

## Bay Cycle Way Ride – Day 1

An early start from us all on this ride as we assembled near to Taybarns for the trip up to Barrow on a chilly but bright morning. Everyone followed Jim's instructions to the letter and turned up at 6.45, ready for an on-time getaway. Our first pleasant surprise was that Tracy had arranged for us to travel up in style in a fabulous, 47 seat coach that was only a week old. Nice one Tracy! It got better. Leather seats, working loo and free tea, coffee and hot chocolate handed round by both male and female "trolley dollies" on the journey.

We arrived at Walney Island well ahead of schedule just a couple of minutes before our bikes. In the event this was just as well as it took about an hour to get them unloaded, saddles adjusted, walkie-talkies distributed, loo break in the adjacent King Alfred pub and get the briefing from Jim. As a result we departed at 10.00am as originally planned.

We were a bit perturbed at first as a one of the bikes delivered was an electric model, complete with chargers and cables. Because the bike was quite heavy our leader, noble as ever, volunteered to swap his bike with Tracy and ride it. (All sense of self-sacrifice was replaced with a smug grin as soon as we got to the first hill!)

The ride out of Barrow was uneventful except that the "well signed new route" signs seemed to disappear once we got to Morrison's car park after about a mile! After a short huddle and some educated guesswork we plumped for a way forward which turned out to be correct as we picked up the route markers half an hour later. From then on the signage for the route was brilliant.

The weather forecast had suggested a dry but cool day, a high of 11° and a northerly wind and we had dressed accordingly. Happily it was nothing like that and after a pleasant morning session on quiet roads through picturesque villages we arrived at the café on the coast road in Bardsea in glorious sunshine. Brian was particularly delighted with the bacon roll served there, mostly because it had been paid for by someone else and not claimed. He did share it with Keith to be fair.

A number of riders commented on how much nicer it was riding without backpacks thanks to John's wife Catherine kindly transporting them for us.

After lunch, and a visit to the Bardsea Public Toilet Voluntary Committee's establishment (how many of you made a contribution?), it was more of the same sort of country though a bit more "undulating". After the first of the day's two big hills, Town Bank Road out of Ulverston, Jim offered the electric bike for someone else to try. Carole volunteered and spent next hour or so with a big smile on her face, zooming past us at pace on every incline and encouraging us to "keep going you're nearly at the top!" After more "undulations", including a particularly steep one called The Rake, we descended down to Greenodd and crossed the A590 and the River Leven on to a bit of proper "off road" which skirted the river before we came to what Jim 1 described as a "stonker of a hill". And it was! Bigland Hill was just that just over a mile from bottom to top. Most of us, with the exception of Phil and Jim 2 got off at some point and pushed. Carole took it in her stride and didn't even break into a sweat. The view at the top across to the Lakes was (almost) worth the effort. After a short geography lesson from Jim2 pointing out the various peaks, Tracy and Carole swapped bikes and it was someone else's turn to look smug.

We were making good time at this point and a decision was made to break our journey at Cartmel for some light refreshment. After milling around aimlessly for a few minutes wondering where to dump the bikes most of us plumped for the Royal Oak. A couple of delightful drinks later we continued our journey to Grange over Sands after some of our party made a brief detour to the Cavendish Arms to say hello to fellow WBCB member John S and his family who were attending a wedding there.

After arriving in Grange there was a slight hiccup for some of us as Roy led us up a steep drive to the wrong hotel. He'd stayed at the right hotel 4 weeks earlier and wondered why this one looked unfamiliar. He put it down to approaching from a different direction!

The hotel seems to have been a good choice with everyone. And we all checked in with little fuss. Bikes were all securely stowed in the ballroom and they were all still there the morning after. With such a large party it was inevitable that people had different ideas about dinner. Some riders plumped for the set meal in the restaurant while others ate in the bar area. Some chose soft drinks and early nights whilst others contributed greatly to the one cask ale offering to be sold out! The usual suspects stayed on until the bar closed shortly after midnight.

Denis forgot which room he was staying in and had to try several doors, including a broom cupboard, before he found the one where Pete had left the door unlocked. A good time appeared to be had by all.