

50p Shop, Hoofield (Okells G.C.) - 6th December 2015

For a change we had a reasonable forecast - a dry day, and with a strong wind behind us on the way out - dropping for our return. Members had seen the forecast so about twenty came for the ride, maybe hoping to do their **Christmas** shopping at the 50p shop; or it might have been **Christine's cakes** which beckoned, which are the most delicious in the area - or it was probably the joy of being led by **Roy Bunnell** and the surprises he would spring on us as the route unfolded.

We welcomed a new member (Typhoon) **Robbie**, and a member from **Merseyside CTC** who came to ride with us for a change. We assembled at the bus stop just as it started to rain. I thought it would soon pass over - but not so - it continued all morning. Many of us had listened to the forecast and were not well equipped for rain.

The group had to be divided into two groups for safety with **Andy** leading the second group, and off we went once again down the cycle path along the **A5117** - a long line of cyclists making a colourful sight in their rain jackets.

On the road to Stoak a lady member had the first puncture of the ride, so we ended with the group in three parts for a time.



Senior management had decided - either in view of the size of the group being too many for the 50p café to cope with, or the weather conditions, or a bit of both - I found myself riding into **Okells Garden Centre**, a very wise surprise! By this time, **Brian J** - who had stopped by a hedge, and there picked up a thorn - had his first puncture. However, we all enjoyed the atmosphere and hospitality of **Okells** and hoped that **Bob and Jill** were not waiting for us at the **50p Shop café!**

Here is our leader Roy with some of his soggy riders at Okells.

After lunch the group split into two - those who wished for a short ride back to **Eureka** went with **Roy**, and the others who opted for a longer ride followed **Andy**. Shortly after the start **Brian** had his second puncture. **Andy** stayed with him for a time so the group was led by **John**. We all hoped he knew the way. **Andy** soon caught us up, and on we went, eventually arriving at the

start of the **Greenway** and a good ride at a brisk pace to **Blacon Station** where **Sue** fed us all with **Jelly Babies** which may be why the rest of the way home seemed so easy - thank you **Sue**.

Some of us met up at **Eureka** for refreshment and chat.

We were surprised to hear from one cyclist who had a 1500 looming's light found it safer to travel on his motorcycle down the fast lane of the M53 at 95 mph, than ride his bike!

At Last **Brian and Sylvia** joined us finally having fixed **Brian's** third puncture - just as well he did not have another, as his pump failed after all the work. Another good day out in spite of the rain and thanks to our leader **Roy** and **his helpers**.



David Collinson text and photos