

Wednesday, June 23, 2010

Wednesday Rides and Wheel Easy on Tour



Poddlers

Ride

Report

Today it was to be training for the mountain stages for the Garmin Chipodde team. The team gathered punctually, excitement and fear of the unknown hanging over Hornbean Training station. Realising that late arrival Ben Basso would be wanting to discover the up to date training techniques of the team, he was quickly directed to the Astana stairlift team who would be waiting at Low Bridge, with team leader, Dave Pantonio ready to welcome experienced riders to advise his young inexperienced team. Even the Big Boys and Girls of team Quickstop, were away doing some serious endurance training at a secret location between Whitehaven and Penrith. Team Garmin Chipodde were excited by the prospect of Keith Contador formerly of US Postmen joining us straight from his win over Trevor Armstrong from team Wirelesshut, in the Tour De Suisse. Even as we sped off toward Knox, Caroline Cancellouta rather suspiciously and possibly in a drug induced stupor took the wrong route and had to be put back on track by Crawford McMillar the formidable Scottish rider. Hampsthwaite was easily reached and the cat.1 climbs of Clint Bank and Cut Throat Lane were skipped up by grimpeur Sue Sastre (on excellent form this year and a clear favourite to win the Tour de Harrogate after extensive extra training and a lovely new bike). PunccheursMaxil Mercx, Linda Leipheimer, and new comer Elizabeth Hushovd (despite resent domestic abandonment) tackled the cat.1 climbs with ease. At Bishop Thornton the pelaton was working well together and with the care and kindness of Trevor Armstrong of WirelessHut we were gently encouraged upwards and onwards to the Gilpin turn off along the road to Brimham Rocks. The cobble practice along the El Butler secret cut through, enabled lantern rouge Cancellouta to surge into the lead and unusually start to lead the group from the front. The joy of the down hill run from the Brimham Road to Ripley brought out the skills of the downhill sprinters proving they still had something to give. We lost Keith Contador at the Ripley Roundabout as he sped off to watch some cricket or something being shown on the TV at 1 o'clock. Racing through Ripley Lance's little brother Trevor showed us what he was made of as he dashed home for 1 o'clock to participate in his pop star wife's birthday celebrations with the garden furniture. Finisseur John Boonan cunningly kept attacking the peloton in the final few kilometres to take the lead, on the climb back into Harrogate up Knox Lane, and with a group of

eschapees kept the pressure up in the training right to the end. 23.87 miles of carefully constructed training for 9 people, for the final session before the Tour. Caroline G

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EG's Ride Report

It looked like it was going to be a sparse turn out at Low Bridge, as many of the regular EG's had said they were unable to attend, but this was OK as they had notes from their Mum's. Excuses ranging from Sailing, Golfing, Grandading, visiting and being under the weather. A new rider joined us, Steve B describing himself as a novice rider (with a heavy bike) but despite this he led two of the less fit EG's up the hills (DP being one) Dave W suggested Dallowgill Moor, so it was North to Bishop Monkton and Markington, morning coffee (and milk for DW, as yet no rusks) being taken at Fountain's Abbey visitor centre. Whilst relaxing John E remarked "how much do you think I paid for my helmet", estimates ranged from £s;20 to £s;80, "Well" he said "I was at this car boot sale, and there was a table with this helmet on it marked everthing a £s;1, so I picked the helmet up and offered my £s;1, and then I was given 50p change". The Yorkshire EG's were in awe of this bargain hunting. Then it was North to Galphay, where Dave W had spent ten of his formative years, fortunately we were able to get him through the area, without him being recognised. Out on Dallow Moor the hills grew steep, on one Ben who had been pushing a high fixed gear dismounted and walked, DP who did not dismount, was feeling smug, till he realised his cycling speed was less than Ben's walking speed. Ben then left us at Glasshouses to return to Harrogate, the remaining five then proceeded to Pateley Bridge for late lunch /afternoon tea, anyway it involved three bacon sandwiches and a baked potato.

After refreshment there was a nervous feeling amongst some EG's about the return route, this was lifted when it was decided Yorke's Folly was out, though John E would have done it with Greenhow Hill for an encore. Then it was down the dale to Birstwith and Hampsthwaite, passing The Gardners Arms a great cheer was heard England had made 1-0 against Slovenia. At the Killinghall junction a lady in a Volvo had a flat tire, this caused some road problems, the EG's marshalling traffic, help with changing the tire was declined and the lady drove back to Birstwith on a flat tire. Here Dave W, John E and Steve B turned left to Knaresborough and Dave P and Roy turned right to the highlands of Harrogate ie Harlow Hill. It had been a great days cycling with fantastic weather, total mile age for both Harrogate and Knareborough riders around 47 to 49 miles (all quality ones). Dave P

Wheel Easy on Tour. Reivers Cycle route and C2C Peter Bradley and Eric waters met at Harrogate station on Friday 11 June, and took their bikes by train to Durham, where they started their ride at 11am. The main objective of our ride was to ride the Reivers Cycle Route from Tynemouth to Whitehaven via Kielder, Carlisle, Cockermouth, and Workington, returning to Tynemouth on the Cost to Coast route from Whitehaven to Tynemouth, via Whinlatter Pass, Keswick, Penrith, Alston and Newcastle.

Here's a summary of our itinerary:

Day 1: Durham, Sunderland, South Shields ferry to Tynemouth, start of Reivers Route, Ponteland, B&B near Stamfordham. 69 miles

Day 2: Bellingham, Kielder Reservoir, Kielder, B&B near Newcastleton. 66 miles. Total:135

Day 3: A very wet day, but our only one. Carlisle, Dalston, B&B near Caldbeck. 50 miles. Total 185

Day 4: Cockermouth, Workington, Whitehaven for the end of the Reivers Route and start of the C2C, Loweswater, Whinlatter Pass, Keswick YHA. 73 miles. Total 258

Day 5: Castlerigg Stone Circle, Greystoke, Penrith, Melmerby, Hartside, Alston YHA. 42 miles. Total 300

Day 6: Garrigill, Nenthead, Allenheads, Blanchland, Edmundbyers YHA near Derwent Reservoir. 32

miles. Total 332.
Day 7: Shotley Bridge, Derwent Valley, Newcastle, Gateshead, Jarrow, Cycle Tunnel to Tynemouth, End of C2C, Sunderland, B&B in Durham, 65 miles. Total 397
Day 8: Sightseeing in Durham, visit Cathedral, river trip, then train to Harrogate. 7 miles. Total 405.

Some of the most memorable moments from the ride.

1. Finding part of our route near Kielder was being also being used for a Sportive. Several cyclists sped past us on their ultra lightweight speed machines. One rider then slowed down as he went up a hill, so 2 pensioners with pannier bags (that's us folks!) caught him up and then overtook him! Our routes parted shortly afterwards so he couldn't restore his pride by overtaking us again.
 2. Asking a very nice lady for directions to the nearest place serving coffee, and being invited into her house in our very wet clothes for coffee and biscuits.
 3. Passing through Cockermouth, with the majority of businesses still closed following the floods. We contributed to the local economy buying Cumberland sausage butties from the recently reopened butcher
 4. Arriving at the remains of the cycle bridge over the River Derwent in Workington, destroyed by the floods
 5. The 10 mile climb from Whitehaven to Lamplugh at the start of the C2C. A nice steady climb - which must be one of the longest, most consistent climbs in the UK.
 6. Riding alongside Loweswater. The scenery is breathtaking.
 7. When climbing Whinlatter Pass, 2 crows were screeching and dive bombing something in the field on the other side of the dry stone wall alongside the road. We stopped to investigate and found a buzzard sheltering in a farm trailer just feet from us. The buzzard then flew off across the valley, with the crows still attacking him, eventually he found refuge from the aerial bombardment in a wood.
 8. The fabulous fast descent of Whinlatter Pass - but stopping for the great view over Bassenthwaite Lake
 9. Visiting Castlerigg Stone Circle near Keswick. The setting on a plateau overlooking Borrowdale is wonderful. You can only wonder at how the circle was constructed 5000 years ago.
 10. Visiting the Quirky Cycle Cafe in Greystoke. The cafe is always open to cyclists: if the owner is not in, you are invited to help yourself and leave your money in the honesty box.
 11. The Village Bakery at Melmerby, excellent refuelling stop before climbing Hartside.
 12. The 6 mile climb up Hartside. Its a good climb with a steady gradient, to be enjoyed and not to be feared.
 13. The 5 mile fast descent from Hartside to Alston.
 14. Discovering that after climbing Hartside, and thinking it would be fairly easy thereafter, the gradients hills were much steeper, and that our shortest day (32 miles) turned out to be our hardest day!
 15. Visiting Blanchland - a historic picture postcard village, a complete contrast to the lead mining area surrounding it.
 16. Visiting The Sage in Gateshead for coffee, and a wonderful view of the Tyne and Newcastle.
 17. Using the cycle tunnel to cross under the Tyne. An information board outside proudly states that the escalators were the longest in the world when it was constructed. The problem was that the escalators and the lifts are currently out of action so we had to carry our bikes with panniers down the longest escalator in the world. Not an experience to be repeated.
- All in all, a wonderful 405 mile ride, in great weather. Eric

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2010 Wheel Easy Miles (approx) Today 1408 YTD 66783

