

# Dukinfield CC

A rainy day in Cheshire proves the perfect opportunity to go pedalling with the Duks



**“D**id you think you would be racing with us today?” asks Dukinfield CC

president Quentin Blagg, chuckling. “We knew you would be... we just knew.” He makes me wonder if I’ve somehow been secretly hypnotised, but I suspect it’s more the fact that I’ve just got carried away with the infectious camaraderie and high spirits of the club members. So somehow I find myself signing up to participate in the 106th club 10-mile time trial that’s been added to the middle of today’s club run around the undulating terrain of east Cheshire.

“We don’t always add a 10-mile time trial in to our club runs!” club secretary Steve Holt points out. “Today marks the anniversary of the event, so it seemed a good way to get people involved.”

Most club runs alternate between the Derbyshire and Yorkshire hills to the north and east of the club’s meet points in Tameside and Stockport, or the flatter Cheshire Plains to the south.

“The course we’re on today still uses some of the same roads as the very first event back in 1889, so there’s a lot of racing history on these roads — it’s like going back in time,” adds Blagg.

Lining up behind the other participating club members and watching ex-Great Britain rider Angela Hunter zoom off down the road, I do feel as though I’ve entered a time warp, with the last time we both signed on the same start list being several years ago.

“It’s my first bike race in while,” Hunter smiles. “I’ve not worn this skinsuit in 12 years, but it still fits.” And, judging by her winning time on the sporting course, she’s still as fit.

Post-race and back at the village hall, drinking tea and coffee, and eating the great spread put on by the members themselves, we all gather round a table displaying hundreds of



MEMBERS

**40**

FORMED

**1885**



From  
Dukinfield,  
Tameside



MEMBER Q & A

# Hilda Fox, life member

**CW: Have you always been a Duk?**

**HF:** More or less. My husband was the president when we met, through bike riding. So I just naturally became one when we married when I was 20, although I couldn't technically join until the late 60s when they finally let women in. I'll be 94 in November, so I've been here a long time. All the members are my Ducklings — I've watched them join and grow up on bikes, along with my daughters, their husbands and my grandchildren. It's a big family. I've only just started to take a step back from things, as until recently I've always had jobs like club secretary or president. Everyone knows me so well.

**CW: How did you get into riding?**

**HF:** I just love bikes so much. My mum thought I was crackers, and my dad said I couldn't ride one. But when I was 14 I managed to get half a crown a week to buy a bike, and taught myself by just riding and falling off, until I managed to stay on it. Then I rode to Blackpool and back by myself!

**CW: What has been your greatest achievement on the bike?**

**HF:** Coming third to Beryl Burton and Millie Robinson in the National 100 in 1958 was special. It was totally out of the blue. It was raining, so it was my kind of day and I just woofed it round. But my biggest achievement was riding end to end for my 70th birthday.

photographs of past and present members.

"You need to speak to Hilda about who's who," says club member Ann Luckcock. "She's been with the club since forever, she knows all the members, past and present. She's supported us all, wiped our tears and grazes, and of course celebrated with us."

"She was a great racer in her day too," chips in Holt, "racing time trials on the road, as well as the track at Fallowfield. She's nearly 94 years old and still rides her bike daily."

Today the club is made up mostly of veteran riders, which could lead you to think club runs were carried out at a pedestrian pace. But like fine wine, members of Dukinfield CC seem to get better with age, and today's run is chipped out at nearly 16mph — not bad considering the 40-mile ride also contains nearly 1,530 feet of climbing, a wind and almost constant rain.

"There's a few rides that go out weekly," club captain Martin Gray tells me. "There's an introduction ride most Saturday mornings for a couple of hours, then Sunday is club run day, and we often ride midweek too. There's also a keen group of mountain bike riders that meet weekly.

"We're big fans of night riding," add tandem duo Phil Cunningham and Brian Anthony. "We've been known to head out for a ride starting at 11pm at night or the early hours of the morning and ride into the dawn. It's so peaceful at that hour."

"And enjoying riding at night means that you don't have to ride in the day if it's raining," Cunningham says, raising his eyes to the sky in reference to today's weather, which has almost been constantly wet.

"Ah, rain never stopped us playing out," laughs Gray. "In fact today has been perfect weather for Duks!"

**Club history**

Dukinfield Cyclists' Club, commonly known as 'the Duks',



Nice weather for Duks (and geese)



Friendly advice is freely given



Signing up for a chance at the cup

is one of the oldest clubs in the country, having been established on March 17, 1885. It is thought that the club was born out of a cycling section of Dukinfield Harriers

(now East Cheshire Harriers) when John Norton White, a surveyor from nearby Stalybridge, gathered together 10 of his friends who had an interest in cycling for a meeting at the Astley Coffee Tavern in Dukinfield, where the club was born.

The first recorded event was September 14, 1889 with the club's first 25-mile time trial held on a course around Macclesfield, Monks Heath and Congleton.

According to

**MAIN PROMOTION**

Taking place every May, the club's 50-mile open time trial was first held in 1928, and is now considered a 'classic' in the time trial calendar, with next year marking its 92nd anniversary, making it the oldest continuously running '50' in the country.

Past winners of the event read like a who's who of British time trialling, with everyone from Ernie Mills to Dave Lloyd taking the win. The event was one of *Cycling Weekly's* Holdsworth Classic League events.

The time trial is now named after the late Brian Clayton, who died in 2016 and who was president from 2002-2011.

RIDE HIGHLIGHTS

# Dukinfield CC

**1 Birtles Lane** The short, sharp climb at the start of the lane is well worth the effort for over three and a half miles of sweeping descending.

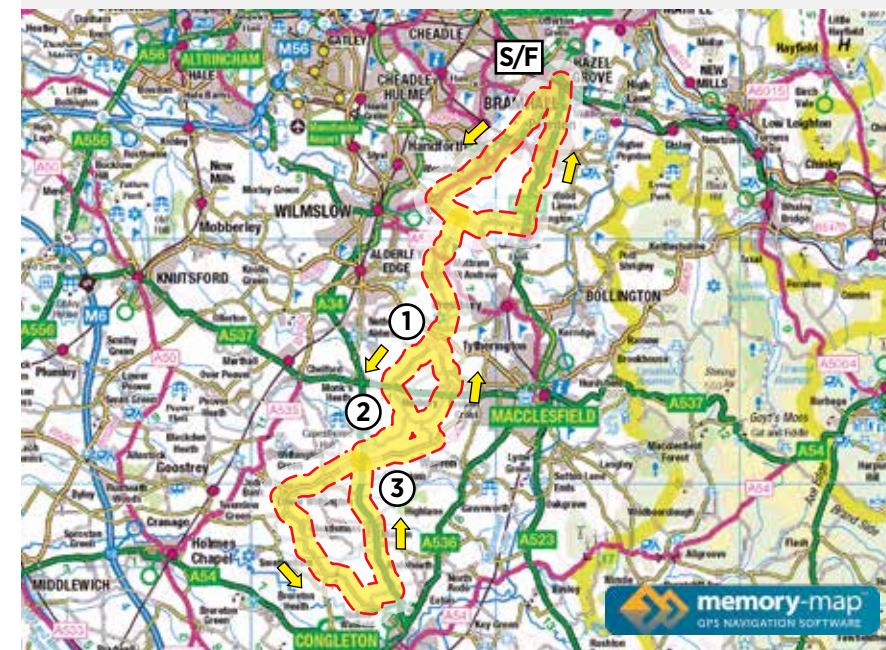
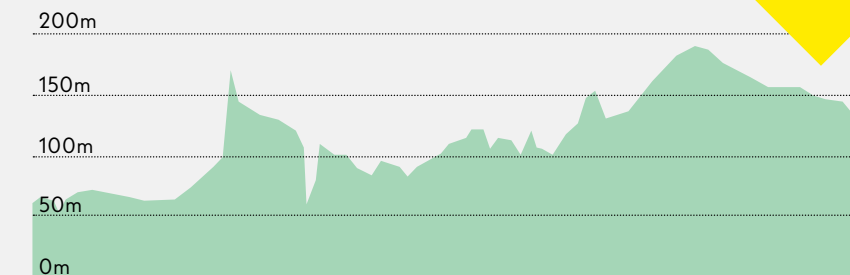
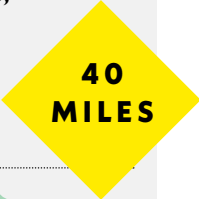
**2 Redesmere Lane** A gentle descent before the lake opens up to your right, an ideal regrouping spot, or even as an impromptu coffee/ice cream stop.

**3 J6/10 time trial course** Follow in the historic wheels of the early racers back in 1889, or test yourself against some of today's time trialling giants on this 10-mile loop.

**Favourite cafe**  
**Goostrey Home and Leisure tea room**

Usually Dukinfield CC's favourite haunt when in this neck of the woods is the tea room at Goostrey Home and Leisure. Open seven days a week, the tea room sells hot and cold savoury food, as well as a large selection of cakes, and, I'm assured, excellent tea and coffee. With lots of space for bikes outside and plenty of room inside or in the garden, there's always room for even a well turned out club run to sit.

**Goostrey Home and Leisure, Goostrey Lane, Cranage, Cheshire CW4 8HE**  
[www.goostreyhome-andleisure.co.uk](http://www.goostreyhome-andleisure.co.uk)



Dukinfield CC records, these early time trials have always been run as a handicap event, making it highly likely that the event was unpaced, bringing the record for the world's first time trial forward by five years.

In the 1920s members and brothers, Albert and Stan Livingston became well known nationally for winning many open time trials. However, it was in the 1930s and 40s that the club was most successful, with Doug Hartley, who won nearly 100 open events, and the 1944 BBAR Team competition with fellow Dukinfield riders Norman Howe and John Bell.

In more recent times prominent riders have included Steve Butterworth, Jimmy Froggatt and Rob Nelson, while multiple national champion and GB international local rider Angela Hunter has always been a second claim Dukinfield CC rider, and still rides regularly with the club.

**CONTACT**

[www.dukinfieldcc.org](http://www.dukinfieldcc.org)

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