

Le Carré de Vallées 2016

Sunday 8 May 2016

Five members from the club made the trip to Ardres in France to take part in this event. All decided to travel over on the Friday and back on the Monday to have a weekend cycling the lanes of Northern France. It was an early start to catch the 08.25 Ferry from Dover to Calais then a short drive to Bois-en-Ardres to park the cars and embark on a weekend of Brilliant Cycling which was enhanced with probably the best weather of the year so far.



Dave Elcome, Bob Burden, Alyson Nye, Sue Matharoo and Taj Matharoo at the start of Carre de Vallee

The bikes were quickly unloaded and it was into the quiet

lanes to the climb of Bouquehault which was made more difficult as they had been laying on services and the road was waiting resurfacing. The descent to Alembon was a welcome relief, then on to Sanghen for a welcome "coffee". It was then along the Hem Valley through Clerques to Recques-sur-Hem before returning the other side of the Valley to Tournehem-sur-la-Hem. It was then back through Louches to our B & B.

Saturday was another fine day and it was decided to go to Gravelines so it was a scenic route via Guemps, Offekerque, Oye-Plage and Grand-Fort-Phillipe before relaxing with refreshments in the square at Gravelines. Part of the square was occupied by the vehicles associated with the 4 days of Dunkirk race. From there it was onto Bourbourg for some well-deserved baguettes before Dave took the lead into the wind back to Audruicq where there was the must visit to Fab Cycles (Hermel). From there it was via Zutkerque, Ardres and through the lakes to Bois-en-Ardres.

The day of the main event started well with our hosts arranging an early breakfast and the sun shining. It was a quick sign in costing all of 3 euros each before setting off on the 60 km route which left the Lakes via Louches, Zouafques, Guemy to Bonningues les Ardres before encountering the first challenge of the day which was the long climb up through the Forest to Quercamps, both Sue and Dave seemed to make light work of the climb. The descent from there via Nortbecurt to the refreshments at Eperleques was one to be cherished. The route then twisted and turned through La Panne, La Petite Hollande, Cocove, Nielles les Ardres to Ardres to finish back through the lakes.

Back at the finish it was a baguette and beer, as the promoting club Les Amis Cyclos de L'Ardresis showed us all such tremendous hospitality that made it into a perfect weekend.

Pictures of the weekend