

## Wheel Easy Ride Report 191

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DUE TO THE WEATHER THE PLANNED WHEEL EASY LED RIDES WERE CANCELLED. The ice and snow made it too dangerous for leaders to take on the responsibility for group rides. However a few cyclists decided to meet at Hornbeam and went for a ride together.

### Wheel Easy Walk in Harrogate

Icy, snowy conditions meant that we felt we could not offer Wheel Easy led rides today but we would arrange a couple of walks. The Harrogate option saw Caroline and David walk from Hornbeam, Gia, Paul T and Sue C met at Rossett and walked through fields behind Whinney Lane in glorious sunshine across to Harlow Carr and along the woods to The Magnesia Well café where we met up with Max, Mary and Jill. Most enjoyable coffee break then we went our separate ways via Waitrose, Harlow Carr or town and a great walk home in the falling snow. Happy Xmas, Gia

### Wheel Easy Walk Around Fountains and through the Deer Park

Yvonne and I started to think we were going to be enjoying each others company as the bus left Harrogate Bus Station with only the two of us destined for the walk, but at the Hydro Dorothy and Dennis joined us. Getting off the bus at Ripon there were more walkers, two from Wheel Easy and two from Ripon Loiterers, making a good walking group of eight. The sun was fantastic to start as we made our way along paths next to the River Skell out of Ripon. Soon it was into the fields and a thermos tea break greatly enhanced by tall John's recent culinary expedition into making Nigella's Luxury Breakfast Bars. Malcolm - you know we all rate your flapjacks but this is something else, and introduces an element of sheer gluttony into the home-cooking scene. Even Brian's dog Poppy had put on 2 stone by the time she got back.

Following the bridleway around the south side of the Fountains estate we met Sandy and Chris Delf heading in the opposite direction, and then it was on the lanes and into the NT Visitor Centre for hot soup. At the restart the snow had started gently falling and the walk

through the deer park was a delight. So then it was to the bus, a quick nod off on the journey (you can't do that on a bike!), and home to tea. Martin W

#### Road Ride

I'd been using my mountain bike in the snow and ice of the last few days and was looking forward to going off-road on Sunday morning - despite the outside thermometer showing - 2C. Disaster struck when I found the rear tyre completely flat - I'd done 11 miles on it yesterday and there was no sign of a puncture at 6pm, so must have collected it right at the end of my journey. I rang Malcolm to offer my apologies and was told that some intrepid souls were at Hornbeam Park with road bikes, so I swapped water bottle, lights and tools onto my road bike, and "hot-footed" it (well more like "hypothermia-toed" it) to meet Phil, Peter and Mark at the Prince of Wales roundabout. Our destination was Pateley Bridge, via Killinghall, Ripley, Burnt Yates, Summerbridge and Wilsill. We were sticking to the main roads as they were most likely to be free of snow, and very little traffic was out today. A snow shower at Burnt Yates caused us to question whether we should continue, but the majority voted in favour (remember this was an unled ride so democracy replaced autocracy today!). The snow didn't last too long, and we reached the Lemon Meringue Tea Shop by 11am. Harrogate Nova arrived some time later on some expensive bikes, and we noted one rider bringing his front wheel into the cafe with him - good way of stopping bike theft we thought - until we later saw him fixing a puncture inside the cafe!!! Our majority vote was for a return via Summerbridge, Darley Mill, Menwith Hill, Penny Pot Lane. The first of the several snow showers started before Summerbridge. I thought that wearing glasses would be an advantage in snow, like ski goggles, but far from it. You get a double whammy - firstly a lot of snowflakes manage to get round the glasses and painfully hit your eyeballs, and the others stick to your glasses so you can't see anything anyway. We stopped briefly for a photo call near Darley, during a brief lull in the snow. As we reached Penny Pot Lane the snow started to come down very heavily. We were cycling - lights on - down the middle of the road on the only bit of uncovered tarmac, and then that disappeared too. Phil decided to walk on the pavement past Queen Ethelburga's estate, and I was freewheeling on the road alongside him, when we heard a car coming down the hill behind us. The revving of the engine told us it was out of control, it was on the wrong side of the road, swerved back onto our side and hit the curb about 20 yards ahead of us. I then joined Phil on the safety of the pavement! All cars were having great difficulty on the hills on both sides of Oakwood Bridge. At Duchy Road I was able to get back on my bike and cycle through the snow, arriving home at 1.30pm. The outside thermometer hadn't got above freezing. 32 memorable miles. Eric

#### Off Road Ride

Just three of the small group who met at Hornbeam opted for the off road ride, Debbie, Malcolm and Darren. We headed down Hornbeam, turned left down the icy footpath through 'Hooky Woods' to Crossways Drive and up Forest Lane.

Here we crossed to go down a footpath running alongside Harrogate Golf Club towards Knaresborough. As we entered fields there was a group of cows which at first ran away and then took an alarming interest in Malcolm who was relieved to reach the stile at the far end of the field in one piece.

This brought us to Calcutt where we immediately dropped down to a wooded path on the opposite side of the river to the usual Wheel Easy route. Unfortunately, Malcolm got a puncture, rapidly repaired by Darren, but only to find another puncture in both tyres. He decided to call it a day and walked the bike back to Knaresborough station just in time for the midday train.

So just the two of us went to Hay-a-Park, right to Ferrensby, left to Knaresborough, Fools Wood and up the Beryl Burton back to Harrogate. Overall an enjoyable and varied ride complete with punctures, a couple of falls (due to the ice) and one icy slide. Darren

#### New Member

We are very pleased to welcome our newest, and according to an early poll, best looking member Madison Elsie Kline ( see slideshow), who joined Wheel Easy (and the rest of society) on December 12, 2009, weighing 7 lbs 2.5 ounces. Congratulations to Sarah and Matt.



