

Sunday, March 25, 2007

Wheel Easy! Ride Report No. 47



Twelve riders opted for the longer ride despite the clocks having gone forward the night before and everyone being acutely aware that the route included the Chevin - that huge lump of geology that looms over Otley and inspired Turners painting 'Hannibal crosses the Alps'.

Setting off in dry, slightly overcast weather, we passed through North Rigton and Leathley where two riders opted for the shorter ride option of returning to Harrogate via Weeton. The rest of us pressed on to Otley where in true Wheel Easy tradition, the more sensible riders opted for the flat, pleasurable ride to Ilkley via Askwith. The riders with 'something to prove' chose to ascend the North Face of the Chevin and a commemorative photograph was duly taken.

It was quite a climb and seemed like it would never end. One of us likened it to the ordeal of Sisyphus; I think that's the chap in Greek mythology who had to keep rolling rocks up hills or maybe he kept getting his liver pecked out by eagles? - Either way, it seemed an appropriately epic description for our suffering in those 12 or so minutes. Everyone made it though and we had a pretty good view.

Continued on across Guiseley Moor, through Burley Woodhead, across undulating Ilkley Moor into Ilkley. At the café we met up with the others who'd declined the Chevin expedition. They weren't gnashing their teeth with regret; they were just nonchalantly eating cake and soon we all were. Another rider took the opportunity to set off early back to Harrogate.

With a slight headwind and brightening skies, we left Ilkley, heading back to Otley through Askwith. Then a familiar route back over Leathley Bridge, through Castley, Weeton, Dunkeswick and Kirkby Overblow. This last stretch was particularly pleasant, especially since it had become quite sunny and the wind had dropped. An excellent end to a rewarding ride.

JF/NK

Seven brave riders set out from Hornbeam on the medium ride, intending to go to Boston Spa,

via Follifoot, Spofforth, Linton and Collingham, returning via the cycle track into Wetherby, and out the other side back to Spofforth.

Unfortunately, the numbers were mysteriously reduced to six riders by the time we reached Hookstone Woods, and were down to five by Rudding Park. No further loses were incurred until Wetherby, where another rider turned off. The remaining four continued to Collingham, and were just about to turn off toward Boston Spa when our glorious leader also decided to head for home. The three riders left rode off into brightening skies, hopefully to complete the adventure.
PH

Here is the short ride report for Sunday 25th March, written at what should be 11.33 (in old money). Six short easy riders set off for what was going to be a gentle amble. The stunning calibre of four of the six riders pushed the group towards a record breaking pace as we headed up St. George's Road towards Ashville, across to Otley Road, and down Harlow Moor towards Pennypot.

A cunning but not necessarily popular left turn along a lovely bit of off road, much favoured by the leader (lead the ride if you want to choose the route Max), led us to Harlow Carr Gardens where the café beckoned the lady members of the team, but not the Tour de France group. We continued along Cardale Road and suddenly Beckwithshaw beckoned, so did the gentle loop to and round Beckwithshaw.

At this point Paul left us to do a homeward dash towards Killinghall and some very big hills and the rest of us headed back along Lady Lane, where we met an intermediate rider who seemed to have lost his way to Boston Spa and having circled what seemed like the whole of Harrogate was gleefully heading off to mow his lawn. Having returned all members of this very speedy slow group to Harrogate the 12 mile ride ended at 11.15 at Hornbeam. A super ride with lots of chatting, but then I am biased.

CG



