

Vale Royal Abbey Arms - 17th April 2019

From Chris L...

This Wednesday we had the biggest turnout anyone could remember from the **Wednesday Riders**; as we assembled at **Eureka** more and more were arriving - I think the weather may have had a hand in this! Over the road **John F** was trying to create some sort of order - he counted twenty-eight for the sandwich deal. Seven (or was it nine) went off with the **Alternatives** so



John suggested roughly eight per group, **Richard** was first off (faster/longer) -so five went! Next **Chris S** with me (another five)! Don't know what happened after that since I'd gone but I suspect the group sizes were higher! Fortunately we'd been advised to load our **Garmins/devices** with the route so plenty of potential leaders, and I understand everyone got there safely.



The route out was twenty-six miles and fairly uneventful for my group with a banana stop at **Mickle Trafford** (at my request); we'd already passed the **Alternatives**. There was a little confusion around **A5117/A41** roundabout that had us down to four briefly - traffic was heavy - we passed **John** and **Helen W** at **Picton** (although they all got to the pub before us). Around **Barrow** the route started to climb, tops came off, water consumed at a greater rate, and the pace slowed!

After **Kelsall** I'd forgotten the route included the **Yeld** - not done this one for a while - fairly unforgiving isn't it? On the way down we came across **Roy** going the other way having become detached from his group, we suggested going back over the **Yeld** wasn't the best way to the pub so he joined us for the rest of the trip through **Delamere** and on to lunch.





John wasn't long arriving after us, no butties until he was there! These could be described as adequate, **Liz** had ordered granary bread but 1/2 were plain white, considering this was the dearest deal we've had, the quality was distinctly average.

Beer was good, staff pleasant and surroundings excellent. **Brian and Sylvia** found the upgraded chairs but us peasants had to make do with cattle class!



On the return I ventured to go on the longer route but I think most people set off in their original groups, I was one of seven but Harry soon had to return as he'd left his water bottle! The sun was

cracking the flags by this stage, half of us were still in full leggings (very useful earlier on) and were finding the going a close! - more clothing discarded although a modicum of decency was retained! Out past **Cotebrook** and **Eaton**, **Bunbury**, **Beeston** and **Waverton** before heading on to **Chester** and a very welcome ice cream at **Snugbury's** on the **Groves** (**Richard** had recommended this as a previous user); photos from the main group suggest they too



stopped on the **Groves** for ice cream - recommended!

We carried on past the racecourse where **Richard** took his leave, the rest of us coming via the river. **Chris** and **Janet** used the **marsh path** whilst myself, **Peter**, **Mari** and **Roy** headed up **Woodbank** to **Two Mills**.

A great day out with a massive turnout, thanks to **Liz** for her work, **John F** for leading and all the other leaders helping out. I did 63 miles but various other mileages are available... From a

personal point of view I was pleased to arrive at the venue with the same number of people I left the **Eureka** with, even though not the same actual people! I think **Dave W**, **Andy** and **John F** also lead groups. Thanks to all who helped - **John** and **I** estimated 50 participants in total.

Chris L

Photos by Chris L

Alternatives

After a short discussion as to whether we should join the main group at the **Abbey Arms** we decided it would be a good idea to join them at the pub with the intention of arriving first. **Brian L** had a route in mind. The group opted not to be included in the butty and chips deal, and hearing about the poor quality and value of the fare provided I have to say we were glad that we went for 'a la carte'.

With a very large contingent waiting to be organised into groups by **John F**, we nine (I think) alternatives crossed the road and took off before them. Our route took us to **Capenhurst**, Lea by Backford, **Croughton**, **Stoak** (where **Chris L**'s group passed us) and **Mickle Trafford** (nothing new there), where we stopped for a quick drink at the usual bench. There we also saw **John** and **Helen W** who decided not to join us. We continued after the obligatory break to **Bridge Trafford**, **Ashton** and on through **Delamere Forest** to the **Abbey Arms**.



All seemed very happy with their 'a la carte' lunches except me. I had opted for a 'Harissa Chicken Skewer' starter. This comprised two skewers with a miserly bit of chicken attached to each - a real starvation plate. The others felt so sorry for me they donated a few chips and **Alan O** even gave me his last piece of fish!. If all the starters are like that, don't bother in future. I have to say that this contrasted with the platefuls others had, fish and chips, gammon and chips etc. and Alan's (the other one) 'Messy

Chips' with three cheeses and pulled beef. You can tell I was a bit envious. I definitely drew the short straw!

The route back was through **Cotebrook**, **Duddon**, **Waverton**, **Piper's Ash** and **Two Mills** via the Greenway. Some others had turned off on the way back. Many thanks to **Brian L** for leading the group on a very enjoyable ride.

Text by Glennys (sorry no photos) (all photos by **Chris L**)