

# **WE DID IT!!!!!!**

## **Children in Need Big Bike Ride – Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2011**

Seemed like a good idea at the time.

5 hours in the saddle, 43 miles, 8 tired legs and 1 puncture later it was mission accomplished.

Who invented 5.30am on a Saturday morning???????????

A 2 hour train ride saw us arrive at Guildford Railway station ready to get under way.

So all the preparation had been done, we knew where we were going, even the sun was breaking through the mist. What could go wrong?

Well the freshly recharged batteries were not in the camera!!!!!!

Good job Chris had the camera on his phone.



Oh also realised about this time that the printed copy of the Downs Link Guide was still on the desk at home!!! Good job both Malcolm and Paul had done the run before.

The sun was shining too, right into our faces. Still good job I packed the sunglasses. Oh, those will be the glasses, I left on the windows sill by the front door so that I didn't forget them!!!!

Anyway 8.45am and down to the riverside, to follow the Wey & Arun Canal down to Shalford, where we picked up the top of the Downs Link. Only 38 miles to go.

The half way target was Southwater, and a steady pedal would have us there in no time!!!! Except the hill between Banyards Station and Rudgewick stood in our way. Long steady climb up and a steep decent down a muddy wet leaf covered path. Still Lunch was the reward at Southwater.



Finally arrived at Southwater Country Park about 11.45am. About half way, but the slight inclines were starting to feel a little longer now, and when “old boys” on ancient looking bikes are speeding past you on the flat you start to get a little worried about your own chances.

Still lunch done quickly and back in the saddle, conscious that too long a stop and nobody will want to get back on the road, and finishing in the dark was not an option, as only 2 bikes had lights fitted.

From Southwater down to Shoreham should have been flat and reasonably quick. However, the 20+miles already in the legs started to make 9.5mph a stiff test for some of us (OK me). Fortunately only 2 more real climbs to cover, but close together and after 30+ miles they became a challenge. But we all took them on and beat them, JUST!!!!!!

A little respite (and some downhill) into, and through Bramber, and onto the final stretch along the river Adur into Shoreham. It’s amazing how long this final stretch can feel sometimes!



Finally at 2.45pm we all rolled to a stop at Shoreham. Most of us shattered, but delighted to have completed the whole distance. Oh except the little matter of getting home to Worthing! What's another 5 miles at this point?

Fortunately the South Coast prevailing winds were not present, and surprisingly we were all able to maintain a healthy pace home, (dodging promenaders).

So what are the conclusions we reach from this adventure?

"never again", "don't want to ever see another bike", "who's idea was this?" were all comments heard at various points during and after, from 3 out of the 4 riders. I'm sure by next year painful memories will be forgotten and stupidity may return.

#### **Notable mentions:**

**Malcolm** is a riding "animal". We got the feeling we were just holding him up and without us he would have been finished and home by the time we had reached Southwater. In fact we did suggest he finish the ride by riding along the top of the downs to home, he was the only one who didn't think this was a silly idea. Apparently his training diet consists of loads of Donar Kebabs, "because they have salad!"

**Paul**, for agreeing to do the ride on the back of no riding for at least 6 mths. He spent most of the day insisting it was time "for a quick burn down the next stretch". Also, when he suggests he "will be

most surprised if we do the whole trip without several stops for mechanic and punctures”, you can be sure HE will be the one puncture on the day!!!!!!

**Chris**, whose longest single ride previously had been 12 miles, and the speed restricted by his younger sister, not only rode the whole distance but after a brief period early on struggling through the heavy going, actually led out for large chunks of the ride, so much so that he wins the award for missing most turns. Even managing to miss turns when he was not leading the trail!!!!!!

**Alan**, what a pace maker! Never at the front, mostly at the back. Keeping the even pace we needed to complete the ride (my excuse anyway). Not bad for someone who’s last long ride was some 30 years ago. Who it has to be said was riding the oldest machine of the group.

**Star of the Day** – above mentioned bike. A 20 year old Raleigh Endeavour hybrid bike, which apart from replacement tyres and tubes has all the same piece parts it had when bought, and carried my vast bulk all the way home.

Thanks to all the guys for taking the day out to do the ride, supporting each other, and the cause, and to all of you who sponsored us to the tune of nearly **£600**.

Get ready to give us your money.

**A great effort all around.**