



# RIDE+STRIDES

*From the Ride and Stride Press Officer:*

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## Ride and Stride 2015

At the time of writing I can report that last year's Ride and Stride has already raised over £130,000, which is once more a record.



The Rt Revd. Colin Fletcher, Bishop of Dorchester, cycled in and around Abingdon with Basil Eastwood, Chairman of the Trust, and a group of others from the area. Marcham provided a delicious fry-up breakfast before the StRiders set off on their travels. They had just discovered deathwatch beetle in their roof and had a scaffolding tower in the middle of the nave - just to remind people what sponsorship money was being raised for. The weather was variable to start with, but after light showers had passed it was a perfect day for a bike ride, apart from quite a stiff breeze at times. Bishop Colin and Basil Eastwood were joined by a large number of cyclists, but numbers varied throughout the day. Norman Dawson, Area Coordinator for the Abingdon Deanery, had designed a route which made maximum use of cycle paths which worked well, except for one incident when a cyclist coming in the opposite direction swerved to avoid an overhanging branch and crashed straight into StRide Administrator, Jeanette Thomas; fortunately no bones were broken.

There was once again a wide age range of people participating, from 2 year old cyclist Sidney Grantham from Kencot to 85 and 86 year old Mr and Mrs Pearce from St Thomas Watchfield. 84 year old Ian Leck from Woodstock walked to 39 churches in Oxford and in Woodstock and 83 year old Eve Vause from Headington cycled to 22 churches in Oxford. There was an encouraging number of teenagers and family groups in between.

As usual there were a number of people who raised over £1,000, the highest achiever being the Revd. David Williams, Area Dean of the Vale of the White Horse, who amassed £2,934 in aid of the four churches for which he is responsible. He visited 16 churches, half of the Deanery, and had many interesting conversations en route. Gillian Argyle's claim to fame is that she was in the top 1% of JustGiving fundraisers in September, raising £2,640 for St Andrew's, Linton Road, Oxford. The most heart-warming report came from St George, Kencot where Tom Fyson raised £1,637.53 in memory of his father, Jonathan, who was organiser for Ride and Stride for a number of years. Yet again Pauline Franklin got 93 people to sponsor her, many of them customers at her hairdressers, and cycled to 50 churches, raising £1,415. However, Henry Meleg from Tiddington had the most sponsors with 168 and a total of £1,688.

The Gillington family of 5 visited 27 churches; the five and six year olds cycled and the two year old was in a baby-seat. They raised £1,585 for St John the Baptist, South Moreton.



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Among the Welcomers being sponsored were a number of octogenarians, which is an encouragement to those whose cycling days are over. The refreshments offered at many churches often provoke remarks from participants, and it does make a great difference, cheering people on their way.

There are too many people who visited more than 40 churches on their bicycles for them all to get a mention, but Ian Bone from Standlake cycled to 62; he is a regular cyclist and enjoys his day, sponsoring himself. The Firth family from Benson visited 46 and then Emma Firth cycled to a further 8 on her own. However there were three walkers, Wendy and Trevor Jones and Bruce Coppin from Headington, who visited 40 in Oxford.

There were some unusual stories from participants; Harry Clark from Ipsden was in Savannah, Georgia on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> flew from Orlando to Gatwick on Friday night, arriving home at 9 a.m. on Saturday morning. At 10 a.m. he was on his bike; 9 people from Ipsden took part with 2 dogs, visiting 44 churches between them and raising about £2,000.



Charles and Tom Peers from Chiselhampton drove vintage tractors to 12 churches, which must be a first.



A group of 20 bell ringers and friends from Shrivenham cycled and walked around Clanfield, Alvescot and Langford, ringing the bells there, and visiting 10 other churches. They were accompanied by Dexter, a springer spaniel.

Those who raise money do not always cycle or walk, but do something else in aid of StRide: Idbury and Fifield in the Chipping Norton area are very small villages and got together to hold a coffee morning, as did St Mary's, Hampton Poyle; Tony Barry from Wheatley organised a walking group, charging £10 per person - 11 people paid to join this Cuddesdon Benefice Walk. They visited 6 churches. Anthony Lee from Sparsholt is sponsored to play tennis.

Thank you to all those who send in reports of their day; they are all read and appreciated, but I am unable to use them all in this newsletter.



Alison Shaw  
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