

Sunday, January 20, 2008

Wheel Easy Ride Report No. 90



There was no appointed leader for the long ride today, so the four of us set off with a vague plan of heading towards Otley, via Fewston, possibly to stop off at the café in Otley or maybe even press on to Ilkley.

As we passed Little Alms Cliff, the strong gusts of wind and poor visibility convinced us not to make our lives any harder by "going over the top" to Askwith. Instead we headed down to Farnley where we met up with the faster riders from the medium ride. Calmer weather down in the valley encouraged us to make for Ilkley where we promptly installed ourselves in the surprisingly empty Avanti café.

There were some differing opinions on how to get back but the majority vote was for staying low in the valley and avoiding the gusting wind up high.

So we set off with the wind behind us as we headed back to Otley and onto Farnley. From there we took the road towards Lindley, Almscliffe Crag, North Rigton and home. JF

With the weather better than forecast and the promise of a café stop and a slower group two medium rides left Hornbeam for Otley, eight on the quicker group with seven following on. By the end of the day we had split into five mini groups which suited everyone's timing for the day.

The slower group of seven stayed together until Almscliffe Crag when two returned via Huby and Dunkeswick to get back to work. At Leathley three riders headed off for Castley and home whilst Sarah and Gia battled on up and over to Otley with threatening skies in the distance.

The wind blew the rain away as we caught up with the advance party two of whom were outside bike watching and the others ensconced inside the Leeds House Café in the market square. We were made very welcome by their enthusiastic staff, full English breakfast for one and excellent coffee.

Home via Castley, Dunkeswick and Kirkby Overblow with a following wind was a treat and to meet a new Wheel Easy member taking her husband out on his paces, getting him trained up! Twenty nine miles. Well done Sarah, her first trip to Otley.

GM

The slightly faster medium group of eight riders (it would have been 'more faster', but was slowed down somewhat by the nominal 'leader') saw one red kite at close range approaching Leathley, and I believe another

on the way back after Weeton but the second sighting could not be confirmed as our expert went on at Otley while most stopped at the café.

As the sightings show, red kites are becoming increasingly common in the area, but are still well worth seeing. I mention this only as an incredibly long winded way to drag into what is supposedly a cycling report our view that 'The Kite Runner' is also very well worth seeing! This is the newly released film of the extraordinarily powerful book. (The tenuous link, for those who haven't yet fallen asleep, is the word Kite.) Anyway, it was a splendid ride. MM

After deciding that the weather, a steady breeze and an overcast sky, wouldn't provide a good enough excuse for staying under the duvet, we set off to meet our fellow short riders. Where were you? We were nearly tempted to join the medium ride when respite periods for calorie infusion was mentioned, but we resisted.

Setting off between the long and medium rides we once again found that our superior fitness allowed us to be in an advantageous position to wait with the gathered crowds to cheer on both groups of super wheelers. When the crowds had dispersed we followed in the less dense air of their wake, gaining a sneaky advantage. As we proceeded via Dawcross to Brackenthwaite we were thankful for the challenge of the ascent against the wind and drizzle, and the aching lungs. A challenging side wind on the descent down to Beckwithshaw was overcome in a manner that snails would sneer at. Checking that no other cyclists were watching we made a brief stop for purchases at Betty's (Harlow Carr) before making our way through the pinewoods and the notorious Valley Drive descent, through town and home. Glad that we got up. MG

On Saturday, two Speedies left Hornbeam Park at 9.00 picking up a further rider at Knaresborough. Enjoying the best weather of the year so far, Paul, Dennis and Bill followed the course of the flooded Nidd to Little Ribston and Cowthorpe. A decision had to be made at the Cattal turn where signs indicated the road was closed due to flooding. Assuming this was a failure by the Council to remove the signs from an earlier flood, we proceeded. On reaching the bridge, we found the signs were accurate but with a bit of careful cycling/pushing, we managed to get across with only damp socks to show for it.

At this point, we were caught by Eric who had reached Hornbeam Park a few minutes after we left and had been chasing the group for 15 miles. Three became four and we continued in the sunshine though Whixley, Thorp Underwood, Upper and Lower Dunsforth to Aldborough before making our way back to Knaresborough via Minskip. At Staveley, Bill decided to take a rest and made his own way back. A ride of 37 miles in lovely weather. PD



