

Sunday, September 13, 2009
Wheel Easy Ride Report 177



Short Ride Report

My hopes of a gentle amble in the scorching sun were dashed as the six riders opting for the short ride wheeled and bunny hopped their way out of Hornbeam Car Park towards the path to Leeds Road. The sun was not bright or shining and the grey had replaced the blue of yesterday. We sped over Leeds Road and made our way to the Rossett footpath and the Squinting Cat at breakneck speed. New rider Mary E did more than keep up, as Darren and Nicola, the mountain bike riders, swooped and swished, swapping exciting mountain biking venues, as we cycled through Beckwithshaw virtuously, but sadly, avoiding Moor Park, climbing up towards Little Almscliffe, the peak of our journey.

The long down hill return was not to be, as the bunny hoppers and Peter decided to go onwards towards the Sun Inn and Penny Pot Lane, Lynda, Mary and myself carried along with their enthusiasm. We cunningly avoided the temptation of going to the village hall at Fewston, despite hungry eyes, and Peter had his banana stop before we turned eastwards towards Harrogate. Darren kindly stopped doing wheelies for a moment to give me a bit of a push up the hill at the beginning of Penny Pot, seeing how helpful Nicola had been on the slope up to Penny Pot Lane end. How lovely people can be to their aging leaders!!! What a joy the ride down to Ethelburger's was, even with the wind against us. The hill out of Oakdale was avoided by turning off along Joe and Geraldine's cut through onto the Duchy area and back through the Vallley Gardens to Cold Bath Road where Mary and Lynda left us and back to Hornbeam and home all done before mid-day. 17 miles at what seemed like tour of Britain speed. Well done all you new riders, and thank you Peter for being such a good back to front marker. CG

Medium Ride Report

Nearly 30 riders opted for the medium ride. We split into two groups. My group made their way to Boroughbridge via Knaresborough, Ferrensby, Arkendale, Marton Grafton and Aldborough. After coffee we returned to Harrogate via Roecliff, Copgrove and Knaresborough where everyone went in different directions to follow their own route home. It was a lovely ride, but possibly on the short side as we only rode 30 miles. Phil and John left the group at Boroughbridge and Copgrove to do extra miles. Paul T

Armed with Paul's print out of his medium ride, nothing could possibly go wrong, or so I wrongly thought as our slower medium group of 10 left Hornbeam a couple of minutes after the faster group. We had no trouble finding Knaresborough, had a slight blip when I confused Boroughbridge Road with York Road and another which meant we never quite made it onto Bar Lane. (Around this point, someone said something about it being an age thing.)

Fortunately none of this mattered and we made good progress to Arkendale (where Phil returned home) with only a moment's hesitation in locating Marton and Grafton. Here I headed confidently straight on towards the B6265 before a shout from Paul B brought us back to the left fork which led past The Punch Bowl along a lovely lane, and also - which apparently is quite important - in the correct direction for Aldborough, Boroughbridge and Gilchests Café.

Crawford, who is a good boy, then returned straight home for lunch. More worryingly, after refreshment, my guiding angel Paul also returned to take a more northerly route to Killinghall just as the faster group appeared unexpectedly, exiting the ginnel from the garden at the rear of the café. Clearly, there was a need to focus, and on the return journey I believe I managed (at least to my satisfaction, if no-one else's) to display an unexpected mastery of the art of ride leading, juggling conversation, particularly with Andi and Lynda, with a reasonably clear idea of the route we were following.

There was also the business of negotiating with Trevor, reassuring him every few minutes that it was OK that he wasn't going to get home in time to watch the start of the Grand Prix which, as he quite rightly said, is the most exciting part. (In my view, the only exciting part, but it didn't seem the right time to mention that.) At 1.00pm, the starting time, we did the decent thing and all offered our best impressions of sports cars on the grid to help him through what could otherwise have been a traumatic moment of Formula 1 deprivation.

So we cycled without mishap to Thorp Underwood, Whixley, over the railway crossing to Walshford, then through Spofforth to Follifoot. Here I took the direct route home up the bypass and Sarah, who had kindly acted with John as backmarker throughout the ride, led the rest back to Hornbeam round Rudding Park. Around 40 very pleasant miles. Malcolm

Long Ride Report

Returning home very late on Saturday night from 2 days in the Lake District, I checked the website and saw there was no long ride planned. So I quickly hatched a potential new route to Malham if there were no other options on the day. There weren't! So 10 of us set off at a brisk pace via Beckwithshaw, Menwith Hill, Greenhow, Stump Cross Caverns for our tea and toasted tea cake stop at the Cobblestones Cafe in Grassington. It's a shame the cafe doesn't give loyalty reward points for the number of times we've been there this year! Peter and James were both on tight time constraints so they then returned home. The remaining 8 continued in the breezy conditions northwards to Coniston, across the River Wharfe to

Kilnsey, and then climbing the valley of the River Skirfare to Arncliffe, where the signpost said 9 miles to Malham. Oops! We'd covered 35 miles so far so my rough estimate of 70-ish miles was now clearly on the low side. This is where the long hard climbs started. However the map shows only 3 up chevrons and 5 down chevrons suggesting that this is the easier way to cross between Arncliffe and Malham. Chris won the "King of the Mountains" trophy, followed closely by guest rider Rob - but 20 year old legs and mountain bike gears seem an unfair advantage! The photos show the pain etched on the faces of the riders on the climb, but - boy oh boy - this is one tremendous ride. The scenery is simply Yorkshire at its world beating best - Malham Cove and Malham Tarn - what a reward! What a view from above Malham with Airedale stretching out for many miles into the distance. We were blessed with wonderful visibility, and had photo stops with the Tarn and the Cove in the background. After Malham we headed down Airedale to Airton, then crossed more hills to Hetton and Cracoe. Whilst Ben, Glyn and Eric had stopped to fix Ben's puncture, Fletcher Christian decided that there would be no more steep hills, so instead of returning to Bolton Abbey via Burnsall and Appletreewick, we took the flatter route along the main road to Rylstone and Embsay, arriving at Bolton Abbey at 4pm. Pots of tea and some very large cakes were bought at the farm shop by Bolton Bridge. With time pressing, and miles increasing, we opted for the quickest flattest route home, so came through Beamsley, Ilkley, Otley, and then 'chainganged' along the main roads via Pool and Huby to reduce the energy sapping headwind. I arrived home at 6.15pm after a truly awesome ride. 85 memorable miles to magnificent Malham! 13 mph average. Congratulations to Alec & son Rob, Bill & Ben, Chris, Nick, & Glyn for a great achievement. This is a very special long ride that Wheel Easy should repeat each summer, but the distance and the hills make it one of our great challenges, so a 7.30 start would be recommended for the future to allow a more relaxed pace.

Note for the riders: Please let me know if you would like any of the full size photos from the day.

Eric



