

Sunday, March 22, 2015

## Wheel Easy Ride Report 464

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### Short Ride

Sadly no ride leader today as Sue Downes was ill. Hope you feel better soon Sue. Sue kindly printed her route for us and thirteen of us set off. We had a new rider, Katie, welcome to you Katie. Hope to see you again soon. We took the route Leadhall Lane, Squinting Cat, Sun Inn, Penny Pot Lane, left at the army college to Sophie's at Hampsthwaite. No-one wanted the short option to return to Harrogate without a visit to Sophie's. Bacon butties and scones eaten we set off up Clint Bank and to Harrogate via the Greenway without Jenny and Katie who returned up the hill back to the A59, and sadly Sarah who found had a puncture on leaving Sophie's. A total of around 25 miles.

Thanks to everyone who led the second group and backmarked. Jean B



### Medium Ride 1

Ee I'm worn out. Nine of us set out, one fell by the puncture wayside but another was collected at Low Bridge. All blokes, ergo less rabbit, more cycling – hence the exhaustion.

Poor old James had TWO punctures and abandoned the exercise. The rest of us got to Fountains the hard way, i.e. UP the Deer Park. The planned arduous route back via Shaw Mills and Hampsthwaite was replaced (unanimous decision) by diverting to Ripley and the Greenway. Nonetheless we did about 33 miles on a gradely day to be in the saddle.

(Note to self: always exchange mobile numbers with the back marker.) Paul B



### **Medium Ride 2**

A lovely morning for the first medium ride after the vernal equinox. Paul Blackham took 8 riders with him in the first group, Geraldine and I took 7 in the second; Marion made it a total of 10 at the last minute. Gentle progress to Low Bridge; lots of bikes out and about, but not much traffic. Bishop Monkton and into Ripon. Gordon guided us very neatly through Ripon (no cathedral or loo stop, I'm afraid). Sue Threadgold left us at Ripon. On to Studley and the bottom of the Deer Park. Some rather strange car driving as we ascended to the church and obelisk at the top, but no deer. Coffee and cake at the Fountains visitor centre, where we met up with Paul's sub-group. Gordon and Alison left us there, so 7 of us left Fountains heading for Markington, and Geraldine managed to round up 4 of us for a photo. Past the gypsy camp, where a gypsy was feeding his hens and tending to his solar panels! Unanimous agreement not to do Shaw Mills and Clint Bank, so back via Ripley and the Greenway. About 31miles. Clive PS



### **Medium Plus Ride**

It was a beautiful spring morning as 11 riders set off from Hornbeam towards Knox and Hampsthwaite and onwards to Brimham Rocks. We all did the track to Dallowgill Moor and found it ok if a little stony in places. Bill decided his best option to protect his rims was to walk it, which left the rest of us plenty of time to enjoy a snack in the sunshine. Riding along the path on the top of the Moor we had great views and a very nice descent into Laverton and Kirkby Malzeard. A lovely ride from there on the road into Ripon and welcome refreshments at Spa Gardens. Our route home from Ripon took us to Burton Leonard and through the Mountgarret Estate. A first timer for a few carrying their bikes over the ford. It was a very pleasant and quiet way to go to Ripley and from there we took the Greenway home. An excellent route for such a fine day and good company as always.  
45 miles Gia and Monica



### **Medium Plus DIY Ride**

Set out for Burn Bridge with new member Michael on DIY ride but were soon caught up by Paul T who was on his own much shorter route. Crossed the clear A61 to Kirkby Overblow and pressed on to Sicklinghall, admiring the formation flying of circa 700 golden plover en route. Paul left us at the Linton turn off and we sailed on to Collingham. About a mile on we found Terry S who had ridden out from Leeds to meet us, and he guided us on to Thorner and thence to Bramham and Boston Spa, finally taking a well-earned break at the trading estate café. Michael then left us for the quick route home via Wetherby while Terry and I rode via Rudgate to Cowthorpe, Little Ribston and Spofforth, where Terry took his own route back to Leeds and I returned to Harrogate via Follifoot suitably exhausted after a 42mile round trip in glorious sunshine. Peter B

### **Long Ride 1**

La Primavera – Spring heralded a unique event today – a trio of long rides. First off was Sarah (long ride variant 1) at 08:30. Next to leave were Peter L and Dave (variant 2) and finally the lazy cyclists at the traditional Wheel-Easy time of 9:30. All 3 groups overlapped in Cobblestones café in Grassington with variant 1 heading off to Littondale and Bolton Abbey, while variant 2 heading up Park Rash. The lazy cyclists lingered over their baked beans in the warm sunshine at the back of the café but were eventually forced to leave and follow variant 2 up Park Rash. What can you say about the possibly the steepest climb in the dales? Stunning, beautiful, awesome spring to mind as well as one or two less polite phrases however, the descent through Coverdale was simply fantastic in the bright sunshine and made all the effort worthwhile. All 8 cyclists made it as far as Masham where we met variant 2 in Johnny Baghdad's café. Variant 2 returned

via West Tanfield while the lazy cyclists opted for Kirby Malzeard and Fountains. Unfortunately Richard L suffered a chain malfunction forcing him to limp home along the main roads accompanied by Eric. At the time of writing no report of them has been received I hope they got home all right.

We covered 73 miles and this ride must surely be a true Spring Classic. Phil S





## Long Ride 2

I couldn't face such an early start as Sarah nor contemplate a later sprint with the Long Group, so my mate Dave and I chose a 'middle way' and left Harrogate centre just after 8:30. As we all know, the morning was fine and clear, but riding across the Stray and through empty, quiet town streets made it extra special (N.B. the calm may have contributed to a car driving the wrong way along West Park!). At Penny Pot we were about 20 minutes behind Sarah, but their group remained out of reach until we surprised them in Cobblestones cafe at Grassington. With a westerly breeze Duck Street was a grind as usual, but the cold headwind through Stump Cross and Grimwith reminded us that winter is not yet gone.

Refreshed from the cafe, we made room for the Long Ride Group and headed off with Sarah's group until we parted at Conistone. Walkers heading down in to Kettlewell cheered us on as we headed up the initial steep incline towards Park Rash. The valley heading up to the foot was simply stunning, empty and quiet - but with a 'slab wall' facing us further on (see photo). Suffice to say that we both ascended successfully, only encountering a couple of cars (typically at the most inconvenient spots) - but it was hard. I was grateful for my touring gear - I don't use it

much, but you when you need it. After a pause at the summit we headed down through Horsehouse and then took the road on the south of the valley through West Scafton. We agreed this was the best bit of the day's ride. Indeed it should be compulsory for cyclists to go that way as it reminds you why cycling is such a pleasure - quiet roads, mostly downhill, little hamlets and cottages with pretty gardens, fields of sheep and lambs - including the noisiest flock we had ever heard, interesting buildings and bridges and a short cut to East Witton to boot. From the top of Park Rash to Masham was about 20 miles of just glorious cycling. We stopped for tea in Mr Baghdad's cafe in Masham where the Long Group caught us again and we swapped tales before the final stretch via West Tanfield, Wath, Ripon, Littlethorpe, Harrogate and home. A brilliant day of exactly 80 miles. Wonderful weather and a 100 Greatest Climb in the bag - and it's still only March! Peter L



### **Long Ride 3**

Four of us set off from Penny Pot at 8.30am in surprisingly benign conditions and potted along to Grassington. Despite an empty cafe we chose to sit in the rear garden and sunshine. We were briefly joined by Peter L and Colin, and then the main group, eager for some calories, so we made good our escape to Kettlewell before we were led astray to revert to the original route to tackle Park Rash. We enjoyed spying coltsfoot (the harbingers of spring), wood anemones, skylarks, oyster catchers, peewit, and curlews and as we approached lovely Littondale, a host of multi coloured paragliders, performing loop the loops and various other circus tricks. We were all ready for further refreshment by Abbey Tea Rooms and were again rewarded with a table in warm sunshine. Honorary Team Leader (retired) needed TLC, generously supplied by fellow Wheel Easy members, to pedal the final miles home. Thanks to all for a super day. 75 sunny miles. Sarah C

