

Sunday, March 20, 2016

## Wheel Easy Ride 516

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### Short Ride

A lovely Spring morning with unexpectedly better weather than forecast saw 14 riders gather for the Short Ride. We welcomed Felicity enjoying a return to cycling. Malcolm was out on his Summer Bike and kindly agreed to lead a group as we decided to split into two groups.

Our route took us along the quiet suburban streets of Harrogate, stopping by the Stray for a photograph to celebrate the unusual sight of crocuses and daffodils out in full bloom at the same time. And soon we were at Valley Gardens all looking rather special in the sunshine. A huge bumblebee joined us for a while.

Then the big challenge was the climb up from Oakdale Bridge and this achieved by all with some style. Dennis offered a longer ride at this point taking in the Black Bull and Kettlesing while the rest of us made a rapid descent to Hampsthwaite and Sophie's for coffee and fab flapjacks.

After this there was a rather disjointed return to Harrogate with everyone setting off at their own pace. But hey, Spring has arrived so being out there is what it is all about. Martin W



### Medium Ride

In dry sunny conditions our group of 12 riders set out for Stray Rein and skirting The Stray connected up with Claro Road and joined the Greenway at Dragon Bridge. After a mile or so we picked up another rider in Bilton and struck out for Ripley, had a brief pause and set out for Scarah Bank heading towards Fountains Abbey via Watergate Road. Turning sharp left just before the Hall, we took a minor road into Sawley then pressed on for the café at Risplith where some felt the need for ice creams in the glorious sun! Next it was uphill to Brimham rocks, Stripe Lane and Hartwith toll bridge, and on to Birstwith. We agreed to continue straight on here to Hampsthwaite and take Lund Lane thro' to Knox, Bilton and departed our own ways home from the Stray. The light northerly wind and mostly sunny conditions combined with a well chosen route to make a very memorable day. Thanks to Paul for back-marking... 33 miles and home for 2pm, Peter B



### **Medium Extra Ride**

As some of us have the luxury of riding on Wednesdays and Sundays, six of us opted to join the medium ride which was heading towards Brimham but with the intention of adding a loop on to the proposed ride.

As it was such a fine day and we had cycled almost to Easingwold on Wednesday this seemed like a good idea. James took a while to get used to the fact that he wasn't going to Easingwold and owing to a lunch date with his granddaughters led three of us back with him at a furious pace!

On the way out to Scarah Bank we saw a heron, then a sparrow hawk and another bird that Colin always knows and wonderful views every which way we looked. Colin suggested that we took a short cut to Risplith (this still means hills) so that he and Kevin could enjoy an extended ride to Greygarth Monument. At Risplith it was so warm and sunny that we were able to enjoy our freshly baked scones and teacakes outside and leave space for the medium group who arrived as we left. Now on a made up route we rode UP to Grantley then the lovely little lane that Peter Lawley first introduced to us that leads to Dallow Gill. It was sublime. As James, Janet, Jen and Gia headed towards Laverton and an "undulating" route home via Galphay and Ripon, Kevin and Colin rode down the Dale to then ride up to the distant Greygarth Monument and then took time out to take in the views from the monument.

From there we enjoyed the ride down to Laverton and a slight wrong turn took us to Galphay and then towards Ripon but turning towards Fountain Abbey and after riding up through the Deer Park took a second refreshment stop at the tea rooms before climbing up the back road and along Watergate Lane and a quick swoop down to Ripley and back along the Greenway into Harrogate. A great ride 41 miles (for Kevin and Colin 46 miles and 2500' of climbing). Perfect first day of spring ride in lovely sunshine. Gia (with additional comments by Kevin)





### **Medium Plus Ride**

A lovely Spring morning for a bike ride saw 11 men (where are all the ladies gone ?) complete a 50 mile ride across the Vale of York to Hustwaite and back. Following the prescribed route, we included an early shock climb of Castle Ings Road from Knaresborough Waterside, just to wake up the legs and then fairly raced eastwards arriving in Easingwold on 11:00. Some of us (only me , as it turned out) thought this too early for a cafe stop, but the majority verdict held and we marvelled at the 'memory lady' in the Curious Table who took our drinks and eats orders and delivered them correctly without so much as punching on an ipad let alone writing them down.

Despite hints of additional miles and hills, the route plan was followed scrupulously even riding through Hustwaite without ascending Gibbet Hill (lovely name) or stopping at the 6 stall Sunday market. The group split in Sessay somehow but regrouped at Thornton Bridge and admired the Drone Driver's skill and perseverance - I don't think I would have had the patience to do it for more than about the 5 minutes it took us to gawp at him.

We then played Hare and Hound back to Boroughbridge and then via Stavely, Occaney and Knaresborough back to Harrogate.

My technology said we completed 50 miles at an average speed of 14.5 miles an hour. Phew. LET IT BE KNOWN however, that Medium Plus rides are not always that fast and furious, and that Leaders will always make sure riders are comfortable and get home safely and without undue muscle strain. So don't let today's brisk event put you off coming along in future

By the by , I should acknowledge my co-Leader, Terry, who selflessly let me lead this ride without so much as a colourful comment. Peter L



### **Long Ride**

Write a couple of paragraphs about a cycle ride using the following words:

Spring; daffodils; Wharfedale; lambs; snow-capped hills; café stop; sunshine; Wheel-Easy; camaraderie; stunning views; 67 miles.

The result should be near perfect – it certainly was! Phil





### **Dean 300k Audax Ride Report**

The sky is grey and the wind is from the north-east as we set off from the rather bleak Oxford Park and Ride. It is 06.00

Off into the hills and at 09.30, the infamous Cleeve Hill behind us, I glance at Mr Garmin - this is the time that Wheel Easy groups will be leaving Hornbeam Park and we already have 75 km behind us. Soon we are diving and twisting through the Forest of Dean, the Cotswolds and into Wales with the wind at our backs.

Crossing the Severn bridge we are now half way and there is a decided drop in temperature. Mr Garmin tells me that the temperature is 8 degrees C. Not that cold really but the wind across the bridge is making it feel a lot colder. Wind? Oh yes, the promised SW tailwind is actually a NW headwind and we are just about to turn and head back to Oxford.

A quick stop at the motorway services and we're back on the road on the relatively flat section to Malmesbury. Relatively flat that is if you ignore the climb up to the Somerset Monument, the light is fading when we hit this lumpy little section. Mr Garmin tells me that the steepest section is 21%.

A stop at the Waitrose cafe in Malmesbury. Andy comments that it is like we're on the audax space ship, looking

through the porthole at people leading normal lives. A man is sitting at a table reading his newspaper. People are quietly choosing their Saturday evening dinners. A couple turn around and ask about the rugby scores. We sit at a corner table stuffing carbohydrates down our necks.

Off to Membury. Now it's dark and we face two climbs over significant ridges with the headwind smacked in our faces. Ahead, we can see the red lights of bikes slowly climbing the hills.

At Membury services, audaxers wearily eat and drink, contemplating the last section. From Membury it's a relatively easy 50 km into Oxford. We swoop through quaint villages, weaving through parked cars and sleepy streets. Out of the dark, a disembodied voice, "I say, you cycling chaps have awfully good lights!" (We're back in Oxfordshire).

Finally, we are back where we started to find Audax Club Hackney have erected a Popup Pub in our absence where we are given a beer, freshly-made vegetable soup and rolls. It's 23.15.

Ian N.