

Sunday, September 28, 2008

Wheel Easy Ride Report No. 126



Just under 40 cyclists including 5 new members (two of whom had come from Cleckheaton) turned up to support the Bilton to Ripley route fundraising ride organised by Martin. This was a great success not just from the financial point of view - well over £300 was raised on the day with more to come - but as a most enjoyable and sociable day out in the sunshine. Congratulations to Martin for coming up with the idea and achieving such a great result.

Chaos and anarchy reigned from the start of the fast ride as 11 of the supposedly most experienced Wheel Easy cyclists failed to follow Martin's detailed instructions and instead of entering Rayleigh Road, hared off down Hookstone Road towards Knaresborough. Regrouping along Oatlands Drive, they soon found themselves headed by a certain veteran star rider who naturally had his own ideas about the best route to join the Beryl Burton path. As a result, we avoided the inevitable glass on the Asda path, and reached Knaresborough without any mishaps.

We also made it to Farnham, but not by the planned detour through Lingerfield, and were slightly embarrassed to see the medium ride reach the junction just ahead of us and from the correct direction. It was also disconcerting to find ourselves following the slow ride along the bridleway from Copgrove, but then we were on our own through Bishop Monkton and up eventually to Markington.

Here we had a shop stop as the village store is open on Sundays, and four took off for a longer ride. The remainder, several of whom were on serious road bikes, decided to skip the unsuitable off road track through Ripley woods and kept on the road to Clint Bank, then through Hampsthwaite to Killinghall, Knox Lane and back to Hornbeam. Here we were greeted by Martin who awarded us our certificates for completing the ride - at least we had managed the intended 30 miles with three or four to spare, if not the intended route. MM

Medium group medium pace. I enthusiastically offered to lead the ride and it wasn't until we got to Low Bridge in Knaresborough that I realised that I hadn't paid any attention to the ride instructions. I had overheard someone say Knaresborough so we flew along the usual Hookstone, Morrisons route! Missing out entirely Martin's carefully prepared instructions to go via town and the Beryl Burton cycle path! I promised to pay more attention and led the rest of the route entirely according to the rules.

Clearly other ride leaders were as inattentive as me and by the end of the ride we had added several riders from other groups to our posse. This added to the fun of the day mixing with other riders and hearing their tales. Our stop at the café at the garden centre at Cascades wasn't a great choice. They seem overwhelmed with large

numbers of cyclists, the service was slow, coffee not hot enough and altogether expensive!

Never mind the sun was staying out for longer, it got warmer and the run down in to Markington along the stream was beautiful. The views on the swoop down into Ripley are majestic and for some of our new members this was all new territory.

At Ripley we saw some of the horse riders who were riding their sponsored ride on the same day. I think I heard one of them say they had 80 riders! Also at Ripley we met Norman and Terry having their picnic stop, Terry assuring us he had done the ride in 23 minutes. We didn't believe him but he insisted on joining us for a photograph taken by Norman.

The route home from Ripley took us through the woods behind the castle where we picked up one puncture, ably repaired by on the spot mechanic Max, through Hampsthwaite and home through Knox Ford. This gave us the opportunity to highlight the benefits of the Ripley-Bilton path which will obviate the nasty crossing at Killinghall at the top and bottom of Grainbeck Lane.

We made it back to the Park at Hornbeam where our leader was patiently waiting for us with our certificates. A wonderful ride on a sunny late September day. GM

Hello here is the ride report for the slow group. The sky was unusually blue, there was a slight chill in the air, yes, a perfect day for a bike ride. Martin carefully gave out a detailed and thorough route. We were all ready to ride. Now, whether or not the ride leaders had forgotten their glasses or they are all b. minded, I am not sure, but to a man and a woman, as we set off, we all set off in different directions from the instructions, except for Dennis.

Four ladies had decided to follow a leisurely slow pace, but having gone skirtingly through Knaresborough, carefully forgetting a loop at Lingerfield because the leader did not know the road, we gently rode to Farnham and onwards to Copgrove. By this time we were confident that all the other groups were in the coffee stops at a garden centre or Ripley.

As we turned right onto the bridleway at Copgrove the speedy long riders came past. Assuming this was their second lap of the circuit, we teased them about their slow speed and dallying. They assured us in rather a tight lipped manner that this was in fact their first lap. I can only imagine that they had got lost, or needed an early coffee and loo stop. We continued happily all four of us keeping up a steady pace.

By Bishop Monkton another group over took us, again we presumed they had had an early coffee stop somewhere we had missed. But no, I think perhaps they had followed the route correctly for a few miles. We stopped at 16 miles at the garden centre cafe, and were tempted by all sorts of goodies. The large order and the arrival of other faster groups confused the staff and we had a very pleasant long wait for our coffees. At one point Gaye wondered what that lady was doing on the floor, and all of us gaped at Sarah, who could have been dead, in a contorted position on the floor. I was relieved I did not have to demonstrate my lack of first aid skills.

Reluctantly we gathered ourselves together and continued on towards Markington and The Drovers, Sue coping admirably with her funny gears on a precipice like hill and first timer Lynda tackling the slope pluckily. For some reason at the Drovers the leader decided to go straight on, towards Bishop Thornton and Shaw Mills, and perhaps just because we could, we did. We entered Hampsthwaite having glided down the most wonderful hill from Clint top feeling on top of the world, despite the fact we were in Hampsthwaite and really at the bottom of the world as we had to climb out of it and back up to Killinghall, Knox Lane and the Park.

This would be easy you might have thought, but on entering Oatlands Drive, Sue escaped from the group and as we returned to the Park, remarkably not the last group back, she was nowhere to be seen. This was a superb day. Newcomer Lynda managed to do this long hilly ride with ease, and finished looking as bright and perky as when she'd started. Well done all you slow ladies, a speedy 33ish miles in about 6 hours!!!!!! CG

