

Sunday, November 8, 2015

Wheel Easy Ride Report 497

Short Ride

By sheer co-incidence (I wonder, Martin?!), I led the Short Ride on the same Sunday last year. To quote, "... gave way to bright skies and warm sunshine..."! Well, that was last year!

Thirteen of us left Hornbeam via the cycle path to the Showground and thence to Rudding Lane and Follifoot. The skies were grey, the temperature pretty nippy, there was a sneaky wind and it was pouring with rain. Nothing could dampen the spirits and we hurtled to the outskirts of Spofforth and posed and pouted against a backdrop of watery sunshine (for that, read paler shade of grey). Jen is now a finalist in the Britain in Bloom competition – the camera never lies! A suitably peaceful place was found near the gate to Knaresborough Lido and we observed a two minute silence – a poignant time for Dennis whose brother in law had been killed in WW2 aged 17.

A coffee for all decision was made except for Dennis who said he would carry on home via Chain Lane. Dorothy's lunches always sound very tempting! We had refreshments at the Watermill Café. A month ago, we sat outside in warm sunshine but today's break was inside with gloves draped over radiators. The conversation was, as ever, sparkling ranging from the success or otherwise of hearing aids to the undoubted pleasure of "live" cinema and, happily, the good quality of the coffee!

The group then broke to take varying routes. However, David's chain snapped just as the group was about to cross the river by Mother Shipton's Well. Needless to say, help was immediately offered by Joe and Glynn who undertook the repair whilst the ladies were told to cycle home. Thank you so much for what is always the joy of Wheel Easy – men with ken.

Thank you too for super company and to those intrepid cyclists who leave for Central America on Thursday – have a marvellous time!
Sue Downes





Medium Ride 1

The forecast was for gloom, followed by rain but all the usual suspects were gathered at Hornbeam so Peter and I notionally divided ourselves into two groups but always kept within sight of each other. It was really good to have Jill cycling with us today, undeterred by the weather.

The rain held off until we reached the traffic lights at Hornbeam but everyone soldiered on in a "cheerful in adversity" sort of a way, albeit thinking we can always just have coffee in Ripon and come home. However we hit a slightly brighter spell of gloom so ran out of excuses to wimp out. Dave P incited us to have a freewheel competition at the usual place and declared the winner to be Me. Apparently women have a smaller profile so are at an unfair advantage in such events. There was no prize.

We didn't stop, only pausing for a minute's silence at 11.00 a.m. near the noisy A61 then continued through Ripon, taking Dave P's advice to detour through Spa Gardens where they were holding the Remembrance Day event. We lost him in the crowd but apparently he has a well documented habit of "evaporating" so we were not unduly concerned.

The drizzle returned which cemented our decision to stop at Fountains Visitor Centre and have a comfort stop but one of our party accidentally found herself in the Baby Changing area (see photo). The cakes and scones were excellent and at this point Dave P condensed back out of the atmosphere. He had been mingling in the crowd at Spa Gardens and got involved in standing up and singing the National Anthem – hence his disappearance.

The rain stopped so we continued to be cheerful in adversity on the delightful route towards the Drivers' Crossroads, where it was unanimously decided not to push our luck and we headed straight for Ripley and the Greenway home.

All in all it was a really good, convivial day out – something of a bonus in the light of the forecast.

Not such a good day for hedgehogs though. I spotted at least two, flattened and face down in puddles. Apparently the British have a great affinity with hedgehogs because they are prickly, grumpy, smelly, solitary creatures – so, what's not to like? Helen T



KEEP
CALM

AND

CHANGE

MY

BUM





Medium+ Ride

Not many takers for this ride today largely due to the gloomy forecast of heavy rain. David started off with a faster pace group of 4 while Monica took a more moderate pace group with Sue C, James, Peter B and Debby. Rain started earlier than forecast and although spirits were dampened, we were undeterred in our decision to follow the prescribed route. Luckily the rain had stopped on Norwood Lane where Sue had a puncture, but the male experts in the group sorted it out quickly. Before setting off again, we realised it wasn't long till 11 o'clock. Shortly after we turned onto the main road, we found the beginning of a convenient track to stop at and observe 2 minutes silence. From there we made our way to Farnley and Otley. On the way up to Cockpit Farm we observed that the Cow and Calf hill in the distance looked distinctly grey and rainy. A group discussion ensued and Peter was the only brave one who was keen to go on to Ilkley and beyond. Soon the 4 of us who were left were tucking into toasted tea cakes and hot drinks at warm and welcome Cockpit Farm. We returned to Harrogate by Askwith Hil, the reservoirs and Pennypot Lane. It did feel a bit damp and the wind picked up but all felt lucky to have arrived back dry, having not seen the heavy rain that the BBC had predicted.

About 30 miles Monica

Undaunted by the early rain, the faster paced group, consisting of Paul (the plumber), Mark, Eric and David, stuck to the task. Taking Jack Hill Lane instead of the main road down Norwood Edge, we were slowed briefly when Eric had a puncture, but then pressed on in the brightening weather to Ilkley, where we stopped at the café in the alley. After the break, the Cow and Calf was a challenge, soon followed by the climb from Menston up the Chevin. By the time we reached Kirkby Overblow all were starting to feel less than frisky, but we slogged on and were relieved when we finally overcame the showground hill and home was in sight. A good ride covering some new ground for everyone, I believe.

48 miles David



Long Ride

The Long and the Short of it.....or a Tale of Two Rides

Ride One started from Wetherby at 8.25 with one rider - me! With a nice tailwind it was an easy ride through Kirk Deighton over to Spofforth, Follifoot and then over towards the showground.

Even the traffic lights at the bridge before the showground were on a rare green for a change.

Ride Two (the official Long Ride) then started from Hornbeam with 5 riders aiming for 63 miles.

As we headed back towards the showground the rain started and, after half a mile, Eric decided that laying loft insulation was a more exciting task - so then there were four! We headed

through the woods with fiery leaves all around us, the rain came on really heavy and we stopped to put rain jackets on. One more decided that 62 more miles was not a thrilling prospect, shortly

to be followed by two more - so then there was one, me! This could have been the end of

probably the shortest Long Ride ever, but I decided it should continue (to allow me to get home)

and followed the ride route. I passed the Short Ride group just after the bridge (green traffic

lights AGAIN!). By Spofforth the rain had stopped, so I followed the route through to Bramham

where I decided Ride Two should call it a day and head for home back at Wetherby. I've no

idea of the Ride Two mileage, but had done 39 by the time I got home - in the dry.

So, what is going wrong with this weather forecasting lark!? Yet again, the Beeb and the Met

Office over-egged how much rain there would be and when. At 2.35 there's still been none. By

chance, I'd glanced at the rain forecast on the Met Office radar and this showed a downpour around 9 or 10, followed by some hours of dry, then rain again. Which is what appears to be

happening because by 2.54 it's raining! Maybe the answer then is to ignore the pessimistic hour-by-hour rain, temperature etc forecasts and use the radar images - they are another option anyway! John