

The Corwen Audax Rides - 19th October 2013

These **Audax** rides took place on the 19th October and started at the **Manor Craft Centre** in **Corwen** which opened especially for us at 7.30am. The day started off dry with light winds but eventually gave way to torrential downpours. Thankfully it was fairly mild.



At the start

There were three events ranging from **The Clwydian at 200km** to the **Bala Mini Bash at 60km** the latter being designed as an introduction to Audaxing. Between these two rides is **The Clwyd Gate at 138k** which is very popular with many riders as it includes the iconic climb up the **Horse Shoe Pass**.

The Clwydian always seems to attract an elite field of experienced Audaxers and this year was no exception; only one non-Audax member was in the start line-up which also included two **Chester and North Wales CTC** members. Thirteen riders got away at 8am on the dot but sadly, one limped back shortly afterwards. The chain on his newly-serviced bike had snapped about 10miles into the ride. Luckily for him, **David Matthews** had arrived early to recce a route for one of his Audax rides, had spotted him, and given him a lift back to Corwen.

My husband and daughter were on duty at **Pantri Bach** to cover the period between the cafe and the control closing times. The cafe stayed open 'til the last rider arrived at about five o'clock - well inside the cut off time of 6.35pm. The first rider to finish arrived back in **Corwen** at 6pm

and the last arrived at 9.15pm. Most riders seem to have enjoyed their day but I did hear someone say “Thanks very much - that was horrible” as they were leaving!

The Clwydian gets underway



The Clwyd Gate got under way at 8.30am. There were 27 starters including one recumbent trike. Three **Chester and North Wales CTC** members participated. The times ranged from 7hrs 15mins to 10hrs 50mins - and some riders were very wet when they arrived back. There was one rider who didn't finish (DNF). One of his tyres disintegrated near **Brenig** but fortunately another rider went to pick him up after he himself had finished his ride.



The Recumbent leaves on the Clwyd Gate

Clwyd Gate Starters



The Bala Mini Start

The Bala Mini Bash attracted 32 riders, twelve of whom were **Chester and North Wales CTC** members. They all left at 9am and all arrived back in good spirits well before 2pm. There were several couples taking part in this event, and also one family which included the youngest rider on the event, an eleven-year-old. I was pleased to note that at least two partners of participants took part in the longer events. Someone commented to me later that "it is a pity there aren't more of these shorter events to introduce people to the joys of Audaxing".

Most people taking part in this event tend to eat at the **Craft Centre Cafe** as the ride finishes around lunchtime. It's great to hear all the excited chatter. The riders on the longer events always seem to be a bit more subdued especially if the weather hasn't been too good.

As it's only my second year organising these events I am still wary of riding even the short one as I worry that I won't be on hand if any problems crop up, so I spend the day at the **Craft Centre** and when it closes I transfer operations to the **Royal Oak** next door. The pub doesn't usually open until 7pm but are always happy to let us in at 5pm. This year the landlord was on holiday but the stand-in staff did a wonderful job. The land lady in particular cut quite a figure walking around with a parrot perched on her head which actually said "What are you having?" when a customer approached the bar. The locals started rolling in about 7.30pm and we were richly entertained until the **lantern rouge** arrived. He was travelling back to **Halifax** and had a lift with a rider from **Burnley** who had finished about 2 hours previously.

That's another thing which amazes me about these rides - the distances people travel to take part. There were riders from **Shropshire, Somerset, West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Powys, Anglesey, South Wales, Lancashire, Herefordshire** and **Derbyshire** as well as **Merseyside** and **Manchester**. I even had 3 riders from **London** registered but they didn't turn up.

Well... it's all over for another year and although it gets a little fraught the week before I will miss all the emails etc. I will now have to start thinking about next year's events. One thing I would definitely like to see next year is participation by more women in the longer events. There were none on **The Clwydian** and only one of **The Clwyd Gate** this year. Come on girls - I know you can do it. Why let the men have all the fun?

Vicky Payne (Organiser)