

## Carnival capers by The Weight on the Back

Kirkby in Cleveland is a little spot just along a narrow road from Great Broughton where for a number of years we've reached the roundabout and turned right at a sign announcing "Carnival". Now as this co-incides with the weekend of the Notting Hill carnival you might envisage huge flashy floats and leggy ladies cavorting in feathers and sequins, but no, this is deepest Yorkshire, we do it **our** traditional style. Follow the pennant flags down the lane to the sports ground (but watch out for evil bumps in you value your vehicle's undercarriage). There's a beautifully kept field of the greenest grass, a pavilion and the finest English tradition of community events. The clubhouse means, of course, home made cake, hot drinks and sandwiches as well as proper ice cream, not the squirty sort. The public address system, which you can actually hear clearly, lets you know when you can see the magician, the fancy dress competition or the race for 5 to 7 years olds. What more do you need to complete the picture? Why the local band of course, and boy, are they good. So against the backdrop of magnificent hills and an azure sky we watched the vintage vehicles draw up in a setting which might have been designed to show them off to the best advantage. I noticed the Pimms, Prosecco and Beer tents have this year been conveniently relocated close by , but many vehicle owners had come prepared with their own hampers. Even some bikers had contrived to bring fold up seats and were surveying the scene in lordly fashion.

If you had no luck on the bottle stall or raffle there's always the coconut shy, where even the most inept infant mysteriously managed to come away with a coconut, or the bouncy castle and toy stall. The plant stall was staffed with experts who could give you the horticultural name of your fifty penn'orth and if you didn't recognise that, they had a coffee table book with pictures to help you see what you were buying. There's thoughtfulness for you. I enjoy the dog show as it has such potential for chaos. I was a bit late seeing it this year but I was in time to see goodie bags being awarded to those children whose animals had not won first prizes. Had anyone thought what a rustling bag means to the average pooch? Instantly there were large dogs towing small children towards the lady with the treats so much for obedience classes eh?

If all that doesn't appeal to you there's the book stall, divided up into subject areas, no less. Very organised. This does, however identify how many people have given up their studies of Zen, aircraft of World War Two or Teach yourself Italian (1954 edition). Similarly the Bric a Brac stall gives rise to speculation. Who would have chosen the most gaudy of the larger vases? Why would you have needed 24 matching sherry glasses? Do I really need another two handbags? Tea towels though will never go amiss. And all those boxed sets of smellies given for Christmas but languishing for years in bathroom cupboards before at last seeing the light of day on this sunny field.

We ended our visit with a determined stand at the straw stall. This is where you pay for so many three inch lengths of straw into which a raffle ticket has been ingeniously inserted. Removing ticket from straw takes about four minutes and requires long fingernails. Failing that, a knitting needle is proffered to those those efforts are frustrated. My winning tickets bagged a bottle of wine and a can of beer. Leonard cherishes the year he won a bottle of Teachers. 2016 saw him get strawberry body lotion and a bookmark. You can't win 'em all. But Kirkby in Cleveland Carnival is definitely a winner and very much fits with the TYMC "yesteryear" image. Roll on Bank Holiday Monday 2018, don't forget to turn up.