

Sunday, February 24, 2008

Wheel Easy Ride Report No. 95



There was a good turnout for Sunday including several new faces who were all made welcome. Bearing in mind the weather which was fine until we had got about 100yds from Hornbeam this must be very encouraging for the spring when no doubt cyclists will be tempted out in even greater numbers.

A sudden return to cold and windy weather dampened our enthusiasm for the ambitious long ride advertised on the website. So the tried and tested familiar route to Ilkley was dusted off again and 15 of us set off on this ride. Unfortunately, the rain started almost as soon as we did and one rider, who 'didn't do rain' headed for home. Another returned home to collect some waterproof gear intending to catch us up later on (which he did). The long and medium rides shared the route to Timble and we overlapped several times.

From Timble we headed on to Askwith and Ilkley for the usual welcome coffee stop. Our return route was via Otley, Leathley, Almscliffe Crag and North Rigton after which the remaining riders started heading off on their various routes home having done approximately 40 miles. JF

The medium ride started out with 17 in two groups and the route was to Fewston and Timble via the Wheel Easy trade route to Little Almscliff. The weather grew progressively more windy and rainy as we progressed up the hill. At one point a number of the group felt a touch doubtful about the full route but thankfully by the time we reached the car park just below Little Almscliff it had miraculously stopped raining and lighter skies lifted the mood.

I think I can speak for the whole group when I remark that there are some quite sharp hills in the area of Fewston and even more so when ascending into the final destination of Timble. BUT it made for a great descent back down to Harrogate. Not a long route in distance, about 22 miles, but quite hilly and interesting beyond Norwood. One or two tailed off in various directions towards the end but I think we all enjoyed the trip in quite challenging conditions. SB

The only photo from the curtailed medium ride is of a very camera-shy but gallant leader of several breakaway short slow ladies, who joined the medium ride, much to the horror of the medium riders. As the short ride was going to be a short short ride, four slow short ladies decided to join the medium ride, which set off at a cracking pace into a driving rain storm. We had worked out our get out point and set off confidently. However the traffic lights broke us up and we got muddled up with the long ride much to their amazement and consternation. Paul kept back-marking us up to the Rossett roundabout where he realised we were not of the long ride. We zoomed past the Squinting Cat to find Sue T. She seemed to have lost the medium ride as well and had decided to ride

home.

We followed in the wake of the fast ride and saw a few flashes of yellow in the distance which we made out to be the medium ride. The long ride by this time was in Newcastle and as we reached Beckwithshaw we found a very kind medium rider, and Sue D who had been swept off with the medium ride big boys group. We now had a real medium leader who guided us onwards enabling us to nearly join up with the real medium ride group. Some stragglers from the medium group were seen returning home because they were cold and wet, and one in particular came home to spend an afternoon in the bath, thus preventing his very cold wife and the real curtailed leader will no doubt fill you in on the rest of the lovely satisfying ride back. CG

The short ride welcomed 3 new members today, and 3 'old timers'. After some deliberation of hill factors and wants/needs of the group, we decided to set off in the direction of Knaresborough, following as many cycle paths as possible. Just out of Hornbeam Park we encountered the rain, but undeterred pressed on through Hookstone Woods, the Yorkshire Show Ground, through the park to Hookstone Chase, followed by a 'right and a left' onto the Knaresborough Road. One group member left us at this point! Several stops also ensued out of necessity, to wipe glasses clear of rain!

We entered Knaresborough courtesy of the Beryl Burton and enjoyed a pleasant ride along Waterside and Abbey Road, relatively free from the usual pedestrians, presumably put off by the weather. Further discussion ensued re.time factors and how legs were feeling, and by this time the weather was behaving itself a little better! (sun even trying to get out!). We also popped in to see St Thomas of Knaresborough - not at home - but we managed to plan a makeover of his somewhat 'bijou' abode, (cave). Some mood lighting and shelving was considered essential, and the lack of a suitable kitchen was noted, but not resolved - may need to return in the future to consider this further!

As the group were still happy, we proceeded to Chain Lane and down Water Lane for a leisurely extension to the ride. We rejoined the Boroughbridge Road and hung a left back into Knaresborough for a coffee (minus one group member, who broke off at this point). We were pleased to meet up with some members of the Ripon Loiterers also enjoying a coffee break. Back up the inevitable hill to Harrogate and to our respective homes.

Well done to the new members who, despite rain and cold (and only thinking of doing 6-8 miles when initially discussed), happily managed 16 miles in good spirits and with great fortitude! Jean will have clocked up her 30 much sooner than she anticipated!!! SE

