

Mayor hosts cyclists for medal presentation in town hall.

The cyclists from the annual Ballymena Road Club – Scott Roof Tiles – fun tour series were the guests of the Mayor Mr. Maurice Mills at the town hall last Tuesday evening.

A large number of medal winners were present to receive the awards and also to make a cheque presentation to the Chernobyl Children's appeal NI. The Mayor welcomed all present and praised the work of the road club in the local community. He was pleased that the fun tours had a universal appeal and noted that both male and female had participated with all ages represented from schoolchildren to cyclists in their mid seventies.

Richard Wilson thanked the Mayor for once again supporting the series and hosting the reception. Richard outlined that there had been a record number of medalists in this year's series with thirty three earning bronze, nineteen silver and twenty nine gold. Five cyclists achieved full attendance, namely, Christina Clarke, Sammy Connor, Paddy Mooney, Martin Ruddy and Alan Mark.

The average weekly attendance was also well up with sixty one riders turning up on five occasions while the biggest individual week saw seventy riders taking part.

The Arctic conditions struck when the thirteenth and final tour was due to be held, and, when week fourteen wasn't any better, the organisers decided to finish the series on twelve weeks and upgrade everyone's medal. This decision was met by approval by all concerned.

The charity fund also reached a record total with £683 being collected over the series and this, when combined from the £200 raised during the nine glens challenge, meant that a cheque for £883 was presented to the Chernobyl Children's appeal NI.

John and Eleanor Duffin were present to receive the money and Eleanor outlined the work which the charity carries out.

She said that the money would be used to bring children from Belarus to Northern Ireland where a couple of weeks in our clean air would boost their immune system and greatly increase their life expectancy. The country is still suffering from the effects of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986.

Any cyclists who was unable to attend last weeks presentation should contact Richard Wilson to arrange to receive their medal and certificate.

These may be picked up at the club rooms on any Monday night.

Pre Christmas fun

The Ballymena Road Club – Scott Roof Tiles - fun tour theme continued on Saturday morning when a group of cyclists turned up at Rex Bonar house for their now annual pre Christmas “soup and sandwiches” tour to the “Waterwall” at Clady.

Everyone was delighted to be back out on their bikes again following the two blank weekends, where they were grounded because of the snow which had rendered safe cycling more or less impossible.

The route took in Toomebridge, Hillhead, Knockloughrim, Gulladuff, Culnady and on to Innisrush, where the group had planned to cross the river ford at the “footstick” foot bridge. However the approach road was still covered with compacted snow and ice and, even though a few riders did take a chance and used the short cut, it was a quick “about turn” for the others and out to Clady before the refueling stop at the Waterwall Inn.

The host was fellow cyclist Paddy Mooney, who is a member of Bann Valley, and who also completed thirteen of this season’s fun tours.

Home made vegetable soup, a variety of sandwiches and hot mince pies were on the menu all washed down with as much tea and coffee as one could drink! The money which the cyclists donated on Saturday will be forwarded by Paddy to Marie Curie cancer care.

The 2010 fun tours visited many places of local beauty and historic interest such as Arthur cottage at Cullybackey, Cranfield and it’s Holy well, Portna Locks near Kilrea on the river Bann, and Saturday was no exception as the O’Kane’s Waterwall Inn has a story of its own.

The Waterwall was founded in the early 19th century in the pre Victorian era and is one of the few licensed premises left which retains the character of the Dickensian times.

The Waterwall was one of the original posting inns where weary travelers changed their horses on the long trek from Londonderry to Ballymena.

This stage coach inn still retains the walled coach yard, the stables, the coach house and many trappings of that bygone age.

The inn is steeped in history and one macabre story centers on one of the previous owners, one Paddy O’Kane, who was bludgeoned to death with a hatchet. The marks left by the hatchet on the low raftered ceiling were still visible until recent years, the murder was never solved.

There were no such attacks on Saturday, save for a good “bun worry” and each rider in the group trying to get to the top of Tully first on the way home.

Calendar

Boxing Day 10

The Ballymena Road Club Stan Finlay memorial 10 miles time trial will once again take place at Woodgreen on Boxing Day Monday 27th December 2010 at 11.00 am.