

## **Chester & North Wales CTC's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Rides, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

A total of 108 riders entered for these circular celebratory rides, starting from Bickerton Village Hall. Of this number, 96 turned up and set out at their various start times. The weather was bright to begin with, and the forecast was not too bad, but it was only a forecast after all, and the weather went downhill rapidly, with some very heavy showers making life unpleasant for those having lunch who were not in cafes.

Twenty-six riders did the 75-mile trip, which was intended to be a hard ride, but two people thought it was not hard enough, and went over 80 miles due to route finding errors, whilst another four did the right distance, but complained bitterly about a "lousy road surface". It probably was, but as it wasn't on the official route, I refuse to accept blame. When this was pointed out to them, the quartet's navigator got a lot of well deserved stick. Disaster struck John Mawson at Overton, when his rear tyre gave up the ghost. He secured another tyre due to the kindness of a neighbour, who brought one out to him, thus enabling him to complete the course even though he lost two hours; a very stout effort.

Forty-six riders set off on the ride to Delamere Forest, and all seems to have gone to plan, since no-one has owned up to going off course, though a group did remark that "the sting in the tail of the Peckforton Hills was unexpected". Reg Waud's bike suffered two punctures, and so far as I know these were the only ones that occurred all day. Another gang were rather smug about the fact that the heavy rain took place when they were in the Station Café having lunch, but a torrential downpour at the Hall as they were putting their bikes on their cars soon took the wind out of their sails. Two riders did the ride so quickly, that they went off to look for the twenty-five mile riders after being told that the Hall did not re-open till 1530hrs. Another two decided that the weather didn't suit them, and abandoned the ride. One rider was foolish enough to believe the opening direction and went off to the main road. Despite being told that it should have said L out of the Carpark, he insisted, "it says R". "I know," said Glennys, "but the organiser doesn't know left from right". I do now, and offer my apologies for having reached 75 before I learnt the difference!

Twenty-four riders, including seven children went off to Marbury in the worst weather of the day, but stuck it out well. This route had various permutations that enabled people to select their own route within the overall framework of the main ride, and this seemed to be very popular.

After the rides were over, ninety-four people sat down to an excellent tea provided by Mark Watson and his helpers, topped off with an excellent 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Birthday cake made by Margaret Pendlebury. Amongst the diners were three guests. Ann Taylor, a former President of the Club and a powerhouse behind the Ledsham Section, was accompanied by Colin Taylor, an excellent former organiser of the Bert Bailey Memorial Veterans' 100. Jim Skelding, a former President, Secretary and founder member of the DA made a speech as "the connection with the long ago" as he put it. Finally, Ann made the draw for the prizes very kindly donated by the Bike Factory. These were: a bike of £500 retail value won by Brian Pendlebury, a Garmin 205 Edge GPS unit won by Mike Cross, and a pair of cycling shoes won by Harvey Blair.

All in all it seemed to be a successful day. Certainly, those whom I questioned said that they had enjoyed it, though some said so through gritted teeth! Finally, I should like to express my thanks to Jean and Arthur Miller, and Pam and Mike Cross for their very welcome assistance over the Saturday and Sunday in setting up the hall and generally keeping me in order.

**David Ackerley - Organiser**