

Blacktoft Tour, Sept 10, 2016

Seven of us set out and seven returned, which is always a good result for a tour. Heavy rain with light northerly wind had been forecast for Friday night and Saturday morning. We had the inevitable discussion over the reliability and timing of the various forecasts as we prepared equipment. With overcast skies, we set out from Faxfleet with waterproofs at the ready, but with sun cream applied, and fingers crossed. The rain caught up with us at Yokefleet where we donned our jackets, and it must have been Saltmarsh Station or thereabouts where we felt confident to pack them away.

There was probably more traffic than expected, some of which we believe was connected to a wedding at Saltmarsh Hall Hotel. There were tractor movements also, but no incidents or surprises. The road surface was generally good, with some sections of tarmac as smooth as a billiard table, others were recently patched. Just one or two sections carried small ruts. This tour is a good opportunity to experience a varying but generally level road surface, with the chance to fine tune technique. The combi skis worked well, although not as smooth as a rubber wheel. The smaller wheels rumbled occasionally as we passed over some of the older tarmac surface. Skating was the technique of choice.

Not to be put off by the rain, lunch was taken on the Ouse bank at Saltmarshe. al fresco.

We didn't know whether to be concerned or relieved over the abundance of Defibrillators on the tour, with at least three machines visible on route. One is in the now redundant payphone kiosk at Yokefleet, which is now under the control of the Parish council, and a second unit at the parking spot at Faxfleet. The third is at Blacktoft Old School Hall, where we took a welcome stop on the return leg. The hall contains an honesty café with generous seating area, library/book sale facility, and indoor toilets. This looks to be a popular stop with cyclists on the Trans Pennine trail.

We were greeted with the sight of the sun as we finished our tour with coffee and cake at the Gilberdyke Garden Centre.

A successful tour

Roy Clements