

Sunday, January 6, 2008

## Wheel Easy Ride Report No. 88

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Eight of us turned up for the first long ride of the year, on a day which just happened to be wonderfully sunny (almost certain to be the trend for the rest of 2008!). Being Jill's ride it just had to be a bit hilly and many of us noticed how a few weeks abstinence from cycling had dulled our athletic prowess. The wind added an extra challenge earlier in the day.

We cycled via Beckwithshaw, Fewston, Askwith and then onto the familiar haunt of the Avanti Café in Ilkley. Ever mindful of the short days we avoided the usual temptations to hang around too long, eat too much or browse the dazzling array of super-bikes at JD Cycles.

For the return home a quicker hill-avoidance strategy was adopted, so on reaching Otley we used the flat and smooth main road to Pool and then smaller roads via Weeton, Dunkswick & Kirkby Overblow.

We all welcomed a good dose of cycling in the sun - a rare treat just lately, which we shared with the many good humoured fellow cyclists we encountered along the way.  
NK on behalf of JF

Nine riders opted for the medium ride. From Hornbeam we headed towards Pannal. On the way to Follifoot we were all excited seeing a red kite just above our heads. At Spofforth we crossed the Crimple Beck and turned onto the quiet Deighton Road. In North Deighton we turned into Ox Close Lane towards Cowthorpe.

We were all enjoying the ride and opted for extra miles by going through Tockwith and down South Field Lane. We were going at a good pace and made our way to the cycle track at Thorp Arch. It was nice to see so many families with young children cycling on the Spofforth to Thorp Arch cycle track. At Wetherby three of us stopped for a coffee while Crawford and Dennis cycled home for their Sunday lunch. The other four riders left the route at different stages as they all

had time constraints. In all we did about 32 miles. PT

Ten cyclists set off for a medium ride to Ripley, travelling through the town centre, Bilton and down to Knox. Crossing the A61 took us up Grainbeck Lane, then right on to the B6161 and left down Crag Lane. This brought us back to the A61, and within ½ mile of Ripley.

After a brief stop at the castle we headed out on the bridleway through Hollybank Wood to Hampsthwaite. The climb up Rowden Lane was as challenging as ever, and a new experience for some new members to the group. Crossing Skipton Road took us to the Army College where we turned left back to Harrogate. PH

The slightly delayed launch of the Super Easy ride, washed away by the rain in December, was very much enjoyed by two new riders, Anna and Cathy, and two Wheel Easy regulars, Ted and Malcolm. The route follows a rough figure of eight via Fulwith Mill Lane, the Mallinson Estate and through the Rossetts, then turning down to St. George's into The Oval and back to Hornbeam. The second half goes to Oatlands Drive and north east to Claro Road and the Dragon Bridge. To complete the 10 miles, a left turn here leads to Asda, East Parade and Stray Rein, and finally to Hornbeam.

We followed this as far as the Dragon Bridge, but here chose to turn right over the bridge and down to Bilton Lane which was a suitable point for one lady rider to return home. The others cycled along the Beryl Burton into Knaresborough for a coffee break at The Riverside café, then returning up Knaresborough Road on the cycle path and back to Harrogate along Bogs Lane, probably around 15 very relaxed miles in total. The only blemish was the appalling amount of glass in a number of places, particularly on the new path around Harrogate High School which we will ask to be cleaned up as soon as possible. MM

