

## **Lancashire and Cumbria Group – June 2021 Ride : Barbondale, Dentdale and the Lune Valley**

On a cool and cloudy June morning, six tandems and one solo headed north from Kirkby Lonsdale into Barbondale. We took the quiet lanes which skirted Casterton and then the fell road above Barbon into Barbondale. The cloud hugged the top of the fells as we slowly climbed the valley but even though the cloud was low, our spirits were high as we chatted and shared our lockdown experiences and looked forward with optimism to the summer ahead. We climbed between Middleton Fell on our left and Crag Hill on our right to the head of the valley where we paused for a breather and to take in the views before our descent into Dentdale. Unfortunately the views weren't as extensive as I'd hoped for, as the low cloud was still lingering on the tops but with the Met Office promising sunshine for later in the day we were all glad that we had completed the climb whilst it was still fairly cool.

After a fast descent into Dentdale we arrived in Dent ready for our coffee stop – and well deserved too, I might add. Dent traces its history back to the Norse settlers who set up isolated farms in Dentdale around 1,000 years ago. Dent is a Yorkshire Dales village but lies within the county boundary of Cumbria.

Suitably refuelled with tea/coffee/cakes/toastt, we explored the valley, cycling an anticlockwise loop up to Cowgill along the south side of the River Dee before returning to the cobbles of Dent on the north side of the river. By this time the clouds were lifting and the day was becoming warmer and we were able to view the valley at its best. We came back into Dent by St Andrews church in the centre of the village which is a Grade I listed church originating in the 12th century. The cobbles in Dent can be a bit of a challenge if you aren't used to them and we stopped for a drinks break as we rode back through the village.

We continued along the south side of the River Dee towards our lunch stop at Sedbergh which, like Dent, lies within the Yorkshire Dales National Park but is within the Cumbria County boundary. We found a perfect location for our picnic, on benches overlooking the cricket pitch of Sedbergh School. It must be one of the most picturesque cricket fields to play on in the country with the surrounding fells and historic buildings performing an imposing backdrop. This is the first occasion we have stopped here when there has been a game in progress.

Then it was onwards – and upwards – as we tackled our third valley of the day – the Lune Valley. We cycled along the minor lane, west of the Rive Lune, heading south. To begin with the lane is fairly easy cycling as you are riding down river, but the lane has a sting in its tail (and it's a big sting!) as it kicks up towards Egholme Farm. We stopped just before the farm to catch our breath and take in the wonderful views across the Lune Valley, with the Middleton Fells beyond, and Barbon Village nestling at their base. That was the hard work done for the day. Downhill for a fast descent through Rigmaden and into Barbon via High Road with the promise of afternoon tea at Casterton Golf Club should we get there in time before The Tee Room closed. We needn't have rushed at the Tee Room is open as long as there are golfers out on the course and so we were able to enjoy a relaxing cuppa in the sunshine and reflect on what had been a glorious day out.

Stephen and Jeanette Webb