

Sunday, June 25, 2006

Wheel Easy! Ride Report No. 8



Shorter Ride

Wheel Easy! continues to attract new riders who are enjoying the benefits of riding with a group and discovering the cycle paths in and around Harrogate. This week's 'short ride' included cycle paths and off road sections and most riders covered 12-14 miles.

We cycled to the end of Hornbeam and through the fields to the Yorkshire Showground and out to Sainsburys. Opposite is the excellent cycle path which starts behind the tip and winds through wildlife areas and woods to Hookstone Chase.

From there we cut off the corner by going up Crossways Drive to the railway crossing on Forest Lane and on up to the Knaresborough Road and Bilton Hall Drive. Many local people are unaware of this superb section of traffic free cycling which takes you to Knaresborough in one direction and towards Harrogate town centre in the other.

Once in town we worked our way through to the top of the Valley Gardens and into the Pinewoods and then out to Harlow Carr Gardens. From here riders began to peel off home as we continued down Beckwith Head Road past Whinney Lane and down the hill into Burn Bridge.

GM

Longer Ride

A group of 12 Wheel-Easyers (of all shapes, sizes, ages and abilities) set off at 10.10a.m from Hornbeam Park. We went along Wheatlands, across the A61, past the cricket ground and Rossett school, to meet Otley Road near Harlow tennis club. From there we dropped down onto Harlow Moor road, over the beck, and met our first challenge, the dreaded Penny Pot hill. At this point a few riders wished that they had moderated their Saturday night out!

Onward to the barracks, turning right towards Hampsthwaite. On reaching Hampsthwaite, we took a short break before crossing the river and tackling the notorious Clint Bank. Then it was right at the T-junction and a climb to the top of the hill. Usually the White Horse at Kilburn can be viewed from here, but the weather wasn't clear enough on this occasion. A refreshing long downhill stint took us past Burnt Yates and on to Shaw Mills. Here we met the final major hill on

our journey, and having conquered it, we took a break at the top, by Cut Throat Lane.

The road led us to Bishop Thornton and on to Markington. Turning left we crossed the A61 and on to Bishop Monkton. Turning right, we bypassed Burton Leonard and continued to Copgrove. From here it was on to Farnham and Knaresborough and back to Starbeck via the Beryl Burton cycle track and Forest Lane. As some riders took their own route home, the remainder followed the excellent new bike route near Sherwood Drive to Stonefall tip. The Sunday jaunt was completed back round the Yorkshire showground and through Hookstone woods to Hornbeam.

In all the trip took about 2½ hours and was about 43km or 26 miles long. There was plenty of scenery, banter and fresher air! What better way of spending a Sunday morning?

PH