

We had a delayed start to our ride from Burscough as we couldn't start without a ride leader and Jim T and Phil 1 turned up 5 minutes late - much to the relief of those who were waiting! It was a blustery day and as Jim T led us out across the West Lancashire plain towards the coast it soon became clear that we were cycling into a strong headwind.

This ride makes use of many quiet rural lanes but the countryside is very open and we soon found out that there was little cover from the wind. The first half of the ride heading out to Scarisbrick and onwards to Downholland Cross seemed to be constantly into the wind regardless of any slight changes in direction. We had 15 riders in the group and the tough conditions often resulted in big gaps between the stronger riders at the front and those at the rear. We gathered together every so often but it proved useful that Jim T, Phil 1 and Mark had each downloaded the route onto their Garmin.

The café stop at The Hayloft in Lydiate was most welcome. Most of us had a hot drink and a few had a bite to eat - the scones and the apple and caramel pie certainly went down a treat. The Hayloft has a duck pond outside with peacocks and peahens strutting around the farm yard. We just had to pose for a team photo by the pond before resuming the ride.

The second half of the ride was easier because the wind was behind us in places. We wound our way through the country lanes at a steady pace though it was tough going for some of us after the battle into the wind earlier in the ride. We arrived back at Burscough around 3pm having thoroughly enjoyed the 32 miles ride. Thanks to Jim T for leading the ride and successfully using his Garmin for the first time! Special thanks also to Anthony, Mark and Clive for supporting Tracy throughout the ride. This is a ride we really must repeat during the summer.