

Sunday, July 29, 2007

## Wheel Easy! Ride Report No. 65

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Once again it was nice to welcome new riders today and one of them opted for the long ride with Phil who we must applaud for turning up as he had this weekend moved house. This might explain his interesting route to get to the ford at Knox but we made it after a pit stop for a tyre repair to a blown valve. We saw the medium riders look down at us from the Dragon Bridge wondering at our unusual and early stopping point.

From there we biked out to Hampsthwaite and in good sunshine climbed up through Clint, Burnt Yates, Shaw Mills and Bishop Thornton to the Drovers. We know now why Sarah B carries two bags because she has everything a good bike rider should carry e.g a sting kit which was a boon for Jill who was stung by a wasp.

At the Drovers 6 riders headed back for Harrogate (I hope they got home in one piece) and 7 of us rode on to Fountains Abbey. Note at this point the females outnumbered the men! Is this a Wheel Easy first? We had a splendid stop at the visitors centre, conversations included the inevitable bike construction chat, ideas for a photo quiz for the social bit of the Wheel Easy AGM (October 1st) and the outrageous cost of replacing a wing mirror on a car these days! Malcolm arrived from the short ride (work that one out) and we left shortly after with him tucking in to a splendid lunch. He intimated he might catch us up. (He didn't.)

The route home from Ripon is splendid, a nice coast down past the church at Studley, then round Ripon via the river and a quick run through Bishop Monkton, Copgrove and Knaresborough. Depending where your ride started it was nearly 40 miles on a fine sunny day with beautiful clear views which were our reward for all those climbs. Thanks Mike for being our photographer of the day. GM

Nine riders set out on a medium ride that was to prove very trying for the Route Planner on his first attempt, heading for Knaresborough via the Beryl Burton cycleway but we soon lost Crawford before we made it to High Bridge!

So eight of us soldiered on through Scriven, where Linda had to clear an aggressive plastic bag

from her gear cluster and on to Lingerfield and Farnham at a very leisurely pace, hoping that the lost cyclist would magically appear either in front, eating a banana or behind, catching us up. All went well then to Burton Leonard where a left turn on to the Ripon Rowel path, down past the lime kilns to the footbridge by the ford (see photo) which we all negotiated safely, and after 30 yards off road through a field full of (thankfully uninterested) cows and then westerly and northerly to the sleepy village of South Stainley.

Close inspection of my now wobbly left pedal showed that it could not be fixed, so I limped on as far as Nidd where it fell lifeless into the road. Now it was quite a challenge riding from there to Ripley and even more difficult keeping the group together from the back but somehow I did make it to the car park where our scattered group finally met up. Being unable to go any further, I suggested a route back through Knox and Spruistry Bridge for the rest and rang home for a pickup. Unfortunately, when the car arrived it refused to re-start, due to a jammed starter motor, so our journey home was by courtesy of the AA. PB

Unexpectedly finding myself conscripted as short ride planner, I thought hard to come up with a novel route, but without success. Nevertheless my three companions all I hope enjoyed a relaxed ride. We passed the squash club, sailed down past the Yorkshire showground and crossed the Wetherby Road to take the path behind the tip and round the narrow corner at Morrisons.

In Starbeck we voted to go along The Avenue and then the path along the old railway line to Bilton Lane, stopping for a brief summary of the progress on the Sustrans path to Ripley, before following the westerly edge of the Bilton Triangle over the new(ish) railway bridge to Asda. Finally we cycled along East Parade which was a convenient point for the three to turn off for home. The two non members both decided at this point to offer me their £s;3 subs, gratefully received, and which hopefully indicated that they had had an enjoyable morning. The proof will be in the pudding, i.e. whether they come back for more. I tempted them with the promise that Caroline was likely to be route planner next time, and that she was the real short ride expert. (Helen agreed.)

As the weather had by now become perfect I set off via Ripley for an excessively large lunch at the irresistible café at Fountains Abbey visitor centre in time to meet up with the long ride, and returned through Littlethorpe. MM

Photo below: Darth Vader repairs his tyre.



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