

Sunday, August 5, 2007

Wheel Easy! Ride Report No. 66



Ice cream at Ripley (medium ride). More photos below.

Glorious sunshine attracted an impressive turnout of 16 riders for Jill's ride which started with a pleasant ride to Otley via Burn Bridge, North Rigton and Leathley. The only surprise here was the difficulty in getting such a large group of cyclists through a junction jammed with traffic. Fortunately, judicious use (abuse?) of the nearby Pelican crossing by Paul R enabled us to move on to Askwith, Middleton and then onto a series of climbs up to Langbar. Four cyclists baled out, pre-Langbar, with appointments to keep back home.

Suspensions were aroused that Jill hadn't been entirely candid regarding the amount of 'character building' hill work but everyone managed well and were soon rewarded with a spectacular swooping descent down to Beamsley. Bill W, being of good character, valiantly alerted fellow riders of serious road surface defects. More dubiously, on the way to Ilkley, he took to pursuing passing young women cyclists for no reason he could adequately explain. He had previously been a shining example to us all.

Once again, the Avanti Café in Ilkley proved an excellent venue for the usual tea and cakes, especially since we could sit outside in the sun. The usual banter turned to the subject of the local cycling shop, JD Cycles which prompted a mass migration over there. Helmets, clothes and tandems were 'oohed' and 'ahhed' over before the ride split into separate groups for the return home via Askwith, Weeton and Kirkby Overblow. All in all, an excellent though challenging ride. NK

What a lovely day, the best it seemed so far this year and more to the point, twice as many riders on my intermediate ride today.

So, the 12 of us left Hornbeam and took a meandering route through the quieter roads towards the disused railway from Starbeck and onto Ripley. We continued through Ripley where

Geraldine took a small tumble and her arms came out worse versus the nettles but her spirits weren't "stung" and we continued onto Clint Bank Lane and into Birstwith. We all made the first hill - a 15% hill climb (some further than others!) up to High Birstwith! A short break was taken whilst we admired a lady runner breeze past us as though it was a walk in the park.

We continued towards Kettlesing Bottom and with the second hill of the day along Swincliffe Lane and then turned towards Hampsthwaite. Finally, we were all spurred on by the promise of a much deserved ice cream, which left one more hill up Holly Bank Lane.

The two new riders decided to press on at this stage whilst we enjoyed the summer sun and indulged in the famous Ripley ice cream! Once back into Killinghall, everyone made their own routes back. Perhaps a shorter than average medium ride but slightly more challenging and scenic, not to mention everyone's "hardware" worked well and got their owners home in one piece !! ST

The sky was bright blue without a hint of a cloud, and the cold northerly wind had dropped, as seven gentle Wheel Easy-ers set off on the route to Beckwithshaw - backwards. Cycling up Rayleigh Road to Leeds Road roundabout, West End Avenue, Beech Grove, Cold Bath Road, Florence Road to Harlow Moor Drive, Jackie cleverly noticed we were going round in a circle. We craftily avoided traffic and hills by crossing Otley Road cutting through to Pannal Ash and sailed past the Squinting Cat, along Lady Lane to Beckwithshaw. All riders were going strongly and enthusiastically, and agreed that an attempt at the crags of Little Almscliffe seemed like a good idea. Tom took the lead closely followed by Jackie (wine) and Paul (eggs and grapes), both intent on doing some grocery shopping sometime that morning. Max with an uncharacteristic burst of speed reached the top first in the breakaway group, the rest of the peloton arriving only minutes later. We took in refreshments, the stunning views and clear fresh air, ready for the downward glide back to Harrogate. At this point three over enthusiastic riders wanted to find a new route (or help Paul do his supermarket shop), and headed off over a field. The rest of the group sailed back to Harrogate via Otley Road, Harlow Carr Gardens, the lovely path to Cornwall Road, the Valley Gardens, and Beech Grove stray, a perfect circle of 14miles in under a light year. CG

During the rest period whilst Paul was perusing his personally printed, home centred OS map, searching for a more direct route to Killinghall, a return route via the notorious "hors categorie" steeply downhill route to Scargill reservoir and onto Penny Pot Lane was suggested. After sensitive negotiations with their partners the green light was given for Max and Alex to join Paul. After a tearful parting the left hand turn was followed onto the steeply descending path to Scargill Reservoir. The intrepid three successfully negotiated several thousand woollen balls on sticks and their associated hazardous (but not in the toxic sense) fallout and swooped down to Low Scargill Plantation. Here Paul asked, in a voice I suspect he secretly kept for hero worship "You didn't ride up that did you?". "Yes" was the softly spoken, blushing reply.

Due to the previous month's weather and deep tractor wheel ruts, men had to carry machines across the plantation to the metalled road leading to Penny Pot Lane. Thanks to the two walkers who closed the gates behind us. A right turn took us to the construction site of the new wind turbine farm where a brief discussion took place as to its merits and associated carbon foot print. With a clear view of Menwith Hill no discussion would have been complete without reference to G W Bush's proposals to site missiles in the vicinity.

Upon reaching the end of Penny Pot Lane, Paul headed left to Killinghall and his eagerly anticipated arrival at the shops, Max and Alex continued past Queen Ethelburger's through the Valley Gardens (on foot) and onto Otley Road. After the Prince of Wales roundabout each took their own route home carefully avoiding the fantastic display of Trans Pennine nostalgic vehicles en route to the Stray. 15+ miles in what seemed like seconds. MG



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