

Sunday, October 25, 2009
Wheel Easy Ride Report 183



Great excitement today as Wheel Easy cyclists started arriving at 9.00 preened and groomed ready for Sky Sports who had come to film and interview us. They were doing a feature on cycling and having trawled the internet, found our excellent site and called Malcolm to seal the deal! The two guys who were thoroughly charming and likeable seemed to enjoy what they were doing and spent the next three hours trailing us on our ride to Beningbrough. Sixty riders had turned up at Hornbeam and we all enjoyed being in the spotlight for the day.

Phil stood in at the last minute to lead the long ride to Masham, two medium rides went to Beningbrough, a splinter group led by the EG's sped off after coffee at the Farm Shop to York and Dennis led the short ride to Brearton.

"Over the hills" for Sky(e)
Wow!, what a coupe for Gia and Malc.,
Sixty riders, creamed and covered in talc,
Swooped into Hornbeam, all stars for the day,
Interviewed and filmed as we peddled away,
To Beningborough Hall, a fine destination;
Sky Sport has a story to tell the Nation.

The Wheel Easy Website, held high in esteem,
Found by researchers of the Sky Sport team.
It created interest, it fitted the bill,
A social success, lots enjoying the thrill
Of cycling for pleasure, fitness and fun.
Reporters were sent to see what had been done.

The image was captured by the men of TV
For future broadcasting; the Nation to see.
They filmed from bushes, bridges and trees,
Even some shots of muscular knees.
With a following wind and even blue sky
Beningborough was reached on a definite high.

Though rested and fed, the return was a pain.
Enduring headwinds, hills and very cold rain.
But this was not filmed, and won't be seen.
No stoic determination to grace the screen.
But nought to two hundred, in three glorious year.
What an inspiring story for the Nation to hear!
Max

Short Ride Report

What a lovely day! Wet leaves on road and cycle paths, for some it was like being on an ice rink. The 20 short riders split into two groups with Dennis leading the first and myself the second.

Off we went out of Hornbeam onto Rayleigh Road and then to Stray Rein towards the Dragon cycle path, along Tennyson Avenue to Knox and Killinghall. Two of the riders nearly got left behind but I turned around and brought them back to the group. We all met up again at Ripley, enjoyed a stop there ('no ice creams, sorry!') and then went up the Ripon Road, turned right to Brearton, Scotton, and right again at Lingerfield to Scriven where we had another stop.

At this point we were all enjoying the ride, the rainbow and even the odd shower. From Scriven we cycled along Greengate Lane heading for Halfpenny Lane to Chain Lane and along Abbey Road. From Low Bridge some of us went on up Calcutt and home, others carried on along Waterside for a coffee and cake stop and the rest carried on up the A59 back home. Overall an enjoyable ride at a good pace. Darren

Medium Ride Report

Eight riders chose the medium ride. The ride to Beningborough Hall via Knaresborough, Farnham, Ferrensby, Arkendale, Great Ouseburn, Aldwark Bridge was full of incidents and amusing comments, mainly from Caroline. The focus for her wit were cyclists preparing themselves before passing the Sky camera and one of our respected cyclists stripping off beside the road before disappearing into the bushes. Most of her comments are unprintable!

The group kept up a good pace with Jo leading the way. Approaching Beningborough Hall we discussed whether we had enough National Trust cards to have refreshments in the café. Jo asked if anyone would like to be her husband for an hour. Wheel Easy just gets better by the week!

Arriving at the entrance we were met by Steve W who was waiting by himself for the medium plus riders. After consoling him we all went to the excellent café for refreshment. The return journey, following the same route, was a bit of a slog with the wind and rain in

our faces. Fortunately Phil S joined us and set the pace back to Harrogate. Although the weather was mixed, we all had a great 40 mile ride. Paul T

Medium Plus Ride Report

Great turn out, despite the weather not been quite up to its forecast. Today we were stars of the small screen, being filmed by two very pleasant guys from Sky Sports. It seems they had "found" us from our website. I believe our website has played an enormous part in Wheel Easy`s phenomenal success. Even if you can not cycle due to illness, injury, family holidays or any other every day life committments just reading the ride reports, the routes and the humour makes you feel like you have been cycling with your mates.

I will take this opportunity as out going Chairman to echo Gia thanks to to all the people behind the scenes who set up and maintain this website, your work is most appreciated. After decending on Beningborough farm for tea, coffee, cakes and some close up photography (where was that make up department?), and this time, thanks to Sue C we found the farm shop had a toilet, (blessed relief for the older guys), the high winds could make the hedge rows rather chilly today.

Six riders took their leave of Martin and his party and headed for York (Alec, Bill W, Dave P, Dave W, Peter and Roy), they are not allowed home early, their wives want a bit of peace and quiet, so it is said.

On to York via Shipton and route 65 cycle path. At Clifton Bridge the cycle path was closed and the route to Cliffords Tower had to be taken through the town (if you are going to York you might like to bear this in mind, I do not know how long it will be closed). It was tea, coffee, cakes and panninis in the cafe then on to the cycle path to Askham Richard. The wind was quite strong and a banana break was taken at Marston Moor " in bright sunshine".

Then into the wind to Tockwith (here Peter left us to head north) and Cattal. Dave W was on top form leading the attack (he is in for a drugs test next week). Dave W and Alec headed for Knaresborough, Bill , DP and Roy for Pannal.

Climbing out of Spofforth Roy remarked his legs were aching, DP ventured we might be met with hot tea and leg massage, brought back to earth by Bill who suggested "you are not coming in here with those shoes". Then it rained. A great day though , not just Wheel Easy numbers but with the number of other cyclists on the road it seemed like most of North Yorkshire were on bikes this Sunday. Dave P

Medium Plus Ride Report

It could have been Malcolm's email. You know, the one about Sky Sports being at Hornbeam Park to film the start of the Wheel Easy ride on Sunday?

Cyclists are not vain people but, in spite of foul weather, Sunday morning found 637 cyclists preening themselves in front of the camera at the Hornbeam Park. 637! This is truly remarkable when you realise that Wheel Easy membership currently stands at 205. Pandemonium prevailed. Three cars of police arrived and tried to instil some semblance of order. Areas were cordoned off for no apparent reason. Several loud hailers were used to no effect whatsoever. Malcolm gave an interview while fending off young groupies on BMX's. Gia announced that the medium ride was going to Beningbrough Hall via Knaresborough, Ferrensby and Aldwark, adding that the men from Sky would film us near Ferrensby. Over

500 signed up for the medium ride. The police, realising that they could have a major incident on their hands offered to escort us with blue lights flashing. And so it was that the peloton wove its way out of Harrogate towards Knaresborough. A spectator in a Zimmer frame was heard to say "Is the Tour De France still on then?"

At the riverside in Knaresborough a man in a Jaguar unwisely hooted at some of the front-runners only to find his car elbowed off the road by the sheer press of riders. He was last seen shaking his fist and yelling like a latter-day barge woman after an escaping Toad. And so we pushed on through rain and blasts of wind arriving en mass at Beningbrough Hall just as the sun broke through the clouds.

In the words of Rose Grimbley, proprietor of the farm shop, "First this red car pulled up and these two blokes with a camera got out. Next I heard this distant whirring, like a massive swarm of bees or the time my Ernie took his 1956 Morris Minor for a burn down the A1M. I ran outside and there was this herd, and I can only describe it as a herd, of cyclists approaching. All in yellow, blue and white lycra. This man put up his camera to take a shot and it was carnage, what with the cyclists all jostling for position and pushing each other off the road to get in front of the camera! Then, the minute the man from Sky lowered his camera, they all rushed into the shop, demanding food!"

Fearing a riot Ms Grimbley was forced to call on the support of a local army base. Squaddies rushed in a massive tea urn to meet the demand. She called in favours from farm shops and cafes all over North Yorkshire. Little vans carrying flapjacks, scones and teacakes descended on Beningbrough like small boats on Dunkirk. At Downing Street a beaming Gordon Brown gave a press conference, thumping the table and saying, "I don't care what the figures say, the recession is over. Consumer spending has reached unprecedented levels in North Yorkshire".

Meanwhile the men from Sky were treated to the unedifying sight of a large group of cyclists with their noses in the trough. Undaunted, they took shots of cyclists sipping tea, scoffing buns, posing on their bikes, reclining on the benches and blowing kisses at the cameraman (don't deny it Martin, we all saw you). Makeup was re-applied in the sunshine and final interviews were conducted. (Personally I thought I looked rather fetching in lycra and mascara and I still can't understand why they didn't interview me). Then the men from Sky waved good-bye and climbed into their car.

At once, a large group of cyclists began looking at their watches and mumbling things like, "Got to get home and wash the car" or "The wife's expecting me to take her to Leeds" or "It's my turn to walk the cat" before slipping away like thieves in the night. So a small, hardy group of about a dozen medium plus riders set off back via Whixley, Cowthorpe, Little Ribston, Spofforth and Follifoot while the skies hurled everything at us except snow. It was a bedraggled bunch that finally arrived back in Harrogate dripping water on many hallways. Great ride! Ian

Long Ride Report

What a start to GMT. Despite the winter weather the long ride headed for Masham at a frenetic pace forging through the rain to Hampsthwaite and Brimham. Here we lost a couple of riders who headed back home via Ripon while the remaining 8 (Charles, Chris, Dennis, James, James, Jeff, Malcolm and me) continued via Dallowgill Moor and Kirby Malzeard at a more moderate pace. A welcome lunch was taken at the usual cafe in Masham. For the return journey we opted for the easy route via West Tanfield and Wath. Just after Hutton Conyers the gremlins struck at young James's bike and once again the cranks fell to

pieces (apparently the same thing happened on his last Wheel Easy ride). Sadly, without Bill, we were unable to supply an Allen key of the right size but up stepped the patron saint of travellers (Chris) who carried on to Ripon and bought a complete set of Allen keys for £1.50.

Once the bike was fixed we carried on via Bishop Monkton without further mishap and ended the ride in fine autumn sunshine. The ride turned out to be enjoyable despite the wind and heavy showers and we completed about 55 miles. Phil



