

Sunday, February 11, 2018

Wheel Easy Ride Report 612

Short Ride

There were three riders for today's ride and the planned ride was soon ditched for something more interesting as the weather seemed less challenging than was forecast. Within six miles we were head-down into a strong NW wind surrounded by moorland smattered with fresh snow. It was cold, but we soldiered on past Little Almascliffe, past the Sun Inn and turned right into Penny-pot with a following wind. At the College round-about David took the shortest route back, while Dennis and I headed for Killinghall to pick up the Greenway back to Bilton, then went our separate ways home... to cook lunch of course! A challenging work-out initially, but much easier coming back. 23 miles. Peter B

Medium Ride

It was a certainly a cold morning hence only five riders turned out for the medium ride. Due to the small numbers there was no organisation required apart from deciding where to stop for coffee and Martin suggested The Grass Routes Garden Centre, which proved to be a good choice.

Unfortunately no sooner had we set off when Marian decided her hands were too cold to continue and left us on the Stray. Heading down the Greenway we met Yvonne and Helen who were training for a running event in Northumberland later in the year. The route continued through Hollybank Woods, Clint Bank and Markington. We were certainly glad to stop for coffee. My hands were so cold Sally came to my rescue and got the circulation going again. I must get better winter gloves! After an excellent coffee stop we continued to Bishop Monkton and Knaresborough. As always it was good company and we managed 28miles. Paul T



Medium-plus Ride - report to follow

Eight intrepid riders today for the faster medium plus group. The weather forecast had threatened brisk Westerly winds and sleety showers around 10ish. The wind was nowhere near as noticeable as we expected and the showers didn't appear. The only mental obstacle to overcome was the thought of not having a cafe stop until at least two thirds of the way round at Boroughbridge (do pro riders think like that, I wonder?).

We worked on maintaining a steady pace with no stops until we rolled into Boroughbridge soon after 1130, heading for Bean Vintage cafe. A brief moment of horror ensued when we discovered it is closed on Sundays in the winter. Plan B was to go to the one on the high street (I forget the name) we usually stop at, which provides cheap and cheerful food and, frankly, crap coffee. At some point in the last few months that cafe has been taken over and has become Plenty cafe, with very very good food and cakes, and proper coffee. The cakes were amazing, the beans on toast generously-sized, the ambience warm with lots more seating space than there used to be, and good espresso coffee. The seeded flapjacks were highly commended. This should be the number one cafe stop in Boroughbridge in the future. Our run back to Harrogate was interrupted briefly by Tony having a puncture, but at least it was sunny at that point. We completed 45 miles at a moving average of about 15mph, and a lowest temperature of 2C. A good ride on a fast route. Michael I

The happy-to-be-out seven, set off for Myton-on-Swale in cold but dry conditions. The route is more familiar to Medium than Medium Plus riders, but Jill F's early detour via Goldsborough, rather than Chain Lane, took the total distance to 43 miles, a good distance as the days draw out. There was a westerly wind, admittedly, but it wasn't as bad as forecast, and sunny patches had turned into bright sunshine by the time we got back to Knaresborough. A marked improvement on the weather in recent weeks. Thanks to all, and particularly Jill and Helen B. for setting the pace, and Chris for back marking. Justin K.



Long Ride

Well, it might have been between 2 and 4C but it was at least ice-free for a change. A bit breezy perhaps though not as strong as the forehead suggested. It was a bit confusing as we were mixing with the Medium+ group and I thought we had eleven in the Long Ride group. However we seemed to 'lose' Dan and Phil very quickly so I hope they were with the M+ guys. We broke into two groups for the run to Thirsk though, we might have taken

slightly different routes as we certainly made it up as we went along. A few miles from Thirsk, Geoff passed on his way back so I think we were down to eight at that point. The Arabica was as good as always and for quite a while we headed back in a tight two by two group - very professional for a change! At Boroughbridge the Audaxers who had been driving the group quite hard, finally tired and fell off the back. Actually, I think they paused to decide where to go next. Anyway, they were not seen again so my thanks for their sterling work and company.

I'd not ridden this distance for a while and was finding the 'hills' hard work so was grateful to Darcy for giving me a tow to Knaresborough. By then we were down to four riders. So, overall, a good day out with lots of snowdrops suggesting Spring is somewhere on the way! No punctures for me for a change, perhaps because I threatened my tyres with the bin if it happened again, so that was another win. 62 miles. John H.

Schoolboy error. Got up early to go for a Sunday ride, got myself ready - but a bit of left hand, right hand at home left one of my gloves out of reach; or at least, not where I'd left it. I normally ride with mitts only in pretty much all weathers, but I'd have normally taken full-finger gloves out on a day like this... Long story short, I didn't realise until Hornbeam that I'd not got more than a cupful of water in my bottle! It's easy not to drink enough when it's cold as you don't realise you need it - but on a sixty-mile ride to Thirsk, I wasn't going out without hydration. A number of rides all went out along Hookstone, but as the Long ride was first away and I was third on the road by Forest Moor Nurseries, I thought I'd stop to fill my bottle there. They weren't open and had no outside tap, but a lady kindly filled it up for me and I was on my way.

Error number two. A minute or two on the road though takes a long time to catch up... By the time I was on Abbey Road I'd caught the Medium Plus ride, and Phil Stell who like a true gent had waited for me to catch up - but the Long Ride was not for catching. We chased them to Boroughbridge, being surrounded by Medium Plussers for much of the way, but our spirited efforts were not rewarded with an increase in Long Riding companions. After Boroughbridge we settled to a more sustainable pace and agreed to pick a route that suited us instead. My arse was aching by now, anyway... We crossed the Vale of York without much incident or interest on its pretty nondescript flat, straight roads; only once over the A19 (thanks to a crane driver thoughtfully holding up all the traffic behind it allowing us to get straight across!) do the roads become more interesting, with the Hambleton Hills adding both scenery and undulation under the wheels.

Some discussion led us to the topic of cafes - whereas I'd been happy to continue per route to Thirsk, it transpired that I'd never patronaged the Gliding Club cafe, despite passing it on many a ride. Another option was open to us; we forswore Sutton-under-Whitestonecliffe and headed for Kilburn and White Horse Bank instead. Now neither Phil nor myself were yet in the peak of physical perfection; as it was, a flat ride got rather tougher for us both! The views from the Gliding club, as indeed were the food and friendly service, were excellent though and I'd strongly recommend it as a delightful place to stop and see the world laid out at one's feet. We spotted two power stations, the Golf Balls of Menwith Hill, and the snow-covered flank of what I am sure was Great Whernside, some thirty miles due west and in another Yorkshire National Park. We watched the gliders take to the skies and snugly avoided the light showers of hail.

Not only had Phil taken the lion's share of the turn on the front on the way out (as well as waiting for me to catch up at the start of the ride), he had also brought a spare pair of warm gloves, which I was very grateful for on a thrilling descent of Sutton Bank where I reached 40mph and felt both rucksack and helmet become lighter as the same wind that lifted the gliders above us tried to do the same to me! The wind was less benign on our return route via Topcliffe however and we were very ready for a stop at Boroughbridge - sadly also

finding The Bean closed, but happily finding room at the Cafe on the market square. The low sun and spectacular cloudshapes kept our spirits high despite dwindling energy reserves - Knaresborough Hill was predictably tough - but not even a broken gear cable leaving me in an eleven-tooth gear at the bottom of the Starbeck hill could dent what was a cracking ride. My drivetrain somehow managed to survive running granny-to-smallest-sprocket back into town; over sixty miles in under five hours! For a windy February ride, nothing to be ashamed of! Daniel H

