

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

Wednesday Rides



Poddlers Ride Report

A lovely sunny day for the Hornbeam gathering with lots of keen, bright-eyed W E-ers plus four new riders- Anne, Angie, Ethne and Sarah. Fifteen Poddlers set out via the hairpin ascent and headed for the Rossett Cycle Path where we split into a more manageable and road-friendly two groups. The sainted Max offered to lead the faster group. Caroline and I proceeded with Ann (suffering longterm ankle problems but a very accomplished cyclist), Ethne and Angie. It transpired that all of us had dabbled with trying to educate young minds so perhaps we are the "Ploddergogues"! We met our faster contemporaries at Stainburn Forest where Max permitted a brief photo call before leading the fast movers forward - and we never met again! A quick text ascertained that they had all returned without mishap.

An excellent ride ensued punctuated by concern re a cow which was "down" but as it was in view of the farmhouse, we decided it was either awaiting a vet or was just enjoying the sun! The road closed signs into Kirkby Overblow were ignored and any sign of roadworks had been carefully concealed so we hurtled (ish) to the end of Walton Head Road where Caroline waved farewell

and rode a solitary route home to the sumptuous fare provided by the saintly Max who was first home by a minute a two.

The remaining quartet cycled on crossing the A61 and turned to Burn Bridge where new girls, Ann, Angie and Ethne returned to their homes via Malthouse Lane.

Thank you the Burn Bridge Brigade and thank you everyone else. Sue D

Wheel Easy Ride Report

A blue sky was all that was required to convince us that today was the perfect day to view the rhododendrons in full bloom at Temple Newsome House. So the five of us, Sue, Sarah, Kevin, Colin and myself set off on what was to become the ridges and rhododendrons ride. Leaving Hornbeam via the usual route to Kirkby Overblow we then continued along the ridge to drop back down via Chapel Hill. The sky was clear and from the ridge the White Horse at Kilburn, Emley Moor mast and even the cooling towers of Ferrybridge were clearly visible. Colin pointed out Whernside as a visible but distant hill. So on we continued up Weardley bank (which felt as high as Whernside) to have a quick rest at the top on the memorial bench of someone from St. Christophers cycle club. We then passed around Eccup reservoir on our way to Roundhay Park, through wooded areas that were carpeted with bluebells. The cycle route from the park to Temple Newsome was immaculate today having obviously had a thorough spring clean, barely a shard of glass to be seen and no evidence of nocturnal car bonfires anywhere. We could even have been in the countryside of North Yorkshire instead of the back yard of the Seacroft and Halton Moor estates. Again the ridges gave us panoramic views over the city centre and way beyond. The rhododendrons did not disappoint us in any way, out in full bloom and standing over 10 feet tall they could only have been described as spectacular, with the added bonus that on our right hand side the multitude of flame coloured azaleas were also at their flowering peak. Leaving Temple Newsome we continued our journey mostly via cycle tracks to Garforth and on via Barwick to Wetherby where we decided this was surely a two coffee ride and popped into Costa. Having spent a good proportion of the ride so far, on traffic free routes it seemed only fitting to return to Harrogate along the Wetherby-Spofforth cycle way. Kevin decided that he would like his memorial bench at the top of the Yorkshire showground hill preferably fitted with a defibrillator on the back. 50 miles a fantastic route in fabulous company with great weather who could want more? Angela

Long Ride

With Hornbeam offering no prospect of a parking space at 9.30, the hill-seekers group got off to a late start while Richard kindly sorted out a parking

spot for your Leeds correspondent. Another argument for using the train, I think.

The group of 6 regrouped near Beckwithshaw with Menston as the target. The route past Almscliffe Crag and on to Leathley proved to be a first for a couple of the group and was marked as a 'do again' ride.

The ascent of Old Pool Bank brought any unnecessary conversation to a halt and, sadly, led to one of the party turning back. While crossing the top of the Chevin the rumours about the demise of the Royalty Inn were confirmed by the for sale boards and the shuttered windows. Let's hope it will have another life as a hostelry of some sort.

Once in Menston, it was clear that Ilkley would offer a richer vein of cafe choice. So, up and over the Cow & Calf we went, even though it was by the 'easy' route. Flags at the Cow & Calf cafe were interesting: the White Rose, the Union Flag, the EU flag plus the Italian tricolour. My guess is that the owner is Italian. On reaching Ilkley, Richard had us all worried when he pulled up near to Betty's, but diverted us to the "The Tearoom" for a stop at 12.00. Unfortunately, the breakfast menu with all the usual cyclist's staples (bacon, beans etc) finished at 11.30. So it was the 'county' menu and with Ilkley in the Season, prices were at the upper end of the scale. However, the Yorkshire Brak Tea Loaf is worth a try - good and solid.

At this point Julie, still recovering from the Caledonian Etape, and William headed back to Harrogate via Askwith and High Snowdon to give 43 miles and some good hills to finish their day.

Part two of the main ride began with the back lanes to Bolton Abbey and wonder at the now tiny bridge that used to carry the A59 over the Wharfe. Discussions at Barden revealed the choices before us: either A59 over Blubberhouses/ Kex Gill or B6265 over Stump Cross. Settling for A59, we negotiated the switchback through Storiths, marvelled at the huge and ancient tree at the roadside to reach the day's killer hill at Hazlewood. Probably a gradient of 1 in 4 or thereabouts, it revealed Peter to be the day's strongest rider; Richard and Terry settled for a push over the last section.

A59 was the usual pleasure that an A road brings but being a short stretch it proved worthwhile, giving way to the bridle path and lanes to West End. Here, idle talk of the agonies of cramp proved prophetic, as the sharp rise from Blubberhouses towards Timble gave Terry a quicker taster! Luckily, nothing too debilitating.

A quick search for tea at Fewston proved unsuccessful, although the staff at the Heritage Centre were very nice in bringing us the bad news.

After that it was back to Harrogate via Penny Pot Lane and a welcome but intricate route through Jennyfield, Coppice Valley and the town centre. In all, 58.7 miles back to Hornbeam and a sense of well being - after a soak in the bath!

Many thanks to Richard for leading us, despite struggling with a slipping chain for most of the day, to Peter, Julie, William and Dave for their many cheerful contributions. A grand day out. Terry Smith

EG's Ride Report

11 EGs assembled at Low Bridge, and - unusually in the absence of our leader DP - by 10.02am we had a plan for the day and we were under way.

The first stop would be coffee in Morrisons at Wetherby, and to avoid the hazard of a large group of cyclists on the Knaresborough-Wetherby road we would have smaller groups at different speeds. So once we'd crossed the bypass John E sped off into the distance, followed by Eric and Marvin. The three covered the 5.5 miles to Wetherby in 16 minutes at an average speed of 20.6mph. Having had our first play for the day, we could then relax at more typical EG speeds for the rest of the day.

Just before we left Morrisons a very large contingent (25+) from the York Wednesday Wheelers arrived to refuel, Morrisons certainly do well out of cyclists!

Our route took us through Sicklinghall, and down Kearby Bank where we indulged in another EG game: the freewheel competition. On this occasion our distances were well down on previous events due to the strong headwind. Then on to Harewood Bridge, up Weardley Bank to Horsforth where we bought sandwiches, panninis, cakes and goodies galore from the village bakery and sat down at the cricket ground for a good scoff whilst admiring the long range views down the lower Aire valley.

The ride continued along Otley Chevin - another stop to admire the panoramas over the Wharfe Valley and beyond to the North Yorkshire Moors and the White Horse. A glorious descent from the Chevin took us into Otley and on to the the Cock Pit Farm Tea Room, where we indulged once again. Theo entertained us with stories of his army training on Brecon Beacons. His explanation of how he came to be in very close proximity with a sheep was that he got out of the slit trench in the middle of the night for his spell of guard duty, and when he returned a couple of hours later, a sheep had moved into his space. Likely story - I don't think the judge would fall for that one - but great entertainment, thanks Theo!

We then climbed Askwith Bank, and descended to Swinsty & Fewston. Some returned to Harrogate and Knaresborough via Little Alms Cliff, and others along Penny Pot Lane. 50 miles covered with 2,700' ascent @12.6 mph average. A great ride, with clear visibility giving fantastic long range views, albeit a little chilly at times. Eric



