

Liverpool City of Culture Ride, 30th November 2008

CTC Two Mills, a newly recognised local group from the Wirral, enjoyed a Sunday ride with a difference recently to celebrate Liverpool as European Capital of Culture for 2008. 18 members and friends met on a bright if cold Sunday morning in November on Liverpool's Pier Head. The world famous skyline is defined by the Three Graces – the Royal Liver Building, the Cunard Building and the Port of Liverpool that together make the waterfront a world heritage site, joining an elite group including the Pyramids at Giza, Stonehenge and the Great Wall of China. It will be the location, too, for a striking Fourth Grace. There was plenty of time to take-in the city's maritime past whilst waiting for someone to cycle further than planned. Buses had replaced the train service from Chester - the scourge of Sunday and no good for the poor cyclist.

Finally together, the group pedalled north passing by the changing faces of Liverpool's docks to reach the stunning Anthony Gormley statues at Crosby. 'Another place' consists of over 100 cast-iron, life-size figures spread out along 3 kilometres of the foreshore, stretching almost 1 kilometre out to sea. The figures are made from moulds of the artists own body and are shown at different stages rising out of the sand, all of them looking out to sea, staring at the horizon in silent expectation. A swift stop for elevenses and then an interesting stretch of canal, part of Regional Cycle Route 81, before joining National Cycle Network 62 at Aintree. The award-winning Trans Pennine Trail joins the Liverpool Loop line, a green corridor through the urban east of the city. Some of today's group were relative newcomers so the traffic-free disused railway path back to Childwall was especially suited and at a comfortable pace. The signs for Route 56 proved a good guide through Calderstone and Sefton Park, passing the recently restored Victorian Palm House and on to Lark Lane for a well-earned lunch in an area that boasts great character.

The homeward route took in magnificent views of the Anglican Cathedral in the centre of Liverpool and the Georgian elegance of Rodney Street, including a ghostly tale at William McKenzie's pyramid tomb in St Andrews Graveyard. He was a gambler who sold his soul to the devil in return for the winning hand. Terrified of his pact, he had this tomb erected and placed his card table and chair inside. Once dead, he left instructions to be placed sitting at the table with the winning hand of cards in the hope of out witting the devil himself. Merseyside Cycling Campaign reports in the latest edition of Pedal Press that you are allowed to cycle in the open streets of the new Liverpool1 retail development 24 hours a day. Welcome news. There is still discussion about the other pedestrianised shopping areas of the city centre so the group proceeded with great care to James Street station and the cross river journey home.

This was a first for CTC Two Mills across the water. Members were each given a specially produced souvenir postcard showing the Gormley figures to commemorate the occasion. Other cyclists can follow this 50 kilometre route to see the sights well beyond 2008. Read more about Liverpool's heritage on the official site <http://www.liverpool08.com/>. A gallery of photos from the Two Mills Culture ride can be viewed on the website for Chester and North Wales CTC.

Janet Gregory
Secretary for CTC Two Mills
Chester and North Wales
www.ctcchesterandnwales.org.uk
twomills@chesterandnorthwalesctc.org.uk