

Sunday, March 29, 2015

Wheel Easy Ride Report 465

Short Ride

Ride report to follow.

Medium Ride

British Summer Time has arrived, full of promise for long bright days, balmy temperatures and light gentle breezes – but not today. It was nevertheless much better than forecast and eleven, well-seasoned Medium riders were keen and optimistic so we set off as one, well ordered group. The sun was shining with none of the forecast high winds and we were soon in Spofforth where we were intercepted by Nicky and Graham who swelled our ranks to thirteen. The pace was brisk and convivial and we advanced generally in two groups, annoying nobody. At Whixley, the nice man at the railway crossing opened the gates for us which avoided thirteen times two (i.e. 26) wriggles through the hah hah gates.

At Great Ouseburn it had begun to rain fairly steadily and Dennis, together with Gordon and Alison turned for home, after we checked he was happy to find his way back without further advice. The rain persisted but we were determined to get our fix of caffeine, bacon and buns and were soon relaxing in Gilcrest's Café and Bakery, contemplating the final leg of our ride. Things gradually dried up through Minskip, Staveley and Farnham and then we began to lose people, starting with Alison who was engaged on a fruitless search for eggs. The sort of thing you normally buy on a bike ride.

A good start to official summer, we started in the dry and finished in the dry and all felt better for it. Thanks particularly to Justin for some vigilant back marking and to the whole team for a most enjoyable happy day. Keith & Helen T.





Medium-Plus Ride

Not a very promising weather forecast but fine up to Ripon for first café stop. The group split into two the caffeine hunters headed to Café Nero the rest to Spa. Gia, Paul, Martin and Yvonne returned home as the rain started, 10 intrepid riders led admirably by Sarah X headed off for Galphay and beyond. This was a route usually done in the reverse direction so the instructions were a little confusing and no villages to take bearings from. However it all became clear and a lovely route it was almost no cars and stunning scenery only a little more sunshine could have improved it. Just the right amount of ups and lots of downs- we came off Dallowgill Moor then up to Brimham (brief food break) and then we swooped down to Burnt Yates. Home via Holly Bush woods and the Greenway. 45 miles and a far better day than was forecast very enjoyable ride and company. Sue C



Long Ride

Last time - 5 weeks ago - I attempted to lead the ride to Castle Howard; the Met Office issued a severe weather warning of gale force winds and heavy rain. They were absolutely right, and only one person joined me on the ride. We got to Castle Howard in the dry, but nearly drowned on the way home. So I had been hoping for a much better day so we could enjoy the splendours of Castle Howard and the Howardian Hills basking in glorious Spring sunshine. No such luck!

Seven of us set off from Hornbeam, all aware that the forecast was not good, so I had Contingency Plans B, C and D available if the Met Office doom-mongers were correct. Plan B (short cut from Aldwark Bridge to Thornton Bridge) was not required as it was still dry as we crossed Aldwark Toll Bridge so continued on the original route through Aldwark and Tollerton to Huby. Plan C (short cut from Huby to Easingwold) was also discarded as it was still dry as we passed through Huby and so we continued through Sutton in the Forest to Sheriff Hutton. However the rain started minutes after we left Huby, not the showers forecast by the Met Office but heavy persistent rain falling from low, grey, leaden skies suggesting the rain would continue for hours rather than minutes - and it did. We reached Sheriff Hutton, all very wet, and getting colder by the minute as the wet penetrated its way through numerous layers of clothing. So Plan D was invoked, and we took the 'short cut' from Sheriff Hutton to Easingwold - if the resulting 63 mile ride can be referred to as a 'short cut'! At Easingwold we stopped at Curious Table for lunchtime refreshments and a warm-up. Bless the staff who were very accommodating to a group of soaking cyclists and genuinely didn't seem to mind the puddles we left under their curious tables! Phil from Boroughbridge continued home without the refreshment stop as he had a deadline to meet: he had already completed 45 miles before our ride started, and arrived home having completed 99.9 miles today - an impressive achievement especially in these conditions. So eventually we were back out into the rain once more for the final leg of the journey home via Raskelf, Thornton Bridge (closed to motor vehicles for 16 weeks), Boroughbridge and Knaresborough, meeting 4 EGs cycling from Knaresborough in the process. We arrived back in Harrogate at 3pm, having completed 63 hard miles at 14.3mph. Too wet for photos today! Eric W