

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

## **Wednesday Rides**

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### **Poddlers' Ride**

Twelve Poddlers set off in the spring chilly sunshine towards the Stray and down the Greenway and onwards to Ripley, this was Gordon's 'Backwards way round' route or as they say in Yorkshire 'backroads'. At the Ripley roundabout we had to wait for quite a while before a break in the traffic made it possible for us to move onto the Ripon Road and turn right down towards Nidd, through Scotton, Farnham and then to Staveley. The daffodils warming to the sun, were abundant on the verges as the sun shone down on us as we swept towards Arkendale, unfortunately the village hall café is only open on the first Wednesday of the month so no coffee and cake for a £1, no refreshment stops at all. Glyn and Jen investigated the newly refurbished Blue Bell Pub, and came away with invites to that night's open evening and free food. Though I think the new cushions on the new outside chairs were more interesting and Glyn probably was caught in the act of purloining them for his conservatory!! Dennis took off at speed and we dashed after him to reach Coneythorpe and then onto the most dangerous part of the ride, trying to cross the A59, dicing with death, after thinking the traffic was never going to give us a break to get across, finally everyone safely got to the other side and turned down to Goldsborough on a calmer road.

Reaching Knaresborough the disappearing act kicked in and there was only five left, who went down Abbey Road meandering through people and dogs, four to climb the steep hill to Harrogate and Liz went up the Beryl Burton cycleway to Bilton. Around 30 sunshine miles though chilly at times. Gordon

### **Wednesday Ride**

Nineteen of us enthusiastically set off to Low Bridge with Ripon first stop and Masham our target destination. There were of course the usual rumblings about the first coffee stop which for the Masham group did not happen until 32 miles on the clock! Mutiny? No, but good humour and conversation to make those last few miles easier especially as Stewart realised that whenever there were signs for Masham we seemed to be ignoring them.

We were sorry to lose James in Knaresborough for a gremlin in his tyre, Paul and Martin who stayed to help him but it was part of their secret mission to stop for coffee at Ripon, which they did. There they scooped up Jon and Jen who joined them for coffee before their return to Harrogate. Welcome back Jon after many months absence and for the very thoughtful bag which he presented to me from the Glasgow Institute of Architects. See picture.

John R left us at Ripon too and we met Dan who was circling the Wheel Easy groups as he had set off with the EG's. We rode to Masham ably led by guest of the week, Jill on day release from the library, through Kirklington, Carthorpe and Snape.

At Johnny Baghdad café, Monica kindly reminded us that we needed to pay our subs else we would be struck off, and doubts were raised whether we had all paid up.

The sun was out and one climb left past Swinton Golf Club and up towards Ilton. From there we had wonderful views first down to Masham, then the Himalayan Gardens on our right and then ahead of us towards Ripon. The run down to Grewelthorpe and on to Ripon is a dream, fast and gently downhill so we kept up our average to Ripon. There Terry led us back to take Lark Lane through to Bishopton Lane, shortcutting Ripon and from there we took the easy route home via Littlethorpe, Burton Leonard and the Mountgarret Estate to Nidd and the Greenway.

Brilliant ride, great company, new route and bits of route for several and 63 miles on a fab day. Apologies for rogue pic in the pack but forgot to include this pic from last week somewhere around Dallow Gill! Gia





### **Wednesday Long Ride**

Four set out today knowing that it was a day to head west towards Wharfedale – the full extent of the route plan at that point! In deference to Richard L's time trial machine with its narrow wheels and tyres, in use today as the road bike was at the mender's following Sunday's problems, we stuck to tarmac for the rest of the day, some of it billiard-table smooth, especially along the back road to Ilkley. High gearing allowed Richard to outpace us along the flats and downhill but gave us a chance to re-group on the hills. Our pictures show something of the pattern of the day.

Langbar summit gave us a preview of the views to come, starting with Pendle Hill away to the west. A deserted Abbey Tea Rooms provided an early lunch during which the next leg of the route emerged – out to Barden and over the top to Embsay. The road closure for motors at Broad Park Bridge served us well as it meant the climb up to Halton Moor was largely traffic-free, although a nest of bird watchers had managed to squeeze past the barrier, instruments trained

on the valley below. Turrets looking like railway tunnel vents were, Richard P informed us, shafts for tunnels taking water from the reservoirs in the north towards, we assumed, Bradford. Although the gradient to Halton Moor was taxing – a debut climb for some – the views from the top were full compensation, as would be the tea stop at Ilkley which was to be the next leg of our route. Heading towards Halton East we greeted the friendly face of fellow WE member Colin Irving, coming in the opposite direction. Colin hadn't been out for several weeks but felt that today was the day to put that right – an excellent decision. Even though refreshed at Christ Church Ilkley, there was no enthusiasm for the Cow and Calf. It was to be the valley road through Askwith, Otley and Farnley to Castley followed by a short dash along A61 to the Kirkby turn. From Kirkby O, it was home in late afternoon warmth, via Walton Park or the Showground. Spring miles in the legs: 62 – 66; 4580 feet in the lungs. Terry S



**EGs' Ride**

Listening to the raindrops on the window cill and later watching the snowflakes cascade onto the ground below, reminded me how lucky we all were to be able to enjoy the wonderful Yorkshire countryside, yesterday, in bright sunshine as we glided along enjoying each ones company and the well-earned freedom of retirement. Is this paradise on earth? We should be so lucky! Or maybe we are!

Passing west of Grewelthope, following our brief stop at Spa Gardens, heading past the uniquely named Himalayan gardens, we bravely descended the steep decline past Ilton and towards The Druids Temple. Twelve riders took time out to examine the 18th century Folly with candid curiosity wondering as to why one should spend so much effort to locate such huge monolithic stonework in the wilds of Yorkshire. Still scratching our heads we headed for the nearby cafe at "Swintonbivouac", complete with Glamcamp "Yurts".

Regrettably the initial greeting created a chilly atmosphere. However in compensation many were heard to remark that the Goulash soup was excellent and the bread was the best sampled this year so the decision to take our lunch here instead of Masham seemed, in the end, justified. Continuing north and east we thus headed for home via Swinton & Masham, sticking closely to the smooth faster roads, as time was about to overtake pre-planned evening events. Once again mileage covered by most should be in the region of 60 miles maintaining a good average for the winter (still?) months.

**As a reminder to those who may be interested, an extended ride is planned at hopefully a steady pace, and because of the distance, starting from Low Bridge at 8.00am to 8.30am. The initial mid-morning stop for refreshments will be in Thirsk. Lunch should be at a farm shop north of Northallerton. Perhaps those who may accompany myself can advise.**

Dave W



