

Sunday, June 11, 2006

## Wheel Easy! Ride Report No. 6

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### Shorter Ride

It was a perfect day for cycling, warm and sunny with a breeze to keep us cool. The growing confidence of the group meant that we extended our ride today to 14 miles taking in some lovely countryside and new paths, yet staying close to Harrogate.

We rode to the end of Hornbeam Park and on the track to Fulwith Mill Lane, and made our way through quiet residential streets and cycle paths to Whinney Lane. Riding along Whinney Lane and Lady Lane gave the group the opportunity for new challenges and excellent views.

We crossed Otley Road, past Harlow Carr Gardens then through the Pinewoods all the way to the Valley Gardens where a community police officer seemed quite unconcerned about our small but responsible group of cyclists. We continued through town to Asda and joined the cycle path all the way to Bilton Hall Drive.

Along this route we met friends of Helen's who took some photos for us and helped with a chain that had come off and jammed.

We crossed the Knaresborough Road, cycled down Forest Lane to the railway crossing, then cut through Crossways Drive to avoid the busy mini roundabouts at the junction with Forest Moor Lane. Using these little cut throughs is a great way of avoiding the main roads.

The cycle path adjacent to Sherwood Drive which comes out by Stonefall tip is excellent - wooded, open spaces, and wildlife areas. Now we only had to cross the busy Wetherby Road to Sainsbury's to ride back to Hornbeam via the showground, through Hookstone Woods and behind St. John Fisher. This mainly traffic free route is superb.

GM

### Longer Ride

Captain Phil and his eight fearless troopers bravely set off on a daring mission, following sketchy orders from Admiral Malcolm.

The route took us down Hookstone Road, over Forest Moor and into Calcutt. From there it was

along Abbey Road, Halfpenny Lane and on to the Boroughbridge road. We veered off left to Farnham, and right at the junction up the first hill. All troopers survived the first test, so it was onward to Burton Leonard. Here we had a short rest and were served champagne and canapés by the natives (this may have been my imagination, but the rest is true).

After endless chatter by the ladies, the mission regained focus and we boldly travelled on to Bishop Monkton, where we turned left towards the A61. Troopers continued through Markington where a major hill was lying in wait for us. The ensuing battle was epic, but the troopers pulled through. Sarah was new to these epic voyages, but she performed brilliantly, with much help from our new Kiwi friend Steve.

Captain Phil promised there was a pub coming up at the crossroads, which helped morale, however he forgot to mention that it had been closed for six months! Clearly this was too much for Paul, who headed home with much haste. Narrowly avoiding a lynching, Phil lead the team to Ripley. Very nice downhill bit - mutiny avoided.

Dodging the A61 by fair means and foul, and making use of an uncharted farm track, we reached the road leading to Knox and the ford over the stream. Sarah and Jane peeled off here, shortly followed by Alec, Sarah and Steve. Phil, Sue and Gill headed along the Starbeck cycle track and home.

45km long, excellent ride lasting about three hours.

PH