

Sunday, June 22, 2008

Wheel Easy Ride Report No. 112



We reckon the Met Office did a good job in deterring people coming out on their bikes today! Ten of us rode with the wind behind us out of Harrogate and Knaresborough, Paul B and Jean took the loop back via Wetherby, the rest of us flew to Long Marston Memorial for the customary photo and reflection on Roundheads and Cavaliers. Phil turned back for the Thorp Arch bike path, whilst we rode on through the delightful villages of Angram, Askham Richard and Askham Bryan.

The Cycle Show on the racecourse was battling with the ever increasing wind and after a speedy refreshment stop and Malcolm's CTC award presentation we set off for home. Three ladies sensibly took the train home, meeting Tony at the station who was part way through his own marathon of the day. Paul, Mark, Gaye and Gia caught up with Tony at Tockwith. He had been riding since 4.30a.m! He rode to Filey and Scarborough, took the train to York and cycled back to Little Ribston. So we helped him on his way to achieving 100 miles by the time he got back home. These personal milestones are gathering pace!

Gia and Gaye were pleased to have the shelter of Mark and Paul for our return journey which was a battle with gusting winds mostly after Tockwith. A tree down on the Spofforth to Follifoot road was a comeuppance for a young driver who sped past us too fast and too close. He had to reverse, while we lifted our bikes over the tree and on to a car free zone all the way to Follifoot. 52 miles, great ride there, bit of an adventure coming back.
GM

For the long ride, an additional loop north enabled the 11 riders to get maximum benefit from the strong south westerly winds before joining the others at the annual Cycle Rally in York. First the group went east to Knaresborough, Cowthorpe and Walshford, briefly up the A168 and then up a little used lane which crosses the railway track at an unmanned barrier and comes out at Whixley. Martin and Yvonne on the tandem took a different route to avoid the barrier, so it was a bit of a disappointment that the barrier, normally closed in favour of allowing trains through, was in fact open this morning. Kissing gates either side are designed to let normal bikes through, but not tandems. More lanes past Thorpe Underwood and over Aldwark Toll Bridge led to Beningbrough Hall, where the sound of a brass band filled the air, and along National Cycle Route 65, a beautiful run into York beside the River Ouse.

We continued alongside the river to the Millennium Bridge, and shortly after arrived at the racecourse where the Cycle Rally was being battered by the increasingly powerful storm. Some riders returned immediately to Harrogate as planned, for the rest the first port of call was the awards ceremony where Malcolm was to be presented with his award as CTC Volunteer of the Year. Accepting this, Malcolm thanked Yvonne for nominating

him and said that the award was on behalf of all the 130 or so members of Wheel Easy who had made the group such a success.

The wind was creating havoc with chairs, tables and rubbish tumbling around the site, so the remaining six cyclists (some laden with bargain purchases - one of the slideshow photos shows Yvonne keeping hers close to her chest, as the expression goes) were soon ready to battle the south westerly on the return journey. We used the same route as the medium ride, through Askham Richard to Long Marston. Near the Marston Moor memorial there appeared to be a small whirlwind, filling the air with dust. For much of the time we took advantage of the windbreak provided by Martin and Yvonne's sturdy tandem riding at the front. First Peter left the group for a more direct route home via Cattal, then Malcolm to head for Pannal. The Harrogate district seemed to be worse hit than elsewhere, and approaching home a sudden gust blew the tandem over but happily neither riders nor bike were injured. MM

