

The Corwen Audax Rides - 18th October 2014

There were three events of varying distances for riders to choose; The Clwydian Audax 200km, The Clwyd Gate Audax 130km , and The Bala Minibash 60km.

The long and middle distance events both arrive at the coast near Abergele and then follow the same route over the tops to Corwen. The shorter event goes out to Bala and back approaching Bala via the southern side of Llyn Tegid. That section always reminds me of the route round Loch Tay.

This is third year I have run these events and there was a bumper entry of 135 in total. The events started from the Manor Craft Centre in Corwen which has a small cafe. The owner always opens early for us. I was slightly apprehensive as to how we would cope processing everyone on the day but everything went smoothly (thanks to my lovely assistant) and all the rides got underway at their allotted time. As it turned out 116 riders set out with 105 finishing but most importantly, all riders were accounted for. There were a few abandonments but only one casualty - a broken collar bone. Happily we managed to get him and his bike home without too much fuss (thanks again to my lovely assistant).

The weather was ok. It was unseasonably warm with some rain but the main problem was the wind which affected all events and resulted in riders finishing a lot later than in previous years. The landlord of the Royal Oak (where the two longer events finished) was very puzzled at the number of riders arriving after 5pm and asked whether the start time had been later this year. Thankfully, it meant more people taking advantage of the 'Cyclists' Special' he kindly provided: a hot drink and a toasted sandwich for £2.50!

This year there were more riders on the longer events although the short ride still attracts a lot of first timers who were all very enthusiastic and complimentary with regard to the route and the organisation.

The feedback for the long event was excellent:

“A very pleasant day temperature wise and the wind wasn't too noticeable until the final stage between Pensarn and Cerrigydrudion when it really became quite a difficult slog for me over the Denbigh moors particularly between Llansannan and Brenig. I can do rain and to a certain extent cold but nothing is more demoralizing than a stiff headwind. Had to stop at the junction with the A5 in Cerrigydrudion and have some 'Soreen' as I was feeling a bit spent after the battle with the wind.”

“The moor around Llansannan was a slog but was made special with the darkness closing in. The final part was great, an easy run to the 'arrivee', and you could see the stars. At

home with all the light pollution it's not often I can do that. As I went past Jeff-in-Wales, he said he was having some malt loaf, I thought "lucky " and then spent the remainder of the ride dreaming of what I'd eat on the way home after finishing. I can heartily recommend this ride"

I have also had some nice emails post-ride which is always very encouraging and makes it all worthwhile. All events were well supported as always by Chester and North Wales CTC members including entries from people in Birmingham, Derby, Herefordshire, and Cardiff. There were lots of couples riding (one tandem) and more ladies chose to ride the middle-distance event.

I will be running these events next year on 17th October 2014.

Vicky Payne