

Sunday, March 16, 2008

Wheel Easy Ride Report No. 98



Several new riders, some of whom joined Wheel Easy through the 0-30 project and one who found us on the internet and drove (with bike) from Leeds, boosted the turnout at Hornbeam to 34.

Thirteen members elected to take the long ride (good job we are not superstitious). The bad weather forecast of heavy consistent rain failed to materialise. Due to the wind strength and direction the route chosen was Knaresborough, Tockwith, Long Marston, Askham Richard, then Bilborough, crossing the A64, and on to Appleton Roebuck. The route then went on to Acaster Selby next to the River Ouse - where sometimes "if you are lucky" you can see the remains of the Humber tidal bore flowing up towards York in the opposite direction to the River Ouse, but unfortunately not today - returning to Appleton Roebuck, (Acaster Selby is a one entry/exit village), Bolton Percy and the excellent Tykes Tea Rooms attached to the bike shop in Tadcaster. Back via Wighill and the Wetherby cyclepath.

Arriving in Harrogate around 3-30pm, total distance approx 47/48 miles car park to car park. DP

Medium ride. Twelve souls set off into a cold north-easterly, fortunately free of rain, winding northwards through Harrogate and heading for the first photo shoot at the Spruisty footbridge over Oak Beck at Knox. Then skirting Killinghall and heading to Ripley via a bit of the terrible A61, we were held up for a couple of minutes in Ripley by the Palm Sunday procession, complete with donkey (they do things properly in Ripley).

From there we had a little bit of off-road travel as we saw both sides of a valley north of Ripley, a route which took us neatly to Nidd (two red kites spotted), leaving most of the hilly bits behind. How many Wheel Easy cyclists does it take to refit a chain? Six, apparently. When one of our number lost a chain and your ride leader thought he'd lost half of the group.

The route towards Burton Leonard commenced through the traffic-free Mountgarret estate, and took us via a ford, which one mountain biker sped through, whilst the rest used the gate or the stile. This side of the A61, whilst not completely flat, is more restful than the other side, so the progress to Copgrove and Farnham and on to Knaresborough by way of Bar Lane, was relatively easy and quiet.

After the pleasant meander along the riverside, the group split into three independent routes to get back to Harrogate. A grand morning out with about 24 miles covered. PB

Short ride. It was a cold grey morning, as what seemed like hundreds of enthusiasts gathered at the now renovated Hornbeam Station, for the Sunday morning bike rides. As I arrived I wasn't sure whether or not I

would be leading the short ride, or Max would insist he could. It all depended on the medium ride. Obviously it seemed appealing and I was leading the short ride, much to my relief as I was cold and had toothache, maybe symptoms of overindulgence from the night before.

Nine riders set off at a gentle pace from Hornbeam, Yvonne and Martin making sure the short ride leader didn't upset four awfully good and very speedy 0-30 people, who had joined the Sunday groups, for first and second times. I soon realised that gentle was not necessary and sped onwards and upwards towards Leeds Road, the Oval, Beech Grove, and then to the Pinewoods, where we encountered several hundred dogs taking their owners for walks. Trying to encourage lots of stopping and resting I was quickly over ruled by the 0-30 riders, who didn't seem at all out of breath or indeed in need of rest stops or a slow pace. We passed Harlow Carr Gardens, and took a sharp right up the Otley Road towards Beckwithshaw. The group very quickly established there would be no shortening of the route and would have gone to Almscliff Crag, had I not enticed them with the thoughts of a gentle glide back to Beckwithshaw, after a pleasant amble through the park.

We crossed Otley Road after leaving Beckwithshaw and despite murderous speeding super cars we all managed to head on towards the Squinting Cat without incident. There was no slowing down or trepidation as we neared the hill down, pedalling against a force 12 gale, and the whizz up the other side, leaving only one ride leader gasping as usual for breath. The rest of the ride was downhill all the way, scudding past Rossett, St. George's and crossing Leeds Road, we arrived back at Hookstone, raring to go on and ride some more.

At this point four riders left the group, and five of us rode past Morrison's , along Forest Moor to Knaresborough for a cup of tea and thoughts of meeting the medium ride. A perfect red kite followed gliding overhead for some of the route. At Calcutt we had to wait, much to our delight as about sixty scooters flew into Knaresborough. Thankfully they did not stop at the café on the Waterside and we indulged in a toilet stop and tea and cake. Yum! eggs and bacon sandwiches resisted, well done Sue and Caroline. We were tempted however, by Martin and Yvonne's offer to go to Ripon with us, but, for various very valid reasons, we all decided to climb home via the Beryl Burton torture route. Glad that we did Sue, Neil and Caroline saw hundreds (two or three hundred) Lambretta scooters parked as we started the B.B way. Martin and Yvonne will have missed them as they flashed up there at the speed of sound, intent on warming up. They must have been frozen. A good ride despite the cold and an on/off icy blast. A very satisfying 11miles and 17 miles accomplished very quickly. CG



