

Sunday, March 18, 2007

## Wheel Easy! Ride Report No. 46

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Sunday morning. I got out of bed and looked out at the Arctic blizzard sweeping across the Crimple Valley. Surely no one would turn up for a bike ride in these conditions. Just in case however, I would do my duty and check and, as pedalling up Almsford Bank in a howling gale was not my idea of a good time, I hauled the bike into the car and drove to our starting point at Hornbeam Park. With mixed feelings I found three others already waiting and raring to go, including a beaming Dennis who is well past the biblical three score and 10. Very soon we were joined by two more determined not miss out on their weekly ride.

As the snow blew round us we agreed that the planned route to Tadcaster was for another day, and that we would keep the Wheel Easy flag flying with an easy 10 mile circuit of Harrogate. So we set off along Rayleigh Road and Oatlands Drive to cut through to Silverfields Road. From here we cycled and chatted down Kingsley Drive and along Bogs Lane before joining the long almost car free section along Bilton Hall Drive and the Beryl Burton Cycleway.

As the barmy gales turned to almost balmy sunshine and back again, we continued up the Bilton Triangle path over Dragon Bridge, and the rail-side path to Asda with its usual sad sprinkling of smashed bottles. At this point we met Crawford, another septuagenarian and club stalwart, walking towards us. Because of the weather, he had decided to walk rather cycle, which he does anyway almost every day as part of his normal lifestyle. At his suggestion we used the chance encounter as an opportunity for him to take another group photo, shown below.

Shortly afterwards Keith left to take his direct route home, and the rest carried on along Victoria Avenue, Beech Grove and West End Avenue. Here Stuart gave us the benefit of his specialist local knowledge to lead us on a new route through the St. George's estate to Leadhall Lane before returning home. This left four of us to complete the route down Hookstone Road to Hornbeam. As Stuart said it was a great deal better than 'festering' at home.

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