

Sunday, February 11, 2007

Wheel Easy! Ride Report No. 41



After several days of genuinely wintry weather, hugely overplayed by TV reporters who seemed never to have seen snow before, and despite an unpropitious morning it was very pleasing to see 22 cyclists gathered at Hornbeam Park.

Fifteen riders were tempted to join Paul T on his debut as leader of the long ride. With the weather being uncertain a route was planned on roads which would be treated in order to avoid possible injury. However, there was no need to have worried, weather conditions were fine. The route, to North Leeds, was not the usual direction for Wheel Easy. It certainly was not going to be a route with spectacular views, but it made a change.

The ride followed the popular route towards Wetherby via Burn Bridge, Kirkby Overblow, Sicklinghall, Linton and Collingham. At Collingham we picked up the West Yorks Cycle Route taking us through East Keswick and Wike. At Wike we had our only breakdown. Luckily there were two knowledgeable cycle mechanics who got Gia's bike going again. We then headed towards Slaid Hill where refreshments were taken at the 'Dexter'. Puddings and chips seem to be popular with cyclists!

We then continued along Wigton Lane towards Alwoodley Gate admiring all the expensive houses. Taking our lives into our hands we crossed the A61 and headed towards Eccup reservoir. Motorists seem to be more accommodating with groups of cyclists than solo riders.

It is a pleasant stretch along 'Leeds Country Way'. Passing walkers reminded me that I must attach a bell to my bike. Do they make carbon bells? At a road fork we had a quick debate on the right way and fortunately opted for the correct one, which led us through Eccup village and onto the road towards Weardley. We passed the New Inn, which might have been a better place to stop. But do they do puddings? Unfortunately we had to join a busy road before taking the quieter road towards Kirkby Overblow, where the sun came out. At Kirkby Overblow the group split up and made their own way home, completing between 30 - 35 miles

PT

In the absence of Phil, called away at the 11th hour to chauffeur his daughter to a Thai kickboxing competition, Malcolm stepped in to lead three members on the medium route. Following in the footsteps of the main group we reached Linton and then turned left to Wetherby which seemed an ideal place to stop for coffee. However, after two cafés were found to be closed, it was decided we had done enough exercise to justify a fish and chip takeaway.

Refuelled, we enjoyed the easy ride along the Wetherby to Spofforth off road route, then the quiet road to Follifoot where Jane took her direct route home round Rudding Park. The others continued to Pannal where two riders joined the A61 back to Harrogate while Malcolm, within yards of his home, decided the glorious afternoon sunshine was too good to miss and took an alternative route back via Stainburn Woods, Weeton, Netherby and Kirkby Overblow.

MM

The short ride was led by Caroline. Only eight miles were planned, but again the increasingly fine weather encouraged us to be more ambitious and by the end we had cycled 13 very enjoyable miles. While no speed records were broken, there was plenty of lively conversation as the three ladies pedalled along Forest Moor Lane to Knaresborough and then alongside the very full River Nidd. Eventually we reached the Boroughbridge Road and turned back into Knaresborough, down the hill to High Bridge. The steep climb up the Beryl Burton cycleway was managed on foot, and at the top we returned to Knaresborough Road, crossing into Forest Lane. Finally Caroline escorted her charges back to their homes in the Woodlands and St. George's areas of Harrogate.

CG



