

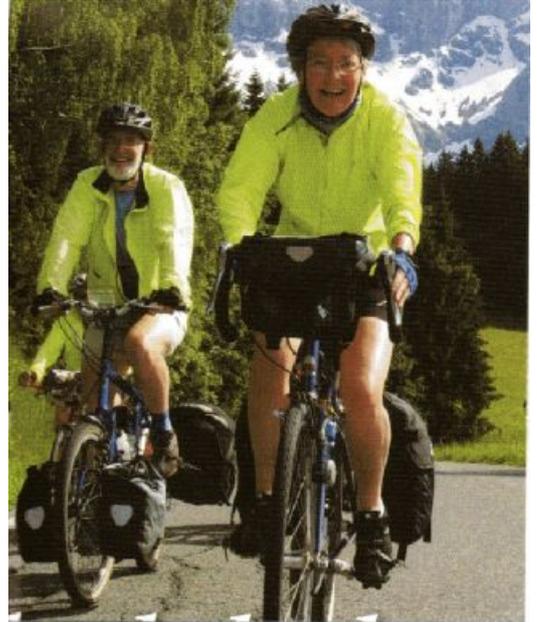
The Old Quay, Parkgate - 17th December 2014

This will be the last blog of the year, but it's not a sad occasion. It's a time to reflect on the wonderful rides we have enjoyed and be thankful to those who contributed to making them so successful. Today's ride was led jointly by **Julian and Ruth** (see pic with snow on the welsh hills) who guided us to **The Old Quay** in **Parkgate**.



The forecast was mild with a chance of rain later on, and a strong breeze -

but it did remain dry - and we even had some sunshine.



About twenty gathered at the bus stop, **Ruth** led the first group of ten with **Julian** the second bunch and headed for **Woodbank** going left at the motorway bridge to reach the end of **Capenhurst Lane**. The route took us through **Ledsham** and Hooton to one of my favourite

stretches **Benty Heath Lane**, there was a pungent aroma of pine as we passed a garden nursery cutting **Christmas** trees.

Just then someone spotted two doves in a pear tree above three hens and six geese just laying around watching some swans swimming on a pond. Yes, it was starting to look a lot like **Christmas**. As we arrived in **Thornton** the group was getting a little ragged and **Ruth** seemed to be in a **Hough**, reminded us that she was our leader, and went to the front. There was a zig and a zag across the **A540** then it was all downhill to the **River Dee**.



I went ahead to film the group at the **Boathouse**, but **Ruth** went off-piste on a rough lane suitable for mountain bikes (that's what I was told **Ruth**) I did film **Julian's** group though.

Locking our bikes outside the **Quay** I was intrigued by **Alan O's** bike - a recent purchase on **eBay**. It s a folding model with those gears in a hub, I gave him a hand to move it as it weighs a ton. What I also found a bit quirky was the outfit that goes with it. Someone said he reminded them of a cross between **Dr Who**, and with red scarf, **Rupert the Bear**. (**Al**, I thought you looked O.K.). I don't think **Raleigh** would!.

Inside the Pub we were scattered around but it was good to see some seldom seen friends like **Brian Parry** with **Bob Williams** and 'not on bikes' were **Bob and Jill**, **Noel and Hazel** and **Mike C**.

Not everyone was going back to the **Eureka**. Wishing some a **Merry Christmas** a group of about fourteen set off towards the **marshes** going past **The Harp** pub. In the bare trees you could see **Neston** through t he branches.



We went through the very picturesque **Burton** village and the Christmas-sounding **Puddington** village, arriving at our starting point - the **Eureka** café. It's just a thought - but do you think because **Jesus** was born on **Christmas Day**, that's why he is called **Christ?**, because I know that's why my mum called me **Chris**, and **Noel** got his name the same way....



John's pic of the **Nelson** mosaic outside the house opposite **The Old Quay** is said to be where **Emma, Lady Hamilton** lived (1765-1815), and is best remembered as the mistress of **Lord Nelson**. Born **Amy Lyon** in Ness, she was raised in **Hawarden**, the daughter of a blacksmith who died when she was only two months old.



High Tide at Parkgate



John also took the pic (above) showing the very high tide last December on the front at **Parkgate**.



To finish off the Blog a little ditty by **Wendy Cope**.

*"At Christmas little children sing and merry bells jingle
The cold winter air makes our hands and faces tingle
And happy families go to church and cheerily they mingle
And the whole business is unbelievably dreadful, If your single."*

So on behalf of **Glennys, John myself** and our photographer **John**, we hope you all have a very **Merry Christmas** and keep those pedals turning in 2015.

Just space for one more by Wendy Cope:

Loss

*"The day he moved out was terrible-
That evening she went through hell.
His absence wasn't a problem
But the corkscrew had gone as well"*

Chris Byrne

Photos by John Ferguson