

Sunday, July 19, 2009

Wheel Easy Ride Report 169



Long Ride report: 15 riders started on the long ride to Masham, which was clearly going to be a ride which required an abundance of flexibility. The aim of the ride leader was to visit the 44th Masham Steam Engine & Fair Organ Rally, but it was clear that the majority wanted to go for the ride, & not necessarily for the rally! Before leaving Hornbeam Park we split into 2 smaller groups to improve safety and consideration for other road users - it was a shame this spirit was not reciprocated later by a caravan driver in Ripon who very dangerously sped past us, almost brushing our elbows in the process, only to have to make an emergency stop in front of us when he realised he was driving very fast to a dead end. I didn't realise our lady members could shout abuse so loudly (totally justified, of course) as we then went past him onto the cycle path exit!

The route from Harrogate had taken us through Knaresborough, where we were joined by 3 more members, then on to Bishop Thornton and Ripon Spa Gardens for a coffee stop. Here the 2 groups met up again, and we were joined by one more member, and lost one as Nick was returning home for a street party. Spa Gardens café was particularly busy as another party of cyclists arrived from York. Fortunately the weather was fine so we could sit outside where there were just about enough chairs for all. The cyclists from York had an interesting selection of bikes, almost all carbon fibre, including a very extreme time trial bike, another used in triathlons, and several with race numbers on, and all very expensive! It was good to see that they had a couple of teenagers in their group.

Suitably refreshed, we set off for Masham, splitting into our 2 groups again, and arrived at Masham before noon. The first group visited the 'Goods Shed' cafe at the old railway station for another large pot of tea, which was drunk outside to the accompaniment of two fairground organs and the hissing of 10 or so steam engines and one steam lorry. What wonderful sounds, smells and noises from a bygone age! Then it was time for the majority

of the group to depart for the ride back to Harrogate. James and I stayed in Masham and walked over the road to enter the main rally field, where there were many more engines of different shapes and sizes. Several were demonstrating their working capabilities, one powering a saw which was being used to cut a tree trunk into planks, another powering a stone crusher with the gravel then dropping onto a conveyor belt for onward transport. There were several miniature steam engines pulling trailers with 2 or 3 people, vintage lorries, vintage motorbikes and vintage bicycles, including penny farthings, and a shaft driven cycle made by the Rover car company of Solihull, circa 1910. After a couple of wonderful hours, we paid the Goods Shed another visit, before setting off for Harrogate via Grewelthorpe, Kirby Malzeard, Fountains Hall, and Ripley, arriving home at 5.15. 52 miles, great ride, good weather, fabulous day out!

Many thanks to Dave P for today's ride photos. Eric

Five riders, Chris, Glyn, Ian, Dave W and Dave P left Eric and James to admire the steam machines. Very much nostalgia here, it smelt just like Leeds City Station 60 years ago. DP and DW couldn't match the blistering pace set by Chris and the others, and they soon vanished out of sight on the ascent out of Masham. However "slow and steady" and "Tortoise and Hare" sprang to mind as we were caught by Ian and Glyn near Bishop Monkton (where had they been?). Weather held off, lots of interest, nice ride Eric. DP

Report from Long Ride - Extra. A steadier group of 8 riders followed on from Eric and the faster riders. At Knaresborough Norman and Terry joined us with new friend, and later on at Ripon we were joined by Liz, and then at Masham by Peter. So although this was a steadier ride, it was definitely an expanding one. After our second meal stop at the Border café in Masham Square there were some concerns that the waistlines would also follow in the expansion direction!

From Masham we decided on a hilly ride taking us up to Swinton Hall Hotel, where Keith persuaded us all to join him on a tour of the grounds to see how the other half live. Quickly escaping before we got charged for using the driveway, we continued climbing up onto the moors above Grewelthorpe and Kirby Malzeard. The winding lane gave great views, and in some parts the road was flooded following last Friday's rain. We returned to Ripon via Laverton and Galphay and then headed home via Littlethorpe, having completed close to 60 miles, in delightful cycling weather. Martin W

About 16 of us (give or take a few) set off from Hornbeam towards Boroughbridge, the skies threatening some rain, but not very seriously. We got as far as Forest Moor Road between Harrogate and Knaresborough when a loud bang was heard from Linda's bike, and the back tyre went flat. Shouldn't be a major problem, but despite fitting a new inner tube of approximately correct dimensions, we failed to repair the puncture, and our first casualty of the day retired graciously, pushing her bike back towards Harrogate.

The slightly depleted group continued through Knaresborough along the riverside to Chain Lane and thence to Boroughbridge Road, past Gibbet Farm (how many places had gibbets in the past? How many people did they hang?) to Farnham, Minskip and into Boroughbridge, where the group photo was taken on Geraldine's phone, as we had forgotten to take a camera (and no-one else had brought one, either). We had provisionally planned a coffee stop at the café by the ginnel, but Geraldine and I were keen to be shown the 'Sticky Wicket' café, so we carried on to Roecliffe.

There was a sign saying that the road to Bishop Monkton was impassable owing to flooding,

but such minor potential problems did not faze the intrepid group (and Dennis assured us that any flooding would have disappeared by that time), and, indeed, there was no sign of it on the way to Bishop Monkton. We crossed the A61 by the Garden Centre, re-grouped, took off the rain gear some of us had put on a few minutes earlier, and continued to Markington, where we found the Sticky Wicket (which was indeed very sticky to cycle on). Dennis, Crawford and John were very disciplined, and continued back towards Harrogate, whilst those remaining had coffee and cakes, before proceeding towards the derelict Drovers Inn, where Paul had a problem with his chain guard, which was speedily removed.

As we got to the top of the long hill down towards Ripley, we came across Crawford trudging resignedly along the road with a flat front tyre and, rather more seriously, what was probably a broken rear axle. Dennis had gone on ahead and had agreed to meet him in the Ripley ice-cream shop with his car. After Ripley, a few of us avoided cycling on the main road by using the footpath on the west side of the A61, but we then had to cross the A61 at the turn to go over the old bridge. It took at least 5 minutes for all of us to cross, such was the speed and density of the traffic.

Round the back of Killinghall via the Crawford bypass (which has been re-surfaced in places) and then across the A61 again to Knox Ford. Sarah did really well and cycled across the 'Spruisty Bridge', but then unfortunately fell off quite badly. A quick check over by the good doctor suggested that there were no bones broken or serious injuries, and the bike suffered only a broken mirror. There were only 5 of us left by the time we got to the top of the hill from Knox Ford, having covered around 33 rather-too-eventful miles. Joe & Geraldine

Two first time Wheel Easy riders, Nicola and James, were among the six who set off towards Whinney Lane on today's short ride. While regrouping at Beckwithshaw we admired a peloton from Garforth CC hurtle by at awesome speed in the opposite direction. We cycled steadily up to Little Almscliff and took the opportunity to get our breath back with a photo of the group and the backdrop of Menwith Hill and the windfarm, then coasted down the other side towards Norwood. All this, and indeed most of the day's route was new cycling territory to the newcomers.

We were hoping for refreshments at Fewston Parochial Hall, where on most summer Sundays one of a number of charities offers most of the essential pick-me-ups sought by the weekend cyclist and walker. Happily, today was one of those Sundays, and we enjoyed tea, coffee and cakes while the rain poured down outside for what proved to be the only time during our ride.

Lynda, who had work commitments, returned by the route we had come, while the rest continued along Penny Pot Lane. We then tackled the steep hill up to Harlow Moor Drive where James, who had mentioned he was a regular at the gym and in training for a 10K run, showed just how fit he is, leaving the ride leader and the rest toiling far behind.

From here we cycled into the Pinewoods and past the greenhouses to Panorama Walk, stopping to enjoy the spectacular view of Harrogate and the distant Cleveland Hills, along the path to the Pannal Ash roundabout, and finally back down the Rossett cycle path to St George's, Langcliffe Ave and Hornbeam. Just over 20 very enjoyable miles. Malcolm

