

Sunday, May 21, 2006

Wheel Easy! Ride Report No. 3



10 Mile Ride

This was our third outing and bright sunshine and clear blue skies at 7.30am suggested the forecast of heavy rain was wrong. We had completed more than half our ride before the clouds and rain scudded in. We welcomed two new riders, John and Sarah, and two visiting friends who had to bail out with a puncture in Bogs Lane.

Ten Wheel Easy! riders gathered for the short ride and we continued to explore the cycle paths around Harrogate and included again the excellent sections of the Beryl Burton cycleway, the path from the Gardeners Arms and on to Asda car park.

We then crossed town via the path to the Odeon and on past the library to Beech Grove and over Otley Road to weave through Park Road, West End Avenue to the new houses at St. Georges, to join the bike path which borders Rossett School and emerges at Green Lane. The rain at this point was pretty heavy so we returned to Hornbeam. We biked 11 miles, young Tom sitting behind his dad Robert was brilliant throughout. Don't forget the ride next week starts at 10am. Pray for sunshine.

GM

20+ Mile Ride (intended)

The long route to Almscliffe Crag proved to be 'eventful' and for some not quite as long as planned. Perhaps the fact that there were 13 of us was significant (though I don't think so) but for whatever reason things did not go according to plan.

Ah, if only we had gone up Rayleigh Road instead of heading up Hookstone, who knows what might have happened! What did happen was that Crawford was left at the Leeds Road lights (for which I must take responsibility) and Alec, who was left at the 'starting line' (sorry, this is not a race) chased after us in the wrong direction, so he ended up settling for the 10 mile route. Actually, this had a huge silver lining as he was later able to store Mary's poorly bike at his

home, and he also avoided getting soaked.

So only 12 of us headed up Leadhall Lane, Rossett Drive, Whinney Lane and so forth to Beckwithshaw where Crawford's absence was noted, too late for the novice ride leader to do anything about it. We pedalled past the 'Private' sign into Moor Park, out the other end, and on up to Stainburn Woods where we stopped for a photo and (foolishly) some of us removed our jackets, warmed by the long climb. The clouds immediately gathered. However, the good news was that Crawford was spotted gamely coming up the road, not in any way offended by the fact that we had unintentionally dropped him at the lights.

We continued through the woods, and out the other end where we admired the fine views towards Otley and took another photo. Just after this the heavens opened and things, including, literally, our route, began to go downhill. We had to imagine how beautiful the trail, which was new to almost all of the group, would be on a fine day.

The long car-free section eventually ended when we turned left onto the B6161, and not long afterwards our group ride turned into something approaching every man for himself (and female equivalent, of course). After half a mile or so we turned right towards Greenmires Lane and the Crag, where we noticed that Geraldine and Joe were not with us. I went back to find that Geraldine had a problem with her chain. I promised to return after reporting to the main group what was happening, but when I reached them found that Paul T. and Nick each had punctures, caused no doubt by the hawthorn under which they were sheltering.

To cut a long story short, by degrees everyone who could set off to find their own way home while Geraldine, who found that she could pedal as long as minimal pressure was put on the chain, Joe, Paul and I cycled very gently to North Rigton, leaving Nick and Jill to complete their repairs. Paul then carried on, and the 3 of us settled in to the Square and Compass for some beers while awaiting Gia's emergency rescue service in the Margolis van. Unfortunately, she arrived with speedy efficiency, and we had to leave our comfortable and apparently smoke free corner for the drive back to Harrogate. My speedo said 15 miles, but I'm sure some at least cracked the 20 mile barrier.

MM