

The LoG took to new scenery over the weekend putting in three separate routes from a base camp in Bundoran.

Friday - The Four County Run

Friday's trek was a mixed bag, weather wise, with the 6 riders leaving Bundoran facing a head wind, although dry, at 14:00. We journeyed North, through Ballyshannon leaving Donegal, crossing the border and then getting rained on in the north, whilst in Beleek. We splashed on to Garrison travelling through Fermanagh and into county Leitrim. The rain was now a thing of the past and remained so throughout the weekend. Passing Rossinver, commencing a long slow climb to Manorhamilton, forward into County Sligo and Carney, then back into Donegal and Mullaghmore. Here a well-earned refreshment break took place before turning back to Bundoran proper. Yes a real four county run.

Additional stops were made for Kodak moments at the Glencar waterfall and at Lough Melvin.

60 miles in four and half hours including the stops.

Saturday – The long haul

Bright and yes breezy, your League of Gentlemen headed once again North at 08:00 am. A North Easterly giving the peloton trouble, causing tight chaining and quite a few swear words.

Paddy Mc had suggested that to keep warm, nibbling would be a good idea, this precipitated the early exposure of some chicken rolls from Jim Q's pouches with the additional fig roll making an appearance, whilst keeping in Motion.

Arriving at the Smugglers Creek in Rossnowlagh at 09:00 was a disappointment as the establishment had yet to chill the wine and raise the parasols for our arrival.

We battered, and I mean battered on, back up to the main Ballyshannon to Donegal road striving to reach Donegal Town where we re-gathered our commitment and utilised the Tourist office's facilities before making the trek towards Killybegs.

After leaving Donegal town we headed directly into the wind and some dreadfully long climbs. The drops at the other side didn't make the coming back seem any more pleasant as we struggled to hold our balance and needed to push down the hills also, so strong was the wind.

The Dunkineely & Bruckless climbs offered no respite with Killybegs seeming no nearer. Great riding by Billy H and the new 'Big Ring' exponent Paul McD kept the group together and Killybegs provided yet another welcome with Mars Bars and Teas all round. This break offered a chance to change the only slow puncture of the trip. The Quigg boys quickly putting 'task to hand' as the tea was getting cold !

The trip back was literally a breeze with speeds averaging 23 mph and reaching 36 mph for good distances, such was the residual power kept back by this hardy bunch. . . aye right I hear. The strong wind and declines must also be mentioned as a help.

The speeds are true and we had 60 miles under our wheels by the time we reached Donegal Town on the way back and a lunch stop at the Anchor Bar, near the harbour for 13:30. The bunch re-grouped and sauntered back replenished looking forward to base camp, where saunas, chacuzis and hot tubs were ready & waiting. A big thank you to the Holyrood Hotel.

A very hard worked 80-mile covered in 8 slogging hours.

Sunday – Normal Service resumed.

The final day of our 4-county tour provided a short spin to loosen up those legs and take a few more snaps. Again an 08:00 start.

Up to Ballyshannon once again with a quick toe into the North at Beleek. Back to Garrison and around Lough Melvin. Turning to Kinlough, taking on the rise above Lough Melvin. What rise ? said Billy H as yours truly took photos of the peleton as it flew past going uphill !

This was indeed Paul McD & Billy H territory, although Paddy McD wasn't going to let the sprinters get away. The able-bodied Keiran Q & 'wee brother' Jim Q, with meself giving a good account ourselves, whilst chasing the speed merchants.

Arriving back at base camp in Bundoran for 10:10 with 32 miles under the belt.

170 miles in total. 16 enjoyable hours in the saddle. All in safe and well. Great Craic to boot.

A huge thank you to Paddy McD and the lovely Anne for their hospitality.

