

## Day 2

Evening folks, what a really really tough day today. Up at 5 30 ,bags packed and down for breakfast at 6am sharp. Plan was to be on the road at 6 45. Made it at 6 43 but not without some difficulty. We had 13 of the 14 ready to go at 6 40 but one guy was running around looking for his 2 water bottles that he'd already filled...eventually he found them in his bag that he'd packed and put in the van !!

Anyway, we made 2 small groups of 7 and headed them out a couple of minutes apart. Kevin Bannon (serious cyclist...not !!) Was leading the first group and myself and Pat Halpin were looking after the second group. We'd had a quick meeting last night with everyone in the groups just to relay the details for today. God I never realised how often ladies need to go to the loo and how difficult it is to find loo's out on the road. Anyway, young Bannon is a bit of a whizkid with technology and he sorted it in 3mins. 200k cycle ...10 loo's,thankfully we didn't need them all but I was fascinated by how many were actually available !!

So off we headed out the road to Tralee and the weather was absolutely horrible, wind and rain and traffic was really heavy. After about 30 mins I spotted 3 cyclists from Bomber's group up ahead. When we caught up with them it turned out it was 2 lads with Arnie who was finding it a little bit difficult to get going after all his exploits of yesterday (understandable). As we passed I thought about it ...but decided 7 15 in the morning wasn't a good idea to give him another horse tranquilliser so I left him in the capable hands of Bombers lads.

We were under severe pressure to get to Tarbert for the ferry at 11 30 and even more pressure because the ladies needed a loo stop. We sorted

That in Listole and even had time for a quick coffee as our groups were moving really well and the rain had stopped. We made the ferry with time to spare and there was also a loo on the ferry that Kevin hadn't accounted for so everyone was happy. From the Kilimer side we cycled 20k to Doonbeg for lunch in Tubbridys pub who put on a great spread for us, it's a famous Clare football club and one of our cyclists, Mick Culligan organised the stopover. Because we were GAA people and cycling for a great charity they wouldn't take a penny off us for the food. There were 65 of us !!

At this stage it was after 2 o'clock and we had 100k done, exactly half way. We headed out of Doonbeg for Kilrush and on to Ennistymon , the wind now was coming from the North West and was killing us on the open roads. Quick break here in the Circle K garage....they had 2 great loo's !! Then on to Ballyvaughan via Corkscrew Hill (thankfully we were going down it) where we got the most spectacular view of the Burren. Spar in Ballyvaughan was just closing as it was now 6pm and coffee machine was off but fair play ,they boiled a kettle for us. From here we had over 40k still to go ,wind had finally died down a bit but it was really cold, like a day in March. I couldn't believe how strong everyone was (specially myself). On through Kinvara ,Kilcolgan and finally arriving in Oranmore at 8 30, considering we started at 6 45 that was some day, 207km and a head wind for three quarters of it. Everybody made it to Oranmore safely which was incredible and at least 70% of the group had never been near 200km before.

Have to say I quite enjoyed it all because the group were all very disciplined and handled themselves very well.

We were out for 14hrs which I couldn't believe....but I suppose if you take out the loo stops ,realistically it probably was 10hrs !!

Getting late so I'm off to sleep, only 135k tomorrow up through Mayo and into Sligo and sure I'm sure nothing could go wrong !!

Donie.