

"Momma" Audax/Ch&NW CTC Rides Sept 2013

These three events, now in the third year of running, are based on **Old Ma's cafe** at Tattenhall nr **Chester** - hence the name. There are three rides allowing entries by cyclists with various shades of ability, fitness and experience.

Firstly the 209km; 3400m ascent "**Pistyll Packing Momma**" which takes an easy 50km route to



Chirk and goes on to visit **Pistyll Rhaeadr** waterfall, **Lake Vyrnwy**, **Bala**, the **Shelf** and **Llanfynydd** before a stiff return over **Hope Mountain**. The climbs after **Chirk** are steep and concentrated, so this ride gives a very tough day out, even in good conditions.

Billy Weir and Landlord Paul, Llanfynydd

Paul's cupcake flapjack

Secondly the 137km; 2000m ascent "**Momma's Mountain Views**" which



shares a start and finish with **Pistyll Packing Momma** - but diverts right at **Chirk** to climb over the big ridge behind **Chirk Castle** (start of the stunning mountain views) before a steep descent through **Vivod** to **Llangollen**. The route then climbs steeply rightwards to the **Panorama** prior to traversing left to the 1 in 4 ascent of the **Old Horseshoe pass**, which in turn leads to a breathless arrival at the **Ponderosa cafe**. After this refreshing stop, there is a pleasant ride to **Llanarmon yn Lal** where the ride joins the 200k route above the **Shelf**.



Inside the pub at Llanfynydd preparing to leave for Hope Mountain

Thirdly we have "Momma's Leafy Lanes" 50k and zero ascent which is designed as an easy introduction to audax riding and a suitable day out for a cycling family - as enjoyed by the Hill family of Lyme racing club.

The total entry for all three rides this year was over 100, but a dire weather forecast for gale force winds and severe rainstorms caused half the entrants to scratch - a shame as the weather was not quite as bad as forecast. The weather stayed dry for the start and finish, with rain being experienced in the Welsh hills. The wind did live up to expectations, so well done those riders who persevered through the difficult conditions.



Leaving Llanfynydd on the steep ascent of Hope Mountain

Special mention, over and above the general heroics, including navigating through closed roads due to a half marathon around [Lake Vyrnwy](#), must go to two riders; firstly, [Jimmy Froggatt](#) who rode out to the start from [Stockport](#) and returned after the ride, giving him a 300k ride for the day. Incredibly, he did all this on fixed! Secondly, to [Billy Weir](#) who came up from [Surrey](#) to ride 3X 200k; 3500m ascent rides whilst he was in the area. Billy left some comments on [yacf](#) website regarding his experience of [Pistyll Packing Momma](#) which I have reproduced here:

"Highlights:

- *the waterfall at Pistyll. A ribbon of cascading water that was simply magical the clear skies in the evening, with a tail wind*
- *the raw brutal weather. I'm weird, I like that kind of challenge and how it makes you face up to yourself*
- *the controls (all good, but Old Ma's and Cross Keys deserve special mention)*
- *generally great route, that just flowed together beautifully in the middle.*

Lowlights:

- *the headwind from Vyrnwy to Bala, mixed with rain - miserable*
- *me being an idiot and taking wrong turns. I could have done without being 15km over.*
- *an impromptu muckslide on a slurry smeared descent, which Germans probably pay good money for in the backstreets of Berlin. My name is not Hans and I didn't find slipping and rolling 5m downhill sehr gut.*

All in all a good day out; one of those rides I'm only too happy to recommend."

The riders on [Momma's Mountain Views](#) had a similarly tough day. [Mike Wigley](#), Audax membership secretary, left the following comments on [yacf](#):

"I wimped out of the 200 today on hearing the weather forecast and rode the 130km event instead. I've got enough points for one season so I decided to just enjoy a bike ride. Yep, the Momma's Mountain Views certainly did that. Some of the Views weren't at their best, or even visible, but what I did see was pretty good. The cattle grid on the climb of the Old Horseshoe was a challenge with back wheel slip but I trust everyone managed to stay on board. Thanks Dave for introducing me to a few new corners of North Wales."

Also on [yacf](#) from "[Overhill](#)":

"It was wet and windy out there Mike. Traction up a lot of the hills was a real problem for those of us who climb out of the saddle!"

Riders through **Momma's Leafy Lanes** missed the heavy rain and just had the strong winds to contend with. All seemed to enjoy the ride and could well be back for more next year. Your **Organiser** was pleased to recommend "A **Shropshire Lad**" 80k and "Bala **Mini-Bash**" 60k as suitable events in the next few weeks to further their **Audax** education and enjoyment.



At the windy Tilston Control - Momma's Leafy Lanes

Thanks to all who took part in what was undoubtedly a memorable and challenging group of events.

David Matthews - September 2013