

## Red Lion, Ellesmere - 3rd September 2014

Today's ride to **Ellesmere** was to be led by **Brian J** but an invitation to **France** was too hard to resist. Fortunately for us **John F** stepped once more into the breach. **John's** intention was to follow a route that **Brian J** had planned and return by a route set by **Brian L**.

The forecast was good and twelve riders gathered for the 9:30a.m. start from the **Eureka**. **Julian** and **Ruth** were to lead a car assisted ride from **Chirk**. **John's** group went from **Woodbank** and through **Saughall** to the **Greenway**, coming off at **Pipers Ash**.



**John** had planned to have a tea break in **Holt**. We were discussing Monday's stage of the **Tour of Britain** as it is due to come through **Holt**, and the fact that riders will have to watch out for the potholes in this area. We headed to **Shocklach** and **Worthenbury**. It's after here the lanes get really interesting.



**Ellesmere Mere**

The weather was remaining cloudy with only glimpses of sun as we sat by the Mere sharing our sandwiches with the wildlife. The majority though, dined in the **Red Lion** along with the **Chirk** group and everyone agreed the food was excellent and very reasonably priced (£1 for a Lime and soda).

I was disappointed not to have caught up with the **Chirk** riders as they had left before we got there. Nice to hear **Tony S** was out and **Jill and Bob** were back from a cycling holiday abroad.



**Chirk Group**



Ellesmere Mere is different from those in the Lake District as no water flows into it to maintain its level. In 1793 Thomas Telford started to build a canal to the coast finishing at Ellesmere Port - named after the Mere. The funds ran out and it was never finished. Telford's house next to the Mere still stands today.

Francis Egerton, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Ellesmere, in 1849, purchased the only known portrait of William Shakespeare at auction for 355 Guineas. Ellesmere Island in Canada is also named after him. In the 11th century there was a castle overlooking the Mere - a bowling green is now on the site. In 1241 King Henry 3rd ordered the repair of the wooden castle, 'doesn't wood burn? Hello!'. The Island in the Mere is artificial and was built from spoil evacuated when they constructed Ellesmere gardens. They called it Moscow Island because in the same year Napoleon was forced to retreat from the Russian capital.



After a short spell on a main road, we were soon back on not-seen-before lanes. There were some lumpy bits and some rear wheel spin in loose gravel - but the lanes were still enjoyable.

**Erbistock** has a church dedicated to **St Erbin** since the 13th century. The village name probably comes from Erbin Stoke meaning **Erbin Stockaded Ford**. I noticed riding through the village that it also has a watermill.

Then it was on to **Overton** where we just glimpsed the ancient yew trees - there are 21 of them about 1,500- 2000 years old in the churchyard of **St Mary the Virgin**.

These long rides require tea breaks so we pulled in to the garden centre in **Borras**. By the time we arrived at the **Eureka** we had covered 76 miles, some will have done more - **Mally** probably over the ton. Well done again **John** - and **Brian** for the route back.

### **Chris Byrne**

The **Chirk** group of 10 (?) met at the cafe in the main street; the car park where the group parked was choc-a-bloc; we thought it may have been the new health centre built next to it. My memory is hazy now having just returned from a walking holiday in **Dorset** but my I do remember that the ride included some beautiful lanes. Lunch at the **Red Lion** was also enjoyable. At the end of the ride three of us had a very welcome tea and cake at the cafe back in **Chirk**. Thank you very much **Ruth and Julian** for a very enjoyable ride.

### **Glennys**

Photos by John F

Photos in the pub by Glennys