

Saturday, June 14, 2008

## Great Yorkshire Bike Ride, Wetherby to Filey

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Here hopefully is the ride report for the six luscious ladies bike ride to Filey. I think everyone needs to remember that cycling is like child birth - you forget the horrid parts. As a couple of Filey virgins Gaye and Caroline had no idea what to expect as they were chauffeured to Wetherby for the GYBR. We noticed the total organisation and the helpfulness of all the marshals. We had heard about the water stops, we had heard about the lunch stop, we had heard about the two hills, we knew there was a stunning atmosphere, we had heard about the long hill down, but we did not really know what to expect. We hurriedly inspected the toilets, registered and went to put our bikes in pole position at the start. Then we remembered that there was a Wheel Easy! photo call at 7.15, there was no get out now, we'd been seen and there was photographic evidence, it was not 6 weeks away, it was not a pleasant ambition, or a dream. It was reality, the only thing that would save us was the rescue van and a puncture. At the start Caroline did an aerobic session, Gaye checked the toilets again and the ride started at 7.30 instead of 8. We started at 7.40.

All went well for the first 32 miles (well 33, I had forgotten to set my distance measurer), we sped along in the bright morning sunlight, people overtook us, people greeted us jollily, Sue T joined us, the route was flat and even a little downhill, we were over excited, and not over tired. Alec and Sue passed us and then joined us for a while, Gia and Helen and Pauline, another Filey virgin joined us and stayed with us. They were making sure we did not call the rescue van I think. We shunned the first watering hole in a very cavalier manner, and sped to the next one, popping behind various hedges to collect rare specimens etc. We had a lovely stop for a drink, and a banana, even though at this stage we still felt full of life and energy.

We should have realised that things had to go uphill from then on. Gia and Helen arranged to meet us at the next stop ..... the lunch stop, I had been looking forward to this, and we pedalled on gleefully, until we saw a wall of bike pushers and a B and Q lorry on a steep cliff face. This was our first hill. It was steep but not too long, and we were still raring to go. At the top we were greeted by Gia and Helen's surprised faces. Lunch was nearby, and all six of us swooped into Terrington I think onto the lunch field. Talk about organisation. A ticket equals a carrier bag which you could fill with a choice of sandwiches, choice of crisps, choice of chocolate bar, choice of drink, choice of fruit, deep joy, and if all that was not enough we could go and have some pasta. Yum. Well why go any further, what a lovely party atmosphere, and a whole cloakroom of portaloos. Caroline was set to stay the rest of the day there.

That was not to be, and lurking in the subconscious there was not only the stunning view of Castle Howard, the cake stop and the sandwiches on the bus and the pride of finishing, but talk in hushed tones of a HILL.

(Although Helen had blanked it from her memory.) At every slight incline Gaye and Caroline thought this might be THE hill. No the hill was a hill and lots of people by now nearing exhaustion were dragging themselves and their bikes up the hill. Many many people over took us at this point, Gia, Helen, and Pauline glided to the top unhindered by weight, lack of fitness or any of that nonsense. Gaye and Sue tackled its foothills gamefully, Caroline was pathetic and got off half way up in a strop. Dennis and his grandson overtook us, Alec over took us, the Uptons overtook us and probably everyone else in the race overtook Caroline, if she'd been conscious enough to notice, apart from her new jolly friend in pink who she'd met at every other hill on route. The views as we neared the top were stunning, the sun shining on the Vale of somewhere (Pickering perhaps). We must have climbed at least a mountain the size of Everest. It was certainly nearly worth the pain to stop at the top and see the amazing scene, and more than worth it to see the five lovely ladies grinning encouragingly.

However from then on it was downhill nearly all the way, but sadly Caroline's legs seemed to have forgotten this fact and would not pedal the bike. Should there be a rescue now, no the others were waiting and it really was down hill.

There was a moment in Malton (and I have no idea when we passed it), when traffic jams could certainly be seen as a positive thing. The cyclists had a bit of a catch up and a rest and the people of Malton watched in amazement as 1000 plus took over the traffic system of the town. Very exciting just like the Tour de France. As was the synchronised marshalling noted and appreciated, at a right angled bend over a bridge sometime after lunch.

We were now in the final phase of the ride. Nothing could stop us. Gia and Helen were still there encouraging us, at one point Caroline, being swished along by some other riders really could not stop to put on her waterproofs with the rest of the ladies. In a final blur of rather lovely lemon drizzle cake, mini loos, a vision of Malcolm starting the homeward journey by himself, and still full of enthusiasm and a total drenching, the Filey Virgins entered Filey in a state of complete euphoria, led by the women of experience. WE HAD DONE IT, well almost. A few little hills and a lot of large puddles, a couple of false finishes and the final proper type important finish. Just how big headed can 3 people get. Hopefully the non virgins felt as clever as the virgins, they should do they made us get to the finish.

Despite the total wash out, a downpour of awesome proportions, the view of the Filey Bay was wonderful and

the ride organisers got us all onto buses, (where we ate our sandwiches, changed our clothes, lost earrings, slept , gossiped ) and back to Wetherby, with baggage, and bikes all at the same time and on the same day. Perhaps they should take over the running of Heathrow airport.

So a great day, to be totally recommended to anyone with a bike. If I can do it anyone can. Thanks to the women of experience, the Filey Six made it. From an over weight, over aged, over excited, over taken woman of experience. CG