

Clwyd Audax Rides – 29th July 2012

It was an early start for the Payne household on Sunday 29th July 2012. We headed off to **Ruthin Rugby Club** for the Clwyd Audax rides which this year were based in the town as part of the 'Welsh Festival of Cycling'. It was my first time as an organiser so I was apprehensive to say the least. The change of venue and season had meant that the routes had to be significantly modified. These alterations had caused problems with some of the established controls particularly at Caffi Florence which kindly opened early especially for us. The weather forecast wasn't too bad: showery with sunny spells - and so it turned out. Most of the riders said they got wet at some point but dried out again very quickly.



The Clwydian 209km got away at 8am with 18 riders starting including 4 from **Chester and North Wales CTC**. Fourteen finished in times ranging from 10h35 to 12h30. Special mention must be made of **Birkenhead North Ender Vicky Stinton** the only lady on this ride who rode all day with her brother but lost her brevet card between the **Ponderosa** and the

finish. How devastating. Well done to **Peter Fancourt** who travelled all the way from Northants to have another go at this ride.

The Clwyd Gate 136km got underway at 9am with 45 riders setting off including 4 from **Chester and North Wales CTC**. Thirty eight riders finished in times ranging from 7h35 to 10h50. Two others finished but sadly out of time although they didn't seem to mind. They say that they had had a brilliant day and had taken 80 photographs along the route and will be back again next



year. Special mention must be made of **Roy and Ross Binden**, a father and sixteen-year-old son from Reading who although they did not finish, did very well and hope to be back again next year. Also **Bob Birch** from Conwy who rode the entire route on a recumbent trike. How he managed those climbs I'll never know. Allez Bob. It was also nice to see that several couples took part in this event.

The Clwyd Vale 60km set out at 10am with 29 starters and thankfully 29 finishers. There were 10 **Chester and North Wales CTC** riders. The finishing times were between 3h40 and 5h40 with most people opting for lunch in **Rhuddlan** Local tandem pair the **Royles** from Denbigh led the field home and even managed to discover what sounds like an interesting cafe near the **Castle in Rhuddlan** which could feature in next year's ride! This ride had a distinct family



feel as not only was one of my daughters taking part in her first event but there was also a mother and daughter from Colwyn Bay and a mother and son from Holywell (Dad did the Clwyd Gate). The only downside to this ride was veteran rider **Jerry Rogers** being bitten by a dog in Cwm. The owner was at the scene and was spoken to. Happily Jerry is recovering well and assures me it did not spoil his weekend.

All the riders whether or not they completed their events seem to have enjoyed the day and were very complimentary about the routes pointing out the contrasts between the coast, the lakes, the hills and the open moorland on the longer rides. All credit to **David Matthews** for the routes and to an even mightier force for the scenery. There has been positive feedback (see www.yacf.co.uk) and some nice post event emails from entrants. I think all the riders deserve medals.

As for me, I'm just glad it's over for this year and that everyone got back safely. Did I enjoy the experience of organising an event and will I do it again next year? "Enjoy" is not the right word. I feel I've achieved something and that feeling is akin to riding up a hill you've never been able to get up before. I am deeply indebted to my mentor **David Matthews** who has been absolutely marvellous and has the patience of a saint. Thank you so much for putting up with me David. My thanks also go to **Lowri Evans** who has been a tower of strength as always, my daughter **Sabina** who dealt with the tea and coffee at the start and my other daughter **Steph** who manned the **Ponderosa** control. And finally I can't forget my long suffering husband **Graham** who has had to put up with a lot this year. He even had to entertain the new **CEO of CTC Gordon Seabright** who arrived just as I was leaving to man a control. I don't think he found that too much of a chore as Gordon seems such a nice man. As for next year's event I've already making plans. And if you can't wait until next year, don't forget the **Momma rides on Sunday 16th September**, and the new **Corwen rides on 20th October**. Full details at www.aukweb.net.

Vicky Payne (organiser)