

Sunday, February 28, 2010

Wheel Easy Ride Report 201



Short Ride Report
The short ride never quite made it over Hookstone Bridge, as by the time the 6 of us left the car park, the leader's plans had changed and we found ourselves turning right down Hornbeam Park Avenue instead of left. At the end we took the bridleway to Fulwith Mill Lane and crossed the A61 into the Mallinsons and Rossetts. From here we rejoined the promised route through Beckwithshaw, a short hairy stretch over the A61 roundabout to the sanctuary of Walton Head Lane, Kirkby Overblow and the lovely run through Sicklinghall to Wetherby. The guys - Neil, John and Malcolm - tended to ride slightly ahead of the girls - Lynda, Maris and Sarah - but no one was in a hurry. The A1 underpass on the old railway line out of Wetherby was impassable under several feet of water, and we stopped to take photos of the flood and our group. Neil, with time limits, returned to Harrogate, while the rest crossed the A1 over the York Road bridge and then added some easy miles on the cycle path to Thorp Arch, returning the same way for a much needed café stop and thawing out at The Gourmet Café in The Shambles. Then it was back along the old railway line into Spofforth, where John took off for a fast return to Harrogate. The remaining four continued to Follifoot, Ridding Lane, up the new cycle path into the Yorkshire Showground and parted company on Hookstone Road after covering an enjoyably relaxed 31 miles. Malcolm M

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Medium Ride Report
Today my ride began with the usual climb up Almsford Bank where I was overtaken by a female cyclist who was on her way home from a night shift at LGI! Respect! Twelve of us "chose" to embark on one of the hilliest rides in the Wheel Easy calendar and after a winter of cancelled or shortened rides this was quite a challenge. We were glad that the forecast of icy rain was totally wrong and despite a bit of a headwind we had good conditions and great

views.

I was reminded of the programme Just a Minute with its guidelines of no repetition, deviation or hesitation as variations of the ride route were repeatedly discussed. I took good counsel from one of my riders who reckoned Wheel Easy could be too democratic and as ride leader I should make the decision. So I thought we should follow the route by the book despite no obvious café stop and onwards and upwards we crept. At the top of Cut Throat Lane where everyone pays homage to John and his spectacular pose beneath the signpost (see October, Wheel Easy Calendar) we took a well needed snack break. Here the ride leader gently chided those who had brought no snack, energy drinks or money!. Geraldine promptly came out with the phrase "spectacles, testicles, wallet and watch" as a method of remembering! Anyway we did our fishes and loaves bit and shared round "Nigella's" nuts and raisins and bars. None of us had ever climbed the road past Warsill to approach Brimham which whilst it was a lot of climbing came with the rewards of great views, (Richard or Terry noted that someone had left a light on in Harrogate) and we saw snow covered dales in the distance. The best was yet to come with lots of down bits past Brimham, Stripe Lane and on to Hartwith Toll Bridge. Yes, a bit of a slog back up past Birstwith and out of Hampsthwaite but everybody made it in good spirits. Well done to Mary who had been poorly, to Linda and Caroline who made all the hills, to Peter for being such a gentlemanly back marker, to Dennis who just beat Alison up Cut Throat Lane and to Richard, Trevor and Terry who helped to shepherd us all round with good advice. Now you are probably wondering what happened to Max! He definitely started with us and he was still around in Hampsthwaite but he sneakily returned to Harrogate in time for Band Practice.

A few of us determined to have a café stop went to the Catwalk café where we were given the downstairs to ourselves and much needed caffeine. Well done everyone. 31 miles. Gia

Medium Plus Ride Report

The general chat to start was just how delightfully wrong the weather forecast was, so twelve of us set forth on a dry day to tackle a few real hill challenges. For many of us it was the first time this year we really had a chance of a good hilly ride as the weather had been so poor. Beckwithshaw was followed by a drop down Pot Bank, then up and down to Hampthswaite, then up and down to Shaw Mills, then up and up and up to Brimham Rocks. We turned down and down towards Smelthouses where the road had suffered some serious water damage and Mark unfortunately got two (yes two) punctures as a result of dropping into a massive pothole. Being an organised sort of fellow he told us to go on to the café and set about repairing his problem tyres.

Around the corner, we had to blink twice and there were cries of "Lama ahead". Yes, sure enough three lamas were being taken for a walk. They do have the habit of looking at you with a certain disdain, as if to say, "What on earth are you doing cycling in these temperatures." Then it was up to Glasshouses and down to Glasshouses Bridge for a café stop. After leaving Yorkshire Country Wines, well filled with coffee (not wine), a steady pace was held prior to the exertions of going up Yorke Folly, a fabulous climb by any standards. At the top the snow covered hills were clear in the distance and a few flurries of snow greeted us on the highest point of our ride. Then back home, down and up to Darley, down to Birstwith, up and down to Hampsthwaite and down and up a bit into Harrogate. A great ride - 42 miles and an awful lot of vertical metres.
Martin W

Long Ride Report

The predicted rain for today hadn't materialised by 9.30 this morning when 8 people set off the long ride to Thirsk planning to meet up with Darren at Marton en route to Boroughbridge. At Farnham most of the group took the wrong turning towards Staveley & had to be chased down by Phil. Somewhere between Farnham and Marton we managed to lose 2 people, Eric & Chris, but thanks to mobile phones the whole group finally managed to get back together at Thornton Bridge. From here we managed to make it to Thirsk without losing anyone else. Although a mainly flat ride the wind by now was making it that little bit more challenging.

After a café stop at Thirsk we retraced our route back as far as Dalton, enjoying the wind on our backs for a change. From Dalton we headed west to Topcliffe & Baldersby St John. A closed road meant a short stretch on the busy A61 before turning off for Melmerby & Wath. At Wath the ride leader had to bail out due to feeling unwell and the rest of the group continued on to Ripon and home. Most people will have covered around 68 miles - well done to Darren on his first long ride & not on the lightest of bikes. Jill

2010	Wheel	Easy	Miles	(approx)	Today	1606	YTD	11573
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