

U3A Bikers
South London Parks
Tuesday 6th September 2022



This was a short, well-attended local ride. Thirteen cyclists assembled at the entrance of Brockwell Park's Lido looking forward to visiting Dulwich, Peckham Rye and Burgess Park. Before setting out, we took a moment to extend a warm welcome to Judy and Valerie, two new members of the Group joining us for their first ride with us. The route, researched by Niesje, was planned to be less demanding than our usual 18-28 km rides.

We set out in two groups, cycled round the lower side of Brockwell Park and took the Rosendale Road exit. We entered Turney Road and headed for Dulwich Village and the Park. From Dulwich Park we took the Court Lane Park exit, stopping at the top of Barry Road to photograph an abstract blue mural with a single representational object, a rose shedding its petals, which had been painted in meticulous detail at the lower side of the abstract.



Crossing Barry Road, we let gravity take us down the gentle slope of Friern Road and reached Peckham Rye Park where the artist William Blake claimed to have seen visions circa 1760, including one of a tree 'filled with angels, bright angelic wings bespangling every bough like stars'.

Rye Lane market was surprisingly quiet. We crossed Peckham Road cycling past Peckham Library, which won the Stirling Prize for architecture in 2000 and is shaped like a giant, unsettling, inverted capital L. Then we took the green and pleasant cyclists' and pedestrians' route to Burgess Park known as The Surrey Canal Walk. This canal had continued to thrive until the expansion of road transport after the end of WWII. The Camberwell basin and final part of the canal were abandoned in the 1940s and had been filled in by 1960. You can now walk or cycle under one of its 19th Century beautiful but redundant canal bridges, while Peckham Library itself has been built over the canal's terminal basin.

We had planned a coffee break at the Burgess Park café, but their coffee-making machine had broken down, so we went to the Addington Square café instead. We were lucky with the weather. Earlier promises of morning showers and thunderstorms did not materialise, at least not in South London. We cycled back to Herne Hill via Loughborough Park feeling grateful, once again, for good company and life in such a special part of London.

Riders: Chris, Denise & John, Felicity, Gisela, Ian, Jane, Joe, Judy, Niesje, Valerie

Report by Irene Skiadopoulou

Photos by Irene and Niesje



