

A tale of two rides to Anderton Boatlift – Sunday 19th September

The 'A' Ride

Janet was leading the A ride today, fresh back from an interesting cycle tour of Hungary and Romania. The early start from Eureka is always unpopular and with rain threatening, we were doing well with a group of 7.



There was Dennis. Take a close look at him and the bike which soon proved not up to the job, forcing him to leave us early.

Brian and Chris

They did bring bikes and wet weather gear which you will see in use later.



Sylvia was testing out her new white jacket to match the bike.

There were also another two Brian's to make for confusion but all of them were very welcome.

Off we go, to a loud toot from a passing car. Not another fast, angry motorist on the infamous A540 but John and Barbara heading for Frodsham to join Peter's ride. Through Capenhurst and Dunkirk, out on to the A41 and hey up, there's no-one behind me.



Yes, it's **the first puncture of the day** before we reached Backford! It took a while to sort even with that super mini pump.

Here was a chance to phone Peter to see how his half of the ride was shaping-up. Then the pub to confirm our numbers for lunch. Not good news there. A large party had booked since I called last week. The Visitors Centre was looking more attractive.

Puncture fixed, we press on over the canal and towards the Zoo – that climb may have been what finished it for Dennis. We reached Mickle Trafford, Bridge Trafford and the Wind Surfing Centre where we had to agree that too much time had been lost for an inside elevenses. Shame, because the rain was starting to settle in by now.



Brian was the first to cape-up.

I had a stopping place in mind once we had done a few more miles and the hills of Delamere. A bus shelter at the crossroads in Hatchmere – no seat but public toilets at the picnic centre near by. Alas, the facilities have fallen victim to the closure movement .

Toilets closed



At this wet and soggy point, I did offer an alternative - Delamere visitors centre for lunch. No, **the remaining 'A' riders** were for going on through Norley, Onston, Acton Bridge and the steep climb from the canal. The leader missed a right to Comberbach only to pop out on an unfamiliar road. The signpost pointed right for Anderton and as luck would have it, Peter's group was just ahead of us.



Lunch was taken at a picnic table in the wet by our hardy group of 'own sandwiches' We moved inside quickly to join the rest of our group. It turned out that Peter had been doing a grand job as ride leader pointing out things of interest, all faithfully recorded on camera by Sue (photo).

We'll let her tell that story separately. She defected, though, to the hard men and women for the return trip.

And it was a bit of a slog home through Weaverham, Sandiway, Whitegate, Little Budworth and Cotebrook. We noticed Harry Watson in residence at the café. On and on, passing Utkinton, Duddon, Stapleford, Waverton and Christleton, to the light on the horizon, afternoon tea served at the church near the pond. By this stage, the leader was down to just three followers.

So plenty of cakes for us



And as for the level of discussion on our table. Had Sue made the right choice switching allegiance to the New Scientist and Guardian reading circle? She waved us on at Chester. I parted company with Brian and Sylvia at Two Mills. The Eureka was closed by now.



The computer said 90 kilometres total trip distance. It felt a lot more, believe me.

Photos and words Janet Gregory

The 'B' Ride

Even with a damp day forecast I set off for Frodsham via the train to meet Peter and anyone else. A small gathering ensued at Costa Coffee, where I noted three chaps on bikes. I didn't know them, but it didn't stop me saying hello and asking where they were heading? "Oh, we've had our ride of 30 miles but had to cut it short due to mechanical troubles". If I had done thirty miles by 10am, I would have had to get up at 6 o'clock!

A small select bunch left the café and headed up out of Frodsham, stopping next at **St Peter's Church, Aston**.

Peter regaled some history about a seven year old slave girl who became head of the household in the 1700's, and we saw her grave.



We now picked up **Route 5**, along some marvellous tracks with cobbles and then across a field or two to come out by the **Dutton Viaduct**.



Following the river Weaver gave me ample chance for photos, as did the disappearance of Mike (due to a puncture).

There were fabulous **pink flowers along the embankment** (which Andy totally missed and did not believe me until I showed him the photos!).

We met up with the rest of the fast early bunch who had met at 9:30, and shared tales of the morning ride.



'Meeting Up'

I then left the Frodsham contingent to return to their cars. As I had come by train, I could ride back with Janet's group.



At the Anderton Boat Lift



The weather brightened up, and even though it was a damp start, we didn't have heavy rain and were all totally dried out by the time we landed at

Christleton Methodist Church Hall for coffee and cakes!

Thanks to Peter for a groovy route, and to Janet for riding the route a week earlier having only just landed from her cycling holiday across the Hungarian Plains!

Text and photos of the 'B' Ride by Sue Booth