

Formby Circuit – 5th June 2011

Only **six riders** attended this week, a small select band with Janet and Tricia arriving by train while John and Barbara Smith and Sylvia and Brian Joyce elected to arrive by car and park at



the station.

The group at the station

The ride was a circular clockwise 46-mile epic, divided neatly into three almost equal 15-mile sections. Sections one and three were fairly flat and rural with scenery somewhat different from our usual Cheshire rides, characterised by large open fields with deep ditches either side, and wide horizons somewhat reminiscent of Belgium

and the Low Countries. The middle section included the only two serious hills of the day which were both were long and taxing as well as being slightly more urban in character. Section one also included a 4-mile stretch of the Leeds – Liverpool canal quite early in the ride and we had ‘stand up elevenses’ on a pack horse bridge where we joined the canal path.



Elevenses on the packhorse bridge



The view from the bridge

Progress was necessarily slow owing to the usual obstacles of anglers, walkers and dogs. However, the views and ambience balanced this out and did give us reason to stop and look at the ‘**Navvies**’ **memorial** and read an ‘**explanation board**’ on the tow path that commemorated the men who dug the canal.



Looking at the 'Navvies explanation board'



The Navvies memorial and explanation board

Looking at the Navvies explanation board (again)



We had lunch at the 'Ow'd Boatman's Cabin Café' at Rufford Marina - very popular with other local cycling groups apparently - Liverpool Mercury having left just before we arrived.



Plaque at the cafe



We tackled the first hill soon afterwards, which gave us a good cardiac workout.

Post lunch climb and rest





View from the top of the hill

The group had to rest and recover at the summit before continuing on. The second hill was more urban in character. I had already warned the group in advance that I considered it a 'Health and Safety' risk to ride up it due to the narrowness of the carriageway and the density of the traffic, both overtaking and coming the in the opposite direction. This had been true of our experience when doing our previous 'recce'.

As it turned out, traffic was light on Sunday but as the pavement was wide we walked up it anyway. We completed the ride with a tail wind at our backs for the final push back to Formby. Despite a weather forecast that promised frequent heavy showers we escaped unscathed and stayed mainly dry. Click <http://goo.gl/naauG> to see the route.

In the absence of Blogmaster Bob, away on family business, the epistle was written by **ride leader Brian Joyce**, with **photos courtesy of Janet Gregory and Tricia Seddon**.