

Sunday, October 1, 2006

Wheel Easy! Ride Report No. 22



White horse above, white horse below

This was a day made for cycling, and the ideal conditions saw a fine total of 27 Wheel Easy! cyclists arrive for the 10am start at Hornbeam Park station.

Of these four chose the day's short ride round the Harrogate loop which Caroline had very kindly offered to lead. The remainder split into 3 groups each with experienced leaders and set off on the first section taking Forest Lane and Bilton Hall Drive to join the Beryl Burton cycleway to Knaresborough. (Please note we said hello to Beryl Thorndike on the Beryl Burton - just thought you'd like to know this amazing coincidence!?)

The route from here led through Farnham (where Dave's broken chain threatened to end his ride until Paul appeared as the good Samaritan with the necessary tool and skills to effect a repair) to Copgrove to meet up as arranged with James and Alison from Ripon Loiterers, and by chance with four cyclists from Wetherby Wheelers who were going the same way. We then continued together to Bishop Monkton and Ripon for a break in the sunshine at the Spa Gardens café.

About half the group went off first, while the remainder enjoyed their drinks a little longer. Then it was back in the saddle for the ride back, following the quiet route along Whitcliffe Lane and then a steady climb up a rough and pot-holed lane. At one point the road was completely submerged by a 20 foot long puddle of unknown depth but it proved to be just passable pedalling steadily across.

Another mile or so further on we returned to civilisation and the road past the Drover's Inn, now closed, and the rewarding hill down towards Ripley. At this point riders split to take various routes home. Andy and Malcolm took the path by Ripley Castle through the lovely woods towards Clint and eventually sailed down into Hampsthwaite before the challenging climb to the A59 and along to Pennypot Lane. Andy returned home to Harrogate via Kent Road, and Malcolm completed 41 hugely enjoyable miles back to Pannal via Beckwithshaw.

MM

RIPON LOITERERS AND WHEEL EASY MEET UP ON THE LONG RIDE AS WELL!

Seven cyclists from Harrogate joined the longer Ripon Loiterers Ride today. We headed out on the flat roads of the Vale of York, destination Easingwold. A circular route took us via Skelton, Boroughbridge, Sessay, Carlton Husthwaite and into Easingwold for lunch. At one point Bike Missile spotted a White Gypsy Horse posing in front of the famous White Horse at Kilburn. Yes it was worth a picture and I hope you can see the White Horse above Kilburn in the background. [This wins 'photo of the day' prize, see top of page - ed.]

The first thing we found at Easingwold is that all the cafes now close on Sunday. If anyone fancies opening a café there on Sunday they could make a mint - there were plenty of hungry souls wandering aimlessly about including 13 cyclists. So we went to the George Hotel. Bad decision. The landlord appeared to dislike, well, everybody really. After an average sandwich at ludicrous prices we decided this is not a stop to recommend.

After lunch we met Dave Preston and the three other "elderly gentleman" (as they wish to be known) sitting in the square enjoying home made sandwiches. Obviously a food reconnoitre had been carried out.

They joined us returning back over Aldwark Bridge where a kind chap heading in the opposite direction took a photo of the now large group of cyclists crossing the bridge. It was then back along the lanes to Aldborough, Boroughbridge and returning to Ripon.

The ride was a good 45 miles enjoyed by all in fine weather. Crunching over acorns seems to be a memorable part of autumn riding this year, and as we approached Aldwark Bridge we also nearly crunched over a rather smart group of marching Army Cadets. Hope we didn't spoil their day.

Five of us then returned from Ripon back to Harrogate having ridden out in the morning. This made a round trip of more than 70 miles. Many thanks to Bill, Jill and Nick for keep Yvonne and I company on the home stretch.

MW

Four sturdy sedate riders set off for a 7 mile amble round Harrogate as the 'nearly lycraed' set off for Ripon. We went along to Fulwith Mill, over Leeds Road and through the Mallinsons towards Rossett and Ashville. Still going at a very steady pace we headed for Harlow Carr via Beckwith Knowle. So busy were we with the cycling we didn't stop at Harlow Carr tea rooms but carried on to Cornwall Road along the path near the kennels and from there headed back to Hookstone through the Valley Gardens. A very pleasant gentle ride, not too exhausting and not very long.

CG

