

Sunday, March 2, 2008

Wheel Easy Ride Report No. 96



FIRST WHEEL EASY MOUNTAIN BIKE RIDE

We were 3 short of the Dirty Dozen - 9 riders in all, who set off on the first official Wheel Easy mountain bike ride on a very windy morning. Heading towards the Beryl Burton Way, there was one minor accident and 3 riders took the wrong turning; things could only get better!

Beyond Farnham we took to the rough tracks and the organisation went a bit more smoothly. Three riders opted to climb over the ridge through the deep muddy section whilst the rest took a more circuitous route.

The ride along tracks near Burton Leonard and through to South Stainley, then crossing the A61 and through to High Cayton was great. This was followed by a technical section and a hard climb before dropping down into Ripley for a break at the Castle Tearooms. Ready for "off", we then discovered Ben had a flat tyre. This was soon mended and we headed home through Ripley Woods and Hampsthwaite.

Everyone enjoyed the day so much, we resolved to try to get a monthly mountain bike ride onto the calendar, but avoiding the use of cars as much as possible.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Malcolm loved his new mountain bike (Gia, you should get yourself a new mountain bike).
- Judging by the photo, Yvonne found something interesting in her flapjack.
- Despite Yvonne's facial expression. The food awards at Castle Tearooms definitely go to the flapjacks - they beat the teacakes hands-down. MW

Seven riders chose the long road ride. Anticipating the weather this ride had two options, 50 plus miles or 40 plus miles. In view of the wind speed and direction the latter was chosen. The route being to Knaresborough and Wetherby, then cycle track to Thorp Arch/Boston Spa.

It had been intended to take the A659 to Tadcaster then A162 to Towton. However on a suggestion from Peter we took a minor road (the old Roman Rudgate road) circling Tadcaster and through the village of Stutton to join the A162 before Towton.

A stop at the Wars of the Roses battlefield, the wind now being in our faces, but not as bad as 1461 when soldiers had to face wind, snow and a hail of arrows. A good café stop at Lotherton Hall, then on to Aberford,

Barwick in Elmet, Scholes, Thorner and Collingham. The force of previous winds could be seen here, signs blown off posts or turned in a different direction, which caused the odd moment's hesitation. On to Linton, Sicklinghall, Kirkby Overblow and back to Harrogate.

Distance a little more than estimated being around 47 miles car park to car park. The wind, though strong at times was not a hazard, just a nuisance when travelling into it. Previous winds must have been very strong though, at Wetherby Racecourse a concrete fence post had not only been uprooted and blown over but most posts had been snapped off by the wind. DP

Medium ride. Gale force winds are not ideal for cyclists especially those with a nervous disposition but 27 riders turned up at Hornbeam on Mother's Day obviously hoping that the wind would die down.

Seven of us headed towards Wetherby with a following wind and enough enthusiasm to add in a loop to Cowthorpe and then on to Tockwith. As we headed west along South Field Road with the wind full on towards us perhaps we overestimated the ride. We did have the privilege of seeing a white owl fly over us and a spectacular vintage car which gave us a friendly horn salute.

With Mothers Day pressures building three riders returned via Walton and Wetherby, the remaining four joined the bike path at Thorp Arch enjoying the protection from the wind and were soon happily ensconced at the Gourmet Café at Wetherby. From there as the wind had subsided we had a fast run home via the bike path to Spofforth and on to Follifoot and back to Hornbeam. We all survived! 32 miles. GM

Short ride. The scheduled rider leader was sadly incapacitated due to wheel collapse of her cycle. (No she isn't getting a new one until she learns to look after the present one better.) "Borrow my cycle" I said hopefully, "no you can lead the ride" was the reply. Where to go? The choice was made as I attempted to cross the Stray without being blown sideways towards Knaresborough nor dumped unceremoniously on my head. It wasn't a day for being brave so four riders set off on what we hoped would be a sheltered tour of the supermarkets.

All went well for the first 300 yards before one of us suffered the loss of a mudguard retaining bolt on a brand new cycle (so much for final point of sale checks) and had to return. Those remaining overcame the blustery conditions, completed the route and proceeded home having not gone as far as we would have liked. Only two incidents to report, firstly Sue was so overcome by seeing the Starbeck Cyclist (statue) that she fell gracefully from her cycle unaided by the wind. Secondly the amount of broken glass on the ASDA path was horrendous - only time will tell if anyone succumbs to a puncture. MG



