

Sunday, December 11, 2016

## Wheel Easy Ride Report 553

---

### Short Ride

A group of ten set off from Hornbeam on the short ride today. We made good steady progress to Knaresborough and then on to Scriven, Lingerfield and Scotton where we paused to regroup & take a photo. Then on to Brearton and a detour on a scenic loop through the Mount Garrett estate with Caroline & Denis making sure we were following the correct route. We enjoyed quiet roads, mild conditions and lots of chatter! Coffee at Ripley Tea Rooms which greatly exceeded expectations. Very festive with helpful friendly staff and three of the group tasting an excellent mincemeat & marzipan tart! Then back to Harrogate via The Greenway. Thanks to everyone for a really convivial ride. 21 miles. Nicky H



## Medium Ride

Ten of us left Hornbeam for Burnbridge and Walton Lane End, split in two groups with Justin bringing up the rear. We were joined by Paul B at Kirkby Overblow and all continued into Wetherby where it was quite busy with a Christmas Market taking place.

I was allowed to cycle past the market but Neil and Al forbade me to stop and look! The A1 cycle path was used towards Boston Spa where Jill left us to go straight home and the remainder used the road into Bramham once we had managed to cross the road which was full of coaches and cars heading for Wetherby Market.

Through Bramham and into Clifford, once I had dredged up very old memories of using this route but mainly due to Neil with local knowledge - just a pity we both missed the turning into Boston Spa due to more conversation than navigation! It was decided that our coffee/lunch break would be at Thorp Arch as Wetherby was so busy.

We were well looked after as usual and entertained by the Wetherby ladies cycling club all dressed up in Christmas gear for their Christmas lunch. I was assured by the cracker that she had cycled in that outfit!

A photo stop was made as we regained the cycle path but a bit further on a disgruntled group complained that it was unacceptable for the leader and back marker to both be at the back! Al kindly showed us the quiet way to North Deighton where the group split with some heading for Knaresborough and others choosing Spofforth.

However we did round up Paul B who had fought his way through the Harland Way.

Many thanks to Justin for back marking, the most important role as no-one is allowed behind him. About 32 miles. Liz P



## Medium-Plus Ride

A large group of more than 20 medium plus riders flocked together at Hornbeam today, with everyone quickly organising themselves into three smaller flocks. Two of the groups self-selected leaders, so Ian Newall and I led off the faster flock consisting of Paul, Treffor, Steve, Dave, Jeremy and Darcy. Despite some misgivings about the conditions, we followed the planned route and soon encountered strong headwinds and crosswinds on the way up Duck Street to Padside.

The crosswinds over the top on the way into the descent to Pateley Bridge were almost unrideable. Everyone made it down OK, even Paul who was riding with only one rear brake block (an unusual economy measure?!).

At Teacups Cafe in Pateley Bridge the other two medium plus groups arrived at about the same time as us, having taken a modified route to avoid the tops.

Jeremy joined one of the other groups as the rest of us followed the planned route back via Brimham, Hampsthwaite and Knox Bridge. One of the shorter medium plus routes today (36 miles) at a slower than usual average speed (12mph), but given the wind and lumpiness that was probably about right for most of us. Thanks to all for good company! Michael I

Plenty of cyclists at Hornbeam this morning as the day promised to be dry but a tad windy. Andrew, Liz F, Maris, Alison, Mike and Steve became Group Three of the medium plus ride although we set off first to get a head

start. Andrew became our guiding light as he had the GPS to navigate the star's path. It was going to be an interesting ride as we toured the back streets of Harrogate, back to where Liz lived, past St John's Church Bilton and on towards Knox.

Once over the main road we meandered along down Lund Lane, towards Hampswaite. Andrew's GPS threw a wobbly and had to rely on old technology and decided we had to head for Kettlesing. Mike said he was going to try and see if he could 'pull' behind Liz, banter about being pulled on a cycle ride at our age when we only have puff to get up hills, that's another tale!

After a pull up out of Hampswaite the wind gusts increased. The intrepid six sallied forward through the windy blasts on to Dacre, unfortunately when turning right a four by four crazy driver nearly took Andrew out. All six still intact we turned onto Braithwaite Lane a steep climb up into a strong headwind on to the ridge and now the wind gusts were battering us from side to side, as we tried to stay on the road, next a motorcycle nearly took Liz out as she was blown sideways by the wind, Up more steep very windy climbs to the top before we turned down to Yorke's Folly. The wind blew Liz over at the top and she nearly took Andrew and Maris with her, luckily she managed to stay upright though Andrew was not impressed with her sudden stops.

After careful negotiation down Yorke's Folly we arrived at Teacups where Groups One and Two were ensconced. After drinks and food we decided to carry on the original route to Bewley, Glasshouses and up more steep hills to Brimham. Now for some of us the very steep hill to Brimham becomes a walking hill, not this time due to the fantastic Away Days, our fitness levels must have increased as we all achieved the top without hitting the tarmac. A lovely swoop down to Burnt Yates and on to Clint Bank where Liz decided to have chain trouble due to miss gear changing. Andrew said 'What's she done now' as Steve and Mike struggled to untangle the chain, like a naughty kid she was told to stay in second gear until the greenway. Down to Holly Bank wood along the busy path to Ripley, where this time Alison was nearly taken out by a child running in front of her. Along the Greenway to the viaduct where we stopped to look for the otter family, Mike thought he saw one on the fallen tree in the water, just as we turned to go a beautiful kingfisher flashing blue and red flew along the river and under the viaduct. A lovely end to a great cycle day out, despite people out to get us, plus the battering wind we survived. About 36 miles and 2800 feet of climbing in gale force winds, thank you Andrew for leading. Liz F



### **Long Ride**

Seventeen of us opted for the Long Ride at Hornbeam, Jill was to have led the group but was unwell. The basic route was Thirsk and back which is almost exactly 50 miles round trip. We split into two groups and remained this way until just before Thornton Bridge when the second group caught and passed the first at a speed that made us look as if we were standing still. We rolled on and Eric and I discussed café possibilities as with seventeen mouths to feed it might pose a problem. In the event we arrived at the Arabica Café in the square at circa 11.30am to find group two seated and already being served. There were plenty of spare seats and the café

performed admirably. Peter took a couple of photos and we discussed if seventeen was a Long Ride record. Eric suggested a return via Easingwold and Aldwark but some had a fancy for Ripon and Fountains which seemed fine.

By 12.15 we were back on the road and heading for Dalton via Sowerby. My mobile rung which I ignored not wanting to be left behind. Soon after it rung again so in case there was a crisis I pulled over to answer it. It was Bob Johnson. He and Geoff Morgan had been up early to route check an Audax ride and Bob's plan had been to join us for lunch and ride back. There was however a slight problem. Geoff had fallen off in Thirsk as he turned right towards the square at the mini roundabout where the road from Sutton Bank comes into town. His leg was non-weight bearing and Bob had hoped we might carry him to the café which is about 500 yards away. Clearly, we were long gone so Bob coped on his own. A kindly motorist drove Geoff the few yards to the café, Bob gathered up the bikes and waited for Geoff's wife to come and collect him.

I caught up the Long ride again just after Topcliffe and we crossed the A1 at Rainton. Not sure why but the wind had not really featured thus far but heading towards Wass we suddenly had a smack headwind. To give us a rest and provide some entertainment at this point Glyn punctured. The photo shows Glyn and his three helpers doing the repair but out of shot there were another thirteen helping with a steady flow of "sound advice". For some reason the repair seemed to take a while? Back on the road we entered Ripon and were left by those returning to Boroughbridge. The rest of us headed out towards Studley Roger to climb through the Deer Park. This climb seemed particularly hard as in addition to the hill we also had to cope with a headwind. Here it fell apart. The front runners headed home, Eric called in for coffee at the visitor centre and once I had waited for the last man on the road four of us headed back via the Greenway bumping into Richard on the way. Myself, Declan and David dropped off Alan at Bilton Lane and then headed for the Coach and Horses where we met up with Bob and Ian for a well-earned de-brief.

Hopefully Jill will feel better soon but sadly I must report that Geoff broke his hip. He's had a successful operation today (Monday) but is looking at about 3 months off the bike. Given he had a few months off earlier in the year with an ankle op life seems a little unfair. The lesson for the rest of us is to note that at this time of year the roads are greasy and if it can happen to an experience rider like Geoff it can happen to any of us. We should should corner slowly and carefully especially when there are leaves or similar on the road. AndyC



