

Sunday, October 21, 2007

Wheel Easy! Ride Report No. 77



Medium ride. An exceptionally fine, crisp but cold start to the morning.

Normally on rides, mine especially, riders drop by the wayside but today starting with 19, a further one rider had radioed ahead to meet us at Abbey Road.

Travelling out of Knaresborough, Crawford took us on a quieter slight detour where we picked the route up towards Farnham. A quick stop in Bishop Monkton for a photo by the babbling stream and home to the many many ducks gathering in their Sunday best. The "Virgin" hot air balloon seemed to be following us again, but it disappeared soon after into the mist.

Approaching Roecliffe, we said goodbye to two riders who took the short route back home, whilst the rest sped briskly on to Boroughbridge. Here the group parted - 8 including Crawford, having had his banana stop went their merry way whilst the remaining 10 enjoyed the warmth of Gilchrist's and their wonderful offerings of bacon butties and a rum truffle. Not having sat indoors here before, the "elderly gentlemen" in the group pointed out the plaque on the café wall where the floods of 1991 had reached an astounding 3'!

It had turned quite cool once we left Boroughbridge and headed out to Aldborough and Lower Dunsforth so to take our minds off the cold, we tried to work out a new 'wheel easy' tune to sing whilst being accompanied by the varied tinkles of our bells! Once approaching Grafton and Coneythorpe the sun shone and all was well again and those extremities warmed up. Having taken a vote at Goldsborough, 3 returned back to Knaresborough along the main road and 7 decided to risk it and travel along the dirt track back to St James Retail Park. Dave said there's nothing like a bit of off road at the end of a ride! A few minutes was spent at the weir whilst Ken pointed out a rather large bamboo bush which he frequently visited whilst canoeing along the river and as we were about to leave a lonely heron was seen basking in the afternoon's sun.

With only one slipped chain to fit back on its cog, it was soon time to all go our separate ways home - the furthest back to Hornbeam - a round trip of 35 enjoyable and relatively wheel easy miles! ST

Long ride. Only six riders joined this fairly challenging ride going past Almscliffe Crag, Otley, Askwith and then climbing to the moors north east of Ilkley for the most exquisite views. This part of the ride is known as 'Jill's Hills'. Beamsley is the furthest point, from where it was a relatively easy run on a single track road back to Ilkley and a well earned break at the Avanti

café. After refreshments Bill decided he would find the steepest hill to ride up before returning to Harrogate. The remaining five visited the local bike shop before returning via Otley, Weeton, Dunkeswick and Kirkby Overblow. It was a fantastic ride and with only six in the group, the leader was quite happy to ride at his normal pace at the back. Altogether 51 miles were covered.
PT

Short ride. Surprisingly for such a freezing crispy cold autumn morning nine short slow riders and a pregnant lady, set out at a cracking pace to Little Almscliffe Crag (the right way round). We zoomed down towards Fulwith Mill, and over Leeds Road, through the Mallinsons to Rossett, where we had a saddle extending experience, despite the lost spanner. All riders suitably saddled and extended we sped past the Squinting Cat, yes sped, and onwards to Lady Lane and Beckwithshaw. All the first time riders were keen to keep on riding and in glorious sunlight we took the park by storm.

Having stopped at the exit to debate on further progress, all the riders powered up towards the summit of Little Almscliffe in a matter of minutes. Despite being followed by Richard Branson's hot air balloon again, he didn't manage to land, and consequently could not join us on a spectacular race down the hill back to Beckwithshaw. We took the main road to Harlow Carr and again we were not tempted by any sort of refreshment, being so focussed on our progress and speed. As we reached Cornwall Road the call of a parental Sunday lunch was too much for one person and we travelled back to The Valley Gardens with nine riders (amazingly no losses up to that point).

Although the bungy trampoline looked very attractive in the Gardens, all riders managed to tear themselves away and headed onwards to the Stray, witnessing two very polite gentlemen discussing a mini car shunt which we missed by seconds. By the time we reached the ride finish we had covered 16 miles very speedily, in glorious hot summer sunshine. CG