

Sunday, April 12, 2009

Wheel Easy Ride Report No. 155



The ten of us who set off on the long ride from Hornbeam were quickly caught up at Knaresborough by Eric who had been released from his short ride duties. His high-speed dash had obviously been inspired by the leader's bribe of Easter Eggs for everyone on the Long Ride.

So eleven of us headed east enjoying the flat roads to Boroughbridge and on to Coxwold. A café stop at Coxwold was made more enjoyable because it was unexpected. Peter sat down with us a little later as he was struggling with his gears, a problem that persisted and got worse through the day. There was plenty of advice but unfortunately none of it of the technical or practical variety. Instead the assembled Wheel Easy riders assured him the problem was "all in the mind", and getting on with the ride would be "character building" for him. To Peter's credit he remained stoic throughout this "advice" session and throughout the rest of the day, and completed the ride with the gears in a real mess. We have decided he will be known henceforth as "Peter the Great".

It got lumpy after Coxwold but after passing Ampleforth Abbey, Nunnington Hall was soon reached. We turned south and east from here and descended the huge hill to Hovingham where the Spa Tearoom was packed out. So it was buns on the village green for us. Then we headed over the Hambleton Hills to Easingwold. The sun came out approaching Aldwark Bridge to make it an even better ride.

Near Great Ouseburn four of us were left behind when we stopped for undressing and light relief. We decided that we were the mind over "it doesn't matter" faction, and Sue then regaled us with more sayings of a rustic and philosophical nature. Perhaps there is a tendency to hallucinate after 65 miles so I think I may have dreamt this bit.

A good ride with excellent views and best of all in fine company. Seventy two miles on my computer. Martin W

Twelve riders chose the medium ride plus leader made thirteen. But despite a cold start the weather turned out great (so much for superstition). The destination, Stump Cross Caverns Café. This is a climb all the way from Hookstone car park (climbing out via Pot Bank) but the wind was in our favour and the whole group rode at a steady pace and in good order.

With a couple of stops on the way the group made light work of the climb. At the summit of Greenhow Hill the views were superb, then down to the café for refreshments. Returning the same way, it's a "swoop down" almost all the way back to Harrogate.

We had a couple of "mad miles" before slowing down to a steady pace just before Stone Houses. (A good laugh, only this time the wind was in our faces.) Returning into Harrogate via Oakdale Hill. Total distance car park to car park approx 39 miles. Dave P

Hello here is the ride report from the "short" ride for Easter Sunday 12th April, 2009. Dave gave us a lovely description of the medium ride, which included the words steady pace, 40 miles and Stump Cross Caverns, with no Easter eggs, so as Eric warily asked if there were any people for the short ride he controlled the look of horror well, as he saw that 6 people had chickened out of the medium ride and were looking to do a medium shorter ride. He bravely gave us some options, as he looked lustfully at the departing long ride group who had been enticed with Easter eggs to do 75miles to somewhere in the mists of the east. He gleefully sped off when he realised that we could all take care of ourselves and were happy for him to follow the Easter bike bunny Martin.

The 6 short medium not wanting to be too slow or too fast or too long or too short group headed off for Almscliffe following in the slipstream of the medium group up Leadhall Lane to Rossett, The Squinting Cat, and Beckwithshaw. Of course by the time we reached Beckwithshaw there was not a glimmer of fluorescent yellow to be seen, and they were probably down the caverns already. We continued to the summit of Little Almscliffe, being joined briefly by a red streak of a cyclist, who engaged in conversation as he flashed off to the Dales. There was much disrobing at Little Almscliffe due to local climatic changes, and we savoured the alien landscape of Menwith and wind farms and a glorious span back towards Harrogate.

The ride continued with the American contingent "leading the group to freedom", past the Sun Inn towards Pennypot Lane end, as Sarah's chain took on a life of its own and needed John's help to control. American Sarah then needed a comfort break, but could not get into Menwith without her pass, this set off a precedent so we had a succession of stops overlooking the superb views Pateley Bridge and the Dales. Richard seemed quite bemused at this point and wondered how we could get to Hampsthwaite from that point. But all was under control, and we all revelled in the swoop down into Hampsthwaite in almost summer sun, without incident. But all freewheeling comes to an end and where there's a down there is an up. Sarah and Sue therefore sped up the long drag to Killinghall leading the group through summer conditions on the homeward path. Richard, realising that we had not got lost left the group to go to tend his garden in Knaresborough.

Having previously crossed the treacherous Skipton Road with ease, crossing the no less hazardous Ripon Road was easy, and spurred on by thoughts of tea and cakes in some wayside café, we all managed the route through Knox and up Knox Lane with flare. As we levelled out onto Crab Lane a small touring team led by Jill, who was obviously heading for Settle or Carlisle, powered past. Choices were then made and the leader bullied the group to come and have a cup of tea at Café Graham instead of the Valley Gardens which would have been overcrowded. Hopefully no-one was poisoned. There we thoroughly enjoyed Sarah and John's demonstrations of the buff (I'm sure it was called that), and relaxed in the sun, after 24 not too long, not too short, not too hilly, not too fast, not too slow miles in two and a half-ish hours. Caroline G



