

Bellis's Garden Centre Cafe - 22nd October 2014

Having missed last week's ride because of a rotten cold/cough I thought I had recovered enough to take on **Andy's** ride to **Bellis's Garden Centre** in **Holt**.

I allowed enough time to go to a cash machine first, except that I took my purple Nectar card, not my purple NatWest card; the ATM is five minutes from home so I lost ten minutes under pressure to make it to the café. The forecast was for a chance of showers and a strong breeze following yesterday's remains of a hurricane.



There were twenty-two riders at the bus stop leaving just enough time to get my breath back as **Andy** (as is our practice) was splitting us into two

groups with **Brian L** leading the second one. As we headed down **Woodbank** on our way to the **Greenway** via **Saughall**, I was told we had a rider from **Leicester CTC** with us; his name was **Jim** and he was taking part in the **CTC BCQ** - it stands for **British Cycle Quest**.



The national CTC website will tell you about it. Briefly, there are 402 checkpoints throughout **Britain** so obviously it will take years to complete.

An atmospheric Dee

We came off the **Greenway** at **Blacon** and rode to the bridge over the **Dee** which

was in high tide. We were on familiar roads up to **Bretton** where **John** took some pics of interest; the terminus of a canal that carried coal to **Chester** for two and a half miles in 1775. A stone marks the site.

There is also a wood nearby, not to be confused with Bretton Woods (a place) in the USA, where in 1946 the dollar ceased to be backed by gold (some say the start of money problems).



Short stop at Bretton



Andy, using his knowledge of this area, took us off piste. I heard a few mumblings like "where are we?" and "Holt's not this way"! But suddenly, there it was "The Warren" the north face of Dingly Dell. It's that steep they have a

gate halfway up to stop people having heart attacks. On the way up we were riding over a thick carpet of leaves (see pic of Jane and dragon fly).



Jane on a carpet of leaves

Last week I was reminded of a poem, this week it was a song by K. D. Lang:

*"The leaves have left hold of their branches as always
And left us with red and gold coloured pathways"*

The next line is far too soppy to write, but for those of you who don't mind soppy it's: "In the same way I, in the same way I, have fallen for you". Arrrrr! Nice song, great singer.



I want to say well done to my namesake for last week's blog I'm glad he mentioned that our greatest painter W. Turner painted the mill in Rossett. I also like the Fighting Temeraire 1839 although he wasn't nominated for the Turner Prize... mmmm.

The downside of the Warren was the upside as we freewheeled down about two miles towards Kinnerton and into some really nice lanes to Rossett.

Marford's distinctive properties

A short climb through Marford and John captured the unusual architecture of the buildings supposedly built by the French Huguenots; we could see some of the branches the strong winds had brought down yesterday on our way into Holt.



There was a huge queue for food but we didn't have to wait too long to be served, although maybe the staff, being under pressure, got some things wrong. Our guest from **Leicester** ordered a chicken ciabatta but got one with Brie - he was half way through it when the chicken one arrived. I don't think the waitress said what was on them - maybe **Jim** should have known the difference, but the **Leicester** said... "mmm".



Return route to Chester

It had rained at the perfect time during lunch and we remained dry all day.



Andy brought us back through **Chester** and around the racecourse.

I would have been happy to repeat what **Chris** said in his blog, "*no incidents to report, punctures etc*", but after **Saughall**, where we sometimes get held up by cows crossing to be milked, a very impatient woman driver trying to get past us blew her horn and shouted abuse. As soon as we could we got to one side to let her pass - but the crazy thing was - her house was about a hundred yards after she passed us. I suppose she must have gained ten seconds! I am thinking of going back to her house and putting a sticker like the one here and posting it on her gate.



Mmm... jelly-babies all round



AllPosters

If you have not seen **Danny MacAskill** on **YouTube** - watch it - it's called '**The Ridge**' on **The Cullins** on the **Isle of Skye**.

Thanks again **Andy** for a great day's ride.

Chris Byrne

Photos by John Ferguson