

## Ride Review

Date: **22<sup>nd</sup> May 2016**

Destination: **Southport and back** - 97 miles

Written by: **Dave Charlesworth**



The weather was good, as six of us met at Middleton Arena for a 9.00am start. This was to be one of our longer rides and all were keen to get on our way. The route was a return ride to Southport and included a mix of mainly quiet B roads, some sleepy country lanes and the inevitable few busier roads.

The route out was over to Whitefield and Farnworth, towards Haigh Hall and onto Standish and Rufford, arriving in Southport via Marine Drive. It was a reasonably flat route and we were able to maintain a reasonable pace, whilst leaving a little in reserve, as it was a longer ride than usual.

Steve F and Tom had arrangements for later in the day, so unfortunately couldn't complete the full route. Just before Haigh Hall and with approximately 20 miles covered, they decided to turn round and head back home.

Dave W, Steve B, Wayne and me then continued on together. All seemed good and we were going

well when Steve B shouted out he had a puncture. Steve wasn't happy, as he'd only fitted new tyres the day before! Fortunately there was a large grass verge to pull onto and Steve soon had a new tube fitted. Dave W was quick to offer his CO2 pump to speed up the job and set about installing a new cartridge in it. It was soon clear there was a slight problem, as the sound of lots of escaping gas could be heard as the cartridge was installed. Dave's frantic efforts to stop the flow were in vain and the cartridge was soon empty! Inflating with the traditional pump was therefore the only option. With a few of us taking turns, the tyre was soon up to a decent pressure and we were then ready to continue.

With less than a mile to go to Southport, it started to rain, so a quicker pace into the centre to find a suitable cafe stop was the order of the day. Unfortunately the earlier sunny weather had brought out all the day trippers, who had in turn filled up all the popular eating establishments. Perhaps not our first choice, but the cafe at Dunelm Mill proved to be more than acceptable and a good selection of savoury and sweet items was purchased to set us up for the journey home.

Suitably refreshed, we got back on the bikes and continued down Marine Drive, before taking a left turn to begin the ride back to Middleton. The route back was via Burscough and Newburgh and on to Shevington, with us re-joining the outward route just after Aspull.

After covering just a few miles out of Southport, it was clear we'd been very lucky with the weather. Although no longer actually raining, the roads were swimming with water and it was clear there'd been some torrential rain a short time earlier that we had conveniently dodged! Feeling rather pleased with our good fortune, the ride then continued without event, with just a couple of stops for buying water etc.

The route had been mapped at 97 miles from the Arena and it was clear with the added mileage everyone would cover in addition to this, a century ride was very likely. This proved to be the case and after leaving Wayne and myself just before Heaton Park to take the Simister turning, Dave W and Steve were able to just top the 100 miles by the time they arrived home. We then continued on our way back to the Arena, parting just out of Middleton.

Wayne's bad luck with spokes breaking unfortunately struck again with 97 miles covered and he was forced to limp home. He was understandably disappointed, however I'm sure we can all agree 97 is close enough to 100! Hopefully the wheel can be repaired quickly Wayne!

A great ride out and one we will no doubt repeat later in the year, so those who were unable to attend this time can join in.