

Okells Garden Centre 9th January 2011

The day did not start too well. An 8.00am phone call from Janet to advise that, due to staffing problems, Andy would not be able to lead the ride. So, whilst I prepared a frugal breakfast, Jill scoured the map for a route for the day.

But **Andy was already unloading his bike** in the car park when we arrived, having partially sorted his staff rota for part of the day.



Soon, 15 of us, including a tandem, prised ourselves away from the ever increasing noise of the Eureka, and set off on a bright, but as it

turned out, icy morning.

We had only made 5 miles before **Peter** had the 1st puncture of the day, rear wheel of course. But, as he wore 'namby pamby' rubber gloves, his hands remained pristine.



First puncture



Second puncture



Peter's pristine hands



Bob's grubby hands

Mine, on the other hand (unplanned humour), repairing another puncture after only another 2 miles, without gloves, remained soiled until lunchtime!

We had previously ridden past a road sign which was new to me. **Sealand Historic Settlement**. What was that all about? What indeed?

A bit of research soon produced a fascinating story about a man named Nathaniel Kinderley. Briefly then: the upper part of the Dee estuary was a maritime waste called Saltney Marsh. His plan, to improve river excess to Chester, was to cut a channel through this marsh, drain it, and shift the course of the Dee 5 miles south. This did involve the agreement of the landowners of many areas, even as far away as Flint and Greenfield, and the provision of 2 ferries across the new channel.



All this, following an act of Parliament, was achieved by 1737 at a cost of £47,830.

The whole area of some 8,000 acres was named Sealand.

Regrettably, for various reasons, not the least of which was the lack of foresight of the Chester merchants in gaining trade with the Americas, Chester lost out to Liverpool, Neston & Parkgate, became silted up, the project, though well intended, failed. But Mr Kinderley was a clever man. He, and his family, had gained ownership of all the reclaimed land, the greater part of which is now fertile arable land.

Lunch at Okells was excellent, though prices do seem to have increased.





The ride home along many potholed lanes and roads was in bright sunshine, only stopping once or twice for quick drinks and to let others catch up.



Thanks for the ride Andy.

You will all be pleased to know that Peter purchased a new tyre on Monday!

Click <http://goo.gl/W5JZI> to see the route.

Bob Witton