

This ride had a bit of everything. There were plenty of hills, rough tracks, country lanes, spectacular views, canal towpaths and a bit of mud towards the end for the mud lovers. We had a few minor falls but, thankfully, nothing too serious and a puncture as well.

There were 21 of us, including our guest, Gary, who was joining us for the first time. Jim T took the lead as we left Trencherfield Mill and made our way through Wigan town centre and up to Haigh Hall where we enjoyed a glorious view over Wigan. After a brief break at Haigh Hall we continued via Little Scotland and out to Rivington. Jim soon discovered that his Garmin wasn't behaving itself and so he had to continue leading us along the route from memory. The group coped well with the regular uphill climbs and we arrived at our lunchtime stop at the tea room at Rivington Bowling Club before midday. The weather was cool but the sun was shining so we enjoyed a welcome break with a chat, a cuppa and a bite to eat. We then gathered on the car park ready for the off and waiting for Christine. She called down from the tea room that there was a rucksack left next to a table. Brian asked whether he had a rucksack on his back. When advised that he did not he decided that the rucksack must be his!

We made our way onwards to Healy Nab along a bumpy track with magnificent views over the surrounding countryside. The snowy hills of the Lake District were visible in the distance. We then entered White Coppice passing the cricket ground and following a tree lined route alongside the Goit and into Brinscall. Geoff took the lead for a while and used his local knowledge to guide us through Withnell to the canal at Top Lock.

It was on the last 10 miles or so back into Wigan that we had a few minor mishaps. Fran fell into a hedge, Margaret came off in one of the muddy sections and Thelma managed to run into a tree! Len was unfortunate to suffer a puncture but it was his front tyre that had picked up a thorn so he soon popped on his spare inner tube. The group was well strung out over the last few miles as we battled the difficult muddy sections but we all arrived back safely. The slightly adjusted route covered 31 miles and 13 members of the group celebrated another excellent ride with a little drink at Wigan Central. It was the perfect end to a brilliant day. This is a ride that is well worth repeating in the future – but let's miss out the muddy bits at the end!