

Carr Mill Circular

Monday 15th September, slightly overcast with the possibility of a rain shower, how many would turn up! Quite a few as it happened, some making the most of the Three Sisters starting point by sneaking a cheeky pre-ride cuppa. 10:00am and time to go, nine bodies in total 6 members and 3 guests set off for the much-frequented Viridor Woods. That's where the familiarity ended for most though, a different exit from Viridor led us to Riding Lane, past the Harrow Inn, through the outskirts of Golborne and to the Eastern entrance of Haydock Park Racecourse. Dirt track from here led us alongside the racecourse to Ashton Heath; a few quiet roads bypassed Ashton Town Centre taking us through Skitters Woods and onwards into Garswood. Rode past the Railway Station heading out towards Pewfall, here we picked up Garswood Old Road; a little used farm access road that eventually took us to our intended destination, Carr Mill Dam.

The route had been pretty flat up to now, few hills here and there but nothing to write home about, the hills were yet to come. All the dirt tracks we had ridden were in fantastic condition, a real pleasure to use, hope the dry spell continues a while longer.

Heading past the Waterside Pub we circled around the Dam to join up with Carr Mill Road for the steady climb up to Billinge Chapel End, probably best described as one of Jim's gentle inclines. Not too steep to begin with but the nearer we got to Billinge the steeper it got. Stopped for breath and a drink near Chapel End School before another uphill section took us to Garswood Road and the highlight of the ride. Bid farewell to one of our guests before heading for the rather rough section known locally as the Turpin, nearly all downhill this bit, but there's always an uphill to follow. Descended quite a way before hitting a nice climb back up over the fields towards Garswood, bit of a slog this one but everyone made it in one piece, few rosy cheeks though. View from the top was superb, skies had cleared and the sun had come out giving us some great vistas over to Rivington, Manchester, Cheshire Plains, Fiddlers Ferry and the Welsh Mountains beyond, well worth the climb, plus we had another excellent downhill to come.

Downhill safely negotiated we bid farewell to another guest before heading to Simms Road End, through Downall Green to Drummers Lane, a short stretch of Wigan Road and onto Landgate Lane for the journey back to Three Sisters. Three more riders had peeled off by this stage leaving the remaining four to complete the course.

Everyone seemed to enjoy the route, had a bit of everything and some great scenery to boot, about 18 miles and just over a couple of hours duration, just over 400 foot of climbing so not that bad, all in all a quite pleasant ride and as always some great company.

Happy to put the ride on the calendar again for those that missed it, assuming there's any interest that is, weather permitting as well I might add, could get a bit boggy in places when the wet stuff comes.

Thanks to everyone that turned out, see you on the next one hopefully.