

Tuesday, June 28, 2016

The Bay Way Ride - 28th/29th June



12 WE members set off early on Tuesday morning in a minibus with the bike trailer to tackle the Bay Way Ride (81 miles from Barrow-in Furness to Glasson Dock) over two days.

We left in sunshine but the forecast was for heavy rain - and so it turned out.

The ride set two new Wheel Easy records- the wettest ride ever over a sustained period (solid rain for two days) and the shortest ride before a coffee stop (1.6miles at the start!)



We arrived at Barrow just as it began to look threatening and Malcolm, our coffee monitor, got to work on asking the locals where the nearest Costa was and believe it or not it was very close (see above). After a coffee break we set off and immediately the first thunderstorm of the day set in and heavy rain was sustained for the rest of the day.



Our destination for lunch was Conishead Priory (a Buddhist retreat) and we arrived and were warmly welcomed with soup and hot drinks and some incredulity by the rest of visitors!

We looked round the Temple (well worth a visit) before heading out in the rain to our stopover in Grange-over-Sands. Progress was slow due to wet roads and poor signage and we had a few conferences on whether it was a left or right turn. Luckily we had Bob's Garmin to help us out and so we were never too lost. Despite riding round the Bay there were some decent climbs that would have given us great views if we could see anything!

We took a short cut from Cartmel to Grange as we had been on the road for a good while and were thoroughly wet and so 12 soggy riders arrived at our B and B.

Bikes were stored, rooms were allocated, radiators were on and baskets were left out for wet gear to be dried. The owners never batted an eyelid as we dripped on their carpet - we were delighted we had booked to stay at a cycle friendly place!

Warmed up and dried out we had a group meal and a topical EU flag quiz (Sue and James won) and, of course a few drinks before retiring for the night with another wet day ahead looking likely.

After breakfast Sarah had to mend a slow puncture and we set off into the rain with nearly 50 miles to ride before we were picked up and could make our way home. James, who has local knowledge, led us to a great

cafe for an early coffee stop - just as well as it was coming down in stair rods and people were taking photos of us as they thought we were mad!

Past Levens Hall the roads were beginning to flood and we were glad when we got onto more minor roads. The ride would have been brilliant if it had been dry but the weather and need to take great care didn't give time to take in the views.

Before we got to Carnforth we climbed the big hill of the day, Bigland Hill, and then rode into Lancashire in the hope of better weather.



Our wishes were not granted till we reached Carnforth and we decided to have lunch at the Railway station and Heritage Centre where we had a 'brief encounter' with sunshine (film buffs will get that reference!). Paul had to deal with a slow puncture but we all consumed a good lunch before we got ready for a rare treat-dry weather!. Some wet gear was shed as we set off towards Lancaster along the canal and this was a great stretch to ride although we were now behind schedule. A quick phone call to the driver let Kevin insist we go to Morecambe and ride along the promenade with the obligatory photo with Eric before we sped on towards our final destination.





A wrong turn set us on a rough track and we had to turn back, unfortunately Kevin got a puncture so the rest of the group headed off to meet the trailer and start to load while Kevin and Colin sorted the puncture.

We all eventually made it to the finish by which time we were drying out and despite being late the driver was great and got us back home in good time.

Everyone had, despite the weather had a good time and there were suggestions of returning in better weather next year to do the ride again as it was a really great route with varied terrains, landscapes and views.

We covered 81 miles (only 15 in dry weather), 3,300' of climbing and had some interesting riding!

The trailer to and from the start/finish worked well and is well worth using.

Thanks to the whole group for sticking with it, remaining cheerful and helping each other out. Thanks to James and Bob for acting as guides at critical points.

It was certainly a ride we will not forget!

Kevin