



### Short Ride Report

"Breathless we flung us on the windy hill..." Nine riders set off across the Showground Cycle Path and, defying gusts and eddies, managed to join the Speedy John at the gates to Rudding Park. At this stage, Rupert Brooke's words rang true but worse was to come...

We sallied forth to Spofforth and what is affectionately known as "Eric's Garden" where, posing and pouting was recorded. At this point, Martin, left us briefly to explore the state of the cycle path to Wetherby in preparation for imminent Sustrans business. By this time the wind was behaving and we crossed the bridge and positively sailed up the hill towards Little Ribston - again Speedy John setting a cracking pace hotly pursued by Denis and self. Having arrived at the Meeting House gateway, we realised that a significant gap had opened up when an equally speedy Caroline arrived to inform that Sally's chain had snapped and that she and Sarah were waiting at the roadside... Galahads, Denis and Speedy John, nobly retraced their revolutions and the rest of us carried on to the delights of the Waterside Café. Justin cycled home from here as he had commitments. By now the wind was gathering strength so, hopefully, he reached home safely.

The heroes and heroines together with Martin, who had encountered the roadside repair crew, eventually joined us. Great was the discussion on the preservation of her beautifully manicured nails (Sarah) and the Black and White Minstrels impersonation of Denis and Speedy John, at which point Martin produced his pack of "Baby Wipes". Forget the Swarfega, these magical cleaners removed every trace of grime and left the chaps sweet smelling and with hands like the proverbial - such is the helpful camaraderie of Wheel Easy members.

The climb up Knaresborough Rd and thence to Bogs Lane was gusty but the Stray path across Skipton Road and thence to Hornbeam was pretty horrific and we did spare thoughts to our intrepid Medium

and Long Riders as they scaled the heights of Ripon and beyond.

Thank you to all participants and to the wonderful back-marking by Caroline. Hope the "exertions" of the Short Ride have helped cure Martin. 16 miles. Sue

Click on slide show for all today's photos

#### Medium Ride Report

After being reminded which route I was to take and to which destination, I duly lead 11 riders out on the familiar route through Harrogate, Knox, Hampsthwaite, Shaw Mills and Bishop Thornton to the (ex-) Drovers Inn. Huge volumes of water cascaded under the bridge at Knox and Hampsthwaite but the skies turned blue, the sun shone on our efforts and the wind was on our backs as we headed up hill after hill. Ignoring my 'joke' about the Drovers being our coffee stop, my willing Wheelies followed me down the 'wonderful hill' to Markington, then left turn along Western Lane to join Watergate Lane and downhill to the rear entrance of Fountains Abbey. Coffee stop was held at the NT Centre, with a consensus that 'scone' rhymes with 'stone' and not with 'gone' - hurrah for common sense.

WE swooped down through the deer park and into Ripon, taking a devious route to gawp at the cottage where Wilfrid Owen recuperated sufficiently prior to setting off to be mangled on the Western Front. Taking the Dallamires Lane route to Littlethorpe, we then hit the proverbial headwind. Yes, I know I promised that the previous tailwind would be as nothing in our faces once we faced it on the low rolling roads twixt Ripon and Knaresborough - but everyone is allowed to be wrong at least 5 times when leading a ride. So it blew against us, and hurled rain at us like shotgun pellets, but we are Wheel Easy and we do not give up - except you did and mutinied when I suggested an extra loop through Farnham.

So to the all important accumulators - eleven people at 35 miles average per head is another 385 miles to the total - except Paul joined us at Hampsthwaite and Max left us at Bishop Thornton and Ian and Charlotte are from Essex and not really members and allowing for the headwind, rain and scones, rounding it up lets just call it 7,000 miles. Peter L

#### Medium Plus Touring Pace Ride Report

The prospect of inclement weather was always going to be a factor in determining the length of this ride and so it proved to be. 15 riders set off at a good pace towards Boroughbridge via a less familiar route taking in Goldsborough, Flaxby and through Marton cum Grafton a degree of guess work came into play as we went in more or less the correct direction although not necessarily exactly the 'Google Map' route. The leader was happy to lead by consensus as we meandered along very pleasant lanes coming across another cycle group cycling at Wheel Easy pace, Malcolm naturally had a chat with them. Avoiding the temptation of the Laden Table Cafe we headed for Ripon 4 riders were left behind on the way to solve a mechanical failure. We timed our coffee stop to perfection as the M Plus Fast group were just vacating their seats. Neil and his 3 loyal puncture repair mechanics arrived in time for tea and when they had finished the group made decisions on the route home. The weather had taken a downward turn with the wind becoming much wilder and rain starting. It seemed wise for 3 riders to go directly home while 12 set off towards Studley all of us into the teeth of the gale which blew directly into our faces to start off with, We laboured up the hill through the Deer Park all deer sheltering else where. Hail and rain then became the order of the day as we struggled up Watergate Lane and then pedalled hard down hill to Ripley taking care to ride well away from the road side as the wind was now blowing us sideways. A stimulating ride which we were all glad to survive in one piece, we are definitely not 'fair weather' cyclists! Approximately 39 miles in all by 12 riders plus 3 X 35 well done all. Sue Couture

#### Medium Plus Ride Report

Well, under slate grey skies, the magnificent seven (Steve, Paul, Dave, Glyn, Alison, Ted and myself) set off for our ultimate destination of Studley Rodger and Glyn's home estate!. A first ensued on route we (and other passing motorists) were stopped in their tracks by a loose lama dancing down the grass verge.....interesting.

The wind at this time seemed to be almost nonexistent but without really trying we found ourselves at

the Bridge of Boro in decent time and onward tout suite to our Cafe stop in Ripon, almost opposite the Cathedral. Good fare followed and once I had assured the waitress that Gia would not be dancing on the tables this time, she was quite happy to let the medium riders enter as we were leaving. The trip back was, shall we say, tough! The climb up through Studley was pretty hard and we were all nearly blowing as much as the wind once we reached the top, but the worst of the side winds came as we reached Bishop Monkton as we all had to be very careful not to be blown into the next field and having close encounters with various farm animals (leave it Paul!). Slowly we edged our way home and all returned safely doing approx 40 miles. Despite the winds on the way back, a great ride was had, with fantastic company, on what turned out quite a mild and dry day. Mark

#### Long Ride Report

Seven of us hoisted spinnakers and set our bearings on Ampleforth, we braved white horses and high tide in Boroughbridge and navigated many small lakes.

Just beyond Milby our fleet was joined by John who had been blown off course from Thirsk but nevertheless helped our confused leader reach the safe haven of Ampleforth Abbey Tea Rooms. Surely the classiest galley in the WE repertoire, tables and chairs by Robert "Mouseman" Thompson, a superb ecclesiastical building and excellent reasonably priced food but we could not find the Hockney rumoured to hang in the toilets.

Eventually we re-embarked for home into a strong headwind but toward Yearsley found some shelter to the leeward of the hill before a long tack to Brandsby and Easingwold .

From there we stayed in close formation head to wind to Aldwark Bridge on Sea for a photo stop where the wise kept hold of their bikes in case they became kites.

We took our third banana stop in Great Ouseburn where Charles overshot into a distant hedge murmuring something about finding a Hockney.

Our usual course through Knaresborough got us back to Harrogate about 3.45pm and probably the day's strongest wind was experienced across the Stray.

A good ride under an ever changing sky with great company.

The return trip, completed by 7 riders was 64 miles. Peter R

2011 Wheel Easy Miles (approx) Today 1845 YTD 14676



