

Sunday, May 17, 2015

Wheel Easy Ride Report 472

Short Ride

Much the same route as last week, but it felt like a very different ride. Instead of blue skies there were leaden grey/black clouds with the bonus, for those wanting to improve their fitness, of strong winds blowing against us all the way up to Little Alms Cliff and beyond. We welcomed Elizabeth on her Wheel Easy debut. Her fine Trek bike was 3 years old but had never gone further than Ripley before. The route, and Sophie's, were all waiting to be discovered. The rest of the group were Gordon, on the short ride for a change due to other commitments, Diane, and Lorraine and Graham who politely said they were happy to repeat much of the ride the three of us did with Jean last Sunday. This just happens to be my favourite short route, though I might have suggested another if I'd known how windy it would be.

We lost Gordon at Pennypot Lane where he turned off for Harrogate, battled up to Menwith Hill and were blown along to Birstwith, Hampsthwaite and Sophie's, for assorted cakes and coffees. One more big climb up to Clint, and finally along the Greenway to Ripley and Bilton, passing many families with impossibly small children confidently riding their two wheelers up and down the path. From Bilton Lane, riders began to peel off home leaving just Elizabeth and I to return all the way to Hornbeam for a ride of 24 miles. Well done to all for managing one of the most challenging short rides, and not minding the fact that I was cheating on my electric. Malcolm M



Medium Ride

There was a general sigh of relief when the group realised we weren't going up Weardley Bank. Instead, we'd agreed to go to Fountains and Studley, returning via Ripon and then the Mount Garret estate. A group of five of us set off to take in an additional loop via Knaresborough and Markington, while Max and Sue led a group via Ripley. We made our way via Bishop Monkton to Markington where we picked up the lane to Fountains. Despite the grey skies and blustery wind, the countryside was looking lovely. On How Hill Road we met a stream of runners doing the Ripon 10. I think we had the better option. After a glide down Studley Royal, we arrived at the Spa Gardens. It was a sea of bikes! Among those already there were the Medium Plus group and Max and Sue's group, However, the staff coped with the influx very efficiently. After Bishop Monkton, James and Sally returned to Knaresborough. The rest of us made our way to the Mount Garret estate and back by Nidd, Ripley and the Greenway. A ride of about 37 miles well suited to the weather. Alison N

Eccup reservoir being closed necessitated a revised route plan which had to take account of forecast strong westerly winds. Cue ace planner Alison. The second and third groups, nine

including guest appearances of Dave P and Roy, actually travelled as one, in concertina fashion. The Greenway was taken to Ripley. The dreaded climb to the Drover's crossroad was, to everyone's surprise, wind assisted. Further on a right turn took us along Watergate Lane towards Fountains Abbey. Here we came across scores of runners going as fast uphill as we were downhill. Respect. Apparently it was the Ripon 10k. Amongst the runners we spotted WE Yvonne. Shortly after reaching Fountains Al's chain parted but appropriate tools and a spare link were on hand to ensure a speedy repair. By the time we reached Studley deer park it was apparent that there were many cyclists out today so it was a mad dash downhill to be first in the queue at Spa Garden's cafe. Alas that was not to be as the WE medium plusers had just beaten us to it. Tiffin taken we returned via Littlethorpe, Burton Leonard, the Mountgarrat (sic) Estate, Ripley and The Greenway. Remarkably over the 31 miles covered we experienced little head wind. Well done Alison. Thanks for your company. Max G



Medium-plus Ride

Six females and one male made up my group which set off after the faster group. Six male riders set off with Paul. We politely waited outside Knaresborough for Paul's group to be convivial and they promptly usurped our position in the groups! We did note that they were riding very neatly as a peloton whilst we were more straggly. We conferred with one medium ride group and ambled along nicely with the wind on our backs through Boroughbridge, Skelton-on-Ure and Ripon to meet up with about 40 Wheel Easy riders at Spa Gardens Café. As Dave P said don't say that cycling is not good for business.

After a couple of photos we set off into the wind for the testing part of the ride. But surely and steadily we conquered all those nasty climbs around Risplith, enjoyed a bit of sunshine until a puncture threatened to spoil the day. But the ladies did us proud, using their Martin Weeks notes and years of Wheel Easy advisors plus of course our man in the group and we were soon on our way again.

As always what a pleasure to ride back along the Greenway. Thank you everyone. 43 miles. Gia M



I've never done this before but today I lost someone in Ripon! My wrong turns while out on rides and my consequent solo wanderings around Yorkshire are the stuff of legend but I've never had anyone do it while I was leading a ride. Anyway, whoever you are I trust that you found your way safely back to Harrogate.

We left Hornbeam with a slightly larger than normal group of ten. On the way to Ripon, the group kept splitting, caused largely by the blistering pace set by Peter Jackson. The same blistering pace allowed us to arrive to an almost empty Spa Gardens tea room.

Suitably refreshed we headed out on the second, lumpy, part of our ride via Galphay, Risplith, Bishop Thornton and so on. I nervously kept counting riders and can say with certainty that nine arrived safely back in Harrogate after a short stop on the packhorse bridge for the photo of the day. Ian N



Long Ride

The forecast of strong winds wasn't looking too promising but four riders elected to join Phil on an epic journey to Buckden, over the Cote de Cray to Middleham, Jervaulx, Ripon and home. It soon became apparent that the wind would be problem and this was confirmed when cycling up Duck Street. The side winds were making it hard to steer a true course. It was decided that a visit to Stump Cross Cafe was advisable to discuss alternatives. Having to peddle down hill to the cafe into a strong head wind soon confirmed that we were not wrong! A plan was hatched and we set off on our way to Barden, Bolton Abbey and Storiths where the wind would propel us home in no time (the hills soon put paid to that idea!) As the wind was now truly behind us, the opportunity to climb over Langbar was not to be missed! We stopped at the top for while to take in the views and rest our weary legs, Then we were on our way to Ilkley and Askwith, stopping at Cockpit farm cafe for much needed refreshment. Just in case we had not had enough hills, the riders then made their way through Otley, Farnley, Castley. Huby, Armscliffe Crag, North Rigton, Burn Bridge and home. Although the route was difficult at times, the camaraderie, humour and determination of the group shone through - well done to Phil, Dave, Richard and Eric. Not the intended 85 miles agreed, but the wind and hills certainly made up for it. (58/60 miles approx). Glyn F

