

## The Cotton Arms, Wrenbury - 6th August 2014

Today's 'A' ride was originally to be led by **Brian S** and although he is back in the saddle and has completed a 70 mile ride it was perhaps too soon to ride another. Once more **Brian L** took up the challenge.

With a poor weather forecast seven riders took the risk of getting wet and were rewarded by staying dry all day. Brian started off - amazingly - on time. There was also a car-assisted ride from the ice cream farm starting at 10:30am.

Ten riders set off led by Glennys.

Our destination was the **Cotton Arms** at **Wrenbury**, which means "old forest inhabited by wrens". You might also find interesting that it is situated on a branch of the **Llangollen Shropshire Union** canal. It also has an unmanned railway station and the **Cheshire Cycleway** runs through it. The local church is **St. Margaret's** which dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and contains a memorial to **Stapleton Cotton, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount of Combermere** hence the **Cotton Arms**.



The church graveyard contains the resting place of a **WW1 soldier** where I placed a centenary commemorative poppy on behalf of the **CTC**. There is also a grave of an **RAF member** from **WW2**. Nearly there! Just two more items and I will get on with the ride - thanks for your patience! **Wrenbury Hall** is said to have sheltered the **Parliamentarian forces** in 1646 when **Nantwich** was under siege before the **Battle of Nantwich** in the **Civil War**. The canal bridge dates from 1790 and was among **Thomas Telford's** earliest works. You might like to see a trail of 150 scarecrows around **Wrenbury** during the first weekend in July.

**WW1 Tombstone in St Margaret's Church Yard with Chris's poppy**



**After Woodbank**



Brian's route took us down **Woodbank** to **Saughall** and onto the **Greenway**. There is an award winning book called "**The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time**".

**Leader Brian L**

We had an incident with a dog in the day-time - a woman and her pooch shouted about the lack of a warning as we approached her. Our gallant leader dismounted and politely explained that our collective bells could be heard in **North Wales** and that she should have gone to 'Hearsavers'.

We came off at **Pipers Ash** and through **Christleton** - so interesting was the chat we hardly noticed the **Ice Cream Farm** (ICF) flash by. **John F**, still in pursuit of the photo of the year, again missed the golden shot of the peloton with **Beeston Castle** in the background! Maybe next time John.

After **Bunbury** we started to cover new ground enjoying for the second week running some brilliant lanes. Eventually we caught up with the **ICF crew** at **Brindley** and after a brief exchange set off for **Ravensmoor**, the venue of an earlier ride.

### **Beeston Castle in the background**

At the **Cotton Arms** most people thought the food was o.k. but they are near the top of the **Lime and Soda League** at £2 a pint. After a quick perusal of **Dave's** new bike - it took six months to be built in **Stoke** - we agreed it looks good. It's a 70<sup>th</sup> birthday present to himself. He was reluctant to discuss its cost on the grounds that his wife might find out!



On our return ride we crossed the **Wrenbury Telford's bridge** and headed for **Tattenhall** via **Cholmondeley Castle**. After a short climb up **Hart Hill** we dropped down and were about 100 yards from the T-junction at the bottom when an impatient motorist decided to overtake us just as a car came towards us. The car overtaking us had to cut in on us, when another car tried to come by and the oncoming car had to stop to avoid a collision. **Alan O** was at the front and he waved his arm in a gesture of anger at the idiot. At the junction the driver of the first car jumped out of his car and came up to **Alan**, well not quite, **Alan** only came up to his waist but this **Neanderthal lump of lard** threatened to put **Alan's** lights out. With great restraint **Alan** remained really calm - obviously all those years as a teacher dealing with angry petulant kids kicked in. I fully expected him to say "when you get home write out a hundred times, cyclists have the right to exist". The car driver's wife seemed very embarrassed by his behaviour.

After this adrenalin rush we got going again to **Bruera**, and **Saighton** to the **Greenway** coming off this time at **Saughall** and finally with **Woodbank** - so well done again **Brian** - a great ride covering 70 miles.

### **Chris Byrne**

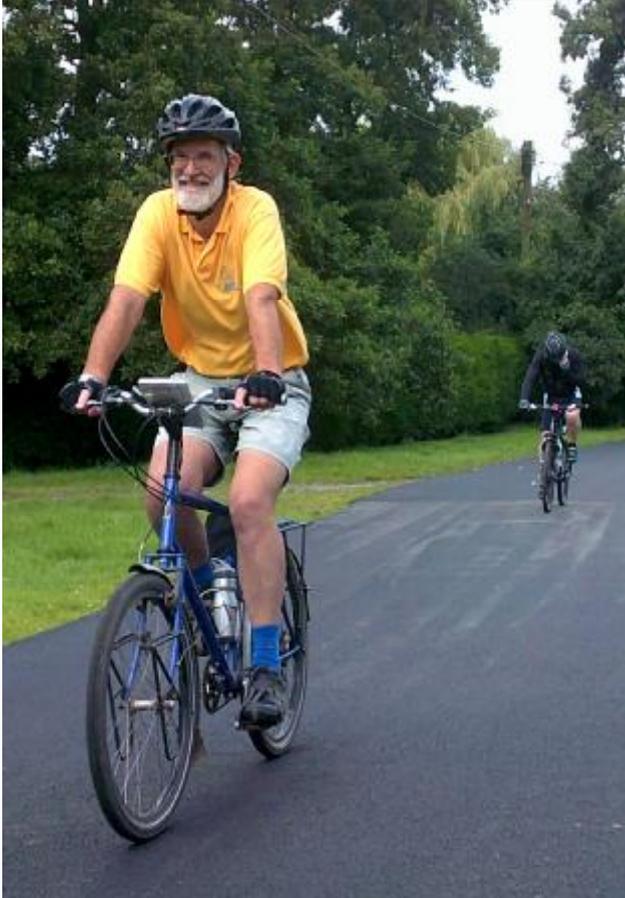
I can't say that there were any interesting incidents on the B ride like the ones the A ride experienced. Eight B riders met at the **Ice Cream Farm** as usual for a starter's tea/coffee. We were very pleased to welcome a new member, **John Wilkie**. I suspect he will graduate to the A rides before long as he's fitter than he lets on!

Our ride took us through **Huxley**, **Beeston** and **Peckforton** to the outskirts of **Bunbury** - no time for **Tillys** - to **Spurstow**. **Spurstow** seems to be a place you drive/cycle through but don't stop. It has a Grade 2 late C16th listed building called **Bath House** (a private house) and a salt spring named **Spurstow Spa**. The Bath House was originally used to accommodate visitors to the Spa. No time to seek it out though even though we went down **Cappers Lane** nearby.

At the junction of **Brindley** and the **A534**, the A group caught up with us - an essential place for a photo call. We're getting used to seeing **John F** on his knees, camera in hand. What a pleasure this lane was, newly resurfaced only a few days ago - being repaired when I reced the



route. It used to be one of the worst roads lanes we used. Unfortunately, although it was a good stretch, it eventually gave way to gravel and potholes.



**Newly-surfaced Kidderton Lane at Brindley**



Swanley Bridge



John F caught us all again on camera on **Swanley Bridge** near the new **Swanley Marina** just before turning right to **Ravensmoor**.

We arrived at the **Cotton Arms** just before the A group as **Brian** had added on a bit more mileage by going through **Sound**.

The food was ok but there's always too much salad for my liking and my last quarter of BLT sandwich was devoid of bacon. Enough complaints!



### **B Group at Peckforton**

The route back was very pleasant - over **Wrenbury Bridge**, via **Cholmondeley Castle**, **Peckforton Castle** and **Beeston Castle**, and not a drop of rain. We made the **ICF** in good time and five of us couldn't resist a final drink and chat before going home. Now it's the **Momma rides** and the **Birthday Rides** to look forward to - so it's on to **York** next Wednesday - for a few of us at least!

**Glennys Hammond**

**Photos by John Ferguson**