

Sunday, March 16, 2014

## Wheel Easy Ride Report 411

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### Short Ride

Well the day was not looking good, a gale had howled at me all night, reminding me I needed to find a route that was sheltered or a route that was all towards the east or no route at all. So twelve people opted for a short slow tussle with a forceful wind, circling round the north of Harrogate to Beckwithshaw, Hampsthwaite and Ripley. All went according to plan, an in your face wind up to Beckwithshaw, where Val and Kevin decided not to risk anymore gusting and retraced their tyres back home, and we continued down the dangerous hill and sneaky bridge up to Pennypot Lane with the assistance of a following wind. Or was it the draught and slipstream of two familiar riders who flashed past us on the hill up. As we gathered our strength to attack an A59 crossing and plan the next stage of the training Tour of Hampsthwaite, a lady came out of her corner café and told us all about her jolly Tour de France celebration plans for the 6th July 2014, I did not like to tell her we would be busy being the reserve Omega Pharma Quickstep team. Julie and Chris left us with a sensible diversion down West Lane thus avoiding the drag out of Hampsthwaite on their way home.

We, the remainder of the training squad, swooped gracefully down into Sophie's village and despite the lure of Farrow and Ball, Martin and Fiona decided they should head home as quickly as possible....quite sensible under the circumstances....we could have had snow next. The six remaining ladies rushed into the café, for a quick refreshment/comfort break. I noticed nestled amongst a surfeit of little wire bicycles, two gentlemen snuggled up on comfy sofas, with cups of frothy coffee, and large chunks of sticky cake. They had abandoned a medium excursion towards Almscliffe and were apparently waiting smugly for a taxi to take them home.

We, on the other hand had more of our training regime to carry out, and had to attack the Col du Clint, and the Ripley New Path and the Ripley Cobbles. As we tussled with the Ripley Cobbles we noticed two more escapees from the medium conquest of Stainburn. Malcom and Martin were skulking outside a shop clasping cups of what could have been coffee. I assumed that they were waiting for the same taxi as Paul and Steve. The six ladies of the training squad had mountains to conquer and valleys to climb, so we had to continue out of Ripley and onto the lovely lime GreenWay and home, Carolyn, Linda and Sue T. heading down the left fork to Starbeck and Knaresborough, Diane leaving at the Iron Bridge fork, and Caroline and Monica following the path to its end at Asda. A very unpromising set of weather forecasts, but good company and beautiful scenery made for a super completed ride. Thank you Julie for your lovely back marking. 18.5 miles on the Threadgold measuring scheme. Caroline G.

### Medium Ride

It looked so simple on paper - out to Stainburn moor, and then a loop taking in Almscliffe Crag, Weeton and Kirkby Overblow. Weather forecast sunny, 11C. Twenty plus members gathered at Hornbeam, and set off behind three ride leaders, Alison, Justin and Peter. And yet, this turned out to be the Grand National Medium, with riders abandoning every few miles, and the finishers, with plenty of miles under their belts this year, relieved to get round. The reason? The windiest conditions that anyone could remember. The forecast was for 20+ mph westerlies, and that's exactly what we encountered. The climb up to Stainburn car park is usually straightforward enough, but grinding away into the teeth of the wind it felt more like Buttertubs or Holme Moss. I thought it would get better as we turned south east into Stainburn Wood, but it was almost as bad, and the only respite came when we dropped into Lindley. Some sensible folk having turned for home, we rode as a single group for a few miles, but then split in groups of four to navigate the drop into Huby, and then that awkward stretch of the A61. The final hurdle was that stinker of a hill in the show ground - straight into the wind, yet again. Those with gizmos reported that we had ridden just 23 miles, but perhaps we should add another 10 for managing so many miles 'wind against'. All in all an enjoyable morning, but let's hope for a little less wind next week. Justin



### **Medium+ Ride**

Fourteen people braved the wind and set off for Ripon via Bishop Monkton, pausing only for a Dave Preston freewheeling competition after Farnham.

The only feasible café stop was at Spa Gardens where we were the first cyclist to arrive and enjoy the pleasure of a short queue and plenty of table space in the sunshine.

Leaving Ripon we headed out to Galphay along quiet rolling lanes. At a short regrouping stop we noticed a turkey in a field. On noticing us the turkey put on an impressive display, fanning out his tail feathers and clucking loudly. Some of the group interpreted this as aggressive behaviour, especially as the nearby notice board read: 'Beware of the turkey but can recommend the roast beef'! In fact, it was courting behaviour, the turkey having taken a fancy to Dave Siswick's red jersey.

Back on the B6265 we faced the cyclist's worst nightmare: uphill and into a strong headwind. It's fair to say that it was a grind all the way to the Brimham Rocks turnoff. In fact, the wind blew so hard that Jill and Martin found themselves in a heap next to the road after a gust forced Jill into the bank. Fortunately it was on a steep uphill section so nothing was hurt except their pride.

From Brimham Rocks we were repaid for our hard work with a triumphant swoop down to Clint from whence most of us took the Greenway extension through Ripley back to Harrogate, the posh people having elected to go for coffee at Sophie's in Hampsthwaite. Ian







### **Long Ride**

Phil, Geoff and I set off not knowing where the weather would take us. First a mini tour of Harrogate cycling banners and photo studio then the main road to Ripley. Beadlam Bank came and for me at the back with the wind seemed to stay. Cut Throat Lane and then more into the winds to Brimham, once Phil had rejoined the tarmac from a lift off. Democracy said no to Lofthouse so down but still westwards through Smelthouses and Beverley, thence a spacharm tea stop. Though the food and prices bettered the owner's greetings,- the blackboard promised a warm welcome, but I think the walkers too will have wondered. A fast and noisy (wind) return to Clint with Geoff breaking off for Knaresborough via Shaw Mills, and two for Ripley, slightly delayed by yet another puncture on Hollybank. Just 38m but more enjoyable. Richard

