

Sunday, October 22, 2017

## Wheel Easy Ride Report 597

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### Short Ride

A very gusty day but an intrepid group of 9 decided to set off on a safer alternative to the planned short route. We headed across the Stray and along a very quiet Greenway to Ripley. Conditions re-evaluated here and we decided to continue to Hampsthwaite and coffee at Sophie's. Refreshed we returned through Killinghall and the majority freewheeled along the Greenway again back to Harrogate. All safe. Thanks to all for your flexibility. David's parting words " A good ride in good company "! ( 17 miles )      Nicky & Graham Holden



### Medium Ride

Yesterday's Storm Brian effected today's turnout, and with high winds forecast, only a relatively few hardy and brave members met at Hornbeam Park. Unusually, there were no takers for the Medium Plus ride which was due to go to Greygarth monument so I joined the other five with Alun who led the Medium ride.

Due to the blustery conditions Alun decided to keep off the high ground so abandoned the published route to Timble and Menwith and sought to go to a cafe at either Askham Richard or Boroughbridge. The latter was preferred so the seven of us headed off in two groups to reassemble at Low Bridge in Knaresborough. Unfortunately as we approached Farnham, our leader, Al, had to turn back due to a knee problem. The remaining six of us continued with decisions being made by the group as we ventured on.

Everyone was keen for a coffee stop, so we made our way to Boroughbridge via Staveley and Minskip. Unfortunately, The Vintage Bean was closed so we made our thirsty way to Cafe Chez-Nous. Replenished after a scone and caffeine, we continued northwest through Skelton on Ure towards Ripon. At the junction with the B6265, near Bridge Hewick, Dave Preston, Brian and I decided to head back to Harrogate, leaving Mike, Helen and Peter to go

on beyond Ripon - and possibly to Brimham.

It was a wise decision to keep off the higher ground, the gusts of wind got stronger around noon and we had to be especially careful when passing gaps in hedgerows and gateways. Fortunately the rain kept away and I recorded that we did almost 33 blustery miles. Tim



### Long Ride

Storm Brian seemed to have put off a lot of Wheel Easy members from riding today, with attendance well down on the usual numbers. The long ride was similarly affected, as only Michael I joined me for the ride to the White Horse. 3 other long riders (Phil, Jill and Martin) were in attendance but decided my route would be too windy, so set off on their own ride to Masham. At Knaresborough, Michael and I were joined by Terry S. We also had the company of David and Mark - who had no Medium Plus ride today - as far as Boroughbridge. Our North Easterly route via Thornton Bridge, the Sessays, and Coxwold to Byland Abbey was delightfully easy with some wind assistance. The west end of the Abbey is encased in scaffolding (see photo) for some maintenance work - removing any vegetation and renewing pointing where necessary. We then turned westwards into the wind to Oldstead where we paused a while at the Black Swan, which this week was announced as 'Best Restaurant in the World'. We spoke to a female member of staff who confirmed that they did not serve baked beans on toast to cyclists (well, you have to ask, don't you?), and said life had been manic since the announcement was made, with phone calls coming in from all round the world. If you want a seat in the restaurant, you must now book up 3 months in advance! When we said we would therefore have to continue on our way up White Horse Bank for beans and toast at the Glider Club, the young lady said that she often runs up White Horse Bank and pauses for a cup of tea at the Glider Club before returning to Oldstead. One very fit young lady indeed!

The Glider Club was a hive of activity, with more take offs and landings than I have seen there before - very surprising considering the very strong winds - but all adding to the experience of lunch at this iconic clubhouse with arguably the best long range views in North Yorkshire.

We then descended Sutton Bank, where we felt the might of the strong westerly wind as it hit the escarpment - an interesting experience - not one I would want to repeat too often! Once back down in the Vale of York our return via Bagby, Topcliffe, Rainton, and Melmerby to Ripon was a little wind affected, but we still made very good progress. We had a tea stop

at Spa Gardens before tackling Fountains Abbey where the rutting season was just getting under way. Terry left us to return to Knaresborough, Michael and I continued to Ripley and back to Harrogate along the Greenway. Home before 5.30pm. For the record, this Harlow Hillbilly covered 73 miles, climbed 3,800', at an average speed of 13.7mph. Eric

