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Personal stories

London to Haiti challenge raises vital funds for RedR's programme in Haiti

Organising your own event is a great way to raise funds for RedR, and make a real difference to the lives of those affected by natural disaster and conflict. The Elliott Wood Partnership did just that when they staged their London to Haiti challenge on Saturday 27 March.

The civil and structural engineering consultancy chose RedR as their beneficiary charity, partly because of their empathy with RedR's work, as well their belief that because RedR provides aid workers with the skills they need to respond to disasters, the money raised would make a huge difference. A cycle ride was chosen due to the number of keen cyclists at Elliott Wood, and the walking aspect added to ensure as many people as possible could join in - as not everyone had a bike or the confidence to ride 50 miles.



A group of over 40 cyclists, 15 walkers and 4 dogs collectively covered a total of 2,345 miles on their wheels, feet and paws. Although the group didn't quite manage to cover a distance equivalent to that from London to Port-au-Prince, as they had originally hoped, they still did incredibly well by making it over half way there before the mud got the better of them. The event was organised to raise vital funds for RedR's programme in Haiti, which is providing aid workers there with the training and support they need following January's devastating earthquake.

The route for the cyclists ran from Richmond Green along the river to Staines, up through Windsor Great Park, and cut north west along an old Roman road to Crazies Hill, where the team encountered mountains of mud. The cyclists continued down to Sonning where they rejoined the river and met the walkers before finally arriving, exhausted, at The Bel and The Dragon in Reading for some well-deserved refreshments.

The walkers went up through the Chiltern Hills from Henley down to Sonning, and along the river to Reading. There were again a few detours, but probably fewer mishaps than the bikers and they too all arrived, muddy and wet, at The Bel and The Dragon. It is still being debated whether the walkers or the dogs were more exhausted.



The stories en-route included tales of detours, hours spent lost in Windsor Park, punctures, bikes sliding sideways in the mud, head winds, hail storms and lots of laughs. One tired but happy participant said it had been a great day; "We all really enjoyed ourselves and each of us came back with a great sense of achievement. It is good to put things in perspective once in a while, appreciate how lucky we are and realise how we can help others."

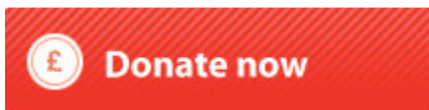
The London to Haiti Challenge has currently raised over £7,000, which is an incredible achievement and a real reflection on the determination of everyone who took part. RedR would like to thank the Elliott Wood Partnership for organising this amazing event, and all participants, who braved the elements, for their superb performance.

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