



Help for Heroes – Big Battlefield Bike Ride

We wanted to write to thank you for your tremendous support you gave us for the recent Big Battlefield Bike Ride in aid of Help for Heroes. It was a tremendous week; full of emotional and physical highs and lows. In summary we cycled just under the 350 miles over the five days, undertook eight memorial services at various sites for those who lost their lives in both the First and Second World Wars, as a group raised over £1m for Help the Heroes, and in the process lost a little weight!

We are in the process of producing a short book on the experience incorporating some of the many images and experiences we shared during the week, and we will send this through once this has been completed. In the meantime we have enclosed a short selection of photographs from the week which we hope provides some flavour of those experiences.

We have also attached below an adaptation of our "blog" that gives a day by day account of our adventures.

Day 1

The week started in Portsmouth with a flourish and the good wishes of the Second Sea Lord, and we were soon ensconced aboard HMS Brittany Ferries on the night crossing from Portsmouth to Caen. We were then bussed for two hours to reach the start point; a small village called Senneville sur Fecamp close to Le Harvre. We were treated to a traditional French village celebration to wish us on our way from the villagers of Senneville sur Fecamp and a marvellous rendition of "God Save the Queen" by the local children. A quick civic reception with the Mayor and some healthy "Kir Cidre" and we were on our way. We finished the first day in Dieppe having carried out services for our fallen heroes at St Valery en Caux (at the top of a massive cliff) and in Dieppe at the main memorial. We cycled only 55 miles today but some very testing hills which, given our Suffolk heritage, came as a bit of a shock to us both! The hotel is functional and we shall all sleep extraordinarily well.

Day 2

An 85 mile day with some serious hills along the way - the worst being a 2 mile / 1 in 4 hill....so much for Northern France being flat!!! Other than the hills and the rain, the other massive challenge today was punctures: with the bad weather creating debris and loosening stones. Our road bikes' with their thin tires were unable to cope and we had a couple of stops to mend ours and others tyres. On reflection we were lucky as some members of the ride had up to 6 in the day ... Ghastly.

We stopped for lunch after 40 miles at Ramburelles after which we then headed on toward Amiens via a delightful town called Hallencourt where we took refuge from the