

WRs' Alternatives' Ride on Wednesday 16th January 2019 to the Wheatsheaf Inn - Upton by Chester

From Chris S...

John W was due to lead the main group with an alternative longer route (30miles) with **Richard**. **Richard** was unable to join us so I led, having blackmailed the ever helpful **John F** into riding with me so I would not be on my own! That left a sizeable number of people inside the **Eureka** when we set off. I was surprised later to find only four of these rode with **John W**, the rest being followers of **Brian L** (eight I think including a couple of new initiates). I think this was the first time that the largest group on the road was the "Alternates" (or Alternatives?). Our scribe, **Chris L**, was unable to be with us so I asked **Brian L** to write something, and the result is below,

From Brian L...

The usual exchange of e-mails on Tuesday laid down **Plan A** as a separate (from the main group that is) twenty-one mile ride to the **Wheatsheaf Inn** with a **Plan B** to **Walk Mill** or **Meadow Lea** should the forecast of heavy rain delay us. **Brian and Sylvia** joined us for the first time and with power-assisted **Peter**, **Penyffordd Pete**, **Glennys**, **Alan O**, 'just-in-time' and resident comic - and our "banter in chief" **David S** and yours truly, indeed the largest group of the day, set off in light rain on **Plan A**. We made

our way to **Dunkirk**, through the gates to **Croughton** and **Stoak** and then surprise, surprise, and to comments of "*I thought we would be going right*" and the like, left through **Stoak** to turn down the **A5117** to **Thornton le Moors** and **Dunham**. I did not find this **A5117** section to be too enjoyable in the damp conditions and I thought the traffic was heavier than I would normally expect on this route (apologies from leader to group). However we were soon back on the quiet lanes up to



Dunham accompanied only by the singing of blackbirds and that equally pleasant sound made by **Peter J's** rubbing strips on his **Roadracer Mk 3** mudguards. We crossed the **A56** at that horrible right and immediately left to the junction up to **Dunham on the Hill** then on to **Mickle Trafford**. We took a right to **Picton Lane** towards **Stoak** (not again), but then a left onto that not too often travelled lane (for me at least) **Ash Hey Lane** with its ample covering of mud and other farming detritus. It was somewhat cleaner after our passage as **Penyffordd Pete** had collected most of it with his **Mk 3s**. Not surprising really when your mudguards are made by a company called "**Crud Products Ltd**".

Up to this point **Plan A** had been followed to the letter but alas a couple of riders then got ahead of the leader and took a left instead of a right at the next junction. In truth it was the most direct route to the venue but deprived the group of the planned twenty-first mile.

Not only were we the largest group of the day but we were also the first group to arrive thanks probably to our one mile shortcut (it is indeed an ill wind that blows nobody any good) as **John W's group** arrived shortly thereafter. **Bob Williams** had made his own way and was already half way through his lunch when we arrived. With two main courses for £9 on offer or a reasonably priced full menu I don't think a butty and chips deal was missed.

Glennys missed a quick group photo shoot as she was busy nattering but then just avoided a spectacular skid and fall on the steep and wet stepped exit from the pub. Well caught, **Glennys!**

The **Plan A** return route of eighteen miles was unceremoniously binned by the group who were in favour of a more direct return route. I suggested we made our way down past the **Countess of Chester, Countess Way** and the **canal path** then onwards to the **Greenway** and the **Eureka**. **Alan** led off and we followed through a maze of roads and eventually emerging onto **Brook Lane** opposite **McColls** (The 7am to 11pm store) and the **Greenway**. No negotiating the crossing of **Liverpool Road**, no **Countess Way**, no **Canal Path** and here we are at the **Greenway**. Magic.

We took the **Greenway** to the **Millenium Bridge** heading for **Woodbank**. **Glennys** and **myself** diverted to the **Witter factory** and spent an interesting time being shown their "**Westphalia**" towbar bike carriers. We also got the Management explanation for the closure of the factory after its recent merger/takeover by an **American Company**.

The **Eureka** was empty when we arrived back at the café at the same time as one other cyclist. We sat at the same table and the meeting resulted in the final amusing tale of the day. During our conversation both **Glennys and I** detected what we thought was immaculate **English** but spoken with a slight **European accent**. **Glennys** broached the subject and we were asked by the "foreigner" to take a guess at his country of birth. **Glennys** went for **Germany** and I opted for **Holland**. I will not disclose the answer but here is a big hint. He told us that his name was **Elwyn Jones**. Mmmm. We got that one wrong.

Comic **Dave S** is also a creative poet in his spare time and came up with an item that was inspired by our **Secretary's** recent reference to the "Alternates" group as "**Acolytes**".

***"A seasoned group leader called Lowe
From the hundreds of rides he did know
Set out for to lead
At a comfortable speed
With his Acolytes behind him in tow."***

And finally the picture that **Glennys** almost broke her neck for but missed anyway. (Thank you **Brian** for sorting the route and leading the ride.)

**WRs Alternates at the Wheatsheaf
(and Bob Williams but you will have
to look closely to find him.)**

Text and photo by Brian

