



#### Walk Report

The odd thing is that people look so different without cycle helmets and wearing "normal" people's clothes, but we soon sorted out who was who and five of us set off on a glorious bright sunny walk with a crisp frost underfoot. Departing via the south end of Hornbeam we took a short guided break courtesy of Yvonne who showed us the new palace being built on Fulwith Mill Lane. Perhaps Gaddafi ordered it and his cronies have now flogged it on to Assad but the house we nosed at through the railings needs a serious Swiss Bank account to complete. Then we crossed Leeds Road and were soon in the fields circumventing the south and west side of Harrogate. The sun shone on the glorious view from Harlow Hill and we made it to the cafe in Valley Gardens. Over coffee topics ranged through interesting Turkish Baths experiences in Budapest (Julie), mixing it with strange French zombies in a spa resort in the Pyrenees (Debbie), to the demise of men only sessions in Harrogate Turkish Baths for reasons not necessarily connected with finance. There was certainly an exotic spa theme to this coffee break! After that we headed homewards to Hornbeam via the Stray. Delightful walk and good company on a great day. Martin W

#### Medium Ride Report

Due to icy conditions the route was changed to a more level route than that originally planned. Gordon cleverly found us an even more icy route going down through the showground quickly followed by that lovely climb to Ridding Park which we all looked forward to first thing on a freezing cold morning. Dennis was up for it though on his brand new bike. On to Wetherby and Thorp Arch via bridle tracks arriving at Boston Spa where Gordon lost half his pack to coffee stoppers. Returning home via Wetherby, Little Ribston, North Deighton, Spofforth and Follyfoot a very cold 33 miles later. Allison S

### Coffee Takers Report

At Boston Spa, 5 of us decided to stop for coffee so Kevin dutifully rode round the village to inspect and chose us a cafe that was already full of cyclists. There was good cycle parking, good chat, good coffee but the food orders were totally chaotic and most arrived when we were ready to leave! We democratically decided our return route which was heading towards Clifford then joining the A1 cycle track which we rode up to the Cowthorpe junction enjoying the company and the sunshine. We continued via Little Ribston, Spofforth and then the grind past Rudding Park and through the Showground. About 31 miles total. Sorry no photos we didn't stop long enough to take any! Liz

Click on slide show for all the weekend photos

### Medium Extra Ride Report

When I woke up this morning I was not sure if I was going to join Martin's walking group or Alec's ride to Bolton Abbey and beyond. A quick ten minute walk before breakfast convinced me it was OK to cycle providing I took care. Arriving at Hornbeam Jill F suggested a 30 mile ride which would finish at Sophie's café. The mention of Sophie's is a temptation I cannot refuse. Seven of us set off to Hampsthwaite via Knaresborough, Copgrove, Burton Leonard, Markington and Bishop Thornton. We were all cautious as we were concerned about black ice. The time of year prompted discussions on the best gloves to wear and what bike we wanted from Santa. Even though it was Christmas lunch day at Sophie's she accommodated us and made us all very welcome. As Terry said 'What a lovely lady'. Bill kindly led us home via a series of cycle paths through the Jenny Fields, past the Claro Beagle, through the Coppice's and eventually to the Odeon. Not quite sure of the exact route but I will certainly try it again and it is a pleasant change from the Knox route. Once again a great 30 mile ride. Well done to Gia who has now cycled just over 5,000 miles this year. Paul

### Medium Plus Touring Pace Ride Report ( on thin ice )

Starting off with 7 riders, we soon shed 1 after Beckwithshaw with a cold, 6 now headed for Otley where 2 went for tea, 4 now for Bolton Abbey Tea room. At minus 1 and wind-chill I considered that this was not a day for the pussies, how wrong I was, it nearly wrote me off, frost bitten feet, fingers burning, legs wouldn't work, ears like crisps, clearly I had bitten off more than I could chew, but with a considerate team (and several rests at the roadside) we were all rewarded with stunning views of the snowy tops at Stump Cross and were bathed in glorious sunshine for the whole ride. 4 x 50 miles and 2 times more. Alec

### Medium Plus Ride Report

To follow

### Long Ride Report ( the other Wheel Easy walk )

Sometimes, when conditions look pretty terrible , the pleasures of a fine bike ride seem to be heightened. This happened recently on a foggy Sunday when Richard led the long ride to wonderful Wharfedale and to a lesser degree this Sunday was similar. Conditions looked decidedly poor but the clear blue skies and sunshine transformed the ride. Six riders started and we were soon joined by a seventh (Martin) between Staveley and Minskip. All seemed fine, the roads were a bit icy but not too bad. After crossing Thornton Bridge conditions began to get worse. The minor roads were decidedly slippery and there were stretches of ice in the shade. I think we all knew that White Horse Bank was going to be more of a challenge than usual but we headed blindly on without even a suggestion of revising our route. We were all anticipating the 50p mug of tea and fine views from the glider club. Kilburn came and went and the smoothly oiled cycling group pressed on as the road began to rise. Slip, slide, slip, crash, fall, ouch, remount, slip, slide, slip, get off and walk. It was the only sensible/possible thing to do and even walking up wasn't easy.

Lunch was great. The café was warm, the views spectacular and the sunshine even brighter. We could admire the polluting fumes emanating from Yorkshires trio of power stations, distant snow on the hills and a flurry of light aircraft and glider activity - all very entertaining. The return to Harrogate allowed to

admire the Christmas lights at Bagby, followed by a beautiful spitting beastly traction engine impersonating another Yorkshire power station. Six riders covered 62 miles + 1 x 45 miles. Total 417 miles. Phil

2011 Wheel Easy Miles (approx) Today 1257 YTD 170459



