

Sunday, June 5, 2016

Wheel Easy Ride Report 526

Sue Downes Ride

Battling our way to Towton 5th June 2016

Unlike Palm Sunday 1461, when there was a blizzard, Sunday 5th June 2016 saw cloudless skies and temperatures of 20+ and another difference was that 27,000 (later reduced to 3,000 by Leeds University) combatants did not lose their lives on the fields surrounding the village of Towton today. Led by Geographer Graham and Ancient Historian Sue, Bridget, Di and Monica decided to visit the location of this bloodshed. Even before leaving the ramparts of Hornbeam Station, we were approached by a very pleasant family who enquired after our intended route. Mention of Towton brought an ecstatic response from Papa who declared, "Yes, 1461-the day England lost 20% of her male population in one day". What a start!

We hurtled to Knaresborough encountering the cavalry who appeared to be exercising across Forest Moor and were overtaken by the Medium Riders as they jetted to Easingwold. A further 20 miles ensued passing by Wetherby, Bramham, Aberford, Lotherton Hall and finally into the area of the battle. Before ascending the hill to the actual site, we noted the tiny Lead Church which sits in Arcadian splendour in the middle of a field opposite the Crooked Billet pub. Photos were taken beside Lord Dacre's Cross – the Lancastrian was killed and buried together with his horse in nearby Saxton. Anyway, lunchtime was approaching so Lord Dacre did not receive our oblations. Of far greater importance to us was the Beer Garden at the Rockingham Arms in Towton. Hot sandwiches, garlic mushrooms and a prawn cocktail were consumed with gusto before heading into Tadcaster where Bridget swept ahead and guided us to the footbridge where we met a most beautiful dog who was so old she travelled by buggy. Her owners very kindly took a photo of four posers and pouters with pooch. Frivolity over, our return took us through Wighill, Thorpe Arch, Spofforth and Follifoot where we parted company with Bridget, Monica and Geographer Graham. Di and I continued through Pannal and said our farewells at the top of Church Lane.

45 miles greatly enjoyed – and mostly by cycle path! Thank you fellow warriors! SD







Medium Ride 1

A brilliant morning at Hookstone Car Park.

All riders rarin' to go, however Dave P arriving home on Sat pm from a week's holiday to 50 odd e-mails after unpacking failed to check out the route.

(just in case you think he was bragging about his popularity, no way, 90% junk and people trying to sell things, and when a certain age is reached the items on offer seem to consist of stair lifts and incontinence pants). Justin sensibly split the group in to two with Paul (who had devised the ride, bless him, leading the other), DP joined this group but his penance was, he had to write the ride report.

Away went seven of us in the first group, unfortunately Alison was not feeling too well and left us at Knox, on to Hampsthwaite then climbing to Swinecliffe then up the pretty little (no name ??) Dale to Staupes.

The weather was perfect, nothing could be heard but the sounds of the birds, the click of the Rohloff and the clacks of Derailleurs, past Menwith then down to Darley, on the road to the start of the track ??, where we met up with Justin`s party (see photo).

Another Paul was mending a puncture, it was good to see a "plenty" of Paul`s it makes a change from a "downpour" of Dave`s.

Then it was down the track to a wooden footbridge, across fields up tracks till we made the coffee stop, this was unknown to most of the riders as it cannot be seen from the road.

After caffeine and calories in the sun, what a change, it was back via Ross toll bridge to Birstwith, ah! thought DP and Martin, Hamphwaite could be next where we could succumb to the temptations of Sophie`s, however Paul`s in charge and it was up to Clint and back via the Greenway. It was a great ride, though on the short side (but could we have managed a long one of these?).

It had something for everyone, cyclists, walkers, mountaineers, and extreme sports specialists. Block and tackle would be handy to get the bikes up on to the footbridge (thanks for your help Martin) and climbing gear to abseil down the other side. the tracks well !, we had been talking about electric bikes previously but electric four wheel drive bikes would have helped.

Seriously Paul it was a delightful ride, something we perhaps do not do enough of, that is to look in closer detail at what is near to us.

We often want to get the miles under our wheels and travel far afield; this might be the fault of the older riders, who want to "get 'em in" before they eventually park their bike in that great bike shed in the sky.

Great weather and company, many thanks. Dave P





Medium Ride (On-Off Road)

At last, a perfect summer's day, and the ideal ride for the weather, Paul Randall's on-off road route. Nine of us took the pre-Greenway route out via Knox and Hampsthwaite, and then up to Swincliffe and Tang, where Peter pointed out a sparrow hawk. Fantastic. Then it was down to Darley, where Peter had a puncture. It took a while to locate the problem – strangely, two holes in the inner tube. Most of us enjoyed the views across Nidderdale while Peter and Paul B. re-captured their youths, gluing two patches and – a long-forgotten task for most of us – chalking the surrounding area. Next was the off-road surprise, the only part of any Medium ride that involves getting off and pushing - down the bridleway, across the wooden bridge across the Nidd, and through the fields on the north side. We came out at the back of Birchfield Farm. It turned out to be Open Farm Sunday, and dozens of families had descended. Somehow, amidst the distractions, Paul B. spotted some oystercatchers, a long way from the nearest oyster (about 5 miles to Ramus, I reckon). Paul and I sampled Jenny's husband's sausage roll – excellent, with hints of black pudding, we decided. Then it was a roll along to the cut-through to Hartwith Toll Bridge, up and down to Birstwith, up the hill to Clint, and along the Greenway

home. Great company, as always, thanks to Paul for back marking, and special mentions to Charlie and Alan on their return to Wheel Easy. 24 miles on Strava, and about three quarters of a mile off road. Justin



Medium Plus Ride (Very Slow Pace)

We were slower than the slowest Med+ ride but we had a lovely time. Thanks Angela, Nicola and Rob. , DaveS



Medium Plus Ride (Slow Pace)

When we finally got sorted out at Low Bridge there were 7 of us setting out to enjoy the beautiful weather and scenery. We had been warned about the road between Ferrnsby and Arkendale being full of thorns so there was a minor diversion via Staveley but soon we were bumping our way over Aldwark Bridge. Alison, Gordon and Sur John left us at Easingwold leaving Maris, Andrew and 2 x Liz to retreat to the Curious Table. The food was good but our drinks were long gone as we had a wait of about 45minutes. Dave S's group had the same problem and we kept meeting them for the rest of the ride. There were fantastic views of the White Horse as

we reached Coxwold and then started the return through Carlton Hustwaite. At Boroughbridge we sat outside at Gilchrest's enjoying our cake and excellent service, then reaching Harrogate well before 5pm having done about 58 miles. The leader arrived home to find a distress call from her husband so the wonderful day was completed by a drive to Ripon to rescue him and a bike with a broken chain! (At least it wasn't at Leyburn!) Liz P



Medium Plus



Medium Plus (Faster Pace)

Ten of us left Hornbeam, though Paul managed to get himself into the steady group which were taking a slightly different route but re-established contact at the Curious Table in Easingwold.

Refreshed, we set off again in glorious sunshine, paying minimal attention to the designated route, arriving back in Harrogate at about 2.00 pm having had a blast, especially on the section going into Boroughbridge.

During the week, Geoff had made a posting on the Wheel Easy Facebook page that cycling etiquette dictates that the group wait for anyone who has dropped off the back. Geoff, who is recovering from major orthopaedic surgery, felt understandably annoyed that, last weekend, the group had ridden on without him. Facebook is a very public forum and Geoff came in for considerable ragging during the ride. However, Geoff is correct: we expect the group to wait for any stragglers. This is a collective responsibility. If the pace picks up, the person on the front will only be aware of the rider immediately behind. If someone drops off the back, the front rider cannot be aware of this. It is the responsibility of the whole group, particularly those at the back, to keep everyone informed of any rider that drops off the back through fatigue or mechanical failure.

One of the attractions of Wheel Easy is that rides are run on an informal basis with a minimum of rules. But we must take care not to leave riders stranded on their own. Let the group know if someone is off the back. Here endeth...Ian N

Long Ride

Fourteen riders set out on the long ride in what was surely the finest day of the year so far. We progressed quickly up to Greenhow via Duck Street and the lack of wind made the section to Grassington both easy and fast. The resurfaced minor road via Conistone to Kettlewell was a refreshing change from the busier roads and the sunshine showed Wharfedale off splendidly. Some riders opted for a quick stop and then headed for the Cote De Cray. The ride leader made a poor decision to sit out the queues at Zarinas which was inundated with cyclists (a good thing unless you want to be served). Following a longish stop we headed north picking up an additional group at Buckden that had opted for an alternative cafe.

Cote De Cray was an easy climb in such nice weather, the stunning scenery providing a distraction from the exertion!

We swooped down Bishopdale and onto Aysgarth. The route to Masham was on the quiet roads from Leyburn via Thirn and we sat down in Masham market square to a well-earned rest (and better service and the best scones in Yorkshire). Martin D



