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February 2010 Issue - Harp Hilly Hundred Special Edition

Welcome to this Special Edition of the Half Link featuring the 2010 Harp Hilly Hundred held on Sunday 24th January.

2010 Harp Hilly Hundred Report

Probably our most successful Harp Hilly Hundred in modern times, we had 180 riders set off on the day and a total of 195 entries. The non-starters due to our foray into accepting pre-entry via the new Harp Hilly Hundred website, which netted 69 entrants, guaranteeing us a reasonable donation to charity even before the day of the event.



Riders get ready at the start

The recent spell of bad weather which had put the dampeners on the usual weekend rides since the snow fell mid December only seemed to work to our advantage, with many riders determined to get a hard training ride in on the first decent weekend this year. A large proportion of the riders were very optimistic about their fitness and many finished over 30 minutes outside their target times but the general consensus seemed to be that they had enjoyed

their day. You will find a selection of the comments received by email later in the report.



A typical rider after finishing!

Again probably due to the recent inclement weather the 50km route proved more popular than it has since we introduced it a couple of years ago, with 22 riders opting for the shorter course.

One thing that you can normally bet on is the Verulam CC taking the Harp Hilly Hundred Shield. After being beaten by the Hemel Hempstead CC last year the Verulam regained the shield as the most successful club from the 62 riders who qualified for certificates.

New for this year is that we have been able to publish the times of all riders who completed either the 100km or 50km rides on the Harp Hilly Hundred website.

www.HarpHillyHundred.org.uk

There was just one incident to mar an otherwise near perfect event. One rider suffered a mechanical failure and due to a mix-up in mobile phone numbers wasn't able to get directly through to the HQ, and, although Mick K drove out to try and find him, ended up walking back to the HQ.

In monetary terms, after expenses, we are left with just over £1600, of which we guaranteed to donate £920 to charity. If we agree to supplement this to give each of the three charities £400 that will still leave over £400 for club funds which together with the £100 donation from DBY will let us invest in items such as direction arrows for future Harp Hilly Hundreds.

For this years event we signed the course with handmade arrows that were produced at short notice from arrows painted on cardboard. The arrows were probably slightly larger than required at 18" by 8" but were seen by the large majority of riders. The 100 km route arrows were red on a white background with a white 'H' in the arrow and the 50 km diversion used reversed colours with white arrows on a red background as can be seen in the photos below.



Unless anyone has other suggestions we would use these designs for any signs we purchase.

Thanks must go to Mick C, Mick K, Jim, Bryan, Terry and Alison for getting the record number of riders underway and to Wally and Dora for managing the refreshments.



Plenty of food for everyone

Thanks also to Mick K. for his photos.

Improvements to the Harp Hilly Hundred

As part of the ongoing process of trying to make the event run as smoothly as possible a number of improvements and suggestions for future events have been forthcoming.



Finish Time

Currently the actual time is shown when a rider's HHH card is scanned at the finish and if they have qualified for a certificate. This will be changed to show the time the rider took to complete the ride and if they have qualified.

Certificates

At the moment we print individual certificates with the rider's name and club which requires a lot of time and effort after the riders have started inputting all the information onto the computer ready for the finish. The riders also have to hang around waiting for their certificate to be printed. In future all riders who finish the ride in their time category will receive a standard certificate for successfully completing the ride when their HHH card is scanned. All certificates can be printed in advance of the event.

We would also reduce the size of the certificate from A4 to A5 which is more convenient to stuff under a jersey for those who have ridden out to the start.

50km Route

The current 50km route is actually almost 60km which means that riders have to complete the ride at an average of over 15 mph to qualify for a certificate. This is too fast for a ride that is aimed at younger riders and those not fit enough to complete the 100km route so we need to revise the course and ensure it is not more than 50km.

Refreshments

Last year when we raised the entry fee to £10 we provided free food and drink for the riders. This year only tea and coffee was free, partly because of the logistics of managing free food and knowing how quickly free food disappears when there's a group of cyclists around. A suggestion for controlling this is that when a rider hands over their HHH card at the finish they are given a voucher that entitles them to a free item of food, say a cake or a roll, and if they want more they have to pay for it.

Richard.

Rider Feedback

Below are some of the comments received by email after the event:

Thanks - great event and nice people !

Mike

Just wanted to say thanks for a great event yesterday, me and my friends thoroughly enjoyed ourselves- it was nice to ride in better weather than we've had of late too- and on previous HHHs!

James

Thank you, and your team, who put on what was a great event yesterday. My legs can certainly confirm the event lived up to its name!!

Mark

Thank you very much and well done - a very enjoyable ride.

Lawrence

Just a quick note to say thank you to all those involved in the organisation for the ride on Sun. great route and excellent early season tester!!!

Ian

Really excellent & well run event!

Thank you & I will be back next year

Mike
