

Wednesday, March 1, 2017

## Wednesday Rides

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### **Poddlers' Ride**

Clutching the map, which my husband had lovingly prepared for me, I set off with three stalwart Poddlers, (Caroline, Monica and Sue), plus El Butler (chief navigator), plus Zoe (puncture repair lady) to Rossett, past the Squinting Cat, whereupon Bridget jumped ship from Wanderers to Poddlers, and joined our merry band.

Up to little AlmsCliff, and down towards Fewston we swept. After crossing the A59 we passed the gated road, where Denis and Zoe left us, (one was headed back for lunch, and the other had a man coming!!!). The merry band of five continued along new territory, turning right onto Duck Street, up a couple of hills, finally to descend down to Thornthwaite, and along quiet roads to Darley.

By now coffee was calling to us, and so we decided to try a new venue: The Station pub at Birstwith. Well what a treat awaited us. Namely a warm welcome from the landlord, a good cup of coffee, delicious sandwiches (some of us shared, but there was no one with whom Bridget could share, so she had to eat a whole sandwich on her own - what a heroine) and a chocolate! Thus sustained we continued up the hill, finishing our ride along Hollybank, Ripley and the Greenway.

Weather had been fairly kind, with glimpses of sunshine, and a few showery splodges. Map was still clutched. 30 miles. Jennifer A



### **Wanderers' Ride**

Now that's what I think Wheel Easy is all about! This was my first ride as leader and I had planned a route which was to be a "variation" on route 175. What a lovely route it turned out to be with the helpful input of all the group. We set off with thirteen and picked up one or two along the way and others peeled off. But we didn't lose anybody! Most of the men were called Mike, Dave or Steve which made things easier. And we had the pleasure of Anne, Liz and Bridget's (how do you spell that?) company along the way.

We went up past Little Almscliffe and at the end of the long straight road Mike said he knew a less hilly way to Fewston so we took that. When we got to Timble Dave knew a route which would have less traffic so we took that. Then Peter took us on a nice little detour round Little Snowdon. And then Glyn took us through Askwith to Otley. So, we avoided the busy Otley to Pateley road completely.

The planned coffee stop at the playground in Otley didn't happen because it was closed. So we had a very pleasant coffee at Stephen Smith's Garden Centre. That meant we had to re-route again. So we went through Castley, up past Huby to Almscliffe Crag and home via North Rigton and Brackenedge Lane.

A great ride. Thanks to everyone who came. Lovely scenery, great banter, OK weather and a lovely day out. Isn't that what Wheel Easy is all about? 34.4 miles, back at Hornbeam for 2pm.

Here is an award winning photo the ten of us who finished the ride together (I took the photo) with Almscliffe Crag and the rainbow in the background. Steve W



**Wednesday Ride: the one when Paul and Martin nearly lost their fillings**

It was bright but cold as ten of us set off for Pateley Bridge over the hilly route. We went through Beckwithshaw and onwards over the Moors with the threat of showers showing over the distant hills. After passing near Menwith Hill we went along to meet Duck Street and

then turned down the perfectly named Love Lane, and the views of Nidderdale opened up before us. Then after pausing for a photo among the snow-drops we went past Thornthwaite church and in the bottom of the valley Colin pointed out the most delightful miniature packhorse bridge in Yorkshire.

The only way was up from here and into a sleet shower as we climbed up to the peak of the ride on York's Folly. Magically the view of Nidderdale opened up before us as we descended to Teacups for brews and bacon butties.

The return was the tough way back up through Smelthouses and at Brimham Rocks cross roads we split with half heading for the fast descent at Warsill, and four thoroughly civilised riders went straight on to the delights of Sophie's at Hampsthwaite. It was here that the usual immaculate catering standards of Sophie's slipped a bit when Paul and Martin were offered baklava. This turned out to be not quite warm enough and was the perfect consistency to glue our mouths shut, and set hard enough to risk a sudden filling extraction! After a period of muffled silence we returned to the bikes for a sunny ride home. 41 mighty hilly miles. Martin W





### **Long Ride**

Welcome back Terry Smith. The primary objective of the ride was to get to York. Picked up Eric W while we were en route to Wetherby. Devious route via Wetherby racecourse ended up in Tadcaster for refreshments. Onward to York via Bolton Percy and Bishopthorpe. Arrived at Cycle Heaven just in time to beat the rain. The rain caused an extended stay at Cycle Heaven, where much ogling of bikes took place. Slight delay in leaving York due to Andy having a puncture. Returned to Harrogate posthaste to avoid any more showers. Great ride managed to stay dry and Terry completed the ride. PCJ



## **EGs' Ride**

On the first day of (metrological Spring), notwithstanding St David's Day, today was a day to enjoy nature's wonders! The dappled light shining through the open glades. The white folds of snowdrops waving in the light breeze. The gentle sunlight glinting from the distant hills. Such was our day! A day shared between twelve enthusiastic older cyclists keen to sample life's pleasures. Who cares about the pain of the hills?

So without our leader, Dave Preston, otherwise engaged, we set off for Ripley, where Bob, left us for his caffeine fix at the local cafe. Norman and Bill diverted directly to the Fountains visitors centre, whilst the remaining peloton tackled the climbs through Bedlam and onwards through Shaw Mills, past "Cut Throat" lane, Bishop Thornton, continuing through Markington and then making our way to our first stop of the day at the "visitor" centre, overtaking Norman (and Bill) taking photo's of threatening clouds behind "The Tower" near How Hill. As the first stop was later than usual brunch was called for to replenish reserves for the next phase of our adventures.

Norman and Bill declined the challenge of more hills and headed off to Ripon and Boroughbridge, whilst the remaining nine accepted the daunting prospect of further climbing not been quite sure what was next to come as this had become yet another mystery tour.

The climb upto Sawley Hall followed, diverting around the village past Sawley Moor Farm and with some relief diving down to Risplith (yes that one again!) and a short climb to Grantley. A gentle diversion up to Skelding, returning to Low Grantley via the back lane which proved to be not only a little muddy but with loose stones and branches somewhat a challenge to remain upright.

Unfortunately Dave Wilson managed to pick up wood debris jamming his rear-mech/wheel! Marvin later discovered an errant puncture, yet again a rear wheel, luckily at the top of the climb up towards Woodhouse Farm. This at least gave the rest of us a respite whilst these issues were fixed.

Photo opportunity taken care of we all "gathered our metal" to continue to Laverton, onwards to Kirkby Malzard and Grewelthorpe. The opportunity was now ripe to complete a dash straight down to Ripon but our leader had other plans guiding us down (at least it was down) the 1 in 5 hill to Mickley care being taken on the rather undulating road surface avoiding the somewhat large tractor partially obstructing the village entrance.

As time was now beating us we once again climbed up to New Field swinging left and right to meet up with the Ripon-Kirkby road passing Lightwater Valley in the distance and thereafter sweeping down to gather at the recently reopened Sun Parlour.

After refreshments were complete Peter bade us farewell to follow his own route home whilst the rest completed the homeward trek via Fishergreen footbridge leading to Littlethorpe and with a little relief home completing the intended target of around 50 plus miles. The weather had been kind to us. The views had been remarkable and the company just great. Thanks everyone!!! Dave W.

