

Wednesday, April 16, 2008

Poddlers Ride Report

Since January the Poddlers have been upping the distances covered, we have ventured very slowly to Wetherby, and having realized we could do that we have been to Boroughbridge on several occasions, knowing there will be gentle hills and a pleasant toilet stop at Morrisons, and a very lovely lady in Minskip who will provide us with lemon iced water if she is about. This week however we decided to brave the area to the west of Harrogate and the peaks and troughs that were offered towards the outer reaches of Birstwith and the golf balls. Six keen riders turned up at Hornbeam at 1.30 and six keen riders set off, despite knowing the route in advance.

We took of course the easy way to Little Alms Cliff, stopping only twice to take in the view. The golf balls at Menwith looked minute. We were all going very strongly and there was an air of cocky confidence in the group as we sped past the Sun Inn towards Pennypot Lane. No-one wanted to opt out and taking our lives in our hands we managed to cross Skipton Road without losing anyone. Onwards and upwards we pedalled, the golf balls by this time were enormous. The group were surprised by the exceptionally long down into Hampsthwaite from Birstwith Summit, and equally amazed by the gentle drag out towards Killinghall from Hampsthwaite.

We eventually reached Knox Lane, after taking our lives in our hands once more crossing Ripon Road, before gliding victorious down Skipton Road in a traffic lull, to get home for an early bath and tea. Everyone deserved the Queen or King of the Mountains award, I only wish I'd bought the spotted Tour de France jersey I saw this week in TK Max, for us all to share. John was last seen heading off towards Hornbeam with his newly renamed fellow cyclists Lu, Lu, and Sin. Need I say more. Quite a few miles in two and a half hours. CG

Earlier in the day, Martin, Yvonne and friend Heather (training for a Scottish *étape*), and Malcolm and Gia, covered some of the same ground on the way to Ilkley and great coffee and cakes at Avanti café (where else?). Then it was the exquisite lane to Bolton Abbey (pausing by the ancient oak for the photo) and some lengthy climbing through classic moors countryside to the next stop, lunch at the Stone House pub. Apparently, from there it's mostly downhill after Greenhow to Menwith Hill, but it didn't feel quite that way battling against a relentless and cold easterly wind. By the time we had made it back up past Little Alms Cliff, through Beckwithshaw, and parted ways at Whinney Lane, we were all pretty well spent. MM

