

WE RODE IT!

SODBURY SPORTIVE

16 August 2015 > 103km > 979m climbing

When friendly purveyor of bike bling Saddleback puts on a sportive in your back garden, it seems churlish not to partake. The Sodbury Sportive began in Chipping Sodbury, not far from our Bristol base, heading north east over some beautiful but testing Cotswold hills towards Tetbury, and then west across the M5 to pick up the Avon Cycleway. After meandering down the River Severn, it turned east, back to the start.

Some 900 or so riders signed up, and with my other half keen to be one of them, I had a cast iron excuse for choosing the 100km route over the proper century. (The 50km option wouldn't have justified leaving the duvet's cosy embrace.) A scant few hundred metres out of the starting pen,

I abandoned her callously and proceeded to do what I do best: badly misjudge a ride.

The first half was all hills, the second mostly flat, so I wisely chose to roast my legs up all the climbs, confident of a gentle recovery on the back straight, fuelled by a Marmite sandwich from one of the generous food stops. This would have worked perfectly had I not encountered a lovely chap called Keith as things were levelling out, with whom I foolishly attempted to work with despite his evident superiority on a bike. The result? 10km or so from the finish, the muscles of my legs seized quite comprehensively, forcing me into an agonising, stilted dance by the side of the A38. Aided by the excellent signage, I limped back to the car, chastened.



ON THE ROAD



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JENNY JOHNSON

"I had a great ride, but I'm annoyed at myself for not going under four hours – I needed someone to work with."



ARIELLE ELTON-WALTERS

"Fantastic sportive around quiet roads and beautiful countryside. Great organisation, marshals and feed stations. It gets better every year."



LIZZI ELTON-WALTERS

"A really lovely sportive. Still a friendly atmosphere despite its growing popularity. Hot food at the finish is always a bonus."



Words: Matthew Allen Photos: RichMcD, SportivePhoto