

## Early Season Challenge Ride

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2014

On the day, 181 riders reported to us at Farndon Sports and Social Club for the start of either the full 50 mile course or the new 50 km option. Over 200 had registered in advance but there were a number of no shows perhaps due to a football match that afternoon which I'm told was important for a certain local team!

The larger HQ this year meant that we were able to accommodate all the vehicles although a lot of participants did ride in which is great. Big thanks too for arriving more or less as I'd asked which meant that the slower riders got away first from 9am. The final faster ones and those riding the shorter course had left us by 10.45am. Just a few minutes later and the first rider checked back in looking for his lunch! Fortunately, our caterers are obliging sorts and were soon into the steady flow of soup, sandwiches, cake, tea or coffee served in proper cups!

The interesting stats:

- 25 people rode the 50 km
- 6 under 18's and
- 50 women took part
- 3 hours and 29 minutes fastest start to finish time for the full 50 mile event

We had lots of positive comments from riders on the day and several took the time to write after the event. The following is from Steve Thomas – Birkenhead North End Cycling Club and CTC:

- *Thank you for organising another great event, we really enjoyed the ride of two halves!*
- *As usual the catering was spot on, love the china - really civilised, it beats paper plates hands down!*
- *Would you pass on my thanks to all concerned for giving up their valuable time to help feed the hungry riders and all of the other people who checked us all out and in again?*
- *Compared to the trendy 'sportive', the CTC events are real value for money. I don't know how you do it, but I'm glad you do, once again thank you for all of your hard work, it really is appreciated.*

The consensus is that the new venue and figure of 8 course worked well. It provided options: to bail out at lunch and watch the match; or, ride straight through for the Sunlight. The weather was a bonus. No accidents or other unpleasant incidents that I'm aware. I would like to record my thanks to the team of helpers from our group, CTC Two Mills, many of whom were on duty from a very early hour that morning. Graham and Merseyside CTC provided the all-important technical support that allowed riders to register and pay on-line, another first for this year.

Next year, the event is scheduled for Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March. I hope to see you there and bring your bike buddies along, too!

Janet Gregory

Event Organiser