

Wednesday, January 2, 2013

## Wednesday Rides



### **Poddlers Ride**

Either the cycling fraternity of Harrogate had not heard or they are not as plucky and sturdy as had been imagined, but only 6 people managed to brave the elements ...well rain again.... and get to Hornbeam to queue for the honour of being led on one of El Butler's iconic rides. Even the designated back marker had opted out and I had been promised any number of things if I took his place. So it was with joy and delight that 5 people (we lost Phil who was talking to Gia ...obviously about Cafes) followed El Butler out of Hornbeam towards Pannal, Spacey Houses, Hags Lane to Spofforth...leaving 6 desperate coffee drinkers still at Hornbeam, deciding which cafe to head for. By North Rigton the rain had stopped and we decided to extend the ride. The road to somewhere and part of Plan A was flooded and even El Butler decided it would not be a good idea to swim with bikes back to Wetherby. So Plan B was launched and just as we struck out along roads we had never ridden along and through places we had never been in before, the EGs managed to catch up with us and posed and pouted for a modelling assignment. Suddenly we were powering through the Thorpe Arch Trading Estate and down the Harland Way to Spofforth. El Butler rushing home to check Dorethy was ok after a bout of something nasty, Dave, like myself, to get home and feel smug about doing 34 miles, Jen and Glyn to cycle back to Leeds...except Jen had to drive the car, and Alison to meet Gordon who like Max was not plucky enough to cycle in yet more rain. So within 45 minutes we had gone our separate ways after a very satisfying, very enjoyable morning following in the wheels of El Butler. Caroline G.



### **Wheel Easy Ride**

We decided that we need to be more focussed about our rides in 2013 so six of us set off for Ilkley with the Timble route the preferred option. So we were guaranteed some hills and luckily skirted the rain that we could see in the distance. Phil left us at Norwood where the rest of us climbed the moor and then in typical fashion and with rain threatening sped straight down the hill to Otley on the main road which is a route we rarely use. After a café stop in Otley we returned via Farnley and Lindley reservoir arriving back in Harrogate with 29 miles ridden and lots of good hills. Gia





### **EG's Ride - Floodwatch 2013 ride report**

The weather man promised drier weather in 2013, but the sound of my crunchy breakfast cereal was drowned out by rain clattering on the conservatory roof. Not a promising start to the day! Fortunately the rain stopped before setting off to Low Bridge, but it had put off several EGs as only 7 turned out today. Some - including DP, our revered ride meister, had been smitten by the winter vomiting bug and were confined to bed. So we had to hatch our own plans today. I suggested we should go on one of DP's favourite quests to Acaster Malbis, to see which way the River Ouse is flowing: downhill to the North Sea, or uphill to York if the tide is flowing upstream? Today the issue would be more challenging - would we be able to get to Acaster Malbis at all? So we set off on the "EG Floodwatch 2013". Our route took us via Little Ribston, Cowthorpe, Tockwith and Rudgate where we could see we were catching up a group of cyclists ahead. "Let's go and chat up the local talent" suggested one EG, so there we were 7 EGs, chatting up Caroline and her other Poddlers! Well that's my excuse m'lud! We continued to Wighill where, joy oh joy, we found our first flood: not a little pond, not a field or two, but a massive lake covering several square miles from Boston Spa to Tadcaster, with Newton Kyme on the far side. Some photos recorded the scene, then on to Tadcaster where the River Wharfe was brimful but crossing the bridge was still possible - apparently this was not so a couple of days ago. More photos - Floodwatch is going very well indeed. After coffee and a calorie or two in Tykes café we resumed Floodwatch by heading through Oxton, but before we got to Bolton Percy our road was blocked by our second flood: not a little pond, not an inch or two across the road, but The Foss had flowed over the surrounding fields and the road was under water as far as the eye could see. Judging by the height of the hedgerow above the road, it looked as if the water was several feet deep. So more photos and satisfying thoughts that Floodwatch 2013 was going extremely well. However Plan B was now required, as Acaster Malbis was out of the question. So we retraced our steps to Oxton, and then via the cycle path alongside the A64 to Askham Bryan, where we discovered there were 2 versions of our Plan B. 4 thought Plan B would turn homeward at Askham Bryan: so 3 of us bade farewell to them and set off on Plan C to York. We took the main Tadcaster Road into the centre and then had the wonderful unexpected site of the Knavesmire under flood. Brilliant - more photos! What a fantastic Floodwatch this is turning out to be! Plan C would join the cycle path alongside the River Ouse at Lendle Bridge, where we found our way blocked by very large flood prevention gates. More photos revealing the cycle path on the other side of the gates was now well and truly part of the River Ouse. Plan D was quickly hatched, we'll go downstream and cross over the next bridge so we could see how the pubs were faring. The answer was not very well. More photos! We then took the A19 north from York to Shipton, and on to Beningbrough Hall. Our intention to replenish lost calories at Home Farm was thwarted as it was closed. So we continued through the park until we hit yet another flood barring our way. Well, not quite - thought Peter! After much debate, and dare I say encouragement from the other two, Peter set off through the flood, then with loud expletives from one EG, and hilarious laughter from the other

2, Peter came to an abrupt halt in the middle of the flood and had to walk his way through. Plan E was now required - Dave S and EW turned round and took the road around Beningbrough Park to Newton-on-Ouse where we found Peter on a bench on the village green, wringing his socks out. Between the houses in the village we could see a new lake where previously the River Ouse flowed. Then on to Linton-on-Ouse with huge floods on both sides of the road - more photos - including one with a long range view with the White Horse in the distance. For a long time we'd been wondering whether we would be able to cross the Ouse at Aldwark Toll Bridge, and prepared Plans F, G and H in case we couldn't; these would involve Thornton Bridge, Topcliffe and Skipton-on-Swale respectively. Much to our relief Aldwark bridge was well above the surrounding floods (more photos), and we could then speed back to Knaresborough and Harrogate, arriving home at 5.45pm. 66 miles. What a ride! What a Floodwatch! What a start to 2013 rides! Can they get better than this? Eric







