

Chester and North Wales CTC 75th Anniversary

President's Tea

A day to remember - 8th June 2014

This was an ideal cycling occasion - excellent weather for cycling, an opportunity to ride a challenging route of choice, and time to chat with friends old and new after a substantial sit-down tea. David Ackerley is the one to thank for expertly planning and organising this event that provided a day out to be remembered for a long time. Guest of Honour was David Cox OBE, Chair of CTC National Council, and who also rode the 50-mile route. VIP guests were Glenda Owen (CTC Councillor for Wales), Janet Gregory and Welna Bowden (North West Councillors). Also at the 'top table' were Catherine Green and Michael Wright (representing 'Millennium Greenway Friends') and Vice-President Arthur Miller. As valued helpers, David's wife Shirley and Arthur's wife Jean were also included.

The event was chaired by our President Mike Cross who introduced the guests, read the birthday cards, and asked for a minute's quiet reflection for members who had passed away. In particular, he remembered David Robinson, who was the previous Chair of CTC National Council and a local CTC member, and who had recently died.

The event was based at Bickerton Village Hall in Cheshire, riders finishing at Bickerton Scout Hut a short distance away, where very welcome liquid refreshments were available.

David had planned three varied and challenging routes of 75miles, 50miles and 25miles, riders in each group setting off between 8am and mid-day (after a welcome drink) which was timed to make sure that everyone finished the rides in time for Tea.

Of the 76 riders and guests who booked for the Tea and the ride, nineteen rode the 75-mile route, thirty-two the 50-mile route, and three people the 25-mile route. The routes included ample opportunities for refreshments at a variety of cafes (vital on such rides). Although at times rain threatened, it never arrived, thus enabling coffee stops and lunch breaks (for those who took them) in pleasant weather. Volunteers were given their Tea free of charge as a thank you for giving up a day for the benefit of riders.

The Tea was indeed memorable - a generous roast meat salad and new potatoes and a choice of two desserts to satisfy the needs of everyone. Vegetarians were very happy with their meals which included an extremely generous portion of fruit and cheese. While coffee was served, the magnificent 75th Anniversary birthday cake, decorated with the Ch&NW CTC 75th Anniversary logo was cut and distributed to the diners. It had the consistency of a very moist and delicious Christmas cake, and because of the complicated bicycle chain bordering the logo, had been professionally iced.

After the Tea, David Cox presented Certificates of Appreciation to people and organisations who have helped cyclists and especially Ch&NW CTC. In particular, a Certificate of

Appreciation was presented to Catherine Green and Michael Wright (representing the 'Millennium Greenway Friends') for the success of the Millennium Greenway. The Greenway is a great asset to our area and has provided a safer and much-needed link to Cheshire and North Wales. David presented all riders who completed the ride with a commemorative certificate. A Certificate of Appreciation was also awarded to Peter Foster (representing Sustrans) and will be presented on a future occasion.

In addition, Mike presented David Cox with a copy of 'The Chain'. This excellent record of Chester and North Wales CTC charted its history from its early beginnings in 1939 with the Merseyside Section, through its many transformations, to the Club it is today. 'The Chain' was authored by David Ackerley and Arthur Miller and represented many months of poring over records kept by our retired archivist Ken Brown. Ken was our longest serving Secretary from 1975 - 1991 and although he is well into his ninth decade, he came over from the Vale of Clwyd to take part in the celebration.

Mike expressed his thanks to all those who had helped to make this day such a great success, but the greatest thanks must go to David Ackerley for the months spent planning and the hard work involved in making sure the day ran smoothly.

Bickerton Village Hall provided an opportunity and space to display the trophies and medals won by our champion CTC Tourist Competition team which are presented at the annual CTC National Dinner and therefore not seen by most of our members. Peter Dilworth, who suggested the display, and his wife Irene arranged the table artistically. In addition, our own Ch&NW trophies were on show. They are presented each New Year's Day at the Carden Arms to our leading local man and woman riders in the CTC Tourist Competition. At the centre of the display was the President's Trophy funded by Mrs I Mills (in memory of Graham Mills) and the Presidential Chain of Office which commemorates our founder member and former President W. H. (Bert) Bailey. A second thoughtfully arranged table displayed a variety of Chester and North Wales documents and certificates showing the extent of the Club's activities.

David, as organiser, would particularly like to thank Mike and Arthur (who also manned the 'sag-wagon') for their valued help in a variety of ways, and especially Shirley, his wife, and Jean, Arthur's wife, who had assisted him when requests for volunteers were less than successful. Thanks also to Peter and Irene Dilworth and to Lowri Evans, our Honorary Secretary, for designing and organising the supply and sale of commemorative mugs.

I think I can safely say that riders and guests returned home contented after a very enjoyable day out.

Glennys Hammond