

Queen Margaret lecturer in training for his own Tour de France



A Queen Margaret University academic is gearing up for the biggest challenge of his life.

Trevor Laffin, Head of the University's Division of Business, Enterprise and Management, is undertaking a gruelling training regime in preparation for cycling the route of the Tour de France.

Trevor's cycle challenge, the 'Tour de Force', will cover the full 3,300 kilometre route one week before the professional riders take part in the Tour de France.

Trevor's cycle ride starts in Corsica on the 22 June and will take him through The Pyrenees and The Alps before finally finishing in Paris on Bastille Day on the 14 July.

The university academic will be joined by approximately 25 Scottish cyclists who will be taking part in the Tour de Force event and raising money for the William Wates Memorial Trust.

In total 36 'lifers' will undertake the full route challenge and another 160 'stage cyclists' will complete individuals parts of the tour.

Fifty three year-old Trevor believes he's never been in better physical shape. In preparation for the ride, he has been working with trainers from Queen Margaret University's sports department. His training regime also means he is taking part in numerous organised cycle rides across the UK.

In preparation for his epic bike ride, Trevor embarked on a training weekend in Sheffield including a 200 mile route

through the Peak District. This was followed by the 'Tour of the Borders' (70 miles) on the 14 April and the 'Tour of Lauder' (86miles) on the 20 April. In May, Trevor's training programme also took him to Ireland where he will cycle for two days in the Mourne Mountains before returning to Scotland to complete the 'Borders Cyclista Sportive' (76 miles) this weekend. This is followed by 'Tour De Force' training day on the 18th May in Edinburgh and the 'Dunfermline Sportive' (90 miles) on the 19th May.

Trevor has roped in a few Queen Margaret University friends to assist him with fundraising. He will cycle to Kinloch Lodge in Skye to meet Lord and Lady Macdonald, who are staunch supporters of the University. Many of his work colleagues also took part in the QMU quiz night which raised £1,500 and was supported by sponsorship in kind from QMU's culinary friends and hospitality partner organisations including the Apex Hotels, the chefs Martin Wishart and Andrew Fairlie, as well as the Edinburgh New Town Cookery School and Timberyard.

Trevor explained: "It certainly is the challenge of my life. I've never been so busy, juggling work and training, but I'm loving every minute. I feel better and fitter than ever before."

He continued:- "Having completed my training in the UK, I'll spend three days cycling in the Alps to help prepare for the long Alpine climbs and descents. I'll then be tapering down the training until the main event starts in June."

Trevor has been overwhelmed by the support he has received from Queen Margaret University's culinary friends. As an expert in hospitality and tourism he has cultivated many excellent contacts in the industry over the years. He said: "I have been so delighted to have the support of great Scottish chefs such as Martin Wishart (from Restaurant Martin Wishart) and Andrew Fairlie (Gleneagles), and of course, to have a charity cash donation from Albert Roux OBE is the icing on the

cake. Martin and Andrew's generosity meant that we had some seriously luxury prizes up for grabs at our University quiz night."

Of course, with Trevor's keen interest in hospitality and tourism he intends to sample a wide range of regional foods as he travels throughout the UK and abroad. He is especially keen to visit Lady Claire Macdonald's cook school at Kinloch Lodge on the Isle of Skye as well as blogging about some of the local dishes he will have the opportunity to sample at the stopping points along the Tour de Force route.

Raw Films, a fledgling video production company run by Queen Margaret University graduates and housed at the University, is also organising special cameras for Trevor's bike. Michael Grant from Raw Films said: "We want to be able to capture the route, scenery and some of the racing action on the Tour de Force. After all, this is probably going to be a once in a lifetime experience for Trevor and we know he'll want to share it."

You can follow Trevor's blog at <http://trevorlaffin.tumblr.com>