



Today was the Wheel Easy Christmas Lunch at the Hockey Club. It was as usual a great lunch and afternoon. Many thanks to all those people who worked so hard to make it a great success. Dave P

Solo Ride Report

As her indoors who likes to be outdoors was scheduled to be partaking in the black art of the simultaneous baking of 100 potatoes for today's festivities and would not be getting her bike out today, I didn't receive my customary early morning call of an elbow in the ribs and was late. The view through a crack in the curtains didn't look appealing. Granted the wind was only a whisper compared of late and it was six degrees but t'was grey and damp. I knew I needed exercise and I knew that her indoors was going to make sure that I got some! I donned the appropriate clothing, ate a hearty breakfast, put my helmet on and unlocked the door to find it was raining quite heavily. "Its raining" I shouted, " might not get as far as I thought". The monosyllabic reply indicated that I was in grave danger of being the only one not to get a baked potato today. As I had missed the 9.30 deadline I decided on a "little" solo ride. So it was up little hills to Little Almscliff (sic), little America and little effort down towards Hampsthwaite. Lots of little potholes were avoided out of Hampsthwaite and the little bridge at Knox was successfully negotiated. I arrived home in a little over 1 hour 30 mins, having covered a little under 20 miles, a little cold and a little drenched but safe in the knowledge that this little ride will at least ensure that I will be given a small baked potato. Thanks to all who worked hard to prepare today's festivities. Max

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Medium Ride Report

The rain was not forecast, and Geraldine's puncture on the way to Hornbeam was not anticipated. Somewhat ungallantly, I continued to Hornbeam to report the potential delay in the start of the medium ride, while Geraldine pushed the bike on to Hornbeam. Martin took a small group of Medium Riders off at the correct time, but others waited for the puncture to be mended. With the help of Paul Blackham and Dave Preston, the repair was effected and 10 of us set off about 10 minutes late for the shortened ride to Wetherby. Somewhere along Lead Hall Lane we lost Geraldine and Paul, so we stopped and waited at the road-works traffic lights. Geraldine's gears were working 'backwards' following the wheel removal and replacement in Hornbeam, but they were soon fixed. Through Burn Bridge and briefly along the A61 to Walton Head Lane, where we left the traffic behind and enjoyed the views over Wharfedale, despite the continuing rain. We turned right and then left in Kirkby Overblow towards Sicklinghall. The original route would have then taken us into Bramham and across the A1, we continued straight on towards Wetherby. We stopped at the turn-off to the Harland Way to Spofforth, and Malcolm took the photograph. At this point the group split into those wanting a café stop and those not, and even the café contingent couldn't agree on which café to use. Dave Preston wanted to go to Morrisons so the could keep his bike under cover, but Malcolm was pretty adamant that he wanted to go to another café. (I'm not sure who went where in the end.) The non-café contingent opted not to use the probably-muddy Harland Way, and we went to Spofforth on the tarmac, and thence to Follifoot, where one of the group headed off to Knaresborough. Then on to Rudding and through the lights, the timing of which seems to have changed, then through the Showground and up the deceptively steep hill. About 25 unexpectedly wet miles. Joe

Geraldine and Joes medium ride reached Wetherby with no major mishaps, there was a delayed start due to a puncture, which led to Geraldine's gears being in reverse order, fortunately this did not mean she had to cycle backwards, but with a quick tweak by Joe all was made well. The group assembled at the old station car park before continuing onwards. Here the most basic question dear to the hearts of Wheel Easy was asked (all together now) "Who wants a coffee stop". Dave P said he was going to Morrisons because the bike could be under cover out of the rain. The look of horror on Malcolm M's face prompted Debbie to state that there was bike cover at the Shambles. Dave P had forgotten this, up to now his memory had been quite good, eg coming back from holiday and remembering where he lived. So three riders Bridget, Dave P and Malcolm M headed for the Shambles cafe, a relaxed DP walking through the door, without thinking that Morrisons shares might collapse without his support. However Malcolm expressed some unease thinking that he may have lost some riders on the way to the cafe. It was here that Bridget rose to the occasion by putting on her carer's hat and buying us all a coffee. The coffee was good, the cafe was warm, and a brass band was playing carols, "perfick" (see photo). The three riders then headed to Kirk Deighton and North Deighton with Malcolm peeling off at Little Ribston, Bridget and DP continuing Knaresborough via Abbey Road and Waterside up the Beryl Burton track to the refurbished cycle track (what a great job has been done here) and Harrogate Hockey Club for a swift half before things got going. Dave P

Medium Plus Ride Report

Riders needing to return for Christmas lunch, thus spake the seraph, should take the Medium Ride. And so forthwith appeared a shining throng of the Medium Plus faster group shepherded out of Hornbeam. However the day was spent seized by troubled mind watching this flock fluctuate in number at regular intervals. Firstly we lost (dropped?) Glyn on the rocky road out of Farnham. Then on reaching Ripon, Geoff and Mike decided to leave our flock on a longer run. Not a moment later for mighty dread did Alison suffer a tyre malfunction. Fear not, Steve gallantly agreed to act as guardian angel until home rescue arrived. But glory shone around as Glyn to rousing cheers caught us back up. After Fountains (and crossing over with the Long Ride doing our route backwards!) Darren (of the curvaceous leg shanks) and Mark heralded a spin up Sawley Bank. The rest hightailed it back to a Ripley town this day where all mankind were assembled. Our two new riders Simon and Graham departed to Knaresborough - we look forward to reacquainting with their goodwill henceforth. Glyn, Dave and I then dodged a host of meanly wrapped motors along the A61 to safely reach the refuge of Knox Lane and home to where our mangers lay. Glad tidings of great joy I bring as I herald a happy median of 32 miles for the 12 of

us. William

Medium 'Plus Plus' Ride Report

As the requirement was to arrive at the Hockey Club by 1.30pm ready for the WE Christmas lunch, there was no chance to complete a long ride (50+ miles), so the route chosen was the Medium Plus ride, with an added loop. 4 of us set off on the 'Medium Plus Plus' ride to Beckwithshaw and climbed to Little Alms Cliff, then on to Menwith Hill, Birstwith, Bishop Thornton. The weather forecast of persistent rain clearing up after midday was fairly accurate, and we arrived wet and mud splattered at Fountains Abbey Visitors Centre for a quick wash and refreshment stop. We resumed the ride through the Studley Deer Park, where crowds had gathered to witness the Stag Rut. We therefore had a quick and safe ride though to Studley Roger as the resident wildlife herd was otherwise occupied on other things, and wouldn't waste any energy chasing cyclists. Peter R - who wasn't coming to the Christmas Lunch - made his own way home, whilst we continued through Ripon and Bishop Monkton. Phil S made a quick blast for home from Farnham so he could change clothes and bike (????) prior to the Christmas lunch. That left Peter B and myself to finish the ride walking along the glass encrusted cycle path around Harrogate High School, finally arriving at the Hockey Club at 1.25pm. Job done! 42 miles x 4 = 168 miles total.

Postscript: Something is stirring in the woods! If you go down to the woods along Abbey Road, Knaresborough, you're sure for a big surprise! A chain saw sculptor has been busy creating some wonderful examples of his art for us all to admire as we ride along this popular cycling route. See Photos. Eric

2011 Wheel Easy Miles (approx) Today 822 YTD 168172

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