

It was a windy morning as we gathered at Parbold for our circular ride to Southport and back. Ray led the group as we snaked through Newburgh until we turned off into country lanes to head for Burscough. We then had a brief stop as we waited for our guest, Chris, to catch up with us as he had arrived late for the ride having been held up in traffic. With Chris on board we continued steadily through quiet country lanes to Burscough where we passed the wharf as we crossed the village.

As we left Burscough behind us we hit open country on the way out to Bescar and on to Churchtown. The wind came into play more seriously as we crossed open country with the wind in our face and sometimes hitting us in strong gusts from the side. We eventually reached the seafront at Marine Drive where we had to battle into a strong wind for around two miles. The peloton spread out as many in the group found it tough going on this final section before lunch. The lunch stop at the Guelder Rose pub was most welcome.

After lunch we continued into the wind along the seafront for another mile or so passing the pleasure beach on the way. We finally left the seafront and immediately benefited from a following wind that made cycling much easier. The return leg took us through Birkdale, Halsall and Aughton before we skirted Ormskirk and continued to Lathom and Hoscarr Moss. As we neared Newburgh on the return run we were held up at a canal bridge with the road barriers down as maintenance work was being carried out. Most of us elected to follow the canal back to Parbold with a handful completing the ride on the road once the bridge re-opened. During the return from Southport there seemed to be a competition for "best fall from bike" with Clive, Sue and guest, Chris, all managing to fall off at some point. Thankfully there were no injuries other than wounded pride.

At the end of the ride Emma, Rita, Sheila, Sue and Gary 2 celebrated having ridden 35 miles for the first time. Well done to the 25 ride participants and thanks to Ray for leading us on a fine ride.