

Bob Clift Memorial Cheshire Cycleway Rides

Sunday 26th July 2016

This is the 30th anniversary of the first cycleway ride in 1986, which I rode at the tender age of sixteen. So it was perhaps fitting that I took on the co-ordination of this well established event as my organisational debut.



I want to start this report with a resounding thank you to all my helpers, most of whom have been involved for many years and were therefore able to tell me how it works, and who helped it to be seamless - and to new helpers (half of which were my family – volunteered, not coerced) who made light work of the catering. There is no way on this planet it would work without you! Thanks also to my designers – of the poster and certificates.

So, I came away from the October committee meeting with a blue folder marked 'Bob Clift Rides 2016', with apparently all I needed to know. Venues were booked, helpers were assigned.

It was closely followed up with help from previous organisers and a golden USB stick with everything I could ever need from the past few years. This was also invaluable, so big thanks to previous organisers too!

With the help of social media and an online booking system, over 200 riders registered for the two rides, more than I think we have had in the past – I have set myself a high bar! Very few dropped out before the day and a handful did not show on the day, so we sent 83 riders off by 8:45am to do the 100 miles; and 113 riders set off for the 50 miles between 9:30 -10:30am.



Just to keep us on our toes, one 100-mile rider only rode 50 miles, was back by one and left. I do not know which 50 miles he did, but his wife and children spent time at the Ice Cream Farm whilst he whizzed out. One 50-mile rider rode out to tell us he was not riding. A 100-mile rider packed in after 90 miles as he was not well and went to his friend's house – his friend, who I believe completed the ride failed to mention this, leading to a phone call at the end of the day to find him. A handful of 100 riders did not stop at any checkpoints and therefore completed the 100 miles in record times of 6 hours. Only one 100-mile rider had technical issues, and had to pack in early on (I believe his pedal fell off? A minor inconvenience, with 80 miles to go!). Luckily only one mishap, when a car overtaking parked vehicles came too wide, forcing a rider to swerve and unfortunately slip off the road causing a minor tumble – but his bike was OK so he continued to finish the ride.

The other 190 riders however, dutifully attended all checkpoints, partook of refreshments and had a very good day despite the rain which finally came by mid-afternoon. Those of you who know me, know I like to take photos – but the day did not afford me any time to take pics, tweet or even facebook; therefore I have a few, and some stolen from Facebook after the event!

Our youngest 100-mile rider this year was Ben Larwood from the hills above Wrexham; we tracked his progress around the course and Mike Cross, President extraordinaire, re-appeared ahead of Ben to be sure to be there to present Ben with the Jim Skelding Trophy.

