

Sunday, October 15, 2017

Wheel Easy Ride Report 596

Short Ride

A beautiful autumn day, so I was more than happy to step into Paul T's shoes to lead the short ride while he joined the medium pluses going to Roundhay. Our group of 7 included 4 WE first timers, Elizabeth and David from Leeds, Paul from Bilton and Dan from Huby, plus Sue A, and our first club chairman, Dave P, whose support as back marker was to prove invaluable.

Paul's new bike had a mechanical and he was on his wife's bike, not ideal, so first stop was at our house to borrow Gia's spare bike which he took to like a duck to water, managing even some of the toughest hills on what turned out to be an unexpectedly, quite challenging ride. We took the usual route to Beckwithshaw and Stainburn Woods, Norwood and up towards the far end of Pennypot Lane. After a brief confab we agreed we were all up for an extra loop to make the most of the weather, and turned west towards the reservoir, braving a short stretch of the A59 and then right to Forest Moor and down to Thornthwaite, Darley, Birstwith, Clint and a welcome lengthy stop at Sophie's for coffees and cakes.

Refreshed, we climbed back to Clint to join the Greenway, a new experience for some. Along the way Dave P and I told them some of the story of the campaign to get it built, the ambition to extend it to Pateley, and how it is now threatened by plans for a new road. Just after the viaduct we came across Keith Wilkinson, a key colleague in the campaign, accompanied by a cameraman recording the hive of activity on the path, how people valued it, and about the proposed road. Several of us were filmed expressing our strong views on the subject. At the Bilton Lane end of the Greenway local residents had put on a display objecting to the road proposals and were gathering signatures on a petition - we all signed. They were also counting the numbers using the Greenway over the weekend; the total for Saturday was over a thousand.

Finally we returned to Harrogate and Hornbeam Park, a total of 29 miles, massively above the legal limit but no one seemed to mind. It was a great day to be out. Thank you all for excellent company and I hope the distance didn't put anyone off giving Wheel Easy another go. Fifteen miles usually does mean 15 miles – well, more or less. Malcolm



Medium Ride

The medium ride was to Hampsthwaite via Knox and I changed it to go via the Greenway, Ripley and Hollybank Wood. This is where I learnt my first lesson of the day which is to inform the website of change of route, unfortunately Dave was waiting at Knox for us. So apologies to him as he caught up with us at Fewston. I thought I only had six to eight riders, but my fame for hills must have spread and I soon had eighteen! New riders Chris and Chris from Baildon, ridden once with WE, plus Peter from Tockwith joined us, no one warned them of Liz and hills!! Paul was elected backmarker. A lovely dry autumn morning as we cycled along the greenway, golden leaves falling gently from the trees, I gathered the group together at Ripley as we waited while a chain was repaired. Once all accounted for we sallied forth through Hollybank Wood, looking splendid in its autumn glory. For the new people it was a taster ride of gentle hills up to Tang past the lovely mansion house on up to Kettlesing Head. Alison left like a spring chicken searching for eggs somewhere in Darley. Another lesson I learnt was to check if anyone had any medical needs as we had to do a stop for a check. It was a day of learning for me. I also had to manage the camera on my new smart phone, which thanks to Al's persuasion has dragged me into the 21st century! I watched as the group safely crossed the A59 and we gathered in the layby. Dennis had to get home for his hot date with a roast dinner and left us at Pennypot Lane and Peter left us to go via Fewston. The group swooped down to Fewston Farm shop only to find a group outing from Huddersfield of 25 cyclists all clad in identical lycra and lots of very flash bikes!! Plus Dave found us. Though we had a wait most of us got watered and fed except for Al and Nigel who had a longer wait so hopefully they did not get indigestion. Paul the back marker left earlier with others. Then Al led us back via the Sun Inn, Almscliffe crag and this is where people suddenly melted away and only six entered the last stage into Harrogate. A lovely autumnal day, fine weather, good company, nice gentle hills a ride of 25 miles. Liz F



Medium Plus Ride Group 1

Happy to lead a sub-group nicknamed ' the faster group' by Gia, I proved her wrong on more than one occasion during the day as we caught up the other two groups at various points on the ride. Partly this was due to my diversions (Brackenthwaite Lane and North Rigton, 'the other way up Weardley Bank' and Thorner) and also to the excessive wait at the Rigton Level Crossing where Dave S. was able to demonstrate his foreign language skills at length.

The North Rigton detour was partly to avoid the other groups but also to warm Steven up as he was inadequately clothed for a Yorkshire October morning. By the close of the ride, he was the only one appropriately clothed for the warmth of Ophelia. The Weardley detour was just for fun and the Thorner one to avoid the traffic on the A58. It also served to bring us into Wetherby across Linton Bridge and behind Justin's group, who we last saw declining the overcrowded Roundhay Lakeside cafe and now installed in the sun outside North Street Deli. We organised seats and joined them for the usual fine fare and chatter against a backdrop of the occasional motorbike gang and rival bike groups envying us our ease. Shaking off 'cafe legs' we made it back to Harrogate via Spofforth , Follifoot (no pub stop) and the Showground - 'the big hill at the last' . 41 miles (suprisingly) and a lovely ride which I WAS happy to lead. Thanks to Steve, Dave, Katharine and Steve (and the other Peter for a while) for being led

nb. - not sure why all four riders in the photos are riding on the right of the road ! PeterL







Medium Plus Ride Group 2

On paper (well, on the screen) the medium plus route today appeared to be less than interesting. A route that takes in the north Leeds suburbs doesn't quite have the appeal of a route that takes in the Dales, and at 40 miles, it looked a tad on the short side given the terrain. However the faster medium plus group today (a group of 6) made a good go at it, with me as impromptu leader, having ridden the route a couple of days previously. We warmed up en route to Kirkby Overblow, puffed up Weardley Bank and cruised to the Lakeside Cafe in Roundhay Park in about 90 mins for an early coffee and date crumble slice stop (to be recommended). The route back via East Keswick, Linton and Wetherby was taken briskly, with us overtaking one of the medium groups en route. All that was left was the high speed run home via Kirk Deighton, Little Ribston and Knaresborough Hill. The weather was glorious, the pace brisk (15.3mph average) for surprisingly rolling terrain, the company good and the bonus was an early shower, having arrived in Harrogate before 1.30pm. Michael I

Medium Plus Ride Group 3

There were lots of riders for the medium plus ride to Roundhay so Gia quickly took charge and divided us into groups. So off we went, Maris, Helen, Justin, Peter, Nigel, Mike and Tim.

Notable events –nothing until we were attempting to turn right in an orderly fashion off the A61 after Harewood Bridge when we were persistently harassed for no reason any of us could fathom by a bloke blowing his car horn. Then on to Weardley Bank where we lost Nigel to Gia's group and later yours truly, leading at the time, missed the turn off to Eccup, fortunately the rest of the group had the good sense not to follow. We regrouped, leadership was now shared and we pressed on to the lakeside café. Roundhay Park is big, so big we got lost, ending up in the kids play area then back tracking carrying our bikes down a long flight of steep steps, asking locals for directions and eventually arriving at the

café, only to meet the fast group leaving without being served. So it was on to Wetherby by the published route for our one and only café stop, on the way Mike organised a photo stop outside a pub.

Maris suggested the North Street café and as we arrived the pavement tables became free and the fast group joined us. The sun was out, the service quick and friendly and the food good. We returned to Harrogate via Little Ribston. At times our ride was a little bit disorganised but as a result all the more eventful and fun. TIM



Medium Plus Ride Group 4

Four groups sorted themselves out for the medium plus ride today, the fast boys, Tim and Mike sorted out another group and Peter as always led another quicker group. That left me with a group of five including Janet who had yet again cycled in from Leeds. The sun appeared as we crossed the border in to West Yorkshire and by the time we reached the top of Weardley Bank we had gained Nigel and communed with Peter's lot who had done all sorts of diversions trying to shake us off.

As Nigel is a visitor to Harrogate all this was new territory and our route through Eccup, up Manor House Lane and through the High Ashes to Street Lane was something of a mystery and nostalgia tour.

We had a good cafe stop on Street Lane to avoid the queues at Roundhay Park and said goodbye to Janet at Wigton Lane. She would have enjoyed the speedy ride through East Keswick to the Collingham Road where her average would have been upheld. However they may not have appreciated my next move which was to visit a long ago well worn Wheel Easy route across the Wharfe by the iron bridge below Wood Hall.

Much of the bridleway has been widened and improved and where it narrowed we made way for a large group of walkers and we emerged at Paddock House Lane. By this time it was a splendid sunny afternoon and a treat to cycle and walk through a hidden valley. The river was fast flowing and beautiful. Back via Kirkby Overblow, we had cut 10 miles from the advertised route but we all agreed this was something of an adventure, easy to do with a small group and a great way to spend a warm October day. Thank you to Nigel, Janet, Kevin, Julie and Paul. Gia



Long Ride

Nine riders set off for the long ride, including new long rider Alan (welcome!), with the prospect of some new roads and a new cafe stop. Initially it was familiar roads to Ilkley via Little Almscliff, Timble and Askwith, with a pesky southerly wind to contend with.

We tried the new "Outside the Box" cafe in Ilkley (opposite the Box Tree restaurant). This is largely staffed by young people with disabilities and learning difficulties and seems an initiative well worth supporting. Trefor and Glyn then returned home via the Cow and Calf, both having been under the weather recently and not wanting to overdo it.

The remaining seven headed up Cocking Lane towards Silsden, but then turned onto Light Bank Lane, a new road for us with expansive views over Airedale. Unfortunately we then had to give away all the height gained, only to regain it up the challenging Robin Hood climb towards East Morton. At this point, Peter, Andy and Mark decided to head directly back via Dick Hudson's and Menston, while the remaining four headed down to Cross Flatts and Micklethwaite. Then it was back up Sty Lane to the upper reaches of Bingley and then up onto Baildon Moor, where we admired the view without being quite sure what we were looking at!

Setting off again, Dave and Alan were delayed by traffic, but Phil and I failed to realise this and we lost contact. Both pairs waited for the other, but despite much searching were never re-united. Eventually we just had to press on separately, Dave and Alan via Shipley, Guiseley and Otley and Phil and myself via Hawksworth, Guiseley and Bramhope.

Weather was pretty good and the wind blew us home. I think everyone rode some new roads, and I suspect everyone's legs are confirming that it wasn't a flat ride. 58 miles and somewhat more than the advertised 4200 feet of climbing. RL

P.S. Although three riders left the main group at East Morton to take shorter route home, via the Chevin and Bramhope, this still resulted in a ride of 53 miles with 4,300 feet of climbing. PCJ

