

Sunday, February 25, 2007

Wheel Easy! Ride Report No. 43



A day which had more than a hint of early Spring encouraged a remarkable number of cyclists onto the lanes and byways of North Yorkshire, including 30 who gathered at Hornbeam Park for Sunday's Wheel Easy outing, several dusting their bikes off for the first time this year. Three new riders were welcomed, Beryl, Richard and Neil.

The Long Ride (Version 1)

Of the 30 riders, 16 chose the longer ride to Ripon and back, a distance in the order of 35 to 38 miles depending how or if we deviated from the original route. We had 3 tandems in our group - not many cycling clubs can boast that.

The route was Knaresborough Waterside, Farnham, Burton Leonard, Bishop Monkton, Ripon and Spa Gardens Café, which as regular cyclists know is an excellent value for money cyclist friendly café. The route being flat was excellent tandem country (Damn! Pity I hate hills or we would have gone via Park Rash). The six wheelers broke away around Farnham to lead a faster group to Ripon (often a good idea as 16 hungry cyclists descending on a café all at once can strain their resources). When the remaining "Lanterne Rouge" group arrived the "Tete le Course" lot had been fed and watered.

On leaving the café a group of 5 riders took the shorter way back to Harrogate. The remaining 11 headed for Skelton, Langthorpe, and Boroughbridge, then on to Aldborough, Lower Dunsforth, Upper Dunsforth, Marton, Arkendale, Ferrensby, Farnham, Knaresborough and Home (for tea and sympathy "don't come in here with all that mud"). On the way to Skelton 5 riders were passed by 6 cyclists on 6 wheels, no not a unicycle race team, but those HGV's of the cycling world, our tandem group, a cheery goodbye and they were gone. The remaining 5 progressed to Boroughbridge where due to the age of two of the riders and their bladder condition a stop was taken (thank God for Boroughbridge toilets) and then Home. A good ride, good company, no wind to speak of and the rain held off.

DP

The Long Ride (Version 2)

The long ride, led by David Preston, set off with a full complement of 16 riders, including 3 tandems, to Knaresborough. The route followed along Abbey Road by the river and around the back of the town avoiding the busiest traffic. From there it was through the villages of Farnham and Bishop Monkton to Ripon.

The Spa Gardens café was already playing host to the Wetherby Wheelers and we also enjoyed a good hot snack before setting off again. Some riders with time constraints returned home at this point and the remainder set off out of Ripon along by the race course and turned along the lanes to Skelton-on-Ure and Boroughbridge.

The tandem riders were enjoying the flat lanes and set off as a breakaway group for a somewhat faster ride. The route included the villages of Aldborough, Lower Dunsforth and Great Ouseburn, and then heading back home via Marton, Arkendale, Ferrensby, and Knaresborough. A total of 42 miles and only one light shower.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Steve and Nita demonstrated a new scientific technique for quickly cooling hot tea. It simply consists of filling the tray and sloshing it about a bit. Unfortunately the provision of straws was not thought through so a tea shortage ensued.

We were joined by John and Fiona from Richmond, members of the tandem club, who brought along their Santana tandem. That made 3 Santanas so JD Cycles are obviously doing a great selling job! The three tandems motoring along down the quiet flat lanes south of Aldborough made a fabulous whooshing sound.

Fiona obviously has magical powers because she managed to produce enough flapjack from her pannier bag to feed an army. And what flapjack it was! We thought the Spa Gardens was a high standard but Fiona topped that by a mile.

MW

After a short detour into Harrogate to collect two riders' drinks bottles left in error on the doorstep, the medium ride headed down Claro Road and the Bilton triangle path to join the Beryl Burton Cycleway into Knaresborough. The group cycled through Farnham to Copgrove, along the lovely track through Roecliffe Moor and into Boroughbridge, unfortunately losing one member on the way due to a recurrent knee problem. After an enjoyable café stop they returned via Minskip. An easy mostly flat ride of around 25 miles.

MM

Six cyclists set off from Hornbeam Park on the short ride and headed up to the Otley Road via St Georges Cycle Path, past Ashville College and through the Rossett estate. Left onto Otley Road and a welcome downhill section to Beckwithshaw mini roundabout to take a right and first left through the pleasant estate of Moor Park. Meeting Norwood Lane, we turned right to the (always longer than you remember!) section leading to Stainburn Woods.

A stop for drinks, decision making and route planning in the car park resulted in four turning back to Harrogate, and two going on further for a longer route, past the Sun Inn and along Pennypot Lane. Signs of spring everywhere and curlews calling. Spectacular scenery in all directions! Cycling at its best!!

SE

