

We want to publish your local group's favourite route. Contact the editor to find out what's required (p80)



(Left) SYNDDA members on the canal at Bamby Dun
(Below) CTC Memorial



South Yorkshire & North Derbyshire

No one knows great rides like CTC's local groups. Tony Gore describes a ride over the towpaths, rivers and railways between Doncaster and Selby



From the flat-lands out towards the Humber Estuary to the hills of the Peak District, the South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire DA (SYNDDA) covers a

varied area. Strong sections in Doncaster and Sheffield offer regular rides, weekend trips and social events.

We have our own CTC Centenary Tree and Memorial, which was re-dedicated by then President Phil Liggett in October 2006 (see *Cycle*, Feb/Mar 2007). It's just off the A625 Hathersage Road at Blackmoor (OS 110, GR 283806).

SYNDDA has a quarterly newsletter, 'The Pedaller', which features cyclist-café reviews. We also have an annual vote for the 'DA Café of the Year', with winners and runners-up presented with framed certificates.

Each year we run the SYNDDA Quest, which encourages local members to explore the historical backroads of our patch. It's similar to the British Cycle Quest (see p39) except

there are just 15 rhyming clues each year. Two DA rides are organised each year to help people visit some of these Quest sites. The Leveller ride here is adapted from one of those from 2007.

THE LEVELLER QUEST RIDE

This ride is called the Leveller for three reasons: the flat terrain, the ten level crossings, and the use of some canal towpaths.

Soon after the start north of Doncaster, you pass the 10th century St Oswalds church on the banks of the River Don. There you pick up the first towpath of the day, quickly followed by the first level crossing. Not long after is the first Quest point at Fishlake church. Take time to admire the stone carvings on the south porch.

After crossing a canal swing bridge, you detour through Fenwick to visit the second Quest point (the village postbox). The Baxters Arms on the right is the traditional starting point for Doncaster Section's Boxing Day walk. More level crossings take you to Askern, a former pit village now looking rather forlorn and far from its heyday as a 19th spa resort. But the Lakeside Café provides a good elevenses stop.

FACT FILE: THE 'LEVELLER' QUEST RIDE

DISTANCE: 61 miles. **TIME:** 5-7 hours (with stops).
TERRAIN: Flat, mostly minor roads and well-surfaced canal towpaths. **WHEN:** Not an annual ride. **MAPS:** OS Landranger 105 & 111. **START/FINISH:** Kirk Sandall Railway Station (OS 111, GR 614078). **CAFES:** Askern, Selby, Snaith. **MORE INFORMATION:** www.syndda.org.uk. Doncaster Section: Meryl Oliver, 01302 539609, p.m.oliver@btinternet.com; Sheffield Section: Barry Raynor, 0114 2372630, barry_raynor@hotmail.com

After crossing into North Yorkshire another short detour takes you to the third (and last) Quest point for the day: the phone box at Walden Stubbs. Heading north you traverse the widest level crossing on the route, hard by Kellingley colliery (or the 'Big K', as it's known locally), one of the few coal mines left in Britain.

More rural tranquillity ensues before a quick left-right-left through Brayton sees you pick up the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) along the canal towpath for easy access to Selby town centre.

This is a good place for a lunch stop, with several cafés and picnic spots by the bowling green or in the abbey grounds. Note that many cafés are not open on a Sunday: head for Morrisons supermarket if in doubt. The abbey is worth a visit while you're here, with most of the fabric dating from the 13th and 14th centuries.

Leave Selby following the River Ouse, then veer southwards, where there are close-up views of the huge power station complex at Drax. Twisting and narrow back roads take you to Carlton. Here you may get a glimpse of Carlton Towers, a Victorian pile once the home of Lord Beaumont, but now a venue for weddings and conferences.

Across the River Aire is Snaith, a small market town with five pubs, a brewery and a small café that closes at 3pm. You rejoin the TPT, which follows a field road between Pollington and Sykehouse, claimed on its website to be 'Yorkshire's longest village'.

Here you swing onto the towpath of the dead-straight New Junction Canal, opened in 1905 and one of the last to be built in Britain. You leave it at Kirk Bramwith, meandering through the lanes and over one last level crossing, before rejoining the outward route at Barnby Dun.



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ROUTE DIRECTIONS

- Start/Finish: Kirk Sandall Railway Station (OS 111, GR 614078)
- Exit L from Kirk Sandall station car park (Sandall La), over rly, R into Moor La
- SO at X (keeping church on R), bear R onto Don Navigation towpath
- Cont to Barnby Dun, where R & 1st L into High St, R into Madam La
- L at T (Bramwith Rd), cross level X, cont. thru South Bramwith, follow rd to R
- L at T (Doncaster Rd) & fwd to Stainforth
- L into Field Rd after sharp RH bend, then 1st L into Water Lane
- Cross Stainforth & Keadby Canal & River Don, bear R & cont to Fishlake (Quest point 1 in churchyard)
- Cont past Hare & Hounds, then L into Trundle La. Cont to T where L (Westfield Rd)
- R at T (Kirkhouse Green Rd) & across swing bridge. L at T (Moss Rd)
- Fwd thru Moss, then R into Fenwick Common La. Follow rd to R & L thru Fenwick (Quest point 2 – post box)
- Pass Baxter Arms on R. Cont to level X. Dismount & cross thru side gates (care!)
- Cont on Fenwick La to T, where R (Moss Rd). Cross level X and fwd to Askern. (Lakeside Café on L - 15 miles)
- R into Selby Rd (A19 – care!), then 1st L (Campsall Rd). R into Campsall Balk
- SO at X in Norton, cont SO thru snicket, rejoin Priory Rd. Follow to R & then L
- Cross into N. Yorkshire, then 1st R. Over level X, then follow rd to L (Walden Stubbs) (Quest point 3 – phone box)
- Cross second level X, then R at T & 1st R. R at T into Churchfield La
- Fwd to Womersley. R towards end of village (Northfield La)
- Cross level X, then 1st R (Wrights La). Follow rd to L thru Cridling Stubbs
- R at T (Cobcroft La) then 1st L (Beal La). Over M62, Aire & Calder Navigation
- Cross level X by Kellingley colliery, then R at T (A645 – care!) & 1st L (Common La)
- Follow rd to R into Beal, 1st L (Craven Garth), L into Marsh La & over River Aire
- Fork L in Birkin (Roe La), then R at T (Hillam Common Rd) Fwd to Gateforth, follow rd to L then R (Gateforth New Rd)
- Over rly, then SO at X across A63, cut through to & cont on Mill La into Brayton
- L at T into Doncaster Rd (A19 – care!), then 3rd R into Brayton La
- L before bridge onto Selby Canal towpath, then follow TPT signs to town centre (36 miles)
- From Abbey L into Park St (A1041), bear 1st L to bus station (Station Rd)
- Cont past rly station, R at T (Ousegate), cont on Shipyard Rd
- L over Selby Canal (Dennison Rd), R & L to cross Selby by-pass (A63 – care!)
- Cont thru Barlow Grange & alongside River Ouse to Barlow, where R at T
- L and immd R to cross A1041, then L onto minor rd
- Cross level X, then fwd to Carlton, R at T (Low St), follow to R, then SO at X (TPT)
- R at T onto A1041 (care!), & fwd over River Aire (TPT)
- R immd before level X at Snaith station (Gowdall La) & fwd to Gowdall (TPT)
- L into Field La, cross level X, L at T onto A645 (TPT)
- R into Long La, over M62, then bear L (Willow La) in Pollington (TPT)
- Over Aire and Calder Navigation, then follow twisting unfenced Crow Croft La (TPT)
- Cross back into South Yorkshire at Topham Ferry bridge (TPT)
- Cont past Sykehouse windmill, R at X (Chapel La), then L into Broad La (TPT)
- Cross New Junction Canal, immed R onto towpath (TPT)
- Cross canal at Sykehouse Lock, cont to Top Lane Bridge (TPT)
- L across canal & into Top La, fwd to Kirk Bramwith, where L at T (Low La)
- Cross River Don & Stainforth & Keadby Canal to reach South Bramwith
- R at T (Bramwith La), cross level X, fwd into Barnby Dun, where R into Madam La
- 2nd L into High St, 1st R and then bear L onto Don Navigation towpath
- Retrace to Sandall church, where L then SO at X. L at T into Sandall La
- Over railway then immed R for Kirk Sandall station car park (61 miles).