



Cycling



Knotty Ash Dash. Lowton St Mary's Church to Liverpool Cathedral and return

July 9th 2006 07:00 hrs

Congregation members and friends from Lowton St Mary' Church arrive at the beginning of a sponsored cycle ride to Liverpool Cathedral and return. In aid of raising much needed funds for the church. You can just hear the theme tune from 'Top Gun' playing in the background as the riders prepare for this a pleasurable ride to the Cathedral and return, a total of 60 miles not 40 as one expected. After the photo shoot, the St Mary's vicar Bill Starker said a prayer to help us on our way, oh boy would we need it.

Leaving the church car park we set off along towards Lane Head and the A580 (East Lancs Road) dodging traffic and small birds as we progressed at a snails pace. Open road at last (A580) well we using the cycle path as we had some younger members so had to stay off the roads as much as possible. Our support vehicles followed us for some miles and then sped off to the first drink stop at the Royal Oak some 11 miles away. Not for getting that this would be at approx 9:30 am so the Oak would not be open. After many riders had fixed their punctures we arrived at our first stop. The landlord of The Royal Oak had been pre-warned of the event and had kindly agreed to allow the riders to use their facilities (Bars still closed), however even when we arrived a little later than expected he was still in bed. May riders still dancing not with joy of completing the first 11 miles but for other reasons, he appeared.

Setting off once more, towards our goal and another drink stop. Progressing towards Liverpool we then took the Trans Pennine trail Route 56, not 66 (some people, called it the Trans Pennine Trial). No punctures this time but at our next drink stop we heard of one cyclist breaking a chain. The support vehicle could not reach them on the trail and he was pushed 2 miles by two other riders, well done guys.

At this point we were still following the trail but now on roads at Childwall (very picturesque) village. The support drivers pointed to the next stage of the route which had what seemed to be a 1:10 climb. All passed this challenge; even if some walked (it was certainly a challenge). Passing Liverpool Hope University on our right we progressed toward the Cathedral, only another 4.8 miles or was it 8.4 miles? It certainly seemed a little longer than 4.8.

Finally the Cathedral was in sight, most riders overwhelmed with the sight of their first finishing line, sped off as if it was a timed trial in the Tour De France. Yellow jersey was optional.



Cycling



Arriving moments later another photo shoot from the supporters and families, we venture into the Cathedral for a well earned lunch. The supporters had laid on a very handsome spread which included the traditional 'Jam Butties' from the Knotty Ash buttie mines and lots of drinks.

Total time so far. Projected 3-4 hours. Actual 5.5 hours. Phew.

Return journey

Leaving at approx 1:05 half the riders set off for the return journey, (others had decided before the event not to return by cycle). Not so eventful return but the Childwall down hill section 1:10 seemed just a breeze compared to the earlier trip. Retracing our original route we separated into two groups, reaching our second return drink stop in only 2 hours we were informed of other mishaps, punctures etc from the second group and they fell 2 hours behind us. The support vehicle collected the remaining people and bikes for the return home. We progressed towards home and stopped at the Royal Oak once again, (this time it was open), but no time for drinks only water and juice.

Arriving at the finishing point at 4:30 (only 3.5 hours from the Cathedral) the eight/nine remaining riders were welcomed by supporters and the vicar. After a short discussion we dispersed and most cycled home, another 2 miles for some.

A very enjoyable and challenging day but we raised in excess of £3,500 for the church.

More [photos](#) here