

Velo Teifi Cycling Club

Tour of France 2009

The Chairman's Diary

(Le journal intime du Chairman)

Wednesday 22nd July 2009

Day 6. Cormet de Roselend *et le cuisine est ferme.*

Weather: Hot, humid, overcast.

A select group decides it's going to tackle the Cormet de Roselend today (it being right at the end of our road), whilst the others decide to drive to the bottom of the hill and take up prime locations to see the Peleton tackle the first climb of the a long day for the Tour riders. Obscenely fit Lynn decides she's going to run up the Cormet... where is my gun?

The climb up the Cormet is hot and very sweaty. We pass Lynn striding up the road and vow to meet her at the top. The climb is full of steep hairpins and false flats (why is the pedalling so hard? I'm going downhill... aren't I?).

We eventually get pulled over by the Race Officials, a couple of Km's from the summit and duly set up base camp to gather the impending caravan discharges. A bunch of hats, drinks, trinkets, keyrings, cleaning liquid, sweeties, salamis and newspapers later, we're content that we've hoarded enough crap for one day.

We wrap Lynn in newspaper like an oversized piece of cod from Bowen's; with only 0.0001% body fat, the impending squall has chilled her. Our offers to roll her down the hill to generate body heat are declined and Lynn sets off back down the road. We sit and wait for news of the speeding peloton crashing into a bouncing, paper-wrapped fish but nothing comes. Except the rain. And the wind. JEEPERS it's cold.

The tour races towards us in a rainstorm. Andrew has scarpered down the hill to hideout with some mountain shepherds in their hillside shack. Let's hope he doesn't *zut alors!* them...





With the race having passed, it was suggested that a ride to summit would warm us up before the long descent home. We muttered and were non-committal.

The suggestion was made again.

And again.

Oh, and again.

Alright Andrew, enough. We'll ride to the summit...

Thereafter we descend in the wet at silly speeds. Dylan's speed being the silliest of all. Loon.

Our fresh faced teammates are waiting at the bottom in one of the team buses having enjoyed up-close and personal viewing of the race crawling by. We agree to spend an afternoon in town watching the tour. After we've showered that it is; oh dear, time for *that* hill. "Where's Dylan?" someone asks.

The gitface has stolen a march on us and begun the ascent. This is really gonna hurt. We give chase. Andrew blows half way (no vomit though) and Jav-lar and I remain side by side in pursuit of our Headstart Homey. Less than a mile to go and we've got the treacherous cycling loon in sight. Jav-lar makes his trademark move – a form of pedalling motion that keeps him in front of me every time... I counter and claw him back.

Around a hairpin and there's a tractor in the way. Jav-lar goes left, me right. I kick again and Jav-lar's done for. Yes! Just the gimp left now. And there he is: grinning, sweating, swearing. The last hairpin and it's the home [uphill] straight. The gimpster has enough of an ill-gotten lead to maintain the gap until the chalet. He takes the win. Just. I suspect the Commissaires will have something to say about his tactics though. In the meantime, we both attempt to suck in the thin air, pour water over ourselves and generally try not to die.



And so into town for a cheeky slurp or two whilst watching the Tour at a suitable premises. We head to what looked 'a lively bar'. Beers ordered, seats taken, prime t.v. viewing spots secured.

A nervous looking waitress comes over. "The seats we're sitting in are for diners? Oh. And we have to move unless we're eating. OK. No problems. May we see the menu please?"

"I'm sorry, what? The kitchen is closed?"

Errrr.... O....K..... Let's get this straight shall we *ma petite amie de serveuse*? We can't sit here because we're not eating. We can't eat because the kitchen is closed. For fecks sake. *Bienvenue a Bourg St Maurice*. Avoid the 'lively bar' opposite the railway station, my friends.

To compound my grumpiness which had since returned from a brief absence, Baron von Snoring Bean decided to demonstrate his prowess as a chauffeur with full consideration for

his passengers throughout the duration of the switchback hill climb home. As a driver he's an excellent carpenter.

The evening finishes with Howard and I assuming Grandmaster positions for a mini-chess championship. Ignoring Andrew's tut's and gasps, we struggle through a first game. Fortunately for me, Lucky How returns in time for me to win two nil.

Beer anyone? Nope. Bit of a trend developing methinks...