

Heart of England Cycling Rally – 15th to 16th May 2010

Organised by CTC Heart of England Member Group

Cyclists' Memorial Service – Meriden

Meriden is a village and civil parish in the Metropolitan Borough of Solihull, West Midlands, England. It is located between Solihull and the city of Coventry, and is approximately 10 km (6 miles) from Birmingham International Airport.



Many will know that Meriden is famous for being the geographical centre of England but how many are aware that it is also the location of the National Cyclists' War Memorial?



Erected on Meriden Green in 1921 "to the lasting memory of those cyclists who died in the Great War" the first service there attracted an estimated assembly of 20,000 cyclists. A bronze plaque was added in 1963 to commemorate those cyclists who died during World War Two and a further plaque covering more recent conflicts is currently under consideration. The Memorial Service has been held every year in May and is part of the Heart of England Cycling Rally, a weekend of Audaxes, led rides and quite a bit of eating and drinking it seems.

And so on Sunday 16 May 2010, the day following the National Dinner, two thirds of the winning CTC Tourist Competition team attended the Memorial Service.

A Celebration of Cycling

Meriden Green, Meriden



Reproduction from the CTC Gazette of January 1921

89th Memorial Service
16th May 2010
11.00 am



Address – Rev. Canon John Eardley



Ray Clay – President, Leicester CTC
Laying his wreath



Ray Clay's Chain of Office



The Bulkington Silver Band



The congregation



Wreath Bearers at the Cyclists' Memorial

Now, the Wrexham Reivers/ CaféHoppers don't travel anywhere unless there are Tourist Competition points available and although none accrued from the Service (not in this life anyway), nor from the cakes and hot drinks afterwards, they did from the Treasure Hunt in the afternoon with **Lowri Evans coming second to (inevitably) Mike Batchelor and Andy Polakowski third.**

Order of Service

CYCLISTS' WAR MEMORIAL

TO THE LASTING MEMORY OF THOSE CYCLISTS WHO DIED IN THE GREAT WAR 1914 - 1919 is the inscription on the memorial.

After an idea by the late Mr 'Biddy' Bidlake, an executive committee was formed in 1919, and in less than a year, £1,200 was raised from cyclists and cycling organisations throughout Britain.

On May 21st 1921 in the radiance of the lowering sun at six o'clock before an estimated assembly of 20,000 cyclists, Lord Birkenhead, the Lord Chancellor unveiled the Memorial. The Green was packed as far as the eye could see, the throng overflowed on both sides of the highway, all traffic ceased, the thousands of visiting cyclists had parked their machines in adjacent meadows. Buglers sounded the last post, afterwards the reverend S. G. Boucher, who had been a most generous patron of the memorial fund, read a simple dedicatory prayer. Afterwards the school children of the village led the vast throng in the singing of the Doxology to the tune of the Old Hundredth, and with the pronouncement of the Benediction, the official proceedings were concluded. There followed an informal laying of wreaths at the foot of the memorial by representatives of clubs and organisations including the CTC, NCU and many D.A.s of the CTC. There was among them a Royal decorated racing wheel, from the cycle of one of the unnamed heroes who had fallen.

The key note of the whole memorial is simplicity, and strength without ornament. The obelisk was built on a concrete base with a concrete column which is thirty feet high, and is faced with Cornish granite.

On the 14th June 1923, His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales visited the memorial whilst on his way to Coventry.

A service has been held every year since the unveiling, with the highest attendance in the 1920's and 1930's yet Meriden today is still one of the largest gatherings of cyclists in the country.

A bronze plaque was affixed to the memorial in 1963 to commemorate those cyclists who had died during World War Two.

A Celebration of Cycling Meriden Green, Meriden



Reproduction from the CTC Gazette of January 1921

89th Memorial Service 16th May 2010 11.00 am

The Bulkington Silver Band will play during the service with Aldersons Chorus leading the singing.

ORDER OF SERVICE

The Welcome

Peter Wright, Lay Reader of St. Lawrence Church, Parish of Meriden and Packington.

Opening Prayer

Our Hymn: "All people that on earth do dwell"

All people that on earth do dwell,
A people that in earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice:
Hear ye his voice, ye people, praise him,
Come ye before him, and rejoice.

The Lord, he knows, is laid asleep,
Waxant our sin he did us make,
We are his folk, he kills us dead,
Ask for his sheep, he doth us take.

Thou art our God, his gates with justice,
A people will thy praise utter:
Praise, Lord, and I will praise always,
For thy justice, so to do.

For why? The Lord our God is great,
His mercy is forever sure,
His truth shall loose us, firmly stand,
And shall from age to age endure.

To Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
The God whose heaven and earth contain,
From man and from his angel-host,
Be praise and glory ever given.

W. Kettle, Church Poet (1911)



Wreath bearers at the Cyclists' memorial

Time like an ever-flowing stream,
 Through life's away,
 Has left behind us, as a dream,
 Days of the golden day.

O GOD our help in ages past,
 O our hope in years to come,
 Be thou our guard while troubles last,
 And our eternal home.

Words

All praise and thanks to God
 The Father now be given,
 The Son, and him who reigns
 With them in highest heavens,
 The one eternal God,
 Whom earth and heaven adore,
 For thus it was, is now,
 And shall be evermore.

M. RUSKERT

Wreath Laying Ceremony

People with Last Post Alliance One Minute High Rollers Hymns

Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

3rd Hymn:

God bless us all our God
 NOW thank we all our God
 Whose mercies and whose grace
 Whose wonders fill our hearts,
 To whom his work returns,
 Whom all our hearts adore
 Hath blessed us on our way
 With signs and gifts of love,
 And still is ever true.

O easy and merciful God
 Through all our life be near us,
 With ever joyful hearts
 And blessing grace to cheer us
 And keep us in his grace,
 And guide us when we need
 And comfort when we fall
 In this world of sin and sorrow.

A Collection for the Charity "Help for Heroes" will be taken during the singing of this Hymn.

National Anthem

GOD save our gracious Queen,
 Long live our noble Queen,
 God save our Queen,
 Send her victorious,
 Happy and glorious,
 Long to reign over us.
 God save our Queen.

Blessing

The Reverend Canon John Eardley.

Notices

Musical Selection will be played by the Bulkington Silver Band.
 The 90th Anniversary Service will take place on
 Sunday 22nd May, 2013.



The Last Post

Photos and images by Andy Polakowski

The Maiden Dye and Memorial Services is a proud member of the CTC and British Cycling



Cyclists' Touring Club

The CTC is Britain's largest cycling organisation with over 50,000 members throughout the UK, Ireland and overseas.
 Founded in 1878, it has for over a century promoted recreational and utility cycling and protected cyclists' rights.

Free technical guidance
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Membership details: CTC, PO Box 610, Unit B, Blawith, TW7 6RP. Tel: 0870 875 0061
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For further details contact:

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