

Sunday, March 29, 2009

Wheel Easy Ride Report No. 153



The Sun God was given an early sacrifice and was obviously pleased as he managed to just about get rid of Jack Frost in time for our 9.30 start. Cloudless blue skies promised a good day of cycling as 19 of us set off through Knaresborough to Ripon. A first break at the Minster was welcome and no mass stripping off of warm layers was a sure indication of chill air, but that made the views all the clearer. After Ripon it was a climb up to Galphay, then Kirkby Malzeard, Grewelthorpe and Masham.

At this point some disarray was caused by a minor insurrection wanting coffee and the leader getting a puncture. So I sent everyone on to Thorpe Perrow, our lunch stop, while I fixed the puncture in the company of Yvonne and Paul T. Paul said he needed the rest but as usual he was just being a nice guy and not wanting to abandon us. We arrived at Thorpe Perrow a little later than planned but we saw a decent contingent of both Wheel Easy Riders and Ripon Loiterers departing after their meet.

Some people couldn't resist showing off by doing a few more miles to get to Thorpe Perrow but they did miss the date and pecan tray bake as a result - I am still licking it off my fingers. Then it was back in gorgeous sunshine to Snape and the daffodils, Wath and Ripon. As we headed back on the road to Knaresborough we met Gaye and Caroline having abandoned their cars at Ripon and enjoying a ride all the way home - well done to both, and we agree it was not a day to rush back indoors.

Back at Harrogate I reckon we had done 62 miles, so our first 100k this year. Now let's have a few more days like that! Martin W

Five followed Martin's route (apart from errors) at a slightly gentler pace, catching up first at

Ripon Cathedral and later at the café. It was a great opportunity for a relaxed pedal, and with no time or daylight constraints on the first day of British Summer Time 2009. Helen and Keith are experienced touring cyclists so were well up to the challenge, but Krizsti and Judit did particularly well to manage the distance on their mountain bikes, and all enjoyed discovering new lanes and byways. Malcolm M

With no sign of ice or snow 4 members ventured from Hornbeam with me on my now guest appearance. The usual route to Timble and Askwith, great run down Askwith Bank to the Wharfe valley and on to Bolton Abbey. We then took a virgin route for Wheel Easy over the gated road to Embsay, past the steam railway and on queue along came the steam train much to Eric's delight. Onwards, marvelling at the views back towards Ilkley and the Wharfe valley.

Arrived at the very famous cycling café in Gargrave about 12.30, not many stops on the way. We all decided the café was great but expensive and the portions small but had a great time confusing the staff with our order. After lunch onwards towards Cracoe and into the lanes heading towards Burnsall. Great views towards Grassington and Kettlewell.

From Burnsall we started to climb through Appletreewick and up over Skyholme hill, our sore legs climbed on with Stump Cross in sight. Chris decided not to continue to Pateley Bridge but to return to Harrogate via Duck Street and Menwith Hill. Hope you got home ok mate!

Leaving four of us to a great descent down Greenhow Hill. Time for tea and cake with Peter tucking into egg and chips at the Lemon Meringue Pie tea room. Onwards and upwards. Yorke Folly was our next challenge then down to Thornthwaite and up again to Menwith Hill finally descending to Hampsthwaite and home.

A big well done to new member and a very brave James for doing his first 75 mile ride (bet he didn't know about me!). Eric and Peter rode strongly all day with Chris on his new bike riding well, great weather good company and a demanding but very rewarding route. Eric says our average speed was around 12mph so with the big hills we climbed it was quite a tough ride. It would be nice to see a few more members taking on these challenging rides - you really do get to see some great countryside! Malcolm Y

Hello here is the ride report from the wandering middle ride group which set off from Ripon Leisure Centre. An enormous thanks to Wendy and Christine and all the other kind members of the Ripon Loiterers, who patiently put up with our foibles and our ways, and took us on the most glorious ride so far this year.

The day was bright and cold but the blue sky promised warmth by lunchtime. Twelve Wheel Easiers arrived at Ripon Leisure Centre with our bikes in various stages of disrepair and dismantling, but they were quickly reassembled and made ready for action when the Ripon Loiterer Leaders thankfully arrived to show us the way to Thorpe Perrow. We set off at a brisk pace through the back streets of Ripon. (Well most of us did - Dennis decided that he really should have his front wheel fitted the correct way round - a short wait by a few - job done and off we set to catch the others up only to find Geraldine a further 300m up the road throwing pedals in every direction - pedal removed from foot - screwed into crank from reverse direction - a cunning little move to re-cut the crank thread - removed - replaced correctly -job done and off we set again to catch up with the others who were patiently waiting near the by-pass. Thanks to VHRLMWRK* and Paul with the appropriate tool.)

Up a short hill and a left turn took us to the quieter road leading to Hutton Conyers. We hadn't gone far when Dennis' chain (new in October) decided to "part company" with his cycle. To the fore again *The Very Helpful RL Man With Repair Knowledge and the gentleman with his link removing tool. The ladies left the men to effect repairs and set off on their own ride. Soon it was job done and on with the gents ride.

The ladies ride continued in a sedate manner, along the correct route, discussing the important things in life, such as Gaye's lamb cassoulet, where you can find the best cassoulet in France, summer hols, costs of wedding and Sue T's exciting cycling in Portugal. We saw Wendy's birth place, and arrived very painlessly in the wonderful village of Snape, where the men caught up with us insisting they had been to Leyburn and other points north before arriving quite puffily in Snape.

After D's chain had been fixed the two speedy RLs led the gents on a speedy, very pleasant mystery tour to Snape. They claimed to know the way and were proved correct after consultations with man washing car in West Tanfield and Paul's map (what a useful man Paul was today). My suspicions were confirmed in the cafe later when the VHRLMWRK confessed to cycling from Gibraltar to England using only a compass! We met the ladies at Snape to find that our speedy RL leaders had managed to arrive in time for the group photo whilst the rest of the panting group didn't. No hard feelings - thanks guys.

Male and female groups then excitedly merged for a short speedy trip to Thorpe Perrow where we had a variety of snacks and large lunches, whilst we waited for The Very Long Speedy Ride who had obviously ridden out to Darlington, before they reached Thorpe Perrow. We met several strays who'd either lost Gia or never found her. Both groups tried to make contact but in the wilds north of Ripon you need to light beacons, phones are no good, despite standing on tables and other tactics.

After a good rest and communications failures, we met the speedy group rushing to obtain a cup of tea and a bun. We then left for the most beautiful ride back to Ripon, via goodness knows where and Thornborough where we saw one of its three henges. At one point we came to a field with a salutary MOD notice warning us "not to touch or pick up anything as it may explode. Did this really mean the sheep couldno we won't go there, particularly with Gaye's growing obsession with her lamb shank cassoulet with haricot beans and Toulouse sausage.

Wendy continued to lead us expertly back to Ripon along a gentle and wide skyed route, the sun blazing uncharacteristically. So, over excited by the excellent ride, two riders decided to abandon their cars, and a joyous husband and cycle back to Harrogate without them, still pondering on the cassoulet. The more sensible members of the group dismantled their bikes and returned home to lunches and teas in the traditional way exhibited weekly by Dennis as he heads off for his roast. A superb day of riding, excellent company as usual, and a big thanks to the Loiterers who put up with us. C and MG

Only three survived from the mass exodus of the medium and long riders. Never mind! We may have been a small band but select nevertheless as we shot (?) off to Follifoot via the Showground, Calcutt, Thistle Hill and carefully across the by-pass.

During an early banana stop pre-Follifoot it was decided that a lack of coffee and other

necessaries would spoil an otherwise lovely morning. So a diversion to Wetherby by way of Spofforth was agreed except that our enthusiast from Earby, was so keen he followed a complete stranger (who didn't even look like me) in the wrong direction. He was reined in before long and after an amusing rebuke the correct route was regained.

Spofforth was soon reached and an amicable parting of the ways took place with the leader heading home towards Little Ribston and Knaresborough. My clock showed just under 22 miles which was just right for such a nice morning. Hopefully Mervyn and Lycia survived the recently smartened up Harland Way. CM

In my defence (ref the report) about me following a complete stranger I would point out that he was also wearing a pair of shorts and had legs that did look like Crawford's, hard though it may be to believe that there can be more than one pair like that! Lycia and I did survive the Harland Way in both directions, having managed an excellent coffee and toasted sandwich in Wetherby.

Unfortunately however I managed to collect a significant amount of mud on the unsurfaced part of the Harland Way which necessitated stopping and prising it out from between the tyre on my back wheel and the mudguard as otherwise the wheel would not go round.

A safe return, and 26 glorious miles in brilliant weather and nice company (thanks for your patience and the loan of the allen keys to extract the mud Lycia). Mervyn A



