

Schoolboys cycle 500 miles to see Kariba Dam

HUNDREDS fly there . . . thousands drive there . . . but two Salisbury schoolboys are probably the first to have cycled the 240 miles to Kariba and back.



THE two Churchill schoolboys, William Lawler (left) and Michael Barton, pose with their bicycles after their marathon Kariba trip.

The two 17-year-old school boys are Michael Barton and William Lawler of Churchill School.

Strapping a few blankets and a change of clothes on the back of their bicycles—and just as a precaution a spare innertube each—they set out on the road to Kariba last Friday.

Back in Salisbury yesterday, a few hours after completing the round trip of nearly 500 miles Bill said: "We wanted to see the dam before it was completed, and cycling was the only way we could afford the trip."

Setting off at dawn the two boys clocked the 135 miles to Karoi before nightfall where they stayed at a police camp. Next day they pushed on over gruelling hilly country and, for the last stretch, mainly dirt roads to Kariba.

HARD GOING

Michael said: "It was hard going and we often ran short of water. But, when we got to Kariba it was worth every aching muscle."

The boys spent the day touring the site after thumbing a lift on a tourist coach.

Two punctures later on the road back, the boys — tired and saddle-sore—found themselves stranded at Banket where Mr. A. B. Castley, assistant manager of the local hotel gave them a room for night and a good breakfast before seeing them off in the morning.

"He did not charge us a penny," the boys said.

Bill's mother, Mrs. E. M. Lawler blinked hard when he cycled in through the gate of his home in Baines Avenue on Wednesday night.

"I nearly turned him away—I thought he was a cook boy looking for a job," she said.