

Sunday, January 11, 2009

## Wheel Easy Ride Report No. 142

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It might only have been about 6 Centigrade but after weeks of deep freeze it felt almost like Spring as more than 30 cyclists gathered from all directions at Hornbeam.

First away were a small group of fast riders. Peter's mainly flat long route to Clifford and Tockwith was for them no match for the peaks of Greenhow Hill and the remote splendours of Burnsall.

On a pleasingly warmer day than recently, nine riders completed the Long Ride which was extended from the planned 35-40 miles to a respectable 54; according to the leader's device at least. Any southern or western facing stretches were into strong headwinds, but due to brilliant planning of the route to Aberford a lot of this was got over with quickly and a surprising amount of tailwind then accrued.

Ahead of the Medium ride we too opted for Burn Bridge, Walton Head, Kirkby Overblow, a great tailwind section to Sicklinghall, Wetherby, A1 cycle path to Collingham roundabout (to the west of A1, the path to the east is not yet Tarmaced), A1 cycle path to Clifford, a surprising hill on the back road to Bramham and then along roads parallel to the A1 to Aberford. Relief at last, as we turned north and swooped past the Towton battlefield and examined the bleak monument to the bloodiest battle in England. Tea in the Tykes Cafe in Tadcaster, could have turned out bloodier and can only be described as a Fawlty Towers experience - don't even ask for HP Sauce, and as for Tea-cakes - forget it Dave!

Rejuvenated and encouraged by Eric's pronouncement that the wind had disappeared, we headed for Wighill, Healaugh and picked up the Marston road out of Askham Richard and home via the oft-used Tockwith, Cowthorpe route. Four riders headed home via Spofforth

and the other five zipped into Knaresborough together until separated after giving directions to a very lost horse-rider on a very flighty horse.

Dave Preston thanked the leader for a not very beautiful and yet interesting ride - we aim to please, Dave. Peter L

To begin with 14 medium riders wound up Hookstone Bridge, then to Rossett Green Lane, Burn Bridge and up Walton Head Lane to Kirkby Overblow. Sadly, Debbie had a problem with her bike chain and had to make an early exit, and at Kirkby Sarah headed off towards Pannal for a shorter route. So 12 were left to make good progress (despite being overtaken by the speedy guys from Otley) towards Sicklinghall and Wetherby where we joined the new cycle path alongside the A1, and battled a fairly unpleasant wind for a mile or two before turning off to Boston Spa.

Phil in the lead sped by the intended turn off to Clifford, but this was a pretty smart move as most were by now thinking about lattes and hot chocolates. We regrouped at the turning to Thorp Arch where we split into two, agreeing to meet up at the café on the trading estate. Some of us proved a little more directionally challenged than others but eventually we all arrived at the café except Dennis and Peter B who knew where they were going and headed straight home for lunch.

After a very acceptable break and a good chat we set off back up the Sustrans path on the former railway line to Wetherby and Spofforth. Here Steve, who had studied the website calendar in advance and realised he would be better to cycle instead of driving to the start, ended his ride and went home. The remainder rode together to Follifoot where they then scattered to various parts of Pannal and Harrogate. About 30 miles, and we agreed pretty ideal for a blowy day. Malcolm M

Hello here is the short ride report for Sunday 11th January 2009. I awoke to the sounds of gales blowing and winds winding, and a cosy bed seemed a better option than braving the elements, except it was full of a cold ridden Max. So loins girded I set out to Hornbeam, hoping that no-one would want to participate in a short ride.

The Hornbeam meeting point was awash with yellow cyclists. All mad. Seven people were up and keen to do the short ride, so after Malcolm's talk and Gia's ticket selling, and several groups of very long speedy people, we set off rather quickly to Knaresborough. A rather hot looking (in the cycling sense) red faced, late Paul, having battled with the gales from Killinghall already, joined us at the first traffic lights. We sped past Morrison's, turning left over the railway line and Knaresborough Road to the Beryl Burton track.

We continued without incident through Knaresborough to Lingerfield (where Paul sensibly decided to return home) and on to Farnham (a repeat of a rather warmer less windy last Wednesday's poddle) and en route we all learnt how to get a good crop of potatoes with particular reference to chitting, from Jo the gardener. Sensing a surge of fitness in the group I suggested the hill out of Farnham and Sandy Lane, and promptly took Sue and Skipton Lynda the other way saying we'd meet again at the T junction onto the Boroughbridge Road.

We met up again, and took a left turn down Bar Lane, round the back of Knaresborough to Chain Lane and my first Wheel Easy puncture. The sainted tyre changer and ride mechanic Joe, in consultation with the labourer Geraldine, then thankfully proceeded to sort out the

problem, with the rest of the riders looking on in admiration. How can all the practice and showing suddenly leave a person's head? I was quite sure last time I watched a tyre change I could do it. Wrong! I had not a clue where to start. Finally Gardener Jo finished off the operation on the tyre and removed a thorn under the guidance of the consulting team. Sue had a date with Sunday lunch and a stock broker, so led the group who were not involved in the tyre operation home to warmth and safety.

With the bike safely mended and checked the ride continued along Waterside and back along a very blustery Forest Moor to Harrogate and the Stray, where we gleefully and carefully and considerably rode home. A short 21 miles done slowly against the wind which seemed to be coming from every direction. Caroline



