

Canal Relay Challenge 2010

18.00 hours 20th May, Asda over-flow car park; and the moment when the Retford team were to hear with some incredulity written on their faces that Worksop Harriers were to renege on their commitment to take up the challenge that is the annual Canal Relay race along the length of the Chesterfield Canal from Kings Park Retford to Worksop Bridge Street Wharf and return.

Retford had received a call from Worksop's John Harrison just 24 hours earlier and the information was that Worksop would be unable to field a team; that was sad as everything was in place including the after-run buffet at the Rum Runner. John accepted that Worksop would be conceding and therefore any run / victory by Retford would likely be seen / perceived as being a little hollow.

The Retford contingent had nonetheless arrived on the night and had expected a race and after a motivating speech by Chris Ryan the team opted to run the distance regardless, and amongst many reasons one would be that the beer afterwards would taste sweeter and the then-to-be double helpings of food justified.

The challenge was set in motion by Ian Storey and Ollie Lord, who carried the cudgels to Lady Bridge where they handed over to Becky Duggan and Chris Ryan to run the short leg to Green Mile Lane; 21.36 at this point would suggest maybe a sedate run however with little adrenalin flowing due to Worksop's omission this time was acceptable.

New Retford recruits; Peter Hepton and Ollie Stanser carried the effort onto Ranby Bridge (34.25) were the second of the mixed gender teams of Helen Howard and Steve Woodward took up the team's efforts; Scofton Lock being reached in 48.31.

Peter Tallents accompanied Andy Sly as they have done so before on this long leg out to Worksop before returning to Scofton; we were to hear that Worksop's John Hewitt had been espied at Bridge Street Wharf and asking the question 'have you got a team then'? To which Andy riposted 'no me and Pete have run all the way from Retford! 1.27.55 was the time recorded at Scofton on the return.

This is the point at which the initial four teams start to commence their final legs as Iain and Ollie raced to Ranby Bridge (1.42.38) whilst Becky and Chris arrived at Green Mile Lane at 1.56.46. Peter and Ollie S then moved the challenge onto Lady Bridge before Helen and Steve steered the effort home to Kings Park in 2.19.17. This being a valiant effort given the lack of a tangible challenge and a dearth of hormonal adrenalin release.

Thanks are expressed to Derek Marsh who time-kept for the occasion. Thanks also to Tom Bell and Ken Neal for transporting duties. Cheer-leading and support was also in evidence in the shape of Charmian Heaton, Maria Needham and Ollie's girlfriend Ria Thurlow, whilst Carlo Pacifico, Giles Harrison and Dave Pickering gave the club's effort a rousing start from Kings Park.

A big thank you once again to you all, whether runner or supporter, and whilst a win may well be hollow, a 6 -5 lead overall is substantially better than being 2 -5 down as we were in 2006.

C R Ryan
Canal Relay Manager
May 2010.