

## Bay Cycle Way Ride Day 2

Everyone was up early on Day 2 and a queue formed at the restaurant door waiting for breakfast and the 8am opening. After breakfast we had a short turnaround to collect our bags and prepare to depart. Catherine reloaded her car with rucksacks and bags to lighten the load for most of us. It was another cool, fresh morning with the sun trying its best to break through the clouds. In other words, it was ideal for cycling. Jim T led the way out of the Cumbria Grand Hotel driveway and we headed away from Grange over Sands. Out in the front with Jim was our grinning cameraman, Keith, who had bagged the electric bike and had no intention of being shifted off it. After a couple of miles or so Jim realised that we had turned away from Route 70 and the Bay Cycle Way and were soon to arrive at a busy junction with the A590. We decided to follow the cycle lane down the busy dual carriageway for a few hundred metres where we could reconnect with the route. Everyone was relieved to leave the A590 behind us close to Town End where we rejoined quiet country lanes.

The route took us out to Levens where we had to negotiate a sharp left hand turn and give way at the top of a short hill. Doreen briefly lost her balance at this point and grazed her elbow as she went down. After some quick running repairs she was ready for the off. We passed through Levens and switched on to Route 700 where we encountered our first testing hill of the day on Levens Lane. We battled our way up it whilst being teased by the annoying Keith who had turned on the power and was whistling as he passed us all panting for breath. We then had an enjoyable downhill run to a bridge crossing the River Kent where we met a group of cyclists who were tackling Lands End to John o'Groats – sooner than us! We left the A6 at this point to climb up a road through a country park. As we reached the end of the road we stopped to wait for the rest of the group but they failed to appear. Roy had correctly calculated from his Garmin that we should stay on the A6 and they weren't aware that we had taken the diversion. After failed attempts to make contact on the walkie talkie Keith appeared on the electric bike and Jim T and Pete concluded, after consulting the map, we had best return to join the others on route.

After that mishap the rest of the morning went well. We dropped down into Sandside and followed the picturesque coastal road to Arnside where we stopped for drinks - and a snack for those who had room following our hearty breakfast. We then proceeded along the front and turned to leave the coast. We immediately met a fairly steep hill which proved challenging immediately after our break. When the road levelled out we regrouped and then meandered on quiet lanes through Far Arnside and on to Silverdale.

Jim T managed to sneak in one more serious hill before we skirted around Carnforth to join the Lancaster Canal. We then followed the canal to Hest Bank, a route that many of us had cycled before on the Brief Encounters ride. When we left the canal it was plain sailing down the long seafront into Morecambe. There were plenty of sightseers around and we passed Eric's statue without stopping on this occasion. It was early afternoon and the group was considering continuing the final few miles to Lancaster to return the bikes to Leisure Lakes. However, a few ladies had requested a toilet stop so we pulled into the former railway station pub, The Platform. A few members of the group thought that we were intending a pub stop and had to be retrieved from the bar to continue the short final leg into Lancaster.

After the short run into Lancaster we gathered at the Millennium Bridge over the River Lune. John B then guided us towards the Leisure Lakes shop. All the bikes were safely returned and we then made our way to meet up with Catherine to retrieve our

rucksacks and bags. The majority of us headed incorrectly to Sainsbury's car park while Steve and Clive, who were in the rear as usual, found their way to Catherine. Steve commented that it was the first time they had arrived anywhere first on the whole trip! With bags retrieved and many thanks given to Catherine and John B we headed for a pub. Tony directed us to The Borough, a fine hostelry with plenty choice of beers. Since we were arriving back in Lancaster earlier than planned, Tracy had been asked at Morecambe to arrange for the coach to depart one hour earlier at 5pm. Unfortunately, this hadn't been conveyed to the members of the group who had been in The Platform pub at Morecambe and they were surprised and dismayed that they had not been made aware of the change. We need to ensure that everyone is present when we make such changes in future.

Despite the hiccups it had been a great ride and a tougher challenge than most of us expected. 75 miles with an elevation gain of 2972 feet. Several of the 26 members of the group had achieved personal bests which they can be proud of. We must thank Jim T for the incredible amount of work he put in to organise the weekend and lead the ride, Tracy for the brilliant job she did with the coach, John and Catherine B for providing transport for baggage that helped ease the pain of the ride for most of us and others who contributed to the weekend in many different ways - assisting others, generally socialising, entertaining us and even laughing at us from the electric bike! Finally, Roy, who is now an expert on Garmin, asked us to send a thousand apologies to Paul as he now thinks Garmin is the best thing since sliced bread!