



### Leeds Triathlon

Swim: 400 metres, Cycle: 20 km, Run: 5 km

We blame Yvonne! It was her idea to have a go at a triathlon and it is difficult to remember how or why we got talked in to it. Nevertheless the past few months have seen the plucky team dashing up and down hills in Valley Gardens, hopping between portable cones and even having a couple of goes at "the beep test". Some gained an unfair advantage by having a spot of coaching, swimming lessons and spinning training. So, having reached our peak of athletic performance the team, comprising Chris, Helen, Maureen, Monica, Sue, Sarah and Yvonne found themselves in the water at Leeds Grammar School awaiting the whistle. We must mention Maureen in despatches because she has only just learned to swim and steamed fearlessly, at the front crawl, faultlessly for the whole 16 lengths. None of us could remember any of the rules except that you couldn't use the steps to exit the pool and there could not, under any circumstances, be any deliberate or non-deliberate attempts at nudity. Heaving a sigh of relief, and our bodies, out of the pool somewhat gracelessly we happily started our specialist subject - cycling! This consisted of a dash out and back on the A61 Leeds-Harrogate road, negotiating some surprisingly severe undulations, traffic lights and quite a lot of (well behaved) traffic. I thought the short run at the end would be easy but it is surprisingly difficult to persuade your legs to go in a straight line after a strenuous bike ride. A bit of cheering and encouragement along the way certainly helped from random strangers and a few husbands. Keith had set his camera on the "sport" mode (!) so managed to capture a few of our less lovely moments when we were least expecting it. We all completed the course and finished in perfectly respectable times with Yvonne getting the fastest overall time of the Wheel Easy Team and then it was the final stage of the event - the dash to The Kestrel for a roast dinner and a few well earned drinks. There was a bit of beery chat about what we were going

to do next, ranging from "how about wild swimming?", to "I think I'll just go back to being a slob". Way back, when we first got roped in to this, I do remember Yvonne saying it would be good - we would all get a bit fitter and have a lot of fun along the way - and that is exactly what happened. Helen (Marvellous for me age)

#### A spectators view

We have some new heroes in Wheel Easy! Sarah, Sue, Yvonne, Chris, Maureen, Helen, and Monica all showed us how to really rise to a challenge today.

The pool was a test for most of the competitors and even getting out after 16 flat out lengths looked pretty strenuous from where I was standing. Then it was a rush to the bikes for 14 miles up the A61 to Harrogate Southern By-Pass and back. A rush was perhaps a little misnomer for Chris who enjoyed a chat, a picnic and a hairdo before setting off on her shopping bike, but she soon sorted out a few other cyclists who thought they were quick. Yvonne said she saw some Wheel Easy riders led by Paul Blackham at Buttersyke Bar roundabout, and almost failed to break the habit of 5 years by nearly following them instead of the triathlon course. Anyway Paul if you are wondering who that dripping purple suited cyclist was now you know.

The next transition took the riders to the 3.1 mile run. It was quite something to even get started as they all reported that the legs were wanting to point in all sorts of directions rather than the two circuits of Leeds Grammar School grounds, but some impressive pace was on show and everyone acquitted themselves really well.

The results - well everyone seemed bubbling over with pride in their achievements at the Kestrel afterwards so and that is a huge result in itself. Excuse me for being rather proud of my wife - Yvonne completed the whole course in 1 hour 36 minutes. That won her the age category and was a full 30 minutes quicker than the winner of the same category last year. I feel exhausted and all I did was drive the transport and watch! MartinW

Click on slide show for all the Triathlon photos

#### Saturday Ride Report

Seven riders converged on Hornbeam at 1.30 but two, Darren and Paul A, turned out to be completing a morning ride (with Steve B) to Pateley, and Jean decided to go straight to Spa Cycles to sort out a small mechanical. The rest of us headed to Boroughbridge, Les B and Richard S sped off via Ripon, while Alison and I took the direct route via Staveley at a more relaxed pace. The result was that all 4 of us arrived at exactly the same time at the Old Foundry Kitchen, which looked and tasted just like the Laden Table which it's replaced. We had our coffees together, but each returned to Harrogate separately by various routes at various speeds. On average about 35 miles each. Malcolm

#### Sunday Ride Reports

##### Short Ride Report

Rob, Arthur plus two Sue's gathered for today's Short Ride - had we had a dog, we would have been the "Famous Five". Instead we settled for the "Fab Four" and beatled (Oh, please, please) off towards Little Almscliffe and hence to Penny Lane (sorry, Pot). The pace was good though maybe not quite enough to keep up with the enthusiastic MG drivers who hurtled past at an alarming and throaty speed. We turned right beyond Little Almscliffe and spotted a loan figure approaching. We didn't hear the skirl o' the pipes as Scotland the Brave's beloved son stopped for a wee blether before carrying on to prepare Sunday lunch. Such are the skills of Crawford... Those of us denied such kindly attributes continued to the Hampsthwaite turn where we debated the options for the return to Harrogate. Cornwall Road and coffee and (yes, Rob, shortbread and brownies) Chez Moi or an extra three miles. Fitness rather than fatness won and we returned to Hornbeam via West, Hollins, Grainbeck and Knox Mill Lanes clocking up a commendable 20 miles at an average speed of 9.8 miles per hour. Thank you, Sue, Rob and Arthur and please come again! Sue D

Click on slide show for all the weekend photos

## Medium Ride Report

There were 19 Easy Wheelers for the Medium ride so we split into two groups with Caroline leading the second group. She claimed that she knew the route because it was her 'favourite route but the other way 'round'. It is Caroline's contention that doing the route in the other direction means that it is downhill all the way! I explained that I have some difficulty with this contention. It is never that easy in cycling. For example, I know that in the Netherlands it is always flat. But any Dutch cyclist will tell you that, no matter which direction you ride in, the wind is always against you. But a circular route that is always downhill?

Our group set off with nine members - soon to lose one to a puncture and another to a loose crank. Then we gained another who had chased us from the second group. Following the cycle path to Clifford, Denis was able to offer excellent local advice and led us to the start of the Wetherby cycle path but not without bumping into Caroline's group who were doing the route the other way 'round', downhill.

After stopping at Wetherby for refreshments we set off down the Wetherby to Spofforth route only to be caught by Caroline again who was definitely going downhill! Back in Harrogate, I was making my way back home when I met Caroline yet again! It was clear that my simple Newtonian approach to space and time was completely wrong. This woman can ride downhill all the way and miraculously manifest herself all over the place! Caroline, clearly a woman of the 21st century, will have no truck with Newton's understanding of the universe. She is someone clearly acquainted with the Higgs boson.  
Ian

As soon as you read this, if it ever gets to you, you must eat your computer for the safety of Wheel Easy. You could tell something strange was going on as Ian's speedier people carrier their bikes up the steps. The 7 who bravely decided to follow a slow meandering but dangerous mission, rode up the ramp. By the bottom of the hill up to Kirkby Overblow we had worked out that Alan should be with Ian's special agents.....he wanted speed and cakes. Having watched a cunning aerial display by a group of red kite spy cameras, we approached our first navigation point and here Alison cleverly suggested we change plans and instead of exhausting ourselves going up the Wetherby - Boston Spa downhill phenomenon, we would go downhill, backwards, and we would be at the peak of fitness ready for any eventuality throughout the ride.

Dressed as french onion sellers we entered Boston Spa car park, lead blindly and intuitively by Paul B. We had avoided capture by MOGS, who claimed to know the EGs, but were obviously just decoys set up by Ian's agents, because they disappeared into a suspicious looking driveway when they realized we had no knowledge of cycling to give them. Unfortunately, Dennis, one of Ian's agents noticed us lurking round the toilets, waiting for our information recorder to take a photo. Would they realise what we had planned? After one attempt, Liz the IR announced that she needed nice people for the photo, we would not do .....a crafty plan to prevent recognition.....and she started scouring the sunday streets of the Spa for more photogenic characters.

Onwards to Bramham past Alison's old school and memories of swinging upside down off the hall balcony, as we prepared ourselves for the down hill sweep back into Wetherby. Glyn disappeared suspiciously for the 13th time and Jen appeared to disown him.....another defector? Sue T. cleverly tested his loyalty as she feigned a wheel failure...Glyn, however, had it sorted in seconds. We attacked the Wetherby cycle path and soon managed to infiltrate ourselves amongst Ian's agents, who, due to too much coffee and cake, were caught off guard. His group totally unaware of our priceless and sought after uphill downhill knowledge, and certainly unaware of who and what we were. By Ridding Park and the turn off to the showground, unbeknown to anyone, including ourselves, we had completely merged into the enemies group, and the sleepers had slipped back into our other lives with no one knowing the intentions or results of our intended mission. The mission was completed with the loss of only 2 members - a female with dark hair and a red jacket and a female with dark hair and a blue jacket, but were they really cycling with us, were they really there. Ian and I certainly didn't know as we accidentally met up for the mission debriefing. We the downhill 7 completed 31.68 miles without resorting to coffee and cakes at an average speed of 10.34 miles an hour. Caroline

### Medium Plus Touring Pace Ride Report

60 miles not 55! Masham via Ripon and Snape. Home via Swinton, Grewelthorpe and Ripon. 14 riders, 3 ladies, 11 gentlemen. (including 3 EG's) 4 x Dawes, 2 x Treks, 2 x Hewitts, 1 x Thorn, 1 x Ridley, 1 x Ribble, 1 x Bob Jackson, 2x Van Nicholas. Later joined by 3 x EG's with 1 x Thorn, 1 x Dacordi and 1 x Sabbath! Hero of the day: Norman who rescued a cyclist from Yeadon with his "tub". Escapee from the Tour de France: Max who flew up the hills. Heroines of the day: Ruth and Helen. Introduced several riders to a new route bordering the Himalayan gardens and saving Peter from an expensive trip to the real thing. 1 x café stop at Masham. 2nd café stop for some at Ripon and entertainment from a band playing at the bandstand. Great day, excellent ride. Gia

### Medium Plus Ride Report

Unusually for the medium plus fast pace ride we had a ride leader (Darren), photographer (Glyn) and thanks to Gia a nominated reporter; but where was our leader? It soon became apparent that Darren had chosen to meet us at Occaney and so we departed taking an interesting route out of Knaresborough via Hazelheads Lane and Bar Lane before collecting the ride leader to become nine in total. Nick, who had got over his fixation with Lofthouse this week, had his sights set on Snape, however the rest of us agreed that our first stop should be in Masham and so we took a more direct route making very good time as we arrived at Suncatchers café at 11.30am. The extra miles (and effort) were put in after lunch around the hills of Grewelthorpe with plenty of climbs and fast descents in which to recover. At one point we thought perhaps Mark had been watching too much of the Tour de France on TV as he appeared to throw his empty water bottle away in true peloton style however it transpired that this was due to hitting a pothole on a fast decent dislodging his bottle which was quickly retrieved. Nick and Pete departed at Grewelthorpe, perhaps heading for Snape or Lofthouse and Darren and Martyn left the group at Bishop Monkton leaving Mark, Allison, Mark, Glyn and Richard to head back to Harrogate. Great weather again today, excellent company and a good workout with very few stops. Mileage approximately 9 x 60 miles. Martyn B.

### Long Ride Report

It was perfect cycling weather as ten riders left Hornbeam park on the long ride. Quiet roads through Kirkby Overblow, Weeton and Castley led us to Otley and Ilkley. As usual the next road to Bolton Abbey was full of cyclists enjoying the day. We then made for Burnsall on a switchback road ending in a fast descent to the village. Burnsall cafe was full to overflowing so we went to the snack bar in the village where we could eat outside and enjoy food and drink at very reasonable prices. Then followed the big climb out from Appletreewick where Ben paid the price for coming on his fixed gear bike. Greenhow was soon reached and then the fast ride down Duck Street led by Glyn and Phil, often averaging 25mph. We then went our separate ways to various parts of Harrogate. Due to a decent average speed of almost 15mph I returned to Knaresborough 40 mins earlier than expected. Approx. 65 miles. Geoff

2011 Wheel Easy Miles (approx) Weekend 2579 YTD 105411



