

Bridges of London Bike Ride

On a sunny Sunday in September, I donned crash helmet and Jacket for the ride of a lifetime on the back of a motorbike along the river Thames crossing the bridges of London from London Bridge to Hampton Court. I had won a bike trip in the raffle held at the ICLG AGM, and had the choice of doing a tour round London or a trip to Brighton. My tour guide for the trip was professional bike rider and ICLG Vice-Chair and Membership Secretary, Bert Washington. Before beginning his career in Information, Bert used to be a motorcycle dispatch rider and has an excellent knowledge of the roads around London, and is used to weaving in and out of the London traffic. This was very reassuring, as I was a little apprehensive having only been on the back of a motorbike once before.



Our ride began with a leisurely trip up Shooters Hill and across to the Woolwich Ferry, where we had the chance to relax and enjoy the sunshine while we crossed to the other side of the Thames to begin our tour.

Having got used to being on the bike, we had the opportunity to pick up some speed on some of the back roads as we headed down past the Thames Barrier. It was a fantastic feeling being out in the open air and sunshine, and being on the back of the bike gave me the opportunity to take in the sites, with a much better view than you could get from the inside of a car.

We made our way across the Tower Bridge, and then over the Southwark, Blackfriars, Waterloo and Westminster bridges. This part of the trip was quite congested with traffic, and I had the opportunity to observe Bert's traffic avoidance skills. Being a regular bus commuter it felt quite a privilege being able to whiz down the centre of the road past a long traffic queue. We continued over Lambeth Bridge, Vauxhall Bridge, Chelsea Bridge and Albert Bridge when we reached Battersea and stopped for lunch at Café Kaslik in Battersea Square.

After lunch we carried on to Hampton Court via Battersea Bridge, and the Hammersmith, Chiswick, and Twickenham bridges, passing through Teddington Lock and Kingston-Upon-Thames. We took a trip through the park at Hampton Court and then started to make our way back home.

On route we headed onto the old North Circular Road between the A40 and the A404 Harrow Road, to pay a visit to the famous biker meeting-place, the

Ace Café, for a bite to eat and to admire the collection of motorbikes parked on the forecourt. There was a great atmosphere at the place and they had a large variety of bikes there, from the modern sports bikes to the more classic models, with some colourful characters to ride them!

The final bridge to cross in our journey was London Bridge, and we went on from there via New Cross and Lewisham which took us back to our starting point in Bexleyheath. In total we had covered 110 Miles in our round trip, and had managed to cross all but one of the bridges – Putney Bridge, which there was just too much traffic even for Bert's traffic dodging skills. I would like to thank Bert for a fantastic day out and would recommend this to any ICLG members who get the opportunity of a bike ride!!



Bert on his beloved Honda