

Sunday, August 9, 2009
Wheel Easy Ride Report 172



We often say that Wheel Easy needs to come up with some new ride categories but we still manage to lead rides that please everybody. Today Ben's long ride plans were hijacked in the nicest possible way and with the prospect of a still and sunny day they set off with 90 miles and Park Rash in their sights!

Our new riders were well looked after by Sarah on the short ride and Dennis who was on grandchildren duty this weekend offered to lead Option 1 of the medium ride. This ride set off to Norwood via Stainburn Woods, over to Menwith Hill and then a new diversion to take in Kettleasing, Tang and Birstwith Hall. Home via Hampsthwaite at a nice leisurely pace and about 24 miles.

Option 2 captured the interest of 10 and in glorious sunshine we went as far as Birstwith Hall on Option 1 for a photoshoot, then back to Clapham Green, Birstwith and Hartwith Toll Bridge where Peter B pointed out three young buzzards circling overhead. He said in France they would have been shot!

The long climb up Stripe Lane included a snack stop and discussion about a café stop. After Brimham Peter J guided us on a long downhill swoop to Warsill on to the Ripley Road and the old Drovers Inn and then to The Sticky Wicket at Markington. Despite waiting ages for our cakes and coffee (Gary and Paul P got their bacon butties very quickly!) we all enjoyed sitting outside and reflecting on a great ride.

Paul P, Peter B and Peter J returned back via Ripley whilst the remainder carried on out of Markington to Bishop Monkton and home via Farnham, Lingerfield and Knaresborough.

The ride was a good pace, we had wonderful views as we stayed on the tops, probably

never more than 15 miles from Harrogate at any time. There were some new sections and several of us had never approached Markington from the Drovers before and it is all downhill! 49 miles for what we now refer to as a medium plus ride. Gia

Eight of us set off from Hornbeam Park, Eric, James, Charles, Alex, Bill, Dennis, new member Geoff and me. It was a last minute route change thanks to Bill but no complaints - I was going to suggest it but I thought nobody would like to do it!

The first 20 miles flew by to Greenhow where we said goodbye to Dennis due to time commitments, then took the fun and fast road to Grassington. At this point we were almost 30 miles into the ride and a café stop was called for. Over tea and teacakes Bill told scary tales of the one in four hill to come, the dreaded Park Rash.

After a leisurely break it was a brisk ride to Kettlewell where a town fair was in progress with so many people it was amazing. Then the hard work started but this wasn't Park Rash yet, just a hill to wake us up before the real thing!! There was a nice bit of downhill first but then there it was. We all started up with James in the lead. He got up the first section but as the rest of us ascended a car came round and knocked us all off balance, in part also because a 90 year old granny on our side on the way back from church was carrying a tree up the hill to use for her fire!

So we were forced to dismount but we all hopped back on and completed the killer hill. We were waiting at the top where we chatted to a couple on a tandem and a foreign dude trying to find a bridleway. After cooling down from the climb we were met by a fantastic downhill to Coverham which was the spectacular highlight of the day. We eventually came to Jervaulx where Geoff went home on the main road to Ripon while the rest of us went to the café. We were not very pleased with the service either due to new ownership or they may have been overwhelmed by customers.

From there we continued to Ripon and the usual route home via Farnham. About 90 miles. What an epic! Fantastic weather and company and thanks to Bill for your help and your vast knowledge of roads. Ben

Eric adds: Ride was brilliant. Great scenery, great weather, and really nice to do a ride with lots of new landscape, as I had never done the section from Kettlewell to Coverdale before. Yes, I was a Park Rash virgin! But no longer. It was pretty awesome. I got to the summit first, but possibly paid for it later on. At Ripon I told the others I was 'running on empty' due to lack of calories. We stopped to regroup at the Golf Club after the climb out of Knaresborough, and when we came to restart I found myself suddenly go dizzy and had blurred vision. Not good! It took 10 or 15 minutes, and James' bar of Kendal mint cake, for me to recover sufficiently to continue, but after lots of food and an early night I'm fine. I don't remember losing my virginity having quite such an effect a few years ago! 88 miles at 13.4 mph average, including dawdling from Knaresborough. Eric

Six cyclists 'volunteered' for the short ride this week, some of whom were relative newcomers to Wheel Easy. The weather was fantastic - blue sky and sunshine! The first day this year where I decided to leave my leggings and waterproofs at home!

We headed off towards Beckwithshaw via the St. Georges cycle path (which is looking in need of a trim back), past the Squinting Cat and right turn to hit the Otley Road. Through Beckwithshaw to Norwood Lane, and a short stop at Stainburn Wood car park to regain

strength, take a photo and contain our excitement at the prospect of newt hunting on Lindley Moor!

A pleasant off road jaunt through the Forestry Commission to the said pond, only to find that the water was very murky, and no newts to be seen! Mutterings of disappointment in the group were quashed at the prospect of the sight of lhamas, which have been spotted in the area of Norwood Edge.

Unfortunately, no lhamas either, just a very steep hill and more mutterings, once we had hit the Otley Road. A right turn down Broad Dubb Road, and back onto Norwood Lane, to take us back the way we came. Approx 18 miles. Well done to all!

Next ride in two weeks will be to spot the Black Panther of Knaresborough! Honest!! Sarah E



