

Wednesday, August 27, 2014

## **Wednesday Rides**

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### **Poddlers Ride**

Dry, calm weather i.e. ideal cycling conditions saw an even larger than usual group of Poddlers gathered at Hornbeam this morning. We split into 2 groups leaving in the direction of Burn Bridge. As seven joined the first group leaving many more being led by Sue in the second group, we gathered again at Walton Lane Head to see if we could divvy numbers up a bit more equally. However, Poddlers are an independently minded collection of individuals so, as usual, it was a bit like herding cats. This time the first group set off as nine as far as Wetherby when Barbara and then Gordon said goodbye to us and we continued again as seven.

We left Wetherby on Freemans Way and then via Walton village to Rudgate and continued across the York Road. After a short bridleway track cutting the corner to the Tockwith /Cowthorpe Road we stopped for a banana break and a pleasant and informative chat about the availability and range of community education classes in the Harrogate area (A conversational sign that Autumn can't be far away).

On through Cowthorpe until we divided at Little Ribston with 4 returning via Knaresborough and 3 via Spofforth. Welcome to Chris, hope to see you with us again. Many thanks to Sue for leading the many poddlers in the very popular second group. Full ride 30 miles. Dave G.

Leader, Dave, was impeccably organised and had planned an exciting route of 31 miles. Caroline was also impeccably organised by appointing me as "Support". Thus, Dave and his group of eight hurtled away up the "not for astygmatics" slope and forward to Walton Head Lane. The rest of us pursued and we all convened there. Four of my twelve Poddlers joined Dave.

At this point, Monica discovered her front tyre was soft and Glyn nobly leapt to her aid. All was well but we never saw Dave and the Speedies again! A lively pace ensued with lots of verbal catching up on Liz' biking exploits in Blackpool last evening - she said she was very tired as a result!! Well done, Liz, for coming today - booted out by Richard peut etre? Alison N had been "festing" at Helmsley and Alison S was still afflicted by her Bridlington cough etc.

By the time we reached the turn off towards the Harland Way, coffee was mentioned and accepted by some and rejected by others who needed to be on their way. Sue W very kindly led Monica and Barbara to caffeine filled haunts in Wetherby and the rest of us (five by now) carried on following Dave's careful notes - at least, we would have done, had I not kep' on talking and kep' on riding thus missing the turn to Walton. Such is the forgiveness of WE Poddlers that Glyn led us back on track and to the metal barrier which we studiously ignored as per instructions. We also elected not to take the bridleway owing to memories of a puncture and a tumble some time ago. We sped along and decided to return via Spofforth with a brief pose and pout in Follifoot and thence to our respective homes and afternoon delights. Glyn and Jen leave for two months of Continental activity including cycling, paragliding and shooting up iron roads in the Dolomites - sounds fab!

Thank you, Dave and thank you rearguard pedallers. Sue D



### **Medium Ride**

With unusual decisiveness a group of ten riders very quickly agreed on a route for the day when it was suggested we ride 'over the top' to Cockpit Farm and then back via Castley and Kirby Overblow. Martin, on his knobbly tyred off roader accompanied us and despite this set off at 'fresh pace' obviously trying to get to Cockpit Farm before it opened!

This challenge was taken up by quite a few and Gia and Sue lead us out up to Little Armscliff with the ride leader being shown no respect and allowed to bring up the rear.

Another fast downhill and through to the Reservoir where some took advantage of the facilities (or was it just to take a rest?) before another climb to Timble. The Group were already divided up but it was a free choice option of the short big hill or the scenic route via the Snowdens- with the resulting split being 50/50. Once again the climbing sorted out a few and by the time we were descending into Askwith the back markers were yours truly and John Russell who kindly kept me company!

Cockpit Farm, as always, produced excellent fayre and beverages and suitably refreshed the Ladies in the party left (was it something we said?) to return to Harrogate whilst the now all male peleton set off to Otley and then back home.

The pace was kept up by Martin as we rode into the wind and back to Kirby Overblow and a short break whilst we decided on the final route home.

The Showground was the favoured route as this gave more options for those branching off and Neil left at Walton Park, James carried on along the by pass to Knaresborough and the remaining four onto the Showground and home with me securing the 'Lantern Rouge' for the day having been one of the few ride leaders spending so much time bringing up the rear!

An enjoyable fastish (for most!) ride of 36 miles in good company and thanks to those who hung around at the back with me- apologises also for my lack of conversation but the oxygen intake was more important! Kevin D



### **EGs Ride**

"From little acorns grow giant oak trees" that's the motto of the Little Acorn cafe in Copmanthorpe where fourteen enthusiastic E.G's, led by deputy Dave W., headed on a dry, sunny and warm morning. The food was delightful, the service excellent and the prices designed to satisfy the tightest of Yorkshiremen. So far it had been a brisk ride, splitting into two groups to minimise problems with irate motorists, and regrouping on Marston Moor to ensure we all knew roughly what direction to follow although as is usual our deputy leader kept the peleton guessing for most of the day.

From our first stop we headed towards Tadcaster, halting briefly for Terry, Bob, Rob and one other to peel off for an early return home. The remaining group continued through Tadcaster and thereafter, were guided on a mystery tour of the flat plains around the "Fentons" eventually cutting back north via Towton, (where Dave P was noted to have an unfortunate tumble at low speed, thankfully without significant injury) and back to Tadcaster for afternoon tea! The tumble must have affected his brain as Dave P was spotted wearing his helmet back to front, quickly correcting his mistake before the "team photo" was taken whilst Bill Whale tried to compete with his version of a "vertical smile"!!!

The peleton subsequently regrouped to head off home by the shortest route to complete the ride by five o'clock completing about 66 - 70 miles in all. David W



### **Long Ride**

At start of play two things were certain - we had five riders (Richard P, Richard L, Peter, John S and myself) and were heading for Langbar. We would busk the rest. Outward through Burn Bridge, Brackenthwaite Lane and B6160, progress then slowed after the fish farm at Lindley Bridge. A busy session of hedge cutting and tree pruning was under way, which was a bit of a puzzle until we rounded a bend to find a parked low loader with a new mobile home aboard, possibly for the fish farm site. We guessed that the new owner didn't want any scratches just yet.

A flurry of traffic on the lane suggested that the house warming might be late in getting under way.

En route to Langbar, John left us for a shorter ride home via Askwith Moor and the reservoirs while the remaining four headed over Beamsley Beacon for a look at Wharfedale in hazy sunshine. In Bolton Abbey we tried a different tearoom, "TheTea Cottage" which we found to be reasonable but not unmissable - scones rated only fair, but the toasted fruitloaf was good. The star attraction is the view over the Abbey from the terrace.

A map conference followed the refreshments leading to a plan to head for Embsay, Skipton, Silsden and Ilkley. Market day and school holidays meant that Skipton was packed, but progress was quick out to the turn for Bradley. Here the serious climbing began. It was reassuring to see that Bradley is well prepared for cyclists who have overdone the hills - see our picture with the defib unit at Bradley village hall.

The section from Skipton to Ilkley is a big switch-back with Silsden in the middle. We joined part of the West Yorks Cycle Route, noted in the map guide as "strenuous" - an accurate description I think. Lunch came at Christ Church Ilkley after only 42 miles. Peter left us for a quick return home at this point, leaving three of us to plot a less hilly route into the wind back to HG. This plan unravelled when impulse took us up the climb to Askwith Moor and on to Fewston and Little Alms Cliff. After a final push up past The Squinting Cat the day ended quietly on back roads to our various destinations. The stats for this "Silsden Sortie": 62 miles with 5270 ft of ascent. Terry S

