

Sunday, March 9, 2008

Wheel Easy Ride Report No. 97



Long ride mystery tour. We start with the usual route to Norwood in sun and rain, good pace 16 then 15 then 14 riders down Jack Hill Lane, to the right the patchwork vista and spread of Swinsty reservoir, then down, down to the first ford across the tree lined Washburn. Bill tells that an Austin Seven has crossed the packhorse bridge, we walk except for Steve who manages to do the bridge and half mile of track through Dobb Park, the remains of the lodge, just two towers poking through the horizon, and then the first 1 in 4 rising steeply out of the valley as misty clinging rain added to the pain. A damp ridge then cruising down into sunshine at Askwith.

The Wharfe Valley is always a pleasure, except for the cars. Ilkley, daffodils, old farmhouses, the roaring bulging river skirting stepping stones onwards in drifting haze and sun to Beamsley. Glucose levels down but still hills up. The Cavendish Pavilion, Coffee stop? Oh No. But you can use the loo, but another fiendish 1 in 4 before sustenance is at hand. Onward, the second ford, a bridge but I hear 'not for men' from Nick, Jill slows but yes she goes, then straight up, tortuous climb but for Dave not as tortuous as the despairing wait for a cup of tea at Buffers Café. It could be the longest wait for a cup of tea ever in all Wheel Easy rides (all planned by me as part of the challenge!). But who minds, Nick is going to buy a train set.

So what to follow, Oh no, another steeper 1 in 4 as front wheels lifted and the gearless walked. But then oh yes, wind behind us, sun beside us, floating over the A59, the gated Blubberhouses quarry and down across Thruscross Dam to be blown up that last long easy hill. From, then it was plain sailing home, an exhilarating ride and an accomplishment definitely, but will I be asked again to lead? PR

Gia writes: Paul tempted 16 of us out with the promise of hills, fords and fabulous views on his mystery tour. '1 dam, 2 fords, 3 x 1in4 hills, 4 very small bits of busy road, 5 gates and a small section of track you might want to walk, plus a café full of trains. 45mls.'

It turned out to be more than usually challenging and hugely varied, a real adventure. The weather was very changeable but with enough sunshine especially on the way home to justify adding this to the list of classic Wheel Easy rides.

The ride through Dobb Park is stunning with views of the reservoir below and a fine crossing over the packhorse bridge with the ford in full flood. Buffers Café, reached via Bolton Priory, is an intriguing café, a model railway enthusiasts' Mecca with rail layouts to die for. Plus wonderful cakes and milk from their herd of Friesian cattle poured into jugs straight from the pail.

The full trip is listed in the ride routes, do have a look and we hope to do this ride again on a long warm summer's day. Thanks to Paul for a great ride. GM

Medium ride. Well what a nice start, but little did we know what was to come!!! Fourteen set off to Knox Ford where we lost Dennis and another rider due to a puncture. So we were down two, but gained one at Killinghall. We descended to the bottom of Hampsthwaite then the weather turned to rain. Half the group turned back at High Birstwith while the rest pushed on to Menwith Hill. Then it was past the Sun Inn, along Norwood Lane and home. At last the rain stopped after a hilly but refreshing 24 mile ride. BC

