

Sunday, August 10, 2008

## Wheel Easy Ride Report No. 119

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Eleven people set off from Hornbeam in windy, but dry conditions for a hilly long ride. Heading out through Hampsthwaite we were joined by Helen at Birstwith. At Clapham Gate Malcolm Y had his first puncture of the day. This was swiftly fixed and we headed on past Menwith Hill, Stone Cross Inn and just after this Helen had the second puncture of the morning followed by the first and heaviest downpour of rain. Donning waterproofs we continued into Pateley Bridge where Malcolm had his second puncture.

A stiff climb up Silver Hill brought us out on to Dallow Moor where we enjoyed the splendid scenery with a following wind helping us along. As we took a loop through Dallowgill towards Kirkby Malzeard, Malcolm had his third and fortunately final puncture of the day. Luckily several people were carrying spare inner tubes! We continued on to Masham for a welcome café stop, still managing to sit outside in spite of the rather windy conditions which made pouring a cup of tea more of a challenge than usual!

As we left Masham, Bill's gear cable broke so he opted to take the main road home while the rest of us headed back via a relatively flat route through West Tanfield, Wath, Ripon and Knaresborough.

Fourteen of us started out on the medium ride, including a few first-timers. The ride to Boroubridge passed off uneventfully, with an encouraging wind. The first serious deluge hit us just as we were nearing Morrisons so we dived for cover under their shelter and by the time we had put on water-proofs and used the toilet, it was time to remove our water-proofs again and head off. The wind became steadily less friendly as we passed through the picturesque villages of Aldborough, Lower and Upper Dunsforth, Great Ouseburn, Thorpe Underwood and Whixley. Perhaps the real low point was replacing a broken inner tube in the middle of the most vicious downpour of the day without a Morrisons in sight for shelter!

By the time we were taking the tiny road which joins the York road to Walshford, some of us were feeling distinctly challenged by the onslaught of the elements. (See picture of challenged cyclists waiting for the high tech. level crossing gates to be opened by the man in the hut..) The ride was originally supposed to finish with tea and scones in Spofforth, but the distance and weather left everyone feeling that the best thing was to head for home from Little Ribston. In the end the only person who turned up for tea and scones was Malcolm after his leaflet dropping day. It is, of course, the leader's job to eat any scones which have been left uneaten! We will try this idea again, but with a much shorter bike ride first!! SP

Here is the ride report for the short ride. After a very confused start on behalf of the short ride leader, due to her complete lack of awareness of time constraints and her brunch date, the short ride set off with four riders,

despite Steve Price's lure of cakes and the kettle being on at his house. However Gaye soon succumbed to either cakes or her boss's lycra and zoomed off to catch up with the medium riders.

The now depleted group sped through Harrogate on the cycle path, and quickly could be seen speeding through Knox, Killinghall and the back way to Hampsthwaite. What goes down must go up and having enjoyed a delicious down we faced an up after the bridge and over the Nidd. The up was not too overpowering and we soon were headed down the rough path to Ripley Castle, easier this way than the reverse. Being the short ride we ignored all taunts and calls from the teashops, ice cream purveyors and cafes and headed onwards, but not before the leader had been reunited with a neighbour she had not seen for four years.

We braved the Ripon Road but only on the footpath and whilst Max headed straight home to Harrogate to beautify himself for his breakfast outing, Caroline and Sue snook up Crawford's couloir and back along Grainbeck Lane to Knox. We headed up Knox Lane effortlessly, having cleverly mended a catching break, found and followed the Bilton footpath to the still glass strewn railway bridge and Asda path. We headed back to Hornbeam as the heavens opened, Sue reaching her car in time to avoid nearly drowning, Caroline reaching the shops on Leeds Road completely and utterly soaked, but then a Sunday 2008 would not be the same without a good wash. A pleasant ride of 17 miles in mainly sunny conditions. Two and a bit hours. CG



