

RIDE REPORT

John Taylor Memorial Ride

Castle Douglas to Crawford and back: 14th July 2012

Riders: Sandy McGlashan, Rob Herd and Ted Norfolk (and part-way: Mike Gray, Bob Rostock and Phil Howard).

Four of us met in the car park at Castle Douglas at 07.00 on a grey and drizzly morning. Fortunately the wind was light and with Bob and Phil planning to meet us later on, Sandy, Mike, Rob and I set off on the Old Military Road towards Haugh of Urr. After climbing up steeply from the Haugh we took a left turn and headed for Crocketford where we briefly joined the A75 trunk road. Then, turning left again, we climbed through the lanes over Largenlee and Mickle Boech (at 146m) and down into Shawhead.

Here I had arranged to phone Bob who was holidaying in his caravan at Barnsoul, to arrange to meet with him at the campsite entrance. From here it was a short run to Routin Bridge, where the waterfalls were in impressive full spate after the recent rains. From here we kept to the left bank of the Cairn Water, riding up the glen and on towards Dunscore. Taking the 'Dunscore bypass' at the bottom of the hill we crossed the B729 and headed for Glen Midge - the first testing climb *suppose the, gasp, to Hardgate is early Mike*. At the hilltop *way of saying waiting* turned left, heading road to Kier Mill. ancient 'Dangerous hill top, which has (not so dangerous Shortly after Kier Mill blacksmiths shop



of the day *(well, I climb from the Haugh enough to not count!!* we regrouped *(polite for me. Mike)* and down the long straight Mike pointed out an Hill' road sign at the survived for many years now, we thought). we passed the old where Kirkpatrick

Macmillan made his first bicycle. We headed on to the café at Penpont crossroads which was to be our first coffee stop, as Drumlanrig was hosting the 'Tough Mudder Challenge' with approx. 4000 competitors taking part, and was therefore not able to accommodate us.

Mike left us here as he was due to sing with the St John's choir at an afternoon wedding in Dumfries (he hoped to meet up with us again on our return journey). After a well earned break we headed on, but had to detour into Thornhill due to road closures around



Drumlanrig: Thornhill was obviously having its own fair day. From here, we rode the A76 on to

Carronbridge where we turned right onto the A702 and began that long ascent of the Dalveen pass, the main climb on today's ride. The rain eased as we began the assault, so we stopped to remove our rain gear to prevent overheating. Rob managed to find some friends here and we stopped to exchange pleasantries. Continuing up the pass at a steady pace and in relatively comfortable conditions (compared with earlier in the day) we had good views of the surrounding Lowther Hills and summited at 337m. We could also see a vast number of wind turbines on the hill tops in the distance, many more than apparent on last year's ride.

Our ride down towards Elvanfoot and the M74 was very fast and we soon reached the motorway underpass, riding the remaining 2 miles to Crawford (our lunch stop) just as the rain began again. Lunch was at Ajay's Corner Shop, where we enjoyed filled rolls and coffee whilst the rain hammered down outside. After lunch, we set off again with the rain still falling, re-tracing our steps over the pass and down into Thornhill. Here Phil phoned us from Kier, where he was sheltering from the rain (*that word again – Mike*) in a phone-box. He then made his way to join up with us in Thornhill, where we had stopped for refreshments at Marchbank's, and took more time to look at the carnival, now in full swing.

Refreshed again we headed back towards Kier; this time passing the churchyard where KM's remains are buried. In the village we turned left and climbed back up to Glenmidge, with the increasing rain beginning to penetrate our waterproofs. We had to make several stops in the narrow lanes for fully loaded tractors and trailers as the farmers hurried to get in the freshly cut silage. Continuing to retrace our steps we bypassed Dunscore again and headed for Speddoch, where I had put in a variation to last year's route. We forked left and began the long and steady climb up to Speddoch Hill (217m) with great views of the surrounding countryside. Then we began the long and fast descent into Glenkiln passing the famed statues by Henry Moore, Auguste Rodin and Jacob Epstein. Rodin's naked man, beside the car park, is shown below. Further on down the hill we were due to turn right, so Rob decided to leave here and head back to Barnsoul, and caravan shower. Passing another statue on the way up to the summit at Larganlee (226m) the sun began to shine at last and gave us new energy. From here the road took us down towards Kirkpatrick Durham and Phil departed for Dalbeattie,



when we reached the A712 junction. Bob H soon followed Phil as we left the village, leaving Sandy and I to complete the remainder of the ride on our own. One last hard climb, in the sunshine, out of Old Bridge of Urr took us up to Clarebrand and then the last few miles back to the car park at CD.

A was a very enjoyable ride despite the poor weather, and a good route revision through Glenkiln.

Total 99 miles @ 13.6 mph average speed, 7hrs 15 min ride time

Ted Norfolk (Ride Leader).

Some additional comments by Mike:-

After the wedding, and back in cycling kit, I did indeed head back for CD, via Shawhead, KPD and Clarebrand. Apart from anything else my car was there! Got soaked at Shawhead, but just minutes later was riding on dry road – the heavy showers were much localised. Unfortunately I was too late to team up again with Ted and Sandy and didn't get back to CD until a little after 6. About 70 miles for me, including Penpont back to Dumfries, which was bone dry, even some sunshine, in contrast to the rain further north.