

Sunday, April 8, 2007

Wheel Easy! Ride Report No. 49



Long ride

5 riders - 3 solo, one tandem pair - felt up to the long ride, led by Keith, which headed off via Calcutt, across the bypass, to Follifoot, Spofforth, and the well-tried cycle path to Wetherby. The objective was Tadcaster, but to include the new Sustrans cyclepath extension, past the race course, and now ending at the Thorp Arch trading estate, which is still an untried route for many Wheel Easy members. And a lovely job they have made of it too !

With little in the way of competition from motorised traffic we decided to extend the journey via the loop through Wighill and Healaugh - new to all of us, but obviously not to the other (motor) biking fraternity, a cavalcade of well over a hundred of whom roared past us - thankfully in the opposite direction - in their finest Bank Holiday leathers, just before the turn down through Catterton and into Tadcaster from the west. The wonderful prospect of coffee and cake at the café so conveniently located next door to the Tadcaster cycling shop beckoned. But, of course, it being Easter Sunday, the café, like the rest of Tadcaster, was closed. Now why hadn't we realised that? So, diet coke and choc bars at the garage it was then !

Embarking on the return journey, another abiding reality - 'don't start out eastwards on a windy day' - hit us literally full in the face as we turned west towards Bramham and across the A1 towards Wothersome (get your maps out!). Hard miles, lightened by an unlikely photo opportunity at a free-range pig farm on top of the bank overlooking Collingham. Just past Linton we picked up Gia, at the end of her solo spin, for the last leg of the ride through Kirkby Overblow, where Keith headed home for lunch, while the rest joined Gia and Malcolm for some home made soup and festive offerings.

Despite the wind, a rewarding 40+ miles for the self-selected few in delightful spring sunshine, with a number of new lanes and byways for inclusion in the club's ride catalogue.

Medium ride

Fifteen left Hornbeam for the medium ride, through town, up over Duchy, along Jennyfield to the Killinghall road and down into Hampsthwaite. Then the climbing started up to Swincliffe and a stop at the top to admire the view or to get over the shock of the first, short, sharp, steep climb (SSSC) of the day. There was not much jovial chatter to be heard. Then down past Birstwith Hall to turn right and back up a little past the entrance to the hall to turn first left up another hill. Then a cruel right turn up to Hew Green. (Too much time spent cycling out to Wetherby resulted in a request for less hills.) Another pause and then on past Crow Trees Equestrian Centre. Strangely enough that was up another hill.

Time to consider the return route and a suggestion from Crawford was instead of the long climb back out of Hampsthwaite, to cycle along the bridle path from Clint to Ripley. We set off but along the way had to stop for a puncture repair. The group congregated at another junction (a rest stop after a downhill ?). No-one said anything as the ride leader went past, after making sure no-one missed the obscure right turn, down (at last) the long hill and I sped down the hill to catch up with Crawford. Thank goodness for Tim passing on the message and mobile phones but I did climb all the way back out of Hampsthwaite just for the exercise and the fun of hurtling downhill again.

Another SSSC out to Clint but it is shorter than the alternative. Only two wanted ice cream at Ripley and the rest could sense home so there was no ice-cream for the ride leader. Most returned via Knox Ford and Skipton Pub route. 2 braved the New Park roundabout. (A motor cyclist tried to dispatch me there yesterday and his pillion passenger certainly wasn't impressed. I am sure she explained to him all that I wanted to about if the van on your right that is obscuring your view to the right don't pull out into the path of the oncoming even if only a cyclist). All in all a pleasant sunny and breezy day with a lot of stops but most of them were necessary. Medium riders will be relieved to hear that I have been demoted to short ride leader for next week.

JP

Short ride

It is many months since I have led the short ride so I prepared a couple of routes using as many off road and cycle paths as I could remember. I led my two companions out of Hornbeam and quickly introduced them to routes they did not know existed. The Harrogate Borough Council cycle map is very useful for identifying these routes.

We cycled through the Yorkshire Showground which is an excellent off road route all the way from Hornbeam via Hookstone Woods but the exit at the top of the ground near the Caravan Club site which was exceptionally narrow has been demolished and we had to lift the bikes over the fence! We cycled down the path behind the tip and across to Morrisons where there is a cycle path which takes you out to Prospect Road and on to Starbeck where we paid homage to the cycle sculpture in honour of Gordon Beer ('Mr. Starbeck'). On down The Avenue and through the new estate and on to the cycle path which leads to Nidd Gorge. We doubled back towards Dragon Road bridge for one of the threesome who had to prepare for a large family brunch. Two of us then carried on to Claro Road, cycled along a path on the Stray to Silverfields Road and then to Kingsley Drive, Bogs Lane and to the Beryl Burton to Knaresborough where we had an excellent coffee at Marigolds by the river.

It was a splendid scene, walkers, cyclists, people rowing on the river. Nice to see so many people out enjoying the fine Bank Holiday weather.

I then decided to meet the long ride coming back from Tadcaster on the Linton side of Wetherby and continued via Little Ribston, Cowthorpe, Thorp Arch and the new cycle path along the railway line from there all the way to Wetherby. It was a magnificent day, warm and sunny, the

fields freshly dug, new crops budding and gorgeous fragrances from the hedgerow flowers.
GM

And an additional report this week from Caroline on the other side of the Pond
Hello here is the ride report for the easy slow ride from the Chapel Hill Chapter of Wheel Easy!
North Carolina. The day was extremely bright and dry the temperature was 32 degrees F and
the wind chill factor was at least minus 50. Four riders set off on the llama bike starting at the
ice cream farm shop. Unfortunately the four other members of the group were unavoidably
detained elsewhere in the USA.

The terrain was undulating with many 'Cherry Tree' type farms and houses nestling amongst
acres of woodland and cleared fields. The ride leader set off at a steady speed trying to beat the
ride average speed in preparation for a group triathlon to be held in July. The two older British
members of the group managed to keep up well and only after 14 miles, a group of llamas, 8
eagles, 6 blue jays, 3 red cardinals and goodness knows what else did the speedier people feel
the need to get to the ice cream shop for a warming ice cream. The ride finished in one and a
half hours after 17.6 miles with a welcome ice cream for all on the shop porch, and I can safely
say it was the coldest ride the Harrogate WE! group has ever experienced.
CG





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Wheel Easy! Ride Report No. 49 more photos



Medium ride photos

