

**Oh no, not another B\*\*\*\*\* hill!**  
***A rider's story***

**En route commentary by Martin Hodgson of Friends of Liphook Junior School.**

10.00 am: This is Martin Hodgson reporting in. Having arrived at Bohunt School for the 9.15 am photo call for FOLJS, I eventually joined the queue of riders at 9.40 am along with three other members of our team. Frank, (*my football buddy, who had driven up from Fareham*), Tania and her 10 year old son Dub. I stood and watched the elite riders set off, with their toned and athletic bodies. In respect of the achievement this group were about to produce, I bowed my head to look at my feet. I found myself tilting forward a little so that I could actually see my feet over my rotund midriff.

30 minutes in and I'm still somewhere on the A3 probably between two or three miles from the start, having had a malfunction with my chain and stopped to get it fixed by Owen Cycles but to no avail so I am now stuck in one gear. Hopefully it'll rectify itself.

10 minutes on and a lot of fiddling with the gears and chain, I've probably done another mile. For now I've got some of the gears working. Although I don't know what gear I'm in but I do have pedal power again.

Just passed Rachel and Tamsin Norris and Tania and Dub Wannerton. Still riding with Frank who's just ahead of me and sweating profusely.

10.55 am: Finally arrived at first pit stop on the A272 and enjoyed a nice refreshing drink. Met up with Lynda Grimes and Janet Knox, who said "We are having a fab time, the weather is really fantastic".

Frank said "Can't wait for that pint of beer!"

Tania and Dub just cycled in. Dub said "I'm having a brilliant time". Tania, who had been a tad wobbly decided to remove her basket from her handlebars as the weight affected her steering. *I think it might have been the big picnic she had in it.* A kind man from the support crew called Rob agreed to return the *picnic* to the finish line.

11.05 am: Set off again with Frank, Tania and Dub. Lynda and Jan had gone on ahead.

11.15 am: Approaching Rogate Hill. Just received a text message from Sarah at the FOLJS stall to say that one of our elite riders Mark Bruce had just come home in 1 hour, so well done to Mark. (*I later heard that his partner Lorna was the second lady home, only a wheel length behind the leading lady*).

Now at the foot of Rogate Hill I met up with Scooby-doo who said: "Should have stayed at home with the newspaper!" I then witnessed the most bizarre accident. Scooby-doo removed his head, dropped it then ran it over. It's not every day you see a cyclist run over his own head.

I almost make it to the top of Rogate Hill before finally conceding and walked the last few steps. Remounted at top, now riding alone, Frank, Tania & Dub now out of sight. Should I be a gentleman and wait for them in the sun or push on? I push on.

11.45 am: Approaching Milland I catch up with Barry and Jill Levy. Barry says "Lovely so far; cooler than last year". Jill agrees.

Reach the first sign of the day which states: '9 miles to go'. At 11.50 am I'm just in time to get to 'The Rising Sun' for opening Time!

Decided best not to stop for a drink, (of water!) so just ridden straight through Milland; the first time in 8 years that I've not stopped for a drink here. Is this a foolish or brave decision? I cycle on and a crowd of well wishers give me a Big Cheer!!! I conclude a brave decision was made.

Pushing on up the hills now – hopefully about 7 miles to go. Still riding on my own; have been for a while now. Last people I saw were Lynda and Jan at Milland, I waved as I cycled through and just seen Tamsin Norris and half a mile ahead of her, her daughter Rachel.

Hurray, a big down-hill, I peddled hard to build up speed, forgetting about my chain problem. I was given a frightening reminder when the chain once again jammed up and locked the rear wheel momentarily. For a moment, I thought I was going down, at speed, some how stayed on. I decided to slow down a bit and carry on. My bottom is ever so sore!

5 miles and Lynchmere Hill to go. Caught up a little bit of time – no reason other than self respect to finish in a reasonable time, and to make sure I get back before the pub shuts. I've now turned into the hill for Lynchmere and my gears are playing up again. Not sure how many gears I've got. They are not made by Ronseal, as whatever it says on the dials, it's not what the gears are doing! I suspect I will be walking up Lynchmere – but don't tell anyone!

Two-thirds the way up Lynchmere Hill, yes, I am now walking and puffing very hard ...who's idea was this anyway! At top of hill I catch up with Tracey and Emily Hancock.

We stop for a drink, then cycle off together, I wondered how Emily was feeling? No need to worry, she was now ahead of Tracey and me.

Nice and breezy riding down the hill, having a pleasant chat with Tracey, when my chain went and jammed up again. Tracey offered to help fix it, but I said "No, no you go on I'll catch up". *I never saw her again.*

Just fixed the chain. All fingers are now completely black with oil. I notice no cyclists around me at all so I'm all alone.

Just spotted a few more in front so I'll see if I can catch them up – about 2 and a half miles to go and its now 12.30 pm.

Last downhill to go free-wheeling; soon be in Liphook. Just under mile and a half to go and home straight, I can almost smell the beer. Best to conserve my energy for that cool refreshing pint when I get back to the pub.

12.45pm. 2 hours 45 minutes, a couple of drink stops, a mangled chain, loss of most gears after only two miles, and a good old natter along the way. Not bad and hopefully a couple of thousand pounds raised by our 55 strong team. A good way to spend a Sunday morning.

See you in the pub in a minute.

***This is the transcript of Martin's comments en route into his tape recorder.***