

101 more reasons to

By Jo Barnes

THE Acorn by Synergie Dalmatian Bike Ride has added more kilometres to its range of charity fund raising routes this year - 101 to be precise. The Dally, as it is affectionately known, is an five route annual bike ride arranged to raise money for Newport-based St David's Hospice Care.

The event takes place on Saturday, June 10.

Over the dozen years the ride has been staged dogged determination by organisers, riders and supporters has seen it raise an astonishing £300,000 for the hospice. And there's no sign of the spotted cyclists stopping money raising any time soon.

Dave Rees, who with a team organises the ride, said: "We've added a new longer route this year, 101 kms (63 miles). The number is appropriate. The new distance is aimed at the more experienced rider who is looking for a bigger challenge.

"The route is for the serious cyclist and really suits the road bikes. It follows our now traditional route to Magor and then goes out to Caldicot, Portskewett then Crick, onwards through Mathern up to Chepstow and then over the old Severn Bridge to Aust in England and then back to Caerleon and, of course, at 101km it's in keeping with the theme of 101 Dalmatians."

Dave, who was named Fundraiser of the Year at the 2022 South Wales Argus Pride of Gwent awards, said the much-loved event, which was started to help raise funds for the hospice after the death of a family member, now has an extra reason to keep raising funds

Dave said: "The ride was started in memory of our friend and family member, John Dixon, who passed away 12 years ago. When we hit a quarter of a million pounds the hospice named a room at the inpatient unit in Malpas after John, which was a huge honour.

"Unfortunately John's grandson, Ryan, has recently passed away Ryan spent his last days at the hospice just last month. So after raising more than £300,000 the family once again had reason to use the hospice services.

"They said that despite 12 years passing the staff and the service that they received was every bit as good as it was all those years ago.

"The family are determined to carry on fundraising so that other people are able to receive end of life care in such a humane and compassionate manner. They cannot thank St David's Hospice Care enough for the way they go about their day business making people feel so well looked after."

Dave said riders look forward to taking part in The Dally. "As always the event is a well-structured day with a professional



COUNTRYSIDE: Cyclists enjoy the canal path ride as they pass through Goytre Wharf in Monmouthshire on the Brecon to Newport 48-mile route of a previous Dalmatian Bike Ride. Picture: DBPR



ROOM DEDICATION: Left to Right, Rachel Kennedy, Dalmatian Bike Ride Committee member; Linda Williams, John Dixon's daughter, Beth Harrington, of St David' Hospice; Jan Rees, John's daughter, Gareth Arnold, committee, Dave Rees, Lee Holmes Committee, Ian Humphries Committee

set up, well signposted routes with well stocked feed stations manned by happy smiling volunteers.

"Once again, we have changed the shirt colour for those that are collecting a full set of shirts. We have well trained lead riders and a team of sweepers at the rear of each ride



to assist if anyone gets into difficulty backed up by a team of van drivers ready to attend on route if anyone needs picking up. As well as mobile paramedics out on the course in the unlikely event of an accident "It's a great day out for all the family. Firstly, the riders get to do their favourite hobby in the morning often meeting new riders then join family and friends for the amazing after party BBQ at the Priory Garden with DJ Daryl, free T-shirts for children, event medals a fantastic raffle and an afternoon of fun and maybe a little tipple or two to

WAVE: Start of the 20 mile Dalmatian charity bike ride for St David's Hospice Care

celebrate. "We have some amazing sponsors that support us every year however we are always looking for local companies to come on board and sponsor the ride even if it's to sponsor a water station, or have their name on the shirts or even have a

take part in the Dally



SMILES: Dave Rees and other riders during a previous Dally

ride named after their company." And what's the next fund raising target for The Dally? "I guess half a million pounds would be the ultimate goal but that's a long way off. So £350,000 is the next milestone. It's so important that the riders raise sponsor money for this great cause as every penny we get goes to the hospice we have never taken a penny out of the funds.

"The Dally is unique, there isn't another ride of its kind from the five routes to the huge gathering to celebrate at the end in Caerleon, to the fantastic venue and all for our hospice.

"No one ever knows when or if they will need hospice services for a family member so it's so important to keep the funds being raised to enable them to give the most wonderful end of life care to the people of Gwent." Event organiser Beth Harrington, of St David's Hospice Care, said: "We're all working as hard as we can to ensure that as many people as possible enter the Acorn Dalmatian Bike Ride to make it a brilliant success again this year: "The Dally is a truly wonderful, fun event which appeals to all levels of cyclists. The entry fee, together

with any sponsorship raised, helps to provides vital palliative care to people facing life limiting illnesses as well as providing support to their families at a very difficult time. We are not only looking for riders but also volunteers to help with a variety of roles. If you can help please contact us to find out more." Registration for The Dally is from 9am with a rolling start at 9.30am from the pavilion at Caerleon School. If you want to sign up on the day ensure that you get there early. For details on the event, maps of the various routes and the entry fees go to www.dalmatianbikeride.com



HONOUR: Fundraiser of the Year Dave Rees, left, with St Joseph's Hospital CEO Stuart Hammond at the 2022 South Wales Argus Pride of Gwent Awards