

Mersey Roads National 24 Hour Championships, a race report.

Part One; Preview

Of the 65 entries received there were 3 tandems, 1 tricycle, 16 road bikes and 49 TT bikes. Fifteen of the riders were females. The average age was 47.8 years, the youngest being **Adam Holt** of Chepstow CC at 20, one of the 27 debutantes on the start list, whilst the oldest competitor was 86 year old **Bryan Highgate** of Fareham Wheelers. The youngest female rider was **Bethany Spencer** of George Fox Cycling Solutions at 21, the eldest female being 70 year old **Kathryn Smith** of Sleaford Wheelers.

There were three 24 Hour Fellowship members riding - **Rob Rix, Richard Parrotte** and **Bob Richards**. Only one of them would make it to the finish.

In terms of possible podium places, the women's event looked particularly open, with none of the big hitters from recent years present for the 2024 edition – a changing of the guard perhaps; there is that flux and flow of riders over time. In particular, no Christina Murray - someone at Farndon on the morning of this year's 24 said she was concentrating on 'a 24 Hour in the USA' (I am not sure if the additional information about it being titled "The World 24" was serious, or an ironic reference to how the U.S. calls one of their baseball competitions 'The World Series' when it only features themselves and Canada and possibly Japan now...). Or perhaps Christina had been wanting to perform well in the National Inter- Services Road Race Championships which took place just a few days before this year's 24 and had adjusted her training accordingly, ruling out the long and steady of long TTs and accompanying training - I had marshalled down at Brentor on the S.W. edge of Dartmoor on

the Wednesday afternoon prior to the 24 for the Inter-Services Road Races, where she took 8th place in the women's event.

The highest placed female from last year riding the 24 this time round was **Amy Hudson** of Derby Mercury CC, who in last year's atrociously wet conditions managed 394 miles on a road bike to take 3rd place behind Murray and **Joanna Cebrat**. In kinder conditions Amy was likely to go much further. On paper the best bet for top spot looked to be 50 year old **Michelle Lindley** of Poole Wheelers, for although she'd never entered a 24 before she had completed both the 12 Hours she'd done, in 2021 and 2022, and only a month earlier Michelle had finished on the podium at the Welsh National 100 on the R100 as third best woman rider. A 24 Hour is as we know, however, a different beast. Speaking with her before the off Michelle expressed a degree of apprehension over her first 24 Hour – she said she knew she was going well at present, but wasn't at all sure if she would go well for 24 Hours....

For the men's title in the National 24 we had no **Robbie Mitchell** this year, but **Mark Turnbull** (Torq) who had finished 2nd only 8 miles behind Mitchell last year was there. Then there was **Michael Hutchinson**, Arctic Aircon, who made his 24 Hour debut last year, finishing fourth. Perhaps with the benefit of experience, and some focussed training he might be able to challenge for the title ? He's won all the other CTT national titles after all (save the Hill Climb), or could it be perhaps the passing years (he's 50) would preclude such a victory. Against that we'll remind ourselves that the 2006 event was won by a 50 year old, Mick Potts of the Derby Mercury, on 486 miles and in whose honour there is the Mick Potts Memorial Prize at the Mersey Roads 24, awarded to the rider aged 50 or over with the greatest mileage. So maybe . . . ?

Another rider to consider for the Men's title was **Lee Williams**, ex-North Hampshire CC now FTP ('Fulfil The Potential' – not my favourite name for a bike club but at least FTP run events unlike most other non-geographically located 'internet' 'clubs', and indeed FTP ran last year's Road Bikes Only National Time Trial). Lee had, like Mark Turnbull, been runner-up to Robbie Mitchell, this time in the heat of 2021 with 504 miles v the 521 of Mitchell. Lee has been riding plenty of events this year, so his fitness was sure to be good. This would, though, be his first 24 hr since that 2021 runner-up spot. As a longer-odds outsider Cornwall's **Tim McEvoy** (FTP) was a consideration – he'd been twice winner of the National 12 Hour (2021 and 2022) and goes better in 12s than in 100s so maybe he'd go better in a 24 than a 12 on that reckoning? Tim had ridden a 24 previously, as a Newquay Velo rider, in 2014 when Jon Schubert became National Champion down in traffic-busy Sussex, on that occasion Tim was 11th, but he's a stronger rider nowadays.

On the CTT webpage for the 24 Hour a few days before the event 'Spindata' predicted that **Adam Wild** of G.S. Metro would run out winner, and by a good margin. I daresay some of you who are older riders might wonder what exactly is this 'Spindata'? Here's a précis from their website -

www.spindata.co.uk/about : A score is given to each TT rider's result based on the time recorded relative to the results of other riders. Every Wednesday evening Spindata picks up the start sheets for forthcoming events from the CTT website and predicts the results for all the riders who have a previous result scored on Spindata. The rankings are updated taking into account new results. Spindata works pretty well in its predictions of placings. It does best for such as 'tens' and 25's, because riders are doing more of those so there is a bigger and thus more reliable dataset for Spindata to extrapolate from. However, with comparatively few long distance TTs (100 miles & plus) taking place this means fewer relevant results for Spindata to cross-reference from – and of course 24 Hours are a different thing completely. As an illustration of the limitations of Spindata in this respect, it was predicting **Michael Hutchinson** to finish down in 5th or 6th place in the 24 Hour, until the result of the only TT he's done since last year's 24 Hour came in – an 18:58 in a Cambridgeshire 10 mile TT on the E2/10 course a week before this year's 24. As a result, Spindata had overnight promoted him up three or four places to a predicted runner-up position in the forthcoming 24 Hour. I think you get the drift there.

Back in 2020 **Adam Wild** became National 100 mile Champion and a week later National 12 Hour Champion, but he has had a few years out of the game (maybe due to the pressures of studying to become a Medical professional ?) So, a 27 year old who has only ridden half a dozen TTs in the last three years to win the National 24 Hour? On the other hand he had finished third in this year's National 100 but even so

One category that would, sadly, be missing for only the 2nd time in the history of the Mersey Roads (or possibly the National 24?) was Tricycle – young **Rose Price**, who was on the start sheet and (again on Jim Hopper's machine) was DNS due to illness.

The tandem section looked interesting – three teams, with one female-female, one mixed and one male-male.

The mixed crew was husband and wife **Steve Massey** and **Laura Massey-Pugh** of the Derby Mercury, who were a definite possible for fastest tandem overall – they broke the tandem record for a circumnavigation of the world riding 18,000 miles in 180 days. You can read about them on various websites including at www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-derbyshire-63836669 and www.guinnessworldrecords.com/news/2023/11/married-couple-overcome-challenges-and-motorcycle-crash-to-set-epic-tandem-bike-record-761429

180 days of averaging 100 miles per day is strong stuff, and no doubt they rode much longer distances on individual days when road conditions allowed and necessity demanded. Clearly tough tandem cookies.

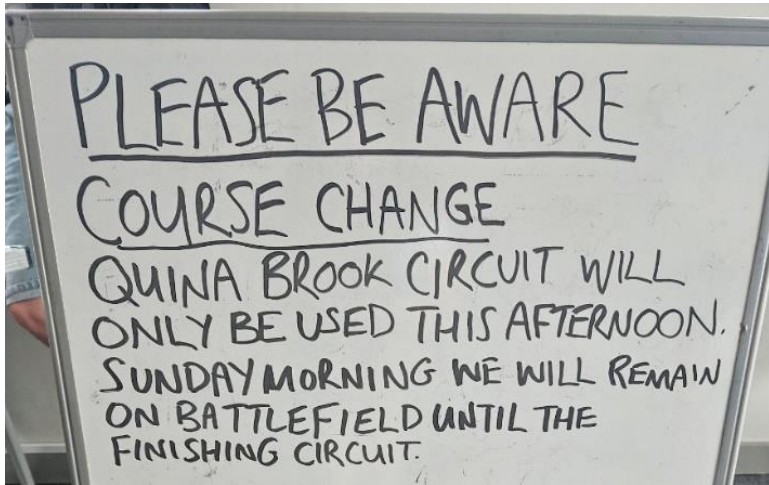
The all-female tandem was womanned (have I just made this word up?) by **Brigid Night** and **Sarah Murray** of Frodsham Wheelers and Clwb Beicio Egni Eryri respectively. This was their first TT as a tandem team. Of the pair, Brigid was the more experienced: together with Hannah Fawcett of Liverpool Braveheart she'd ridden an impressive 252.8 miles in the Vive le Velo 12 Hour in Yorkshire earlier in the summer, setting a new national female tandem record for a 12 Hour. Brigid had also ridden the Mersey Roads 24 Hour in 2022, when she and her companion Christopher Hanson-Jones completed 334 miles.

The all-male bike in the category was manned by seasoned Scottish tandemists **Donald McLean** and **Mark Leadbetter**, riding for the Flying Kippers CC. It would be their fifth time on the start line of the Mersey Roads 24 since 2016, and they'd finished every time, managing 428 miles in 2018 – one of the two times they'd won the tandem prize; clearly a force to be reckoned with.

In the VTTA stakes, 70 year old **Kathryn Smith** of Sleaford Wheelers has been setting age records this year, with a 217 miles ride in the Vive Le Velo 12 hour the month before.

As ever for TTs and even more so for long distance events both the weather and the course would have their say - in email correspondence with **Bob Richards**, the Fellowship's treasurer a few days before the event, I had said to him "You lucky riders – the weather is set to be ideal for this weekend!". Not too warm, no rain predicted, with just a gentle breeze daytime, and very still overnight. By the eve of the event the forecast had changed a little, to show light rain from Saturday 10 a.m'ish through to mid-afternoon, but overall still kind in comparison with other recent rain or heat affected editions.

Less helpful were the course changes, which had had to be managed by Jon, Sam and the rest of the Williams family and Mersey Roaders - oh dear, those rolling hills to Battlefield and back would need to be ridden many times . . . speaking with Jon at Farndon I learnt that it had not been intended for there to be so much Battlefield but the (current) normal afternoon roads of Prees>Tern Hill>Espley>Shawbirch>Espley>Shawbirch>Tern Hill>Prees were for the 2nd year running unavailable due to roadworks, and then, on the eve of the event it had been discovered that there were further roadworks elsewhere on the course – riders arriving at race HQ (and also via Twitter/X) were met with a notice by the sign-on desk –



This course change would mean Prees>Battlefield>Prees (with an extra spur added via Wem & a bit) from early afternoon to teatime, Quina Brook until 10pm'ish, then around 12 long hours of Battlefield and back as an extended night circuit, before riders were sent north to the finishing circuit on the outskirts

of Wrexham from 10am'ish onwards. Cripes. Lots of uphill and down dale to and from Battlefield, a 'sporting' 24 Hour in CTT parlance ! Whilst weather conditions were looking kind, without any of the faster flatter smoother roads of Espley etc featuring then it was hard to see anyone breaking any records.

The 2024 24hr Part Two: at Race HQ & Start Line

My day had begun around 8.30am, riding up from my (dismal) digs near Chirk via Overton and Bangor-on-Dee to the race HQ at Farndon. I wanted to get there before the forecast rain started, and indeed clouds were darkening over the Welsh mountains over to the west as I rode northwards. Rain looked to be imminent, as I arrived at Farndon.

At race HQ in the village's well-appointed Community Club premises there were at 10a.m. as yet no riders, but already present were Jon Williams and other members of the Williams family, and it was good to chat, especially with Ruth, who told me of the battles women riders had had to be allowed to ride the 24 Hour and other events. A subject for another article to be sure.

Riders and their support team members began to arrive after 10.30am. It was pleasing to catch up with some people I'd met before, and make new acquaintances. Andrew Askwith was good to speak with, not riding this year but there to marshall and generally support the event. Soon to be a 60+ vet, Andrew notched up two 420 mile-plus rides in the Mersey Roads 24, in 2022 and 2023. At the other end of the TT scale, Andrew also rides likes to ride the end of season hill climbs, and rode last year's National on The Struggle up in the Lake District. Good news is that he has now signed up to become a member of the 24 Hour Fellowship. Hurrah. It was also good to meet Ray

Retter, who like myself hails from Devon. It was interesting to hear of his farming roots in the county. At the sign on desk Liz Taylor and her daughter Lynne were handing out copies of the wonderful all-encompassing BIG book that is John Taylor's "The 24 Hour Story", essential reference for anyone with any interest in the world of riding against the clock for 24 Hours and of long distance standards such as LEJOG. I also left a pile of 30 or so copies of the Fellowship's Journal 129 from earlier this year out on the adjacent table, and they were eagerly snapped up . . . next year perhaps they should only go to debutants ? It will be interesting to see if we get any new members as a result of journals being circulated.

Outside the sky was still overcast but it was not raining.

Time passed quickly, and it was soon near 5,4,3,2,1 GO time, so I made my way down to the start, where riders were beginning to mill around. I didn't see anyone on turbo trainers warming up . . . but Jim Hopper said to me that he had seen riders doing so in the past, much to his amusement and derision. There was the usual vibe of excitement and apprehension . . . each rider wondering "What will the next 24 Hours hold? How deep will I have to dig?" All those long long hours of training over the previous weeks and months, all the preparation carried out in the days beforehand to make sure that every conceivable eventuality could be met by each rider and his or her support team, all of this had come down to the now, and to the next 24 Hours.

Edwin Hargraves, his trike on the verge beside and behind him, was doing the honours as start timekeeper for the umpteenth time. In the absence of Rose Price on the Hopper tricycle, the first rider off was 76 year old **Rob Rix** of Southport CC, whose piece on his 2023 experiences in the 24 Hour you will have seen in this journal - he was back to see if he could improve on things and have an altogether better and more satisfying race than his 2023 outing.

Off at no. 8 was **Sue Satchithananda**, one of a trio of riders from Crewe Clarion Wheelers. I remembered Sue from last year, battling through the rain, in her first ever 24 Hour. The two other Crewe Clarion's riders were both 24 Hour debutants: **Maryjane Watson** and **Stuart Day**. Maryjane, 60+, confessed she was nervous, with traffic a major issue for her; "*I hate traffic, I really do, it scares me*". She was also concerned that she would get lost. I did my best to reassure her, telling her that once the evening arrived it would get quieter, the night even much more so, and that there would be plenty of marshalls to ensure she stayed on course. Maryjane had one of those dinky little neat crash hat 'wing mirrors' attached, to give her visibility of what was coming up behind (**Adam Wild ! Whoosh !!!**) which made her look a bit old school sci-fi . . . The third Crewe Clarionier, 51 year old **Stuart Day**, was riding fixed gear (about 52 x 17,

I believe) and tri-bars – not a common set up, but why not? The Crewe support crew (the Crewe crew) were awesome – more of which later.

Geraint Catherall of Anfield BC was also early off, for his umpteenth 24, on a metal bike, not the only one to choose such a machine.

The Fellowship's own **Bob Richards** was no. 14, he'd been feeling optimistic about the 24 earlier in the summer, training had gone well, and he was looking to put a short run of DNFs in 24s behind him . . . then he was hit with Covid and it had all gone wrong. This had happened only ten or so days before the 24 Hour, he didn't feel great, although a decent-feeling midweek ride had given him the belief that he had bounced back sufficiently for it to be worthwhile to at least give it a go.

The first of the three tandems to start were **Brigid Night** and **Sarah Murray** off at no. 21. Both were smiley and chatty before the start . . . but would they be so by the time the race ended? I can tell you they were. And throughout the 24 Hours. After the event, Brigid got in touch, and told me of how her and Sarah got together for their 24 Hour:



“Sarah and I began cycling on the tandem together in mid-February of this year, after I plucked up the courage to ask her if she wanted to ride tandem in a 24 Hour event. It was early on a cold and wet Sunday morning, yet despite this, unbelievably she immediately said YES ! And this was despite her never having ridden on the front of a tandem before, nor having ridden a time trial longer than 50 miles. However, Sarah had had experience of 24 Hour running

events, and cycling a “24” was on her ‘bucket list’ . . . but hitherto she had been put off by the idea of being out on her own through the hours of darkness – so being on a tandem: ideal solution!”

A light drizzle put in an appearance for a few minutes, you'll note starting timekeeper Edwin's umbrella up in a picture or two, as he sought to keep his paperwork dry. And for precipitation that was it, the rest of the weekend was dry and warm, aside from the night, which was decidedly chilly in the wee

small hours before the dawn on Sunday.



Nick Clarke of Arctic Aircon, had been part of AA's winning team previously, with a 500+ mileage (528) which gave him third place in 2019. He'd been 2nd in 2018 and 4th in 2017. However, it didn't need a genius to predict he'd not get anywhere near such heights this time round – he was riding a (small-wheeled, folding) Brompton . . . which demands the question "Why . . .?". Well, as it happens Cycling Weekly featured a piece about him after the 24 Hour, which you can find at :

<https://www.cyclingweekly.com/news/the-only-bike-i-had-was-a-brompton-the-one-id-been-run-over-on-meet-the-man-who-rode-367-miles-in-24-hours-on-a-folding-bike>

The 2nd of the three tandems was off immediately after Nick, the mixed machine of Derby Mercury husband and wife **Steve** and **Laura Massey/Massey-Pugh**, the round-the-world-tandem-record couple – would this translate into a big ride in a 24 Hour? Neither rider had done a TT of any sort before, and indeed a little inexperience showed when someone spotted they didn't have lights fitted and Steve said "Oh, it's okay, they're with our support crew, we'll put them on later, when it starts to get dark" . . . erm . . . the error of their thinking was made clear to them, and there was a scrabble round for lights from bystanders – someone lent them my rear light and someone else a front light. And I learnt something there and then about CTT and the lights requirement – rules state that you must have lights fitted and working when you start, but what is not said is that they have to be functioning for the full duration of your ride. Obviously a 24 Hour would of course require lights to be on and working between the start and end of lighting up times as per Highway Code, but if you were riding a shorter daylight TT you could even, I believe, remove your lights once you'd got going. The rule allows, I was told, for those occasions when through no fault of your own your lights pack up during a TT, although IMHO if they do, then with modern lights that'll almost certainly be your fault because you forgot to charge the bloomin' things fully

beforehand. Anyway, Steve and Laura trundled off on time, thanks to the quick thinking and kindness of others.



**Amy Hudson of Derby Mercury.
Edwin in background, pondering Times crossword.**

Another husband and wife pairing in the race were another Derby Mercury couple, albeit on separate solo bikes. These were **Kyle** and **Amy Hudson**, both in their late 20's and both on road bikes. This was Kyle's first 24 Hour, and as far as I can tell his first TT. His wife Amy rode last year, and was third in the women's classification on 396 miles. I asked Kyle how he felt Amy and he would fare: "Well, she'll smash me at any rate" said Kyle. Amy was off 9 minutes later. Speaking with her in the start line area, I

asked her how she felt she'd go, given that the conditions were so much better this year than last. "Yeah I want to do more than 400 mile. Who knows, might I even win the women's category? That's a big ask, though, on a road bike, versus all those on TT machines".

In between the two Hudsons the third tandem had set off, manned by the Scottish pair **Don McLean** and **Mark Leadbetter**, of Flying Kippers CC. They were business like; they knew it was going to be tough; they knew that they would have to be tough in return.



A pair of Flying Kippers

One of the possible high-achievers, **Tim McEvoy** of FTP was away shortly after. I know Tim is a fast rider, as like me he lives in the south-west and I'd seen his times on various results sheets locally. Tim lives in Cornwall, whilst I'm in the next door county of Devon, though I had not met him in person, or not knowingly, before. *"Hello Tim, I'm from the south-west too, I'm from near Exeter"*. He looked at me mock-askance, and said *"Exeter? Nah, that's virtually the north"*. I might add that Tim's poor geography here (north of Cornwall there is no land until Ireland, just sea) aligns, to his detriment, with his inability to navigate successfully through Exeter earlier in the summer during an RRA record attempt. He also got lost in Taunton during the same attempt, which he subsequently abandoned. And I am going to deliver a plot spoiler now and let you know he didn't complete the 24 Hour this year either – went off course and ended up in Anglesey perchance? I am being deliberately unfair – he probably was just a little sensitive to my mentioning 'Exeter' after that failed RRA, and anyway isn't it part of your support team's remit to ensure you don't go askew? Also, Bridgit and Ian Boon had told me of Tim that he is a sound and interesting chap, and I should make the effort to find time and place to talk with him sometime, with a view to a Journal piece.

Adam Wild of GS Metro, on no. 35, the 'Spindata' favourite, looked sleek and speedy, in the way that those in the prime of life (27) and on a modern TT bike can look. Fast B*\$tards.

A rider making his 24hr debut and off at no. 47 on a metal bike was 45 year old **Andrew Walsh** of Audax UK. Andrew had found my email address I think via the Fellowship's web pages, and gotten in touch earlier in the summer - he explained that having previously been exclusively an Audaxer and 'Randoneeur' and indeed completed PBP, he'd been branching out into TTs over the past few years, the longest a 50 miler. I had suggested that he took a look Brian Griffith's '24 Hour Manual' on the Fellowship's web pages, which whilst written a few years back was still valid. Andrew had replied "Yup, already done that, very useful". Here's some background on him being on the start line for this year's 24, taken from his extensive cycling blogs website:

"I had been in a motivational hollow off the back of my 2023 Diagonale, goal-less, working a lot of hours, travelling to the US, putting on weight, dealing with the serious illness and later passing of my Mother, a cancer diagnosis for my widowed Father and the general ebb and flow of being a Dad to teenage kids... cycling seemed un-important and a luxury that I hadn't been able to indulge. However, I realised throughout April 2024 that I needed to cycle, I was giving too much to work and not enough to myself and maybe getting back riding would help me level up the balance.

I started by climbing back into my commutes, 25Km each way to the office, and oh how easy it was to see how much fitness I'd lost. Horrifying really. I did the commutes regularly

twice/week and after a while felt some strength returning. I also started going out on Sunday mornings with my mates down to the café in Oundle. It was a pleasure to cycle with them again and to my surprise I wasn't getting my legs ripped off every week.

The 27th/28th of July was the date I had in the calendar for the RTTC National 24 Hour TT Championship (Mersey Roads), and with all that had gone on recently I genuinely had no intention of riding it, but I was still keen on just going up to experience the event as a spectator or to volunteer as a helper. However, on the way home from work on one of my commutes in early May I started to think differently. I thought if I really want to experience the event why not just go up and give it a try racing? No big build up, no big training miles just go up and give it a bash with the primary goal being to start and finish? I somewhat socialised the idea with a couple of mates on the Sunday ride and of course my friend Jim Churton. None of them said I wouldn't be able to do it or scoffed at the idea... which gave me some encouragement to pursue it."

Of course, with all these riders, as they roll away from the start line you wish them good luck, in fact everyone, riders and by-standers alike, are offering each and every rider doing their very first pedal strokes away from the start line "good luck" and other messages of support. Heart-warming stuff to be sure. Nothing quite like it.

Multi-Champion **Michael Hutchinson** was off at no. 60, and I asked him how he felt he might do, to which he replied "*Not great, I've only done three 4 hour+ rides in preparation, maximum 6 hours, I've got problems with my back etc etc . . .*". As I really don't know the man, I had no idea if this was the usual 'get the excuses in beforehand' approach that we all are guilty of from time to time, or whether he was simply being frank.

Three minutes later at no. 63 was **Greg Elwell** of VTTA Yorkshire. I'd met Greg first at the Vive Le Velo 12 hour last year, and also a few weeks later at the 24. He'd started 2 minutes before me at the 12, and was my minute man for the 24 Hour, where he went on to do 459 miles. Greg had done 270 miles in this year's Vive Le Velo 12 Hour, so he was clearly in good form. Speaking with him, he allowed it to be understood that he was hoping he could manage 500 miles this weekend in the, with the kind weather, plus he felt he could push that bit harder, and maybe take fewer and shorter stops... off he rolled.



Young Adam Holt:
 "This suddenly feels like a really really stupid idea . .

Youngest rider of all, 20 year old **Adam Holt**, Chepstow CC, in a natty skinsuit with pink body nervously awaited his start time of 14:08. I think he was the most anxious of all the riders I spoke with. He really had no idea what to expect. I said to expect periods when all he wanted to do was to get off the bike and just STOP ! (or possibly the other way round). But **don't**. Keep going. And once you are on your way to the finishing circuit you are to all intents and purposes THERE ! And when you have finally

completed your (first) 24 Hour you will feel great. He still looked like a rabbit in headlights, with several shotguns pointed at him.

Chris 'Hoppo' Hopkinson, veteran of so many long distance TTs, the weekend's penultimate starter, was sporting green hair – such a shame that crash hats are now compulsory, as it was thus hidden for the duration. A popular character, there were exhortations of "Smash it Hoppo !" from the remaining bystanders.



And last off was no.70 **Mark Turnbull** of Torq, and that was it – all the riders were now out on the road, each rider set to fight their own individual battles – "and now it goes as it goes, and where it ends is Fate" as classical Greek tragedian Aeschylus wrote, probably about cycling but possibly about Agamemnon.

There had been seven DNS, all of whom had dutifully made their apologies to the organisers, bless their non-cotton aero socks. It was now time to head down to Prees on my trusty old steed to see how things were going

The 2024 24hr Part Three: at Prees Heath



Some of the support teams at Prees Heath, awaiting their riders' return from their afternoon trips down south to Battlefield and Wem.

When I arrived at Prees, around 4 o'clock, none of the riders had returned to Prees but were still on the roads south between there, Battlefield and Wem. It would be interesting to see who made it back to Prees first. These are the first few to appear, all of them the faster riders who had gobbled up those who started ahead of them – it's just analog wristwatch timings so only accurate to the nearest minute.

First up the road was **Adam Wild**, arriving at 4.18 pm, then:

Lee Williams + 3 mins

Joe Gorman + 4 mins

Tim McEvoy + 5 mins

Mark Turnbull + 9 mins

Michael Hutchinson + 14 mins

Mark Turnbull, we later learnt, had punctured at one point.

Michelle Lindley was first female rider back to Prees, at 4.39pm, then female road biker **Sien Van Der Plank** at 4.46pm (+9), looking composed and smooth in her action, followed by **Sue Satchitananda**, number 8, at 4.52pm (+33). **Amy Hudson** came past at 17.06 (+7) - husband Kyle was being caught by Amy, but not battered – he was only a couple of minutes behind her time-wise.

Gradually more riders appeared, some had done more Battlefield + spur than others, so it ceased to make sense my recording times as I had no idea who had been routed where when. I thus relaxed and chatted with support teams and, if and when they stopped, riders.

Everyone who has been at a Mersey Roads 24 talks of the great atmosphere at Prees roundabout and its immediate environs during the event, and rightly so.

I spend considerable time chatting with the chap looking after The Flying Kippers tandem, he was called Chris. His being there had been a slightly last minute arrangement due to someone else dropping out at short notice. Chris, however, had been very pleased to step in, and instructed me to specifically mention that one of the reasons he was more than happy to do so was due to Donald of the 'Kippers having proved to be great friend and source of strength, when Chris had had a serious and potentially life-threatening medical condition crashing into his life a while back, so it was his way of expressing his thanks.

At Prees, over the past few years the area around the roundabout has been developed/smartened up, a plush (but soulless) large café (good fish and chips, mind), and there is the all-night petrol station where you can get food and coffees should you need them at any time of the day and night.

At one point in said café (a bit like a MacDonald's in some ways, but isn't) there were I believe four generations of the Williams family present, all tucking in. Outside, I sat and chatted with Chris, plus another Amy, the partner of rider number 11, **Joe North** of Audax UK. Joe has had plenty of experience of long

distance events, having done PBP plus LEL. Amy told us that Joe was known to some of his cycling friends as 'Road Kill Joe', as he liked to make the most of certain food-gathering opportunities presented to him when out riding at home in Scotland

Amongst the various support crews pitched at Prees, I caught up with the colourful support crew that were there to service the needs of the three Crewe Clarion riders. **Stuart Day**'s wife Janine, plus helpers John and a couple of others were definitely 'up for it' – their paraphernalia beyond food, drink, spares etc included a dinosaur costume (TT Rex !) which Janine donned from time to time, and some antics with carrots and sticks (the real thing) waved in front of their riders as they re-started after a stop. They also had music, both recorded and their own improvisations on kazoo. Things like this generally bring some welcome distraction to tired riders, whether it's your support crew or another's. Sometimes, however, when you are tired, struggling and going grumpy, such roadside frivolity becomes less fun to encounter than you'd think; "*Grrrr, Bl**dy annoying people, all jolly and having a good time whilst here I am feeling ill, tired, in pain, want to throw bike in river Dee etc etc*" I feel there is room in UK cycling for a new club, Curmudgeonly CC. President to be Mr. Ed Reardon. I'd join.

The Flying Kippers were living up to stereotypes – on one of their stops their chosen sustenance to take on board was 'tatty scones' – Scottish potato breads, whilst another time it was porridge. **Don McLean** and **Mark Leadbetter** were in for the long haul without doubt, they knew full well that the forthcoming hours would be long and hard, and had in fact elected to avoid knowing the time, or the number miles completed, until late in the race. Just pedal.

By now the riders were on Quina Brook, a welcome break from the long Battlefield & back legs, and were passing through frequently. I timed the riders on one of their laps; Adam Wild was lapping fastest at around 31 minutes.

The day was by now moving on, the sun was setting, and soon I would need to be up at the perimeter of the roundabout, to carry out my marshalling and time check duties.

To be continued

The 2024 24hr Part Four: The Night Shift.

This year I got round to volunteered myself for some 24 Hour (night shift) marshalling. The race organisers had kindly put me down for Prees Roundabout, to give me a good vantage point from a race report point of view. I duly reported for duty around 10pm, taking over from Edwin Hargraves and others. I was then officially'ish initiated into the dark art of being a marshall/time checker. Many of you reading this might wonder what exactly we write down?; *"Rider no 4 – socks class badly with (slack and flappy) club jersey. Also, needs to be more smiley"* perhaps ? No - actually we get given 2 x A4 cards with grids on – on one, when a rider encircles the RAB turning point we simply write down the time and the rider's race number, and then we have a card with all the rider's numbers down the left and against each individual rider we transpose their lap times across from t'other sheet. Sounds easy eh? It is until two or three riders appear at once, and only one of them shouts their number, and you can't see their numbers on their back because the light is poor, then it becomes more testing. Sharpen up lads and lasses !

At the roundabout, also on duty with me was John Forbes, who I had not met before, and we were joined by the irrepressible and irreverent Jim Hopper. Andrew Askwith was also floating about, and donning high-vis he stationed himself on the far side of the RAB so no-one would vanish off the first RAB exit and end up in Wolverhampton rather than back to Battlefield. We suspected that some riders might have preferred the Wolverhampton option by now, however.

At one point a police car pulled up by Andrew, and we could imagine the conversation

"'Ello 'ello, 'ello, and what's going on here then might I ask sir?"

"It's a fair cop guv, we is well guilty, as we is engaged in the running of a bicycle race, what we know is Contrary to British Values, as set down by New Labour in the 'noughties, which values expressly state that it is only motor vehicles what should have the right to pound UK highways"

Have I got Andrew's Yorkshire dialect right I wonder?

But seriously, you'd think that there would have been some communications sent to police out and about in the area rearding the race, given that the authorities would have been notified by the organisers months ago.

Most of the riders dutifully shouted their race numbers as they passed, and our favourite was number 11, **Joe North**, aka Roadkill Joe – he shouted "Legs Eleven" each time he circled the roundabout and I suspect elsewhere on the circuit. The Bingo Numbers concept should definitely be taken up by all time

trallists – **Adam Wild** would thus have been “*Jump and Jive, thirty five*” for example, **Nick Clark** on his Brompton “*Dirty Gertie, number thirty*”. Some, though, wouldn’t work; it’d be hard to imagine for example no. 31, the veteran Scots pair on the **Flying Kippers** tandem shouting “*Time for Fun, thirty one*” as they passed at 3am, knackered and having no fun whatsoever and with no fun on the horizon for many a long and painful hour, or 50 year old veteran **Louise Glysen** of Buxton CC at no 16 claiming “*Sweet Sixteen, Never Been Kissed*”.

Some riders failed to shout their numbers, and some in response to an appeal from us of ‘*Number Please !!!?!*’ would respond with “*Thank you*”. . . . Hmmm. One rider, who we saw a lot of as he was going faster than everyone else, did not shout his number once, not once, all night . . . this was super speedy **Adam Wild**, who didn’t “*35 jump’n’jive*” his way round the roundabout but came in fast, smooth and close, twin lights shining – we learnt to tell it was him by his line, his lights and his speed.

Another impediment to data gathering were the tales told by Jim Hopper and John Forbes, highly amusing and truly distracting. I contributed with my own tale of misconception of an Italian bicycle-related nature, which I will try to remember to include in my editor’s postscript. (*oops no space – next time*)

It was disconcerting to discover just how busy the roads remained, late into the evening. We all know that the road from north of Prees down to the motorways through the Midlands are heavily used by lorries. It was definitely VERY unnerving being on the outside of a roundabout as heavily-laden ‘rigs’ came up from Espley direction, as for a few moments, as they swung around the RAB, leant over, lights ablaze, they were heading straight at us – a failure in a braking system, a lapse of concentration by a driver, a shifting load, and we’d’ve been dead. It was like a weird version of reverse ‘chicken’.

In E.U. countries heavy goods vehicles are not permitted to use public highways between midday Saturday and midnight Sunday. Sadly our nation follows the U.S. model of ‘24/7’ – commerce before people – so British drivers don’t get a break at the weekend, and nor do we. There will be a slight reduction at weekends here, as around 20% of lorry drivers on UK roads at any given time are E.U. drivers, and are bound by E.U. rules.

From time to time we’d see the lights of riders coming up the road from Battlefield direction, get ourselves all set, only for them to pull in beside the encampments and vanish into gazebos, to be administered to by their support teams. Sometimes there was music and laughter, most times not. It was as if there was a party going on and our names were not on the list.

Jon Williams had asked me, back at HQ, what time I packed in last year's wet wet wet 24. About 1.30 a.m. "Ah" he said, "of riders that pack , the vast majority do so between 1 a.m. and 4 a.m. At work (hospital) we describe these hours as 'The Dead Hours' – these are the hours when more patients die than at any other time".

The Dead Hours were certainly not dead as far as big lorries went – plenty of them continuing to swing around the roundabout.

Sadly, however, there were riders who whilst not actually expiring, were going DNF. **Richard Parrotte** of Shaftesbury CC succumbed to problems with an ankle, and **Bob Richards**, of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines CA (team winners in previous 24s) was finding that sadly the covid he'd contracted earlier in July had taken its toll, and he had had to stop. One of the tandem teams, the Derby Mercury mixed machine of **Steve** and **Laura Pugh/Pugh-Massey** had also had to pull out, one or the other of them having serious comfort issues. They were in a sombre and depressed mood, very disappointed, we were told. Par for the course for DNF'ers; you build yourself up, and something lets you down. **Tim McEvoy** had also packed, and so had **Joe Gorman**, both of whom had been going well. It was also sad to note that the oldest rider, **Bryan Highgate** ('Sid the Cyclist') of Fareham Wheelers, the oldest rider at 86, had abandoned.

The other two tandems were still going - "Go on Kippers" and "Keep it going Sarah and Brigit". The all-female tandemees were a real glow-in-the-dark delight, not due to any lighting they were equipped with, but simply their spirits – as they slowed ahead of the roundabout they could be heard CHATTING and LAUGHING and as they passed they would always say "Thanks !" and have big smiles. I almost exclaimed "What are they ON !" but I didn't which was sensible because Jim H or John F would've have responded with something like "It's a tandem Pete, you stupid t**t".

One of the bursts of music we heard was from Brigit and Sarah's support crew:

So [said Brigit afterwards], support team Suzi planned the Cabaret for the 4am lull. This involved her dressing up in sequins, the car decorated in fairy lights and dancing to a carefully chosen playlist blaring out of a speaker:

Our Cabaret theme tunes included:

Cabaret - *Lisa Minelli*

Up all night - *Secondcity, Rafhaella*

Bicycle Race - *Remastered 2011, Queen*

Things can only get better - *D.Ream*

Girls Just want to have fun - *Cyndi Lauper*

Does your Mother know – *Abba*



We had a few hours running up to the Cabaret when we chatted about what it would be like and then chatted and laughed about it afterwards”



Prees Heath roundabout in the early hours of the Sunday morning - lights, music, bikes, pain

Adam Wild was steadily increasing his lead. Some folks, early in the night, had voiced concern that he'd not be able to maintain his effort, had gone out too fast etc, Well, he was still bombing round.

The night was cold, and mist was swirling around in the air before dawn, then slowly the darkness faded, and lo and behold it was easier to read rider's numbers. 'Legs Eleven' **Joe North** was still calling out as he was going round, and number 66.

Adam Rogers of Eastbourne Rovers (A footy club name surely?!) had by now gotten his left arm number up the right way and was no longer 99. Bravissimo.

5.30 a.m. and myself and John Forbes, who had been an excellent companion, were relieved by Christine and Phil Minto. I stumbled back to the land of gazebos, tents and vans, where the lovely Crewe Clarion made me a very welcome cup of sweet hot tea, bless them.

A less hopeful snippet was that the youngest rider, 20 year old **Adam Holt**, had gotten off his bike and had said he was not getting back on.

Amy and **Kyle Hudson** were still not that far apart. I had heard the Mrs Hudson recording a short video clip on her phone, the gist being that "Nope, not going as well as hoped, but press on".

The Flying Kippers' support team of Chris was still there and attentive, and the **Flying Kippers** Donald and Mark were still pushing on doggedly or possibly dogfishedly.

Here are some time sheet excerpts from the night circuit **Adam Wild** is no. 35, **Lee Williams** 65, **Mark Turnbull** 70, **Christian Geldard** 55, **Michael Hutchinson** 60.

31	22.06	23.54	DNF			
33	22.34	00.37				
34	22.44	00.41	2.29	4.31		
35	22.36	23.47	01.02	2.17	3.32	4.52
36	22.09	23.55	1:45	5.32		
37	22.40	01.01	2.38	4.15		
38	22.50	00.58	3.08	5.43		

50	22.32	23.45	01.08			
51	22.43	00.47	2.39 1.55	4.34		
52	22.49	00.29	2.29	4.25		
X 53	22.36					
54	22.19	23.51	1:24	3.01	4.42	
55	22.10	23.32	00.46	2.50	4.19	
56	22.21	00.01	1:48			
X 57						
58	22.23	00.00	2.14	3.52		
59	22.38	00.16	2.00	3.44	5.30	
60	22.12	23.39	1:15	3.12	4.52	
61	22.04	23.51	3.29			
62						
63	22.36	00.00	1:27	3.04	4.57	
64	22.24	00.23	2.38	4.49		
65	22.06	23.24	2.12	3.36	5.05	
66	22.43	00.18	2.07	3.54	5.11 5.4	
F 67	22.09	23.33	X DNF			
68	22.22	23.54	1:35	3.15	5.17	
69	22.43	00.34	2.29	4.27		
70	22.30	23.55	01.26	2.48	4.14	

Eventually the sun rose above the mist, all smiley, and its warmth slowly took effect, lifting the temperature and the spirits of riders and support accordingly. At 8.30a.m. I had a hot chocolate from the petrol station and tried to sleep. Managed five minutes. Grrr. At nine a.m. I headed off, up to the finishing circuit on my bike, where I would find out which riders had made it, and which had succumbed during The Dead Hours.



The 2024 24hr Part Five: The Finishing.

The journey from Prees via lanes then the A525 Wrexham road to the finishing circuit seemed to take me long time – my previous two times along this bit of A525 had been when I had been actually riding the 24, a very different circumstance. I was also not trying very hard this time. I thought maybe those in the race might pass me before I reached the circuit, but I managed to arrive ahead of them by a few minutes, and positioned myself on the short sharp slope half a mile or so from the start of the circuit.

First onto the circuit was **Andy Halpin** of Band of Climbers CC, just after ten a.m. The British Cycling club web page for the club states that “Band of Climbers CC is a cycling club for those who love to climb”. CTT cites they have seven members, and they are linked with the a business of the same name -

Band of Climbers, who run mountain cycling tours and sell cycling kit. They have not yet run a time trial event. Sort it out BOC CC !! Andy was going steady and continued to do so; he finished tenth with 405.31 miles, the best road bike performance of the race.

Next to arrive was Derby Mercury's **Amy Hudson**, at 10:13 a.m., giving her three and half hours or so of tired tired riding around a trading estate. All that fun and all for only £40 entry. Bargain. Actually, tough work, but we all know what a lift we get when we are on that circuit. Before I left Prees I had seen her and her hubbie **Kyle Hudson** arrive close together at their feed station, chatting to and encouraging each other, ahh sweet. At that point Amy was at least 9 minutes up on hubbie. She increased this lead over the last few hours, and come stop time had just managed to break the 400 mile mark, which she was very pleased about as for much of the race that didn't seem possible. Her 402.66 miles secured the female silver medal, and on a road bike to boot. Kyle appeared on the circuit 6 or 7 minutes after her, and he went up the short rampy slope like Fabian 'I push very hard on the pedals' Cancellara riding a TDF short prologue, and he did this each time up the hill, but must've slowed down elsewhere - continuing to lose time on wifey to finish on 394.72 miles.

Good to see that all three of the Crewe Clarions had made it through the night, **Stuart Day** on his fixed wheel machine ground his way up the hill, and Clarionettes **Maryjane Watson** and **Sue Satchithananda** looked tired but were doggedly pressing on. Stuart finished on 412 miles, ninth place, a great first 24 hr ride, Sue on 350.72 in 28th place, and Maryjane had got neither lost or run over and completed 268.01 miles.

A surprise was that young **Adam Holt**, the Chepstow 20 year old lad, who last I'd heard had dismounted and wasn't going to remount, had resumed – lovely to see him on the finishing circuit, an emotional moment as clearly he'd gone through it. Adam finished with a 400+ distance, for 16th place on 401.35, which must've given him enormous satisfaction as just the concept of finishing had clearly seemed to be an impossibility for him for a time. The race, however, must've taken a real toll on him as I don't recall having seen him back at HQ after.

The other very young rider **Bethany Spencer**, 21, was still hanging in there, but had had a steady slowing down during the course of the event – at the start of the Quina Brook circuits the previous evening she was showing an average speed of c. 18.5 mph; this fell away dramatically and her final AVS was around 11 mph, her final distance 262 miles. I imagine she felt very fed up as it got harder & harder & harder to maintain any decent speed, but she bravely stuck to the task right to the end.

The rider who finished third overall in the female category, **Rebecca Mason** of Malton Wheelers, was going steadily, ending on 394 miles, and so was pre-race favourite the Poole Wheeler **Michelle Lindley**, who would emerge winner of the female category on 429.19 miles, and in doing so set a new 50+ age record, beating Lynne Taylor-Biddulph's 404.42 of 2019. **Kathryn Smith**, aged 70, was still there, moving inexorably onwards to claiming a new 70+ age record for a 24: 349.63 miles.

Of the fast cats and kittens, **Adam Wild** of GS Metro had emerged onto the finishing circuit first, and was lapping at around 23 minutes for the 8.18 miles. He was a mite slower than **Mark Turnbull** of Torq, who was taking a minute less on average for the 4 laps I recorded, but the hare was not going to be caught: Adam had built up an uncatchable advantage earlier, and in fact was over 50 miles up on Mark by then. Turnbull finished third on 490.64 against winner Wild's 546.36.

Lee Williams (FTP) emerged little later onto the circuit, and whilst I don't have any lap times for him he was looking strong – and indeed he finished runner-up, the only other rider to break 500 miles, on 520.98. His FTP team mate **Christian Geldard** took 4th on 469.81.

Arctic Aircon's **Michael Hutchinson** was clearly not going to finish in the medals this time, if his lapping around 25 or 26 minutes was anything to go by, and whilst Jesus may've said to Moses 'Come forth', Michael came fifth, on 455.71 miles, and lost his beer money.

Bystanders and support teams continued to cheer ALL the riders on, some of which were looking truly half-dead as they struggled to keep the pedals turning you know the thing; *"DIG IN"* . . . and meanwhile you're thinking *"I can't effing well dig any effing more, I'm effing well ALL DUG OUT and have been for the last x effing number of effing hours thank you very much!!"*. Curmudgeonly CC, it's the future.

It was unpleasantly hot in the last few hours. Some riders I hadn't seen for ages - those who started their final Battlefield circuit (28 miles of it) not long before the cut-off time (about 9.30 a.m.) appeared much much later onto the finishing circuit, just when you'd thought maybe they'd gone DNF. It was thus very pleasing to see that **Rob Rix** of Southport CC, and at 76 the oldest rider now out on the road, was still there, a late arrival on the circuit. He said after, in reply to my email to him congratulating him on finishing: *"Thanks for the kind wishes, very much appreciated. There were times when I thought I would not make the finishing circuit but managed to pass 4 time keepers before the called out "STOP" Sorry I didn't get to chat after the event. Best wishes. Rob"*.

Legs Eleven, number 11, **Joe North** of Audax UK was still hanging on in there, although when I heard him pass a timekeeper he only managed to croak '11'; where were the legs? THE LEGS HAD GONE.

Le diagonaliste **Andy Walsh** of Audax UK was one of the last riders onto the circuit at nearly midday, lovely to see him and cheer him on his way to 12th on 403.31 miles, just when was thinking he'd gone AWOL. I spoke with him afterwards, and he was very pleased with his distance, as he had secretly hoped to break the 400 miles barrier and had indeed managed to do so.

Sadly, **Greg Elwell**, hoping for a 500 mile ride, had disappeared, probably some stage during The Dead Hours, and was not to be seen. DNF.

Meanwhile, the two remaining tandem pairs were keeping it rolling, and yes **Sarah Murray** and **Brigid Night** (Clwb Beicio Egni Eryri /Frodsham Wheelers) were still smiling and pedalling, or possibly just grimacing and pedalling, as they moved to the new female tandem record for a 24hr, at 356.90 miles.



Sarah and Brigid: Still smiling. Nutters.

The other tandem, the Flying Kippers, were still airborne, but looking forward to crash-landing somewhere/anywhere once their finish time of 1.41 p.m. eventually arrived, which it duly did, and indeed **Donald McLean** and **Mark Leadbetter** rolled out the overall tandem winners on 374.45 miles. I imagine that when they reached the finishing circuit they allowed themselves to look at their watches and see how long they had to go.

As riders' finishing times began to arrive I rode down the course to the nearest time keeper, to hear various riders being told "Okay, you can stop now" and to hear various expressions of supreme relief. There was a last view of the Crewe Clarion support team, Janine husband of **Stuart Day** was in a layby and may've had a penguin costume on or perhaps I was becoming unhinged by then.

And then I rode back to HQ. Lots of tired but cosily happy riders gradually arrived. Outside the hall, in the warm afternoon air, I spoke with winner **Adam Wild**, before the final distances were calculated. He was fairly confident that he'd beaten the record; he believed he'd done 546 miles. I asked him how it'd been, and he said that the hardest bit was the final Battlefield leg/circuit, but other than that he'd felt surprisingly okay, with his race strategy and his support team working pleasingly well.

Meanwhile riders and support crews were inside awaiting the official results: CTT officials working on laptops, a few sheets of paper, and after half an hour or so there we were, the results were posted up for all to see. Medals and trophies were awarded, people applauded, a nice vibe. Personally, I was pleased that **Adam Wild**, at 27, had won – a nice polite and friendly chap.

Amongst others I spoke with back at HQ Farndon was **Rebecca West** of Malton Wheelers, who expressed great delight with her third place in the women's classification on 394.08 miles, not something she was expecting at all.



National 24 Hour Champions – Michelle Lindley & Adam Wild.



The top women – L to R 2nd Amy Hudson, 1st Michelle Lindley, 3rd Rebecca West

People slowly drifted away, home to wherever home was. I rode south back to my rubbish digs. I was tired. It was hot. I rode slowly.

It had certainly been an enjoyable weekend experiencing the 24 Hour from the side of the road etc.

I had thought beforehand that maybe during the race I would get to thinking *"Get me out there, I want to be on my bike and riding this not just watching others do it !"*, and whilst when riders were on the finishing circuit I felt a degree of envy I'll admit that when they vanished off from the lights of Prees into the darkness of the night for yet another Battlefield leg I found myself thinking *"hmmm..... wouldn't much fancy that..."*

And the next day I returned home to the lovely Westcountry.

Results of the 24 Hour

RB = Road Bike, Blue = female rider, bold = tandem

1	Adam	Wild	GS Metro		546.36
2	Lee	Williams	FTP		520.98
3	Mark	Turnbull	TORQ Performance		490.84
4	Christian	Geldard	FTP		469.81
5	Michael	Hutchinson	Arctic Aircon RT		455.71
6	John	Lowe	Withington Wheelers		433.19
7	Michelle	Lindley	Poole Wheelers Cycling Club		426.19
8	Chris	Hopkinson	API/Anglia Sport		415.57
9	Stuart	Day	Crewe Clarion Wheelers		412.32
10	Andy	Halpin	Band of Climbers Cycling Club	RB	405.31
11	James	Rees	Audax UK		403.43
12	Andrew	Walsh	Audax UK		403.31
13	Amy	Hudson	Derby Mercury	RB	402.66
14	Steven	Abraham	Arctic Aircon RT	RB	402.51
15	Dominic	Smith	QN Racing	RB	401.94
16	Adam	Holt	Chepstow Cycling Club		401.35
17	Adam	Rogers	Eastbourne Rovers CC		399.84
18	Chris	Shaw	Fenland Clarion CC		396.68
19	Kyle	Hudson	Derby Mercury R C	RB	394.72

20	Rebecca	Mason	Malton Whs		394.08
21	Sien	Van Der Plank	New Forest CC	RB	390.46
22	Roger	Squire	Wrexham CC/Fibrax		375.88
23	Mark	Leadbetter	Flying Kippers		374.45
"	Donald	McLean	Flying Kippers		374.45
24	Rob	Powell	Abergavenny RC		371.7
25	Ian	Ryall	Audax UK	RB	371.51
26	Nick	Clarke	Arctic Aircon RT	RB	367.69
27	Ben	Cox	Audax UK		365.25
28	Sarah	Murray	Clwb Beicio Egni Eryri		356.9
"	Brigid	Night	Frodsham Wheelers		356.9
29	Andrew	Rawling	Westmead Team 88		353.17
30	Kathryn	Smith	Sleaford Wheelers Cycling Club		349.63
31	Sue	Satchithananda	Crewe Clarion Wheelers	RB	342.54
32	Keith	Luetchford	Buxton CC/Sett Valley Cycles	RB	336.48
33	Corinna	O'Connor	Audax UK		330.26
34	Louise	Glysen	Buxton CC/Sett Valley Cycles	RB	304.75
35	Cliff	Degraff	Velo Club Cumbria		302.57
36	Charles	Price	Derby Mercury R C	RB	295.51
37	Geraint	Catherall	Anfield BC		293.64
38	Joseph	North	Audax UK		284.94
39	Kevin	Wright	VTTA West Group	RB	272.11
40	Maryjane	Watson	Crewe Clarion Wheelers	RB	268.01
41	Rob	Rix	Anfield BC		264.35
42	Bethany	Spencer	Audax UK		254.14

Below are the intermediate average MPH's of riders at each stage, where **1 QB** is start of Quina Brook c. 6pm, **2 NC** = start of Night Circuit c. 10pm, **3 FC** = start of finishing circuit c. late Sunday morning, and **4 END** = riders overall MPH at end.

			Distance	1 QB	2 NC	3 FC	4 END	age
1	Adam	Wild	546.36	24.1	23.9	22.8	22.78	27
2	Lee	Williams	520.98	23.7	23.5	21.6	21.71	39
3	Mark	Turnbull	490.84	22.5	21.3	20.3	20.45	51
4	Christian	Geldard	469.81	21.7	21.4	18.3	19.58	49

5	Michael	Hutchinson	455.71	22.0	21.6	19.0	18.99	50
6	John	Lowe	433.19	19.2	18.6	18.0	18.05	55
7	Michelle	Lindley	426.19	20.3	19.8	17.8	17.76	50
8	Chris	Hopkinson	415.57	21.1	19.8	17.2	17.32	56
9	Stuart	Day	412.32	19.2	18.7	17.1	17.18	53
10	Andy	Halpin	405.31	18.9	18.6	16.8	16.89	43
11	James	Rees	403.43	19.3	18.4	16.7	16.81	46
12	Andrew	Walsh	403.31	19.6	18.7	16.7	16.80	45
13	Amy	Hudson	402.66	19.5	18.6	16.7	16.78	28
14	Steven	Abraham	402.51	16.8	17.0	16.8	16.77	49
15	Dominic	Smith	401.94	18.4	17.9	16.7	16.75	46
16	Adam	Holt	401.35	19.7	19.0	17.0	16.72	20
17	Adam	Rogers	399.84	19.8	18.2	16.9	16.66	49
18	Chris	Shaw	396.98	20.3	19.6	17.1	16.54	61
19	Kyle	Hudson	394.72	19.1	18.2	16.4	16.45	29
20	Rebecca	Mason	394.08	19.1	18.3	16.3	16.42	33
21	Sien	Van Der Plank	390.46	19.0	18.2	16.2	16.27	29
22	Rob	Powell	379.88	19.7	18.8	16.1	15.83	46
23	Roger	Squire	375.88	18.4	17.4	15.7	15.66	55
24	Mark/Donal	Leadbetter/Mclea	374.45	19.6	18.2	15.5	15.60	57/6
25	Ian	Ryall	371.51	17.7	17.1	15.7	15.48	58
26	Nick	Clarke	367.69	16.9	16.8	15.4	15.32	39
27	Ben	Cox	362.25	18.4	17.5	15.3	15.09	38
28	Sarah/Brigid	Murray/Night	356.90	18.9	17.4	15.0	14.87	42/5
29	Andrew	Rawling	353.17	17.6	16.8	14.9	14.72	63
30	Sue	Satchithananda	350.72	16.6	15.8	14.6	14.61	53
31	Kathryn	Smith	349.63	18.0	16.7	14.6	14.57	70
32	Keith	Luetchford	336.48	17.4	16.1	13.9	14.02	64
33	Corinna	O'Connor	330.26	16.4	15.7	14.0	13.76	51
34	Cliff	Degraff	310.75	15.6	14.8	13.2	12.95	59
35	Louise	Glysen	304.75	15.2	14.6	12.7	12.70	50
36	Charles	Price	295.51	15.3	14.8	11.8	12.31	63
37	Geraint	Catherall	293.64	14.6	13.7	12.2	12.24	50
38	Joseph	North	284.94	15.3	14.7	11.8	11.87	37
39	Kevin	Wright	272.11	14.5	13.4	11.1	11.34	63
40	Maryjane	Watson	268.01	12.6	12.7	11.2	11.17	61
41	Rob	Rix	264.35	14.1	13.1	11.0	11.01	76
42	Bethany	Spencer	262.74	18.5	16.0	10.4	10.95	21
	Joe	Gorman	DNF	23.5	23.3			39
	Tim	McEvoy	DNF	23.0	22.6			46
	Leon	Marshall	DNF	21.7	21.0			44
	Greg	Elwell	DNF	21.2	21.3			50
	Steven/Laur	Massey/Massey-Pugh	DNF	18.2	18.2			47/3
	Bradley	Woodruffe	DNF	18.9	18.6			27
	Richard	Parrotte	DNF	18.3	17.6			59
	Ben	McCreath	DNF	18.3				33
	Stuart	Edwards	DNF	18.3				59
	Nathan	Boyer	DNF	17.8	17.6			45
	Bob	Richards	DNF	17.6	15.6			67
	Brian	Hygate	DNF	15.1				86
	Robert	Tomlinson	DNF					52

Most riders showed an improvement in speed once on the finishing circuits; you stop less often, and you empty the tank !

D.N.S. x 7 = Chris Hall, Matt Jones, Ian Harcourt, Carolyn Chambers, Rose Price, Andy Gray, Damian Healy

There were 7 DNS and 14 DNFs – last year 2023 there were 10 DNS and 12 DNF – interesting that despite the conditions seeming kinder this year there were more who DNF'd than in 2023's Götterdämmerung deluge.

Interesting to see that not one single road bike rider packed.

The only female rider who DNF'd was on a mixed tandem, or to put it another way of the fourteen DNFs thirteen were men. Well done women !

Of the 27 debutantes, only four riders went DNF, two of whom were on the same machine (tandem), so only 3 bikes/4 riders DNF of the novices. Well done newbies!