

Sunday, August 23, 2009
Wheel Easy Ride Report 174



Medium-paced long ride

Considering it had been billed as a medium pace long ride, with semi mythical Park Rash as the main challenge, I was slightly unnerved less by the quantity than by the quality of the 15 cyclists who met at 8.30am at the starting point, The Smiths Arms in Beckwithshaw. Several Wheel Easy superstars were in the line up, along with some relative muppets, in particular yours truly, the nominal ride leader. I knew that 2 more (stars, not muppets), Eric and James, would be joining us later at Grassington. It was good to see Tim and Tony for the first time for a while.

However, it was a fabulous morning and all was well as we passed Stainburn Woods, enjoying the fairly unusual sight of all 8 wind turbines spinning away to produce enough carbon free electricity for nearly 6,000 families, watched as ever by the all-seeing golf balls at 'RAF Menwith Hill'. Along this stretch and up Duck Street towards Stump Cross, Malcolm Y's prediction that natural selection and survival of the fittest would sort out the group proved to be true, as he and the other speedies pulled away. At Greenhow, Tim had a call requiring him to turn back home.

We followed the main road (anyone doing this should beware of Devils Bridge, on a bend at the bottom of a steep incline, a death trap if approached too fast) to Grassington where some of us arrived just in time to see the fast group for the last time before they left the excellent Cobblestones Café. Our departure was slightly delayed because Sue and I found ourselves queuing to pay behind 3 of Satan's Slaves (closely related to the Hell's Angels family), one of whom Sue pointed out had a 'bullet hole' in his bald head. This was the central feature of an interesting tattoo which covered this part of his anatomy, and I don't doubt there were other points of interest elsewhere hidden under his very large leather jacket. They took a while to sort out how much milk they had in their coffee and I'm told

there was a discussion about yoghurts. It didn't seem appropriate to ask them to get a move on so we waited patiently.

The run up through Conistone and Kettlewell was idyllic, but Park Rash loomed ahead. The first hill is tough but short and manageable, like the steepest part of Yorkes Folly, then there's an easy mile or so before a zig zag bit that sorts out the men from the boys (/ladies from girls/stars from muppets). Along with a few others I had to push my bike for a short distance before we remounted and climbed grimly to the top of this section, which then flattened out for a while before the third hill which again proved challenging but do-able. At the top Eric, James and I think the two Peters were waiting for the rest of us.

The reward was stunning, with a thrilling descent into the sunshine and the lovely views of Coverdale, interspersed with a few more short climbs. We diverted slightly to Middleham and stopped at the CTC recommended Nosebag Café, before continuing at a good pace through Thornton Steward, Thornton Watlass, Snape and Wath (what wonderful names!) to Ripon. Here, Tony, Sue and Paul carried on, while 5 of us took a third café stop, at Dish's (again very good), and were very pleased to be spotted and joined by Nick K, out on his first long ride for some time.

I encouraged the rest to go on ahead so that I could amble gently on to Harrogate, eventually arriving home after 89 brilliant miles at about 7.15pm. Malcolm M.

Medium Ride Report

14 riders made up the medium group. Our route went through Knaresborough to Farnham and then on to Boroughbridge. After a café stop at Gilchrist's Tea Rooms, the group split with some returning to Harrogate for Grand Prix watching etc. The remaining riders rode on to complete the loop, passing through Aldborough, Great Ouseburn, Thorpe Underwood and Wixley before splitting at Cattal to allow the faster riders to return to Harrogate more rapidly.

The weather remained fine throughout, which was a pleasant surprise!

Nick Folkard

Short Ride

Eleven riders coasted off from Hornbeam Park at a gentle pace to enjoy the morning ride, with the weather fair.

Our route took us to Knaresborough via Hookstone Road, Forrest Lane Head and Calcutt. We stopped for regrouping at Low Bridge, along Abbey Road and enjoyed the quiet 'off road' section with few pedestrians at that time of the day. Left turn to Chain Lane and under the bridge to pick up Water Lane by the new estate, for the second section of off road. Right turn to Boroughbridge Road and left towards Farnham. Left at the T junction to pass through Scriven, and eventually a left turn at the little school to Lingerfield and a loop back to Knaresborough via Old Scriven, where we re-grouped to decide who would partake of a cafe stop. Several utterances of 'Grand Prix' were heard, before several of the group dispatched themselves in a cloud of smoke!! That's dedication for you! Four of the group stopped for a natter and cuppa by the river, before returning to Harrogate, not forgetting to pay homage to Beryl Burton, as we passed by her plaque!

Ok - now to own up! Due to having excellent back marking from Alison, I did at one point drift off in a reverie, and actually missed the left turn to Lingerfield!! Much to my

embarrassment, I had to own up after a mile or so! OOOps! Sorry! But thanks to the group for their cheery support and good natures! Next time I think I will opt for sat nav with a LOUD voice.....'Please turn left at the next junction!' Sarah E

