

Wednesday, January 3, 2018

Wednesday Rides

Wednesday Wanderers Ride

A remarkably small turnout at Hornbeam this morning; a total of 8, in fact. The lowest I have ever known (apart from the few days when rides are cancelled, of course). Did other members know something that I didn't? Had they looked at the weather forecast? Were they put off by 40-plus-miles-an-hour winds and rain? Storm Eleanor? The wusses. Jill the Hill was one of the eight, but was unlikely to come Wandering, so 7 of us (Brian, Alison N, Liz P, Michael, Terry, Geraldine and I) set off for Ripley and in the general direction of Nidderdale, taking it as it came. The first time we really noticed the wind was as we crossed the Nidd viaduct, out of the shelter of the trees. It was reasonably sheltered to Ripley and through Hollybank Woods, although there was some light rain which shouldn't have arrived till 3pm. We had a small altercation with a dog walker just before we reached Clint Bank Lane, but reached Sophie's without problem. General discussions about how we had passed Christmas and the New Year took place. There was a lack of consensus about how to go back, but we eventually went up Rowden Lane (nearly a mile uphill...) and then left down West Lane to Hollins Lane and thence to Knox and back home.

About 16 miles Joe



EG Ride

New Year is the time to celebrate the end of one year and the start of another, the time for singing Auld Lang Syne, for opening a new diary, for hanging a new calendar on the kitchen wall, and.....oh no.....for zeroising last year's hard earned cycling mileage, and setting another year's target! So after 2 days stuck on zero miles, by 3 January I'm anxious to start building my miles for 2018. However, there is a problem. Gloom, doom and despondency is being spread by the BBC and the Met Office about the destruction and havoc being caused

by Storm Eleanor, so today's ride looked to be in jeopardy. However the view from my kitchen window over the expanses of the Waters estate (i.e. the back garden) suggested that the BBC were still suffering from the aftermath of Michael Fish's infamous 1987 Great Storm forecasting fro-pas. A phone call to Peter B at 9am confirmed there would be at least 2 of us at Low Bridge, and therefore there was a quorum for today's ride.

In fact, there were 3 further stalwarts at Low Bridge: all Davids: one R and 2 Ps. One of the Dave Ps (the Preston one) was making a very short guest appearance to bid us all a Happy New Year, and he then turned westwards, uphill into Eleanor's headwind, to cycle home at the top of Harlow Hill. The second of the Dave Ps (the Peatfield one) adopted the more sensible approach and cycled eastwards with us, assisted by Eleanor's strong tail wind, speeding the four of us to Tancred Farm for a good hearty breakfast stop (and we all know what that means!). Our timing seemed impeccable, as we later emerged from the Farm Shop, we discovered there had been lots of heavy rain whilst we were inside. Where next? My earlier suggestion of Filey - and catch the train back - had fallen on deaf ears, and so we made our way via The Dunsforths to Boroughbridge, where another team conference resulted in the ride being extended via Skelton-on-Ure to Ripon, where we visited the Wakeman's House Café in the Market Place for the first time - and very nice and friendly it was too. The three Christmas Puds with custard went down a treat (that wasn't me being greedy - three of us ordered them!). We subsequently discovered we had avoided a second very heavy rain shower whilst inside the café.

We returned via Bishop Monkton, Burton Leonard, Markington, Ripley and the Greenway, with ride members turning off at different points. We all agreed the ride had been far better than any of us had thought possible; in fact, Storm Eleanor had proved to be a bit of a damp squib. I bade farewell to the last of the riders at the start of Slingsby Walk, and then I was suddenly hit by Eleanor's full fury. The wind speed rose dramatically and the heavy rain was horizontal and very painful. The last 3 miles were very hard and very wet. This Harlow Hillbilly completed 50 lovely miles followed by 3 very strenuous miles today. A surprisingly good start to 2018: now there's only 5947 miles left to go! Eric