

Leeds - Liverpool Canal Walk 6

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Whitebirk Bridge to Riley Marina, Thursday May 25th 2017

Take 15 intrepid canal walkers, a canal through downtown Blackburn and a very hot sunny day and you have a surprisingly green and pleasant walk.

We started on a round about at Whitebirk, on the east side of the former cotton town of Blackburn, with the warning that this would be quite an “industrial” walk. Quickly we saw our first large former cotton mill called Imperial designed by Sidney Stott in 1902. It was a bit ‘down at heel’ but the more observant members noticed that it was still in use with a variety of users. A little further on was Daiseyfield Mill much restored as offices for Granada(?)



And it was then on to Eanam Wharf, a restored canal building with a very large canopy over the tow path, former stables and offices and a substantial canal director’s house all built in stone. Amazingly one occupier had tiny monkeys in an elaborate cage! Not all was old stuff. We passed

Graham and Browns modern wallpaper factory with its redundant K6 telephone box papered with a striking design. Soon we found ourselves overlooking the town centre with its cathedral somewhat obscured by a very new building facing the railway station. What was surprising was the state of the town path for it was all very green with much tended grass and trees, it was hardly an industrial scene at all.



Further on we passed down a flight of 6 locks as we walked westwards and it was clearly late spring with tiny cygnets and ducklings and ungainly goslings from the Canada geese all with proud protective parents.



Gradually we left Blackburn, past neat waterside homes and through woodland fringes as the canal curved and looped towards Riley Green. The countryside opened out as even the suburbs were left behind. Once off the canal we headed gratefully towards the pub to well earned refreshment. However the fun wasn't over yet for some of our group found themselves witnessing the Lancashire Constabulary in a car chase with the full works of flashing lights, sirens and tyre stingers, all very exciting until we heard it was a training exercise!

It was a super day, but it wasn't half hot!

ps.

Dear All,

You may recall the lovely large red brick mill on the canal we saw last week with the old Granada sign on it. At the time I said it had been another cotton mill but as I stood there I thought privately that the round headed windows were too small for such a mill. Further reading indicates that it was in fact a large flour mill which operated up to the 1960's . Later it was converted into offices and studios for Granada and is now used by the

NHS. Recently it has been revealed that the mill had a secret wartime role in manufacturing torpedoes with materials brought in by rail and the finished products taken out by barge on the canal!





