

Saturday, August 20, 2016

## **Audax Taster Ride**

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### **Wheel Easy Audax Taster Ride**

Eight Wheel Easy members turned up for the 200k Audax Taster Ride starting from Hornbeam Park on Saturday. Declan, Andy, Alan and Glynn were new to the distance and the Audax concept. The numbers were doubled by Ian, David, Bob and myself. We additionally had four VC167 guests with Anne and Mick travelling down from Newcastle plus Lyndsay and Chris from Guisborough (riding Tandem). They had heard about the ride and were keen to support the venture plus enjoy new roads. For good measure Geoff Morgan turned up to accompany us as far as Sherburn before turning for home. Hence thirteen of us rolled out of Hornbeam Park. Whilst it was dry at 07.50 by 8.00 it had started to drizzle so Waterproofs were worn from the start.

The concept of Audax Long Distance Cycling is to ride a predetermined route of 200k (126.6 miles) or more and gather "proof of passage" to evidence you have done the ride. Hence 5 minutes after starting we called into the Cash Machine at Woodlands to get a printed balance to time and date stamp our departure. By North Deighton the rain had stopped, the waterproofs came off and we enjoyed dry weather for the rest of the day. The main feature weather wise was to be the strong southerly wind which was going to be against us for the first 58k (35 miles). Wetherby was a bit busy but by Aberford we were on quiet roads riding as a group and proceeding quite nicely. After a quick shop stop in Sherburn to pick up another receipt we continued into the wind to Askern. On deserted roads we passed through Birkin, Beal, Criddling Stubs and Womersley. At Askern we stopped for elevenses at Subway. A bacon sandwich plus a coffee for a couple of pounds filled a gap and set us up for the next leg to Pocklington. After first heading east to Thorne we turned northeast and picked up a big tailwind. With almost no effort we were rolling across the pan flat terrain at 20mph. After Howden we took to the lanes and once more we had the road to ourselves. Lunch at Pocklington was convivial and taken in the Deli Café in the Market Square. We had completed 128km (80 miles) and were over the halfway point.

After lunch we turned west to Stamford Bridge and onto Haxby to consume guilt free cakes at Thomas the Bakers. We then set out on our penultimate leg to Boroughbridge. Once again we had the benefit of the wind which helped tired legs to press on. Our final stop was Morrison's at Boroughbridge where Ian mended the only puncture of the day. The run back to Harrogate via Farnham and Knaresborough was a bit brutal as we again turned into the full force of the wind. With the finish in sight however and the sun shining things didn't seem too bad. Our final receipt was collected in Knaresborough Road at 6.15pm, before we headed to Ian's flat for a debrief. Ian had thoughtfully filled his fridge with Stella but we called at the One Stop in Knaresborough road to buy a few more just in case. Here we had our biggest disaster of the day in that they had completely run out of David's favourite tipple John Smith's Smooth. Despite David's willingness to compromise they couldn't even offer him Tetley's by way of a replacement. Ever resourceful David bit the bullet, thought on his feet and bought four cans of Kronenbourg. We then headed around the corner to Ian's to re-hydrate and replenish salt levels with large bowls on nuts and nibbles.

Better than forecast weather with no casualties and no tears it had been a big day out. Four Audax UK 200k medals are on order and will be presented in due course. Andy C

