



Poddlers Ride Report

Given the promise of a SW wind and no rain until later, ten Poddlers departed the "Beam". There would have been eleven but Max, though looking gorgeous in his skullcap, had omitted to add his helmet and headed home to take appropriate cerebral cover. Facing the SW wind (I don't think so), we manoeuvred and "surged" ourselves to Beckwithshaw, where Speedy Graham was patiently awaiting - this time suitably clad.

The slog to Little Almscliffe was punctuated by gusts, headwinds, eddies and what could have been a sirocco but was actually a straw laden lorry blowing its contents across our flight path. With typical Poddler determination, the entrance to Stainburn Forest was reached and Linda seized the opportunity to pull out her banana. Such was the delight on her face until, oh dear, the top half hit the mud. Just as she was about to retrieve, wipe and eat, a large be-gloved hand grabbed the offending object and in the manner of one wielding a cudgel, tossed it into the hedge. Poor Linda and poor Surge-on, who was only trying to make sure no-one ended up with mashed banana in his/her treads.

Upward and onward to "Dangerous Corner" and into the road to Menwith Hill. Two patrol cars had passed us but so far so good and then new boy, Grant aka Galahad, made his bid for camping points and a place in the banana-less Linda's heart forever. He spotted a coconut lying at the side of the road - a replacement of distinction. Alas, 'twas a common mangel-wurzel and not the trophy he had aspired to lay at the feet of the banana-bereft one. Our sweet Linda, however, declared herself "delighted" although she was overheard saying some coconut milk would have been more fortifying..

With a following wind, we sailed to Hampsthwaite and positively shot up the hill and into Grainbeck Lane. Ripon Road was traffic-free and Knox Lane and Ford were taken at a hurtling pace and then we reached what is affectionately known as "This is where Denis goes for lunch Corner". However, Denis

did not go for lunch - well, not straight away. He was awaiting Caroline and her saddlebag. A whispered interchange ensued between them and Denis was seen to pass an empty bottle (HP Sauce size) to Caroline who blushed and promised to fill it. All I can say is that Caroline must never be considered slow, merely sloe...

Various departures took place until I realised I was the only one heading back to the "Beam". 24 miles of perpetual Plodder pleasure - thank you everyone. Sue D

Click on slide show for all today's photos

Wheel Easy Ride Report

Great minds think alike! Both Martin and Malcolm had Cockpit Farm in their sights and with the wind behind us for most of the ride it was a great choice.

So that we didn't arrive too early (!) we ambled around Kirkby Overblow and Barrowby before heading along to Castley, Leathley, Otley and Weston. We had called ahead so Sue had the coffee going and she was pleased to be presented with a 2011 Wheel Easy calendar.

Return home via Askwith and up the hill to the moor. Nice to have the wind pushing us up the hill. This week Steve had his extra gear and it showed as he eased to the top. Angela had a problem which meant she couldn't get into her lower gears but still made it anyway.

After Timble Steve had a puncture but Rescue team Martin and Yvonne were there to help. Home via Stainburn Woods. Lots of hills, not so many miles but quality ones! 11x 35 miles. Gia

EG's Ride Report

So how come, when the weather forecast was for high winds and rain, did I find myself cycling up Lofthouse into the teeth of a Force 8 gale with horizontal rain? And into a hail storm up whilst trying to cycle up Yorke's Folly in the dark? And arriving home, soaked to the skin, at 7.15pm? And what on earth possessed the EG's to go to Masham in such conditions in the first? Well it's a long story - so brace yourselves!

It all started a week ago when Dave Preston, thinking he'd put his camera into his back pocket, had actually slipped it down the back of his tights. After accusing everybody in Tadcaster of stealing his camera, when no guilty party had come forward, he extended the orbit of his suspicion to the entire population of North Yorkshire. Later that day as he undressed to get into his bath, the 'stolen' article dropped onto the bathroom floor from his right ankle! Such was his embarrassment that he won't dare show his face on an EG ride ever again, and he's exiled himself to some distant part of Europe. There is also a rumour that he is now feigning dementia and was last seen pretending to look for his camera in the snow of Val d'Isere. Anyway, you get the picture, Dave P - our one-time esteemed leader, now disgraced - has fallen on his sword and can no longer lead an EG ride. So the EGs have the same power vacuum experienced when the dictator of a banana republic is forced out of office (Dave P: think yourself lucky - at least your head is still attached to the rest of your body).

Meanwhile back to the story..... the EG's had no leader, which always causes total confusion and amusement. Today was no exception.

"So where are we going today?" I enquired.

"Mmm" said one deep in thought

"Shhhh" said another, not wanting his concentration to be disturbed

"Mmm" repeated yet another

At this point John E came out of a deep slumber and thinking he'd heard "Masham", jumped on his bike and pedalled off furiously in that direction. We all tried to catch him up and tell him he'd completely misheard the conversation and we needed another 30 minutes of debate before we could decide on our destination. But it was too late: he was in time trial mode and was tucking into his coffee and tea cakes in Ripon before we could talk to him.

By now Bill was beside himself: "The rain's coming.....the wind's getting up.....look there's a big black cloud brewing over yonder hill.....it'll be dark soon.... and we're doomed if we go to Masham!" But it was to no avail. John E still had the bit between his teeth, and an hour later 8 EGs were sipping from bowls of hot soup in Masham. 3 EGs, Terry, Norman and John R, had listened to Bill's advice and cycled to anywhere, as long as it wasn't Masham. They were last seen heading out of Ripon towards

Boroughbridge. Astonishingly, Bill had ignored his own advice and was now tucking into fruit scones in Masham. So that's how 8 EGs got to Masham - it was all a big mistake!.

Over our soups, and Bill's fruit scones, we realised that the wind had been very kind in speeding us to Masham in record time. From now on, it would be payback time - big time - our return journey would be into the teeth of the ever increasing wind. Ian - on his first EGs ride - opted for the flatter route home along the main road. The rest would return on the lumpier route via Grewelthorpe, all except Peter, who had arranged to visit his son and daughter-in-law in Pateley Bridge for the evening. There's only one way from Masham to Pateley Bridge: Lofthouse! Not for the faint hearted, and this is no day for an EG to be tackling Lofthouse on his own, so I did the decent thing, and rode with him. Guess what? The rain came.....the wind got up.....there were 10 big black clouds over yonder hill.....and it did get dark soon.... and we were well and truly doomed! The conditions were horrendous, but we made it with a smile on our faces. Where would we rather be, I asked. In Queensland facing Cyclone Yasi as my daughter is? In Harrogate hospital recovering from a replacement hip operation as EG James is? Or cycling up the six chevrons of Lofthouse into a force 8 gale? Yep, we knew we had the easy option and we were happy with it!

A short while later we had peeled off our soaking boots, squeezed pints of water from our socks and gloves, and were drinking tea in the warmth of Peter's son's house. 15 minutes later, whilst Peter was still warming his toes in front of the fire, I was shivering outside on the doorstep, trying to put cold wet socks and boots back onto hypothermic feet. Then it was out into the dark, all alone, and Yorke's Folly! The wind was worse, and was knocking me all over the road, and even lifted me and my bike off the road. The rain was harder, and turned to extremely painful hail. The gradient was even steeper. It was so bad my mind went blank. Eventually I arrived home at 7.15pm. I was recovering in a hot bath with muscle relaxant, when she (my beautiful young muscle relaxant) said to me in her heavy Swedish accent, that if ever I do such a stupid thing once more, she will never, ever, again allow me to

(censored by P Tindle).

For the Captain's Log: 11 EGs set off from Knaresborough. 3 EGs returned via Boroughbridge, estimated 45 miles each. 6 EGs returned via Knaresborough, estimated 58 miles each, and 2 EGs (Eccentric Geriatrics) returned via Pateley Bridge, 63 miles each. 609 miles total

2011 Wheel Easy Miles (approx) Today 1258 YTD 12831



