

York CTC Newsletter, 2009.

Over the last year the Section has enjoyed its usual selection of trips away, both home and abroad. Destinations have included Hawkshead; Dufton; Whitby; the Algarve; Easter was spent exploring the area around Hadrian's Wall where we were joined by CTC members from Chester & Portsmouth; Grinton and Ingleton for the May Bank Holidays; Northumberland, following Sustrans routes; two weeks touring the Picos de Europa in Northern Spain.

Congratulations to Brett Hill, Keith & Ann Benton for completing the LEL in appalling conditions.

July saw the successful launch of the PG Challenge Rides with 68 taking part in remembrance of Peter Gray. An excellent effort by the organiser, Andrew Kirby.

Gerry's rides have maintained their numbers, up to 240 riders from 231 for the same events last year.

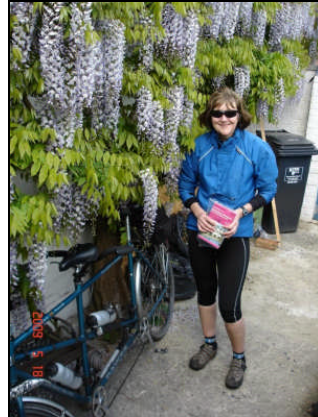
Please enjoy reading the following reports, some a little longer than previous as, due to dwindling news reporter numbers, this will be the last newsletter for the time being.

Crocks in the Cotswolds Strawbs in the Mendips

Sustrans routes can give an area once visited a new twist. The Cotswolds/Mendips is such a place and a long time since we were there with the club one Easter. A bit of research, Google Earthing and inspiration and the trip was set in motion.



Lydia outside Street YHA



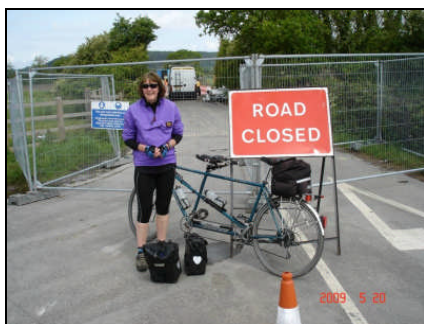
B&B Devizes



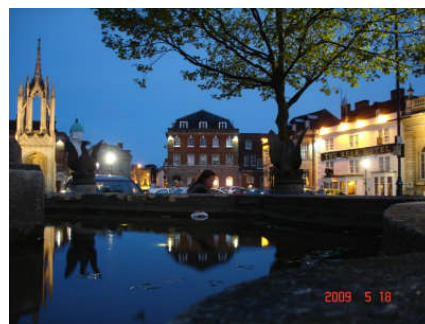
Caen hill Locks

Kicking off from the hostel in Stow on the Wold one morning with promising weather deteriorated within 5 miles to stair rods, a whirlwind and utter blackness! It got worse. Taking refuge under a tree by the lane which was now the rapids of the upper Nile, a passing tractor forced me to lift the laden tandem out of the way which then swung the chainset into my shin. I could not utter *\$%@** out loud because it was so painful!! What a start.

It had to improve after this and it did. Glorious sunshine down the lovely Coln valley with beautiful villages in succession to Arlington Row. A pub lunch and then past the famous Uffingham white horse to the excellent Ridgeway independent hostel near Wantage. The route then took us on trail 45 & 4 through the glorious vale of Pewsey to our B&B at Devizes. Devizes, a pleasant market town brewing the famed Wadworths 6xx . However, after taking in several pints of this hallowed brew I was not allowed to recite the fabled “ there once was a man from Devizes” verse that evening in the Black Bear hotel by stoker Lydia. Denied.

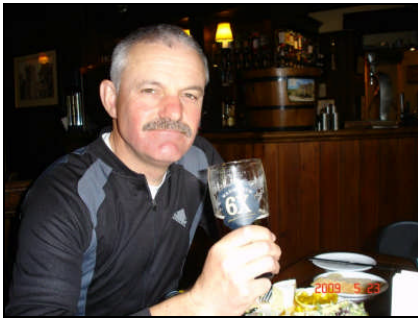


Breakout

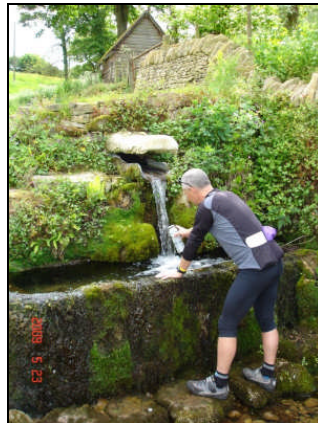


Devizes

Then along the Kennet and Avon canal route 4 passing the 45 locks down Caen Hill two aqueducts and on through Bath, Bristol, Avon Gorge to Avonmouth. This brought us onto the new Sustrans Strawberry line cycleway from Yatton to Cheddar cutting as it goes through the Mendips (southerly flanks used to grow – you’ve guessed it strawberries). Too early for strawberries so a Cheddar cheese toastie at Cheddar! Onto the village of Street staying at, for me, one of the best located hostels in UK. : A 75 years old Swiss chalet located in a National Trust forest on a ridge looking down from our dorm window onto Glastonbury Tor. All for £13/ night. Bargain !!



Dave



Crock Water



Stawberry Line

Route 3 took us onto Wells (No baby eating Bishops to be seen anywhere) but not before a broken spoke on the rear - drum brake side. Over an hour to sort this in the entrance to a farm. Time was passed though in the good company of an inquisitive farmer discussing the expenses fiasco and which parts of the MP's need removing. Then high into the Mendips and the Hostel at Bath. Similar to York in many ways but definitely NOT tandem country. Many a breadfruit was thrown off the Tandem Bounty next day due the unforgiving terrain. The mutiny was quelled; Lydia (alias Mrs Christian) was sentenced when we arrived back in port. The Mendips gave way to rolling countryside by the river Severn and the The Ship Inn stayover at Upper Framilode. Gammon with chips and beer and the severe hills were a distant memory. Until next morning! Back into the Cotswolds. North South with the grain is OK, but West East is a bugger.... Although picturesque, it's warp speed down into a valley and pulling against black holes gravity out. Not easy on a tandem. We dropped into Copton Abdale and filled the bottles with spring water from a 16th century stone Crocodile poking out from the hillside for the last few miles back to the car.

If you enjoy severe hills, Cholera free springwater, Sustrans tracks and your strawberries with cream snappy this may be the one for you.

Dave

Grinton Lodge Hostel Weekend – Saturday 2nd to Monday 4th May



Grinton Lodge Hostel



View from the Hostel of Reeth

7 of us met up at Skelton, 9am to cycle to Grinton. A fairly quick pace was required to get us to Bedale, in order to catch the train to Redmire. The intention then was to go over Butter Tubs Pass to get to Muker and the café there, however Peter knew of a track from Castle Bolton, which kept us high on the fell side, with good views. By the time we came off the track the decision had been made to take Oxnop to Muker, which is much nicer with quieter roads and better views. It was then just down the valley, with some of us taking the back road to Grinton, which missed out Reeth and the final climb to the Hostel. Evening meals for the weekend were taken in the pub in Grinton, which then required us to climb back up the hill to the Hostel.



Wensleydale Railway (Redmire)



Climb of Oxnop (Andy G. and Sally)

Day 2 we intended to go through Marske and over the climb to Barnard Castle, however Andy G. said I know a nice route (with track) to bring us out onto the top. This proved to be OK until we got to a steep down and up which proved too much to ride on road bikes, it was then a long descent to Newsham (with a strong tail wind). The roads then meandered through the lanes to Barnard Castle with the final 5km into a strong head wind, the café stop being Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle. Instead of doing the Stang to get back it was decided to follow the Walney to Wear (Sustrans route 52) through Bowes and the track to Arkengarthdale, when we should then turn and have a tail wind back to the Hostel.



River Tees at Whorlton



Bowes Museum

The journey home was through the lanes to the café at Masham and on through Grewelthorpe and Ripon to get to Knaresborough and our usual route back to York.



Grass track from Castle Bolton



Elaine walks steep descent to river crossing

Overall it was a very good weekend with plenty of steady off road riding and again no rain.

A.K.

Ingleton Hostel Weekend – Saturday 23rd to Monday 25th May



View of Ingleborough



Sally, Jon and Elaine (Carnforth Station)

5 of us met up at Dringhouses at 8am to cycle to Ingleton. We were to meet up with Andy G. at Otley between 10.30-11am. We went the usual way through Wetherby and the back roads to Otley. Our next stop would be Grassington via Appletreewick before the long climb up to the track of Mastiles lane (4.5km of track) where I thought our luck had run out, with some light rain in the air. This was also the point when I received looks of disgust from those there. I must say the track was much better than the last time I rode it (however, not in the best condition). After this things improved to Stainforth and over to Austwick and onto the Hostel at Ingleton. It was decided that we would have a meal in the hostel that evening (this proved mediocre).



John, Sally and Elaine on climb to Mastiles Lane



Pete crossing ford on Mastiles Lane

It was decided to have a ride to Morecambe; I took the decision to take the main A65 to Kirkby Lonsdale while the traffic was quiet, which turned out to be helpful for a circular route. Back roads were used to get us to Carnforth and the 'Brief Encounter Cafe' at the railway station, which was a café-cum-museum. It was then along the Lancaster Canal and the cycle track along the sea front at Morecambe where a number of photos were taken with the statue of Eric Bartholomew. The cycle path was then taken to Lancaster where a second café stop was taken, with some interesting local characters (not recommended), before heading back to the cycle path out of Lancaster to Wray and our 3rd café of the day, before returning to Ingleton. We decided after the previous nights meal that we would try out the Wheatsheaf for the evening meal, this turned out

to be a big mistake, with the food for some inedible. We ended up having a few drinks at a pub with live music; P.S. I've got the evidence!



Elaine cycles along Lancaster Canal towpath



Sally and Elaine with statue of Eric Bartholemew

The journey back was via the back road to Ribble Head and through Hawes to Castle Bolton, where Pete bought a fruit pie, which turned out to be a pork pie topped with cranberries. Then it was the back roads, up Preston Scar through Masham and onto Ripon ('Sun Parlour' - first time this year). This was where we left Andy G. who headed back to Leeds, while we headed back through Boroughbridge and over Aldwark Bridge.



Ribblehead Viaduct



Andy G. and Pete with statue of Eric Bartholemew

All I can say is yet another good weekend only let down by the quality of the food in Ingleton, which is surprising with "Bernie's" and "Inglesport" cafes, which are both excellent.

A.K.

Peter Gray Challenge Rides – Sunday 5th July

I was a bit apprehensive in organising the event, especially since it was the first one I'd done. I came up with a number of routes representing various aspects of what Peter was all about.

220km was intended to be a true challenge ride to test the most hardened of cyclists. This took in Pete's favourite Easter route of the Stang, which was extended to Tan Hill, Butter Tubs Pass, Fleet Moss and a number of other climbs. This proved to be the case with 12 riders taking part on the day. They set off at 7.35am and I was surprised to see a group of 7 get back by 6.30pm all Clifton members.

100km was designed to be a standard club ride setting off at 10am enabling those who choose to, to cycle out to the start. This had 2 cafes at Ripon, which had to deal with all 50 riders descending upon them within a 15-30 minute period, the second being 'Restaurant 21' in Easingwold. Unfortunately there were two incidents on this ride a rear shunt, causing some damage to some of the cycles. With a more serious incident when Geoff came off, which was caused when descending out of Yearsley where he moved over onto a bit of rough road to let a car pass. He ended up spending the night in the Friarage Hospital in Northallerton. 50 starters and 49 finished the ride with just the one unfortunate incident.

25/40km was designed to encourage families and those who haven't done this sort of riding before. 6 started out and 6 got back with no problem, all doing the 40km route.

I would like to thank all those who took part and thank to Clifton for including the 220 and 100 into their Challenge Series. Brett deserves special thanks for helping me out all day by doing a check on the Stang (220km route), before coming back and dealing with the returning riders, providing Teas and Coffees.

2010 Event will take place on Sunday 18th July and will be the same routes except a 50km ride instead of the 25/40. Route sheets etc. can be found at: -

<http://www.amkirby.co.uk/York/PGRides.htm>

A.K.

Northumberland Coast and Castles July 2009



Bamburgh



Titanic connections

You could cycle in Northumberland at anytime with its great coastline, Cheviot Hills and lack of cars. The Sustrans Coast and Castles route brings this all together in one convenient loop.

So with the usual poor suspects we began with a night in Newcastle; an Italian restaurant to start ending up with inebriated Geordies at the excellent Station Inn by George Stephenson's railway bridge over the Tyne.

Next day from the centrally located Albatross (reminds me of a python sketch) independent hostel we followed route 1 along the Tyne, through the cyclists tunnel under the river (poor Elaine + diagonally opposed bike nearly lost it on the escalator). A preliminary bacon sarnie alfresco at Tynemouth and down the coast for a picnic at lovely Druridge bay. Already, Cashpoint Pete's bike had punctured with a broken cable in his STI lever; honourably letting everyone, including the ladies, sort it out for him! What a gentleman.



Excellent Route !



Hang on Elaine



Honourable Pete

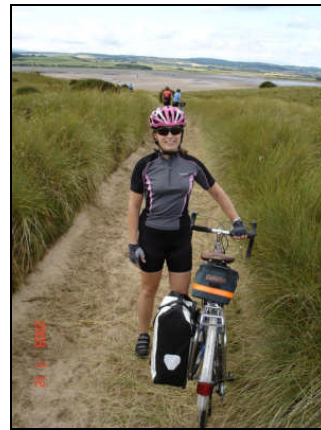
Overnight in Alwick Lydia, Nick and myself stayed at the White Swan Hotel. The dining area has the entire reclaimed & relocated 1911 RMS Olympic's (identical sister ship to Titanic) panelled dining suite bought at auction by the hotelier after her break-up in 1935 at Jarrow.

No icebergs hit during the night so onward to Bamburgh castle then tracking it through sand dunes to the magnificent Budle Bay, Chillingham castle overnighiting at the reprieved Wooler Hostel under the Cheviots. Another night of beer and pasta.

The Sustarans route then skirts around picturesque base of the Cheviots although bumpy with leafy/ferny tracks – good then. Our luck with the weather was lost for an hour or so with a monsoon before reaching the excellent cyclist's café at Elsdon. A stay over at Bellingham YHA bunkhouse – a great place although there was just enough hot water for a very small mouse to have a short shower.



To Budle Bay



Rideable?

Next day the group parted. Group "A" became disorientated (lost) in the tracks through Kielder forest but eventually found their way out to the Dales and home! Elaine, myself + stoker followed the pleasant route 72 alongside the Tyne from Hexham to central Newcastle. Farewell until next time then to the land of the stotie loaf and Newkie brown.

Dave

Whitby Hostel Weekend – Friday 24th to Sunday 26th July



Whitby Abbey



Whitby Abbey

Seven of us set off just gone 9am, heading to the first café stop at Fridaythorpe, which took in the ascent after Kirby Underdale. The 2nd stop being at Wykeham Tearooms, after first going through Sledmere and a couple of ascents to cross the A64 at Sherburn. It would then be up Forge Valley and the steep ascent of Silpho hairpins, through Harwood Dale to the 3rd stop of Flask Inn. A couple decided to go their own way to Whitby while the rest did a bit more of the main road before being able to get back onto the back roads. The evening as ever with our group would be to have a drink before the evening meal, which tonight was at Trenchers.



Group on climb to Silpho

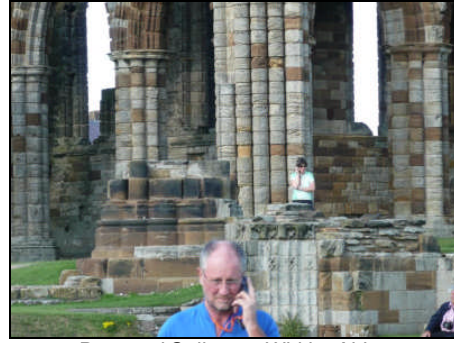


Rideable?

Saturday ended up as a short ride along the coast to a tea garden at Runswick Bay via a track to get there. It was at this point it was decided to go to Danby Lodge for our 2nd stop that took in a steep ascent of Bank Brow near Boulby. Sustrans route 52 (W2W) was then taken to get back to Whitby. A look around the Abbey was always the intent on and was much better than the last time I went round about 20 years ago (or there about- free entry to the Abbey when staying at the Whitby YHA). The evening meal was having an Indian at Whitby railway station, which proved to be an excellent choice.



Whitby Harbour



Pete and Sally tour Whitby Abbey

The return journey split into 2 groups to Pickering with those cycling all the way taking in Ruswarp, Sleights, Grosmont and the hillier moor road though Stape. The other group took a more scenic route to Grosmont and a train ride to Pickering. Both groups meet up and did the usual route back stopping off at the Arboretum Café at Castle Howard.



Sally at the top of Bank Brow near Boulby



John fixes the only puncture of the weekend

We were very lucky with the weather yet again, with a torrential downpour when we were in the Tearooms in Wykeham on the way out and another while we were in the Arboretum Café on the return journey, with just a shower heading back into York.

A.K.

Tour of the Picos de Europa.



View from ferry across to Santander



Group climbing one of the ascents

Having trained it down to Plymouth on the Saturday we had time to explore a little of Dartmoor before the ferry departed for Santander on Sunday afternoon. Nick and AK had done their homework and planned a route to Yelverton and back, following Sustrans Route 27. It proved to be the ideal leg and lung stretch before boarding the ferry. It was a pleasant enough crossing with a spot of whale/dolphin watching thrown in and time to go on deck, enjoy the Spanish sunshine and our approach into Santander.

We headed east along the coast off the ferry, with the intention of going round the peninsula and along the north side of Santander to avoid the centre. With Andy G's GPS we made it out on to the minor roads fairly easily. After a section on quiet main roads to get us across two rivers, we found an old railway line that had been surfaced to take us to our accommodation in the sleepy village of Casar de Periedo.



View over Carmona



View over the Cantabria mountains

Our first full day in sunny Spain proved to be too much excitement for Jacque! With three passes to negotiate and the mercury rising into the 30's, dehydration and touring panniers took their toll. We were all relieved to reach Potes and our hotel. No prizes for guessing who was first to the bar!! It was going to take a bit more to bring Jacque back to life. After some negotiation with the proprietor he agreed to ferry (for 60 Euros) Jacque and her bike over the next day's pass, in his 4x4, to Posada de Valdeon where we had a rest day planned. With that organised we could relax.



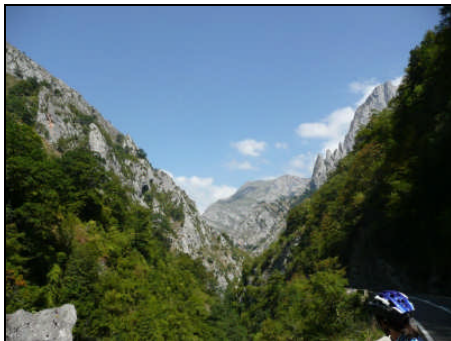
View across lake towards Torre Blanca



Pete in Oseja de Sajambra

With another warm day ahead of us we said 'hasta luego' to Jacque and set off into the heart of the Picos. Today we would get our first views of the limestone peaks, just a 1600m climb in our way! Well worth the effort for some stunning views before dropping down to Posada Valdeon where we caught up with Jacque. It was a relief to see her almost back to her usual self. We were all glad of a rest day as the heat continued. So a short walk, a picture show at the tourist info office and a picnic lunch on the balcony were the extent of our activities.

With everyone keen to get back on their bikes we headed for our only pass of the day, a steady 1280m. After a lunch consisting of a cheese and 'tree bark' bocadillo we started our descent of the famous Desfiladero de los Beyos. A superb run down this gorge to Cangas de Onis was punctuated by frequent photo opportunities too good to miss. Cangas is a busy town with an impressive Roman-style bridge. This is where we had our first real taste of the local Asturian cider, an acquired taste I have to say and acquired by some quicker than others!! Note – an evening meal in Cangas is not the laid back Spanish experience you might expect. Please hand me the Gaviscon and the Valium!!



Desfiladero de los Beyos



Roman bridge at Cangas de Onis

Saturday and the weather had turned cloudy and hazy. We decided to take a detour up to the Disneyesque Covadonga and the lakes beyond. This proved to be a less than a bright idea as the whole of Spain seemed to be heading in the same direction. After lunch and a gear cable repair we headed for Arenas de Cabrales where we would stay 3 nights.



The Basilica of Covadonga



Hotel Torrecerredo

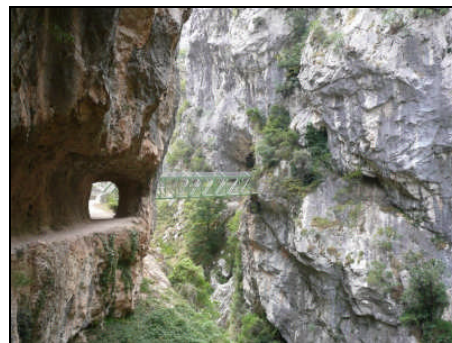
After an easy/rest day the owners of the Hotel Torrecerredo (Jim & Pilar) dropped us off at the start of the Cares Gorge walk and picked us up again when we returned. A 12 mile walk not to be missed, even if it had to be done in cycling shoes! The stunning scenery proved to be too much excitement for some cameras! We got back to Arenas in time to get a card and cake to celebrate Pete's birthday.

Time to start heading back, so off to the coast and a route via St. Vincente to Comillas, famous for it's modernista architecture including the occasional Gaudi design. Weather damp and grey but soon forgotten when we got to our hotel. A fantastic location right on the beach, all rooms with a sea view. A very dramatic, atmospheric night with heavy rain and thunder and lightening battling it out over the bay.

After a wet morning and a spell huddled in a bus shelter, some of the group headed off to explore the Via Verde along a disused railway line. We had a real treat in store for our last night, a dramatic, if slightly OTT, gothic palace at Villacarriedo.



Group approach to Cares Gorge



Cares Gorge foot bridge

Homeward bound now. Took a direct route to Santander and made use of a local ferry across the bay so avoiding the city centre. Time to relax by the beach, take in the Spanish sunshine, have a paddle and a leisurely lunch before boarding the ferry home.

¡Adios, hasta luego!
Sally

Arnside October

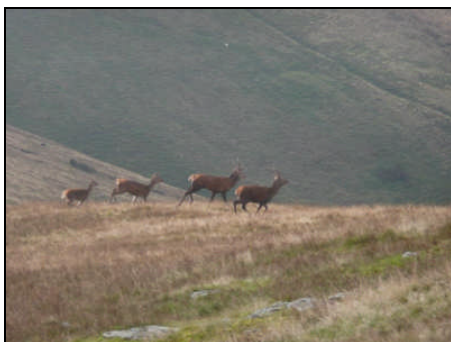


Lydia looking back towards Arnside



Descending Fairy Steps

Arnside is a great base for walking the Lakes, Western Dales and also has great trekking trails within its own locality. So with no more a do Lydia and myself met up with Ken, cashpoint Pete, AK, big John, Sally and Elaine in sunshine and blue skies at Arnside hostel. Ken brought along the fruit of his loins Jason, who could not quite make us out – even at the end of the long weekend! We almost immediately launched into Morecambe bay mud hauling ourselves on to the wooded limestone cliffs after White Creek to escape the dreaded tides and could be anywhere, quicksand! The 12 mile (or was it 14 - see Andy!) circular took us around the lovely headland to Silverdale, Leighton Moss reserve, Zealand Redmayne and onto the wooded and enchanted fairy steps. These are not for fairies though cutting down through a deep and narrow fissure in a limestone buttress where two of our larger beer drinking fairies struggled to get through. Good day out finishing off with the excellent homemade cuisine at the hostel and Thwaites Bomber Ale at the local. After a couple everyone tried on Pete's toon army tartan football supporters hat with attached ginger wig (see rogues gallery). Strangely it looked quite natural on Pete and nobody gave him a second glance at the bar



Deer on Ill Bell



Above the clouds and mist from Yoke

Day 2 and up the beautiful Kentmere to cover the 11 miler of Waiwright's Kentmere Round taking in Yoke, Frostwick, Mardale Ill Bell and down the picturesque Kentmere valley back to the village. Lovely weather conditions with columns of mist slowly evaporating away as you ascended higher into the fells with hardly a breath of wind. Not bad for October.



Sally crossing stream (John and Elaine background)



View towards Kent Mere

Sundays walk from Kirby Longsdale started badly with brief rain and Cashpoint Pete realising his rucsac was 15 miles away on a bench outside the hostel. Arranging to meet up with him at Barbondale manor, something was lost in translation ending with Pete apparently a mile away further up the valley of Barbon! Forgotten rucsac, then this – in no mood to talk then!! Our walk took us to a non-existent crossing on the river Lune so we backtracked to a Gothic cattle bridge. Even OS can be wrong. Into and out of Barbondale following a drystone double walled bridleway to High Casterton leading back into Kirby Longsdale.



View over River Lune



Village of Barbon

Good weather, respectable mileage and good company made for an enjoyable 3 day trip. When's the next one then?

Dave

Arnide Rouges Gallery

