

Sunday, September 7, 2008

Wheel Easy Ride Report No. 123



The forecast for Sunday 7th September and the torrential rain Saturday evening deterred many riders for the day. Never trust the forecast, hold your nerve! Sunday turned out to be fine and sunny and those who rode had a wonderful day. A few riders supported the Great Milk Stout Ride at Pateley, some starting at Hornbeam to get in a few extra miles, there was a charity ride at Harewood and an Audax ride run by Martin Weeks and Dave Preston on behalf of North Yorkshire CTC starting at Ripon. Seven Wheel Easy riders took part in either the 50k or 100k and all started from Harrogate again for the extra miles.

The riders who met at Hornbeam at 9.30 agreed to ride together and followed a favourite route out to Beckwithshaw up to Little Almscliff, Norwood and Menwith Hill.

This ride leads to one of the best Wheel Easy downhill swoops from the top of High Birstwith all the way to Hampsthwaite. A great introduction to yet another new rider who joined the ride today. GM

Five Wheel Easy members (maybe six - Tony ?) completed the Great Milk Stout Ride in surprisingly good weather conditions. Three had set out at 8:15 from Hornbeam and within 3 pedal turns the rain started. Drizzle gave way to dry grey conditions until Hartwith when the heavens opened for 10 minutes by which time the oak trees proved to be more colander than umbrella. Just over 400 entrants to the GMSR was a good turnout, with lots of junior entries and the route was dry and quick despite the frequency of the hills. After the finish the 'drenched three' dried out in the courtyard café by which time the sun was well established and they took their various routes home.

I was unable to persuade the others to join me cycling to Lofthouse and then over to Masham - I wonder why? It must have been me attracting the rain as I got soaked twice more on the tops above Lofthouse before reaching dry conditions and a late tea with the Audax Management team in Ripon. The cycle home from there was in warm evening sun, which made the tired legs and saddle sores less annoying. PL

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Having seen the heavens frequently open for several days before we didn't expect a big entry at Ripon but we were delighted when 23 turned out for the 50k and the 100k rides. Riders came from far and wide, and there was a good representation both from Ripon Loiterers and Harrogate Wheel Easy.

As usual the Sun Parlour Café at Spa Gardens provided an excellent base and delicious home cooking. So after a hearty start riders set off in theSunshine!! Yes, skies were blue but organiser's warnings of floods needed to

be heeded as there were almost certainly going to be some impassable sections of road.

The 50k ride was a delight. No closed roads, blue skies and gentle sunshine, and best of all a return to the Sun Parlour café for lunch.

Riders on the 100k, however, took a little longer and it turned out that several sections of road were severely flooded, causing most riders to take diversions. We have to say "most" because two intrepid, and not easily deterred, riders: Mike Bissell and Malcolm Yates, made it through every flood, including those that came to the top of the forks. They were dripping slightly on their return but regarded the whole event as a highpoint of their cycling year! Malcolm was even raced by a water vole in one of the floods, and also now doing a thesis on the fluid dynamics associated with cycling through deep water. Next year we are providing snorkels and route sheets in nautical miles.

Thanks to everyone for turning out despite the not too promising conditions. We were able to donate £5;20 from the entry fees to Ripon Guides as Caroline, who runs the Sun Parlour café is also the Guide Leader for Ripon.

Martin Weeks



