

The Bert Bailey Memorial Veterans' 100 - 13th July 2014

The annual **Veterans' Ride** took place on the second Sunday in July, an unusual date as we normally have the first Sunday reserved for the Club's Premier ride, this one being the 49th in the series. The change in date was brought about because the organisers of Le Tour didn't think fit to consult us before arranging the starting date for Le Grand Depart in Yorkshire, and it was anticipated that many of our members would go to see what turned out to be a magnificent advert for Yorkshire and cycling in this country.

2014 saw the Club reach its 75th anniversary, and amongst other junketings it was decided that all entrants in this ride who were or would be 75 years of age this year, would be eligible for free entry; the remaining entrants had their fees reduced by £2. This generosity resulted in the event losing £127, but as we all know, celebrations cost!

When I left home to go to **Duddon** for the start it was raining cats and dogs and the first riders to turn up were very ready with their complaints about the organiser and his lack of influence with the Clerk of the Weather. However, the rain cleared away just in time for the first group to be sent on their way in the dry by our **President, Mike Cross**, and conditions remained very pleasant for the rest of the day. I'm still waiting for apologies from those who doubted my claim that "The sun will be cracking the flags soon".

Out of 87 entries 15 either cancelled or failed to start, a failure rate of 17.24% which is slightly higher than I have noted in the past. Most of the cancellations were caused by falls from bikes, sundry other accidents and one by being under the whip at home! Apart from two, or possibly three punctures, there were no other incidents which was a great relief. Apart from being verbally assaulted about the weather, I was also taken to task by two riders who claimed that I had not sent them the information about start times and riding groups. When informed that they had received the info by email, they both said "I leave looking at that sort of stuff to the wife". Another rider, who brags about never reading the conditions for the event, would have turned up on the previous Sunday. Despite his querulous email demanding to know why he hadn't received his documents, I took pity on him and told him when to arrive.

Ken Jones and Mike Cross

As all cyclists know CTC stands for coffee, tea and cakes, and on their



return all riders that I spoke to were lavish in their praise of the food at lunch and tea, a vitally

important part of the day's proceedings. Those who were able to stay for the presentation of Certificates at the conclusion of the ride gave a hearty round of applause to **Ken Jones**, a regular rider in the event from Bromsgrove. Despite being eligible for free entry he chose to pay the fee, asking that it be used to provide chocolates for the volunteers who make such events possible. It pleased me no end to see such a generous acknowledgement of the work of the unsung workers who gave up a day's cycling to enable the rest to enjoy themselves.

Harry Watson once again took the **Gil Tirrell Trophy** for being the oldest entrant, at the age of 85, to complete this year's ride. He then announced that this was the last of his 43 rides in this event, a figure that is almost certainly going to stand for all time, as under the present rules someone would have to be 94 years old to break Harry's record!



Harry Watson and Mike Cross

This was the seventh and final time that I have organised the Veterans' 100 and I'm delighted to say that **John Mawer** has agreed to take over with immediate effect. I have enjoyed the work involved, all of which would have been in vain without the help given to me by many people including those who have led groups, dealt out refreshments, sorted out the car parking and driven the Sagwagon. I've refrained from mentioning any names as I'm bound to omit someone and so annoy him/her, but I'm very grateful to all those who have helped me. Please note that for a number of reasons next year's ride will be held on the **12th July 2015**, this being the second Sunday in the month.

David Ackerley (Organiser)