

Delamere Forest Café - 26th December 2018 (Vale Royal Abbey Arms)

With **Chris L** away I wasn't sure anyone would write up last week's ride and having, as you know, a memory like a goldfish, I wrote it up as soon as I got back. However **Paul M** had the same idea but was a little slower at hitting send than I was. So I have produced the following amalgam of our reports (**Paul in blue**).

Only two **Wednesday Riders** were to be found drinking coffee in the **Old Quay** when the ride to **Delamere** was due to start today. Not surprising really, it was **Boxing Day** and we (**Janet and I**) were the ones who had cooked up the idea a few days earlier.



Undaunted we headed for the exit, but wait - there was **Ian** waiting outside, now we were three. The mist lifted and the sun shone on us as we headed through **Burton**. There at the end of the "missing link" were **Helen and Glen** waiting for us. We continued to the **A5117** and along the cycle path which appeared to be blocked near the **Harvester Inn**. Five more **Wednesday Riders** had spread themselves across the path. Now we were ten!

After a few moments chat **Andy** led off with some of the group in hot pursuit. Unfortunately none of them knew the way and they headed down **Little Stanney Lane** - since that's what we normally do! **Glen** sped after them, testing out his new **Cadence sensor**, and managed to catch them three miles further along. **Janet and I** had decided it was better to stick with this route now rather than go back.

The first test of over indulgence over Christmas came at the short stretch of aptly named **Little Hill at Dunham on the Hill** where we had a short banana break, if we actually had one. Continuing on to the next Mince Pie tell tale climb up **Manley Lane** and through **Mouldsworth** where an even more athletic running group appeared to be taking to the road.

Andy was by now complaining about the hills and saying he could have found an easier way to get to **Delamere**. I wondered if he meant he could have driven there in his camper van? Soon we were riding through the forest which seemed to be turning into a giant car park. We realised that the great British public, having spent the previous day eating, were intent on a short walk in the mistaken belief that they could thereby burn off the extra 50,000 calories they had eaten the day before. However, despite this, they would no doubt need to refuel and so the **Visitor Centre** would be overflowing with them and their

recalcitrant and muddy offspring who would rather be trying out their new games console. We hurried past and went to the **Vale Royal Abbey Arms**. This was also full, but with people who had dispensed with the idea of walking altogether and just driven there - for another large meal. The five of us who wanted to dine found the last remaining table in the corridor by the toilets and ordered our food. I indulged in a very fine pint of **JW Lees' beer**. By the time the food arrived so did the other five of our group - but there was nowhere to sit. **The food was excellent although slightly more expensive than our usual sandwich and chips deals**. Once we had all finished eating **Andy** was ready to lead us off again (still not knowing the way of course), but then **Colin's** food arrived! Some of us waited patiently and enjoyed more conversation while **Colin** ate, others, less patiently, paced up and down asking poor **Colin** how much longer he would be!



Someone (**Ian?**) found a pair of cycling gloves on the wall outside the pub and brought them in. All were asked but it seemed they belonged to none of us. As we were ready to leave still no owner had been found so I handed them in at the bar. Outside, **Glen** was asking if anyone had seen his gloves? We sent him inside, but soon he was back saying the bar staff said none had been handed in. A repeat visit resolved the problem and finally we were ready to go.

We set off - with more complaints as some people realised for the first time that they now had the main climb of the day - two miles up to **Willington**. The complaints stopped with the lovely gradual descent on smooth roads to **Oscroft** - **Glen** and **Andy** competing to see who could freewheel the furthest. (**Paul** thinks **Glen** won - I don't know - but he deserved too, having not complained about anything all day, even when we tried to give his gloves away)

A Jelly baby stop in Waverton from Chris S the JBK in absentum of JBQ after which the Group started splitting, I persuaded a few to go back a different route past the Zoo instead of the same way we went out, although I probably stretched the truth in saying there wasn't much difference in the distance; a further split and three of us ended back at the Harvester. A dry day with no mention of the "B" word and hopefully a few of those extra calories disposed of, thanks to Chris and to Janet who led a lot of the ride.

Those of us who went back over the marsh to **Neston** found the mist starting to rise again but we reached **Neston** before it combined with the dark.

Chris S and Paul M