

Sunday, April 5, 2009

Wheel Easy Ride Report No. 154



- Eight of us (Jill, Bill, Peter J, Peter B, Dennis, Chris, Dave W, and Eric) set out on the long ride without a ride leader, and to be honest, without much idea of where we were going, although there was a suggestion that involved Grassington. So a route emerged as we went along, leaving Harrogate via Queen Ethelburga's and then along Penny Pot Lane, Menwith Hill, Greenhow, Stump Cross Caverns, arriving at a café in Grassington at 11.45. Bill shamelessly tucked into bread and butter pudding and custard before midday, whilst others of us settled for sandwiches or paninis - well, we do have our standards to maintain!

After finishing his bacon and egg sandwich, Dennis left for home at a fast pace (I don't think the two events were directly related) whilst the remaining 7 enjoyed a few extra minutes before setting off via Burnsall (photo shoot), Appletreewick, Bolton Abbey, and Ilkley. We stopped at Askwith to decide whether to tackle the long climb up Askwith Hill, only to find the road closed by the police due to an accident. So 3 disappointed and 4 delighted cyclists continued along the Wharfe valley to Otley.

At Pool, Bill and Dave W opted for the short route to Harrogate along the main road through Huby, leaving 5 of us to continue along the country lanes of Castley, Weeton and Dunkeswick. Peter B then received a text message from his daughter inviting him to a pub in Boroughbridge; after planning a 20 mile route from Dunkeswick to Boroughbridge, he reread the message and discovered the pub was in Burn Bridge only 5 miles away! So Pete and Eric then made their way back to Harrogate via the Swan at Burn Bridge, whilst the remaining trio (Jill, Peter J and Chris) continued the climb to Kirkby Overblow and on to different parts of Harrogate.

Given the different routes home, we would have each covered between 60 and 65 miles, all in great weather, and wonderful Wharfedale scenery. Great ride! Eric

- The heights and vistas of Brimham Rocks were calling on this perfect day for eight Wheel Easy regulars on what was billed as a medium plus ride, which meant that the pace was determined in the main by my limitations on the many hills on the way there.

We were very pleased to welcome Ben back after a long break due to work commitments, none of which seemed to have slowed him down at all even on his mountain bike. Our route went through Beckwithshaw to Hampsthwaite where we reached the junction at the same time as one of the medium groups coming down from Killinghall. Then it was Clapham Green, Birstwith and over Hartwith toll bridge before the steady climb to Brimham where we regrouped and took the team photo.

Sawley was successfully located, though I didn't realise it until Sue kindly showed me the sign a few yards away at the entrance to the village. From there on it was plain sailing, along lovely Low Gate Lane, new to at least two riders, up to Studley and down through the deer park, again new territory for some, and eventually to Spa Gardens where the medium riders were already enjoying drinks and cakes in the bright sunshine.

Martin, following on after leading the short ride, reached the café at the same time and joined us for the ride back through Littlethorpe, Copgrove, Lingerfield and Knaresborough. An excellent ride of about 42 miles. Malcolm M

- Sixteen riders joined the moderate medium ride to Ripon via Hampsthwaite where we collected Paul B, a short pause to look at the magnificent village information tablet on the green and then on up Clint Bank and up to Cut Throat Lane. This is a hilly route out to Fountains but well worth the climbs for the wonderful views and the glorious downhills especially in the Deer Park.

A warm welcome awaited us in Ripon Spa Gardens where we met with Norman's group who had gone on ahead at Knox at a faster pace. We are running out of names to describe these medium rides! Having three different paces meant that this magnificent ride was made accessible to a wide range of riders which is very much the Wheel Easy mantra.

Lots of accolades today, to Lynda who this time last year was a cautious 0-30 rider, Mervyn whose knees seem to have been fixed, Crawford who is venturing out on the longer rides again, Max who races up hills, Caroline who this time last year discovered Ripon via the flat route but now masters the hilliest route, Chris who powers her way through the pack on her trusty steed, Matt who tried to get on the short route but was refused, tried the moderate medium group and was refused and finally joined Norman's group and he was well up to the pace!

Well done to all the riders today, a warm welcome to our new riders, Richard and Brian. It was a magnificent day and one of the finest rides in our repertoire! 36 miles. Gia

- David Preston joined us on the Short Ride this week of his 70th birthday. Congratulations from everyone in Wheel Easy. I hope we can turn the pedals like David and the other septuagenarians in the club when we reach 70.

Six of us made our way along Hookstone Drive and turned onto the circular route around the Showground on this sunny cool morning. We then carried on the cycleway to bring us

out near Morrisons and continued to Low Bridge. Abbey Road was a treat with just a few folks enjoying the sunshine.

We turned left up the Bridlepath that brought us onto Aspin Lane and then we went to the Castle, where I astounded everyone by explaining that the bowling green was not flat but was typically awkward Yorkshire as it had a lump in the middle ("crown green" bowling to the uninitiated). David then told us about the Sallyport and we took a photo at the famous view. In the market square we all sat and had a chat with Blind Jack. If you have not seen this amazing sculpture I recommend a visit.

We then went back down the hill to Waterside and at High Bridge David kindly offered to lead the group back to Harrogate, while yours truly played hooky and chased down the Medium Group for a longer ride. Martin W



