

Smiffy's Ride London Day.

My Ride London day started at 03.45 by loading up my bike onto my sister's car, and setting off towards the Capital. I was to be dropped off, some 5 miles away from the start, at a pre-determined location. I had no idea where I was, and simply followed the hundreds of other riders, who appeared to know where they were going.



My given start time was 06.36, and the instructions were "Don't be late for the start time allocated to you" When I arrived at the Olympic park, I had never seen so many cyclists in one place, and immediately thought that the start was going to be a right shambles....

We were all put into, what can only be described as cattle pens, and were told to wait until called forward. Once again, I thought that this was total chaos, as there were riders in my pen, wearing the wrong colours, and the wrong letter groups, so I expected the worst.

Group by group were called forward, and I had purposely not looked at my watch when it was our turn to go. I waited until I was crossing the official start line, before starting my Garmin bike computer. From then on, it was "Dog eat Dog" and every man for himself, to hold the little space in front, and to the side of you.

I had no idea what time I'd started, and was only aware of travelling through the roads and dual carriageways of the city at speeds of around 30mph and above.

Someone's iPhone whizzed passed me at a closing speed of around 50mph, as it became detached from the handlebar mounting of a rider somewhere in front of me, and shattered into a thousand bits across the road, luckily that missed everyone around me.

St Pauls Cathedral, that was the only building I recognised on the way, probably because, I was concentrating so much on other riders, than gazing at the wonderful architecture flashing by at law breaking speeds.

Once clear of the city, and out into open countryside, the riders thinned out a little, and I picked up a rider on my back wheel, taking advantage of the large hole I was making in the air in front of him. He did thank me for helping him along, but quickly vanished at the first sign of a hill.

Being 16 stone, hills always prove to be a problem (going up anyway) but I did see him again though, as I flashed past at over 45mph going down the other side.

Everyone was commenting on Leith Hill, and Box Hill being gruelling and terrible, and how tough they are.... well, having ridden up the Stelvio Pass in the Italian Dolomites 8 times, these were not hills, but mere speed bumps that went on for a few miles, yes, they are a slog, but when you set yourself a pace that's comfortable, and understand that you're not Chris Froome or Bradley Wiggins, by plodding on, the summit soon appears in the distance. Having said that, the view from Box Hill was glorious though !!

I had set myself a target of 6hrs, and to do the entire ride non-stop, starting out with 5ltrs of fluids, a selection of energy gels/bars etc, I eventually ran out of water whilst riding along the Embankment, with 2 miles to go, so I was very happy achieving my target. My finish time by Big Ben was 12.00 exactly, and when I stopped my Garmin on crossing the official finish line, I realised that my total ride time was 5hrs 19mins and my average speed was 18,8mph, much better than I'd ever thought possible for this overweight 53yr old bloke!!

Oh yes, my start time.....EXACTLY 06.36 !!

How did they manage that?? I have no idea, but well done Ride London, for such a slick operation

After a reunion with my support team, now numbering 4 in total, Wife, Haydee, Son, Rhys and Sister Kim and Brother in Law, John, after a quick change, walk to the car, and we were back home and I was relaxing by 14,30.

What a great way to spend a Sunday, in unusually fabulous weather for our summer, it's just a shame, that when asked, " Can you remember where you went?" , my answer is, "I have not got a clue.....It all happened so fast !!"

Thanks to all the staff at Imps, for giving me the chance to burn rubber through the City of London, now that was fun, scary, and a little mad at times.