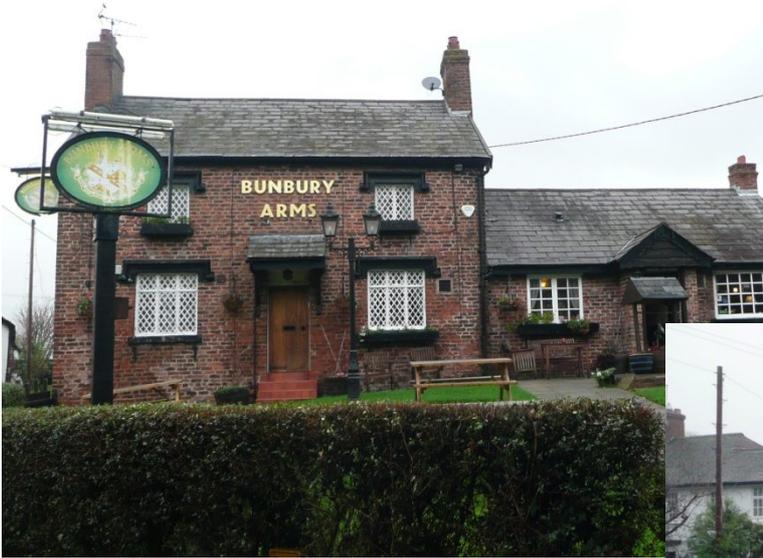


## Bunbury Arms, Stoak - 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014

The first thing to report is the large number of riders turning out on such a miserable day - there were over twenty outside the **Eureka** - nearly all with their wet suits on!



The route to the **Bunbury Arms** was through **Puddington**, **Burton**, down to the marshes then on to **Neston**. Usually the views from here across the **Dee** to **Wales** are brilliant but not today; the **Welsh** mist (not **Scotch**) could have hidden the **Spanish Armada** going to invade **Chester**.



On arriving in **Neston** I bowed to local knowledge and made a slight alteration to the route. This had a temporary effect that I didn't know where I was - but now and again half way up the stairs I can't remember if I am going up or down - it's an age thing. To get back to the front I realised how long our thin yellow line was; it was at least the length of two football pitches or maybe twenty bus lengths. Our only climb of any significance was out of **Raby Mere**.



We then headed to **Port Sunlight** but today it was Port No-sunlight.

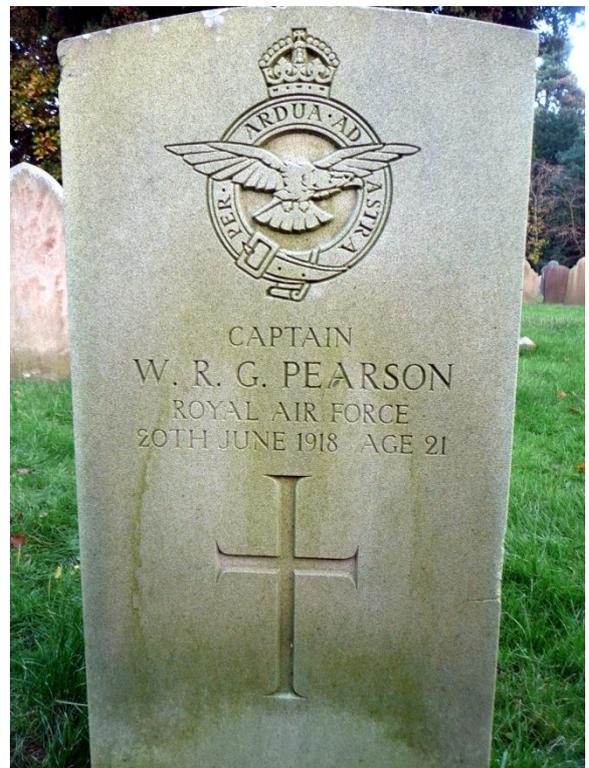


A detour around the **Gladstone Theatre** took us to the disused railway track which was built by **Lord Lever** to transport the raw materials from the ships to his soap factory. In the pursuit of truth it may come as a disappointment to you to learn that the **Leverhulme** success story was to a

large extent on the back of slavery in the **Belgium Congo** along with **King Leopold of Belgium**. Between them they worked to death over half the population, more than the **Holocaust!** There is a book entitled "*The Leverhulme Ghosts*" by **Jules Marchal** if you want to know more. **William Lever** had a wooden lodge built on **Rivington Pike** in 1913. He loved the outdoors where he often slept, but **Edith Rigby - a Suffragette** who brought voting rights for women to attention - burnt it down. He is remembered rightly for being a good employer to white people but no amount of soap will clean his bloodied hands. But eh! Thanks for the cycle track **Will**.

The track brought us out in **Eastham** where a path takes you as close to the **Mersey** as you can without falling in. The thought stuck me that this is R2R river to river, but again the mist prevented any views; we could have done with a **Dee-mister**.

We went up a slight hill to **Eastham village** where I wanted to show everyone something living that was even older than **Bruce Forsyth** - a yew tree in the church yard of **St Mary's**. It's 1600 years old. Some were tree huggers but others just wanted to hug a plate of chips.



Given more time I could have shown the group the grave of a **WW1** pilot named **W.R.G. Pearson**. He was only 21 and had 11 shoot downs over **France**. As a **Captain** he trained crews at **Hooton airfield** to learn the skills of dog fights. Two airmen

closing in on his plane turned left instead of right and all were killed in the collision. (see [John's pic](#)) and Google.

On the way up to [Eastham village](#) there is a left turn and due to a split in the peloton a group turned here. Both routes lead to [Ellesmere Port](#). Although they missed the yew planted in [Roman Britain](#) in 440 they gained enough time to use the original route along the canal to the pub.

Breaking news was that Mike Knox hit a pothole going under a bridge and nearly went for an early bath; I had to put some air in my rear tyre or rather [Andy](#) did in order to get to the pub and change the tube. [George and Ada](#) had arrived but [Bob and Jill](#) came later due to [Bob](#) getting a puncture in his puncture proof tyre. I heard a rumour that [Alan O](#) was present but I never spotted him.



It was becoming a Punctuated day. As we were leaving after lunch, the outside of the pub resembled a bike repair shop; front and back wheels were being repaired and the count was up to four.

Earlier on I had missed a call, It turned out to be from [Brian L](#). A small group had decided to make their own way but there was no need for concern when they went missing as they are very experienced riders. With groups arriving separately riders wanted to depart that way. Our new women members needed to be back for the school run, thanking us they left. That left about ten of us heading to the [Greenway](#).

We hadn't gone a mile when [Peter](#) got his second flat. Having used his only spare tube [St. John F](#) not only supplied one but went about changing it for him too. After we deserted them thinking we were on our way, at the start of the [Greenway](#) [Brian J](#) joined the flat tyre set making it six on the day - definitely one for [John F's](#) stat book. The upside to this final delay was we had time to eat two of [Sue's Jelly Babies](#) - cheers [Sue](#).

There was just one more incident to finish off the day. I lost concentration and went off the [Greenway](#) track into the gravel pit alongside it. I remember thinking '*I am going out doing what I love but why can I hear laughter?*' - my gravel riding skills kicked in on the last second and I managed to get back on track. So on reflection an eventful day and despite a light shower first thing - a dry day.

**Chris Byrne**

**Photos by John Ferguson**

*(Many thanks to Chris for leading the ride and managing to produce this write-up within a day! ed)*