

Two legs good, four legs better? (riding the Mary Towneley loop)

One would have thought I should know better by now, at my age! Having "good ideas" really should be a thing of the past where I'm concerned, but I never learn.

The plot being to do the Loop anti - clockwise starting at Jane and Richards new home in Mankinholes, working round via a few pubs such as The Newdie and The Ridge at Widdop then on to The Crooked Billet at Worsthorne, then on to The Ram at Cliviger before hitting The Buck at Cowpe. From here my plan was to make The King Bill near Watergrove res for my last pint. Now all you mountain bikers and fellow runners may think "well yeh- whats the big deal?" Well the "big-deal" my friends was that I was riding my rather large Hanovarian bay mare horse complete with saddle bags for essentials such as whiskey and jelly babies and a few clothes, for three days, seven to eight hours a day albeit with pre booked overnight livery and accomodation. Now I've done some daft stunts in my time-Eiger, Materhorn, skied the Rote Naser in Zermat but this one actualy made me check my policies when I got back to see if I had been covered for death,loss of limbs etc the answer was no.

Riding a half ton horse is quite demanding any time but when the blasted thing decides it will throw a wobbler and spook at every skylark or idiot motorcyclist that passes, then the task becomes more taxing as you move further away from home, you just can't get a taxi back .The perspective of the views and the countryside from the saddle was ammazing, really! The weather on Saturday was lovely on leg one to a yard about two miles north of Worsthorne but Sunday over to Rawtenstall was miserable in driving rain over Thievely Pike down to Lumb. Things perked up I must say in the evening when a visit to a classy Indian for a nosebag and plenty of scoops took the pain away. Monday dawned wet , cold, grey, and miserable and yet I still have a third of the Loop to complete! A long steep climb up onto Cowpe Lowe found me in the driving rain and low cloud that would make the next two hours or so over Rooley Moor to Broadley near Whitworth very very unpleasant indeed. The rain has now filled my boots up to my knees, penetrated my three layers of Lowe Alpine's best effort to my underwear and worst of all--My Soul!!! The final section over Brown Wardle to Walsden was "testing" to say the least. My horse was not happy (it's a frightening drop into the quarries at Summit) I had lost the plot completely and just needed to get through the last couple of miles (please God!) before I exspire. At this point Abbey decided to bolt in an effort to finaly kill the bastard on her back that has made her work so hard for three days. I lie not when I say I prayed, cried, and pulled my arms out of the sockets but managed to pull her up half a mile down the lane. I jumped off, It's all over now, or is it? One mile to go and Abbey stood on my foot and crushed the big toe on my left foot. What was I in my previous life?? an axe murderer! I did not deserve that--or did I ?

We are so lucky to live in a beautiful area and whether we run, bike, walk or ride we allways get a new canvas that changes and changes and that's what makes all our crazy adventures worthwhile. Many thanks to Pat for logistical backup in her new motor!

Rodeo Ray

Please sponsor us!

Sue, Annie and Ella Roberts are doing the "Race for Life" at Broughton Hall on May 13th. It is for cancer research uk a subject close to our hearts (we`re running for **MANDY**). It is only 5 km, but quite a challenge for the girls, so dip into your pockets (a pound will do!) and please sponsor us. See me at the pack run or E Mail suecheers@aol.com

THANKS!