

Goosnargh.

Fantastic weather forecast for the days ride, bit of grey cloud about as pick up time approached and subsequently passed, had the Likely Lads ducked out, not at all. Denis was waiting for Alan and Alan for Denis, hiccup sorted; off we set for the Broughton Inn.

Yours truly had the lead as we left the pub car park; Denis calling out directions from just behind, he'd done a reccy of the route last Monday so we should have been in safe hands! First turning for Beacon Fell in sight, keep going came the call, second turning same call. Couple of miles we'd been told, after about 4 miles we stopped when he said "we may have gone wrong", may have! Convinced of two things now, 1 Denis can't read a map, confirmation would come later in the ride and 2 he can't have any sense of direction at all. The Trans Pennine trip may not make it out of Warrington! Or to Warrington for that matter!

Route sorted it was double back time, only for a mile or so followed by one of Jim's slight climbs towards Beacon Fell. Undulating in places giving the old legs a bit of respite, but the nearer we got to the Fell the steeper the road became, last section was quite demanding not so much the gradient as the duration. The superb views along the way and the glorious sunshine helped ease the pain though. Summit reached it was time for liquid and a much needed breather, elevated position gave us chance to take in the scenery, didn't disappoint either, breath-taking comes to mind probably because we didn't have any at the time!

Time to get going again our fearless leader once more at the helm, explained to us that the next section was a bit tricky, it was a one way system around the park and yes he'd got it wrong last week, gone past his turning and ended up doing the circuit twice, anyone surprised? Off we set on a well earned downhill section, sharp right hand bend followed along with a miniature version of Silent Hill, he'd kept that info to himself, the rest of us were in totally the wrong gears, can't do anything about it once your committed it was stand on the pedal time and grind it out, thanks for that Denis, only laughed when we challenged him. The circuit around the Park is basically a roller-coaster ride, some great downhill's along with some not so great uphill's, stopped after one of them to take some photos and determine where Denis had gone wrong previously. How he'd managed to find his way back last week was certainly more luck than judgement, not a clue when it comes to map reading, you have all been warned!

After every climb there comes a descent and this one was particularly nice, reached just short of 40 mph in places and it went on for quite a while, exhilarating! Tarmac road but the surface had dirt or something on it that felt loose under the wheels, just added to the thrill, scary but nice, made the uphill slog more than pay for itself. Undulating country roads took us back to Vine, sorry Grapes in Goosnargh, Denis leading the way without map and without getting lost, there's a novelty. Broughton Inn next stop, didn't take quite as long to get back for some reason! Bikes loaded on the car, some of them anyway, (Muppet here was cycling home), it was time for lunch and a well-deserved pint.

Superb route, challenging but well worth it for the views, for those that couldn't make it you lost out I'm afraid, upside is it will have to go on the calendar again.