



1600 on 1 June 2005 - JOG - Joe and Rob

Rob & Joe's JOGLE June 2005

A bicycle ride of 935 miles from John O'Groats to Land's End

0945 on 17 June 2005 - LE - Rob and Joe



Rob & Joe's JOGLE June 2005



Joe



Rob

The riders

Rob from Stratford-upon-Avon and Joe from Wokingham

How it all started

In 2002 Rob rode the Sustrans Coast-to-Coast (C2C) route (140 miles) and got the taste for cycle touring adventures in 2003 he rode the Trans-Pennine Trail (220 miles) from Southport to Hornsea and in 2004 the Pennine Cycleway from Derby to Berwick-upon-Tweed (355 miles) - the ride in 2003 was with Steve and John and in 2004 with Steve and Peter.

The obvious next step was "the big one" .. the End-to-End (E2E) ... approximately 950 miles between Land's End and John O'Groats.

Steve wasn't able to take the time for the E2E¹ so Rob, through a combination of the CTC and the Cycling Plus Forum, met Joe who had the ambition to do the E2E before reaching a specific birthday that has a number between 4 and 6 and a zero²

After a Sunday outing cycling through the lanes around Woodstock and Bicester in Oxfordshire a plan started to come together with some serious research on routes etc. Several books were acquired together with

reports from other people³ who had ridden either LEJOG or JOGLE⁴ - together with lots of felt pen lines on a road atlas.

Many of the reports described horror stories with trains etc getting back from John O'Groats so we made the decision to do the JOGLE on the basis that :

- i) getting to JOG by train was easier than getting back from there (how wrong we were)
- ii) having been cycling for 2 weeks or so it would be good to get home in 7 or 8 hours from Penzance rather than a day-and-a-half from JOG,
- iii) we didn't believe all the stories about the prevailing wind being from the SW - if you are cycling the wind prevails towards you; *and ...*
- iv) it looked on the map as if it was downhill from JOG to LE !!

1. Steve joined our E2E ride for the 2 days from Carlisle to Preston

2. Rob had already passed this milestone in life some 6 or 7 years earlier

3. Special mention must be made of Rob's friend "Doc Martin" who did the ride in 2004 and provided invaluable route suggestions

4. LEJOG = Land's End to John O'Groats
JOGLE = John O'Groats to Land's End

The Route



The route towns, with overnight stops in bold :

John O'Groats	Glencoe	Kirtlebridge	Whitchurch	East Brent	Washaway
Wick	Bridge of Orchy	Gretna	Wem	Bridgwater	Nanstalton
Lybster	Tyndrum	Longtown	Shrewsbury	Taunton	St Wenn
Berriedale	Crianlarich	Carlisle	Church Stretton	Wellington	St Columb Major
Helmsdale	Ardlui	Calthwaite	Ludlow	Appledore	Gross
Brora	Tarbet	Penrith	Bromyard	Cullompton	Fiddlers Green
Golspie	Luss	Shap	Newent	Silverton	Redruth
Tain	Dumbarton	Orton	Gloucester	Crediton	Marazion (St Michael's Mount)
Invergordon	Clyde Cycle	Tebay	Whitminster	Colebrooke	Penzance
Dingwall	Route across	Carnforth	Woodford	Bow	Land's End
Beauly	Glasgow	Lancaster	Alveston	Okehampton	Penzance
Drumnadrochit	(Hamilton)	Preston	Bristol	Bridestowe	
Invermorriston	Larkhall	Wigan	(Henleaze)	Lewdown	
Fort Augustus	Happendon	Prescot	Easton in	Lifton	
Invergarry	Abington	Widnes	Gordano	Launceston	
Spean Bridge	Crawford	Runcorn (Bridge)	Clevedon	Egloskerry	
Fort William	Moffat	Frodsham	Yatton	Camelford	
Corran	Lockerbie	Tarporley	Congresbury	St Stud	

Primary objectives were to minimise hills and main roads - the route was selected and divided into realistic days so that we could book accommodation etc.

Maps and GPS

In order to make the trip as simple as possible we produced a "Road Book" that consisted of 204 A5-sized pages with an extract of the LandRanger 1:50 000 Ordnance Survey map (printed at about 70% of the actual scale)

Joe (a.k.a Gadget Man) acquired a GPS receiver that fitted to the handlebars of his bike and plotted the route into memory - this gadget turned out to be of mixed value as the daily reports describe, however it was invaluable in identifying precise grid references on the few occasions that the map was unclear and negotiating towns to find the overnight accommodation.

In general we followed the map but in a few areas modified the route to avoid main roads. The original map had two errors, one of which was caused by some very recent road building.



Example page from the Route Book. The Memory Map CD product was acquired with maps created in Word and the route annotations applied with a graphic pen and tablet.

The Accommodation

All of the overnight stops were booked in advance to ensure that we would have somewhere decent to stay and not spend time and effort hunting for a place each day - we used Bed & Breakfasts and small hotels - all sourced via the Internet, together with one night at Joe's brother's house in Bristol.

Two of the stops were arranged so that parcels of clean kit could be collected (and the rather sweaty stuff sent home for laundering!) - Rob's eldest daughter, Tamsin, lives near

Preston and met us that evening and the second kit point was at Bristol.

With one exception the accommodation was excellent and we found good eating places every night.

From the number of "No Vacancy" signs we saw, the pre-booking was a wise decision.

The Journey to JOG

The simplest and most economical way to get to John O'Groats was to go to London and take the Caledonian Sleeper to Inverness. and then the local train from Inverness to Thurso, before riding the 20 miles to the "start" at JOG.

The return journey from Penzance would get Joe home to Wokingham via Reading and Rob to Stratford-upon-Avon, with changes of train at Exeter and Birmingham.

The sleeper train left London Euston at 2110 and arrived on time at 0830 on 1 June 2005 - the plan being to take the 1127 train to Thurso but see the journal for what actually happened

The JOGLE Journal

The following daily summaries are an edited (very slightly) version of the missives that Joe wrote and transmitted from his Palm Pilot at the end of each day to an audience across the world (well Rob's pal Phil in Australia was included)

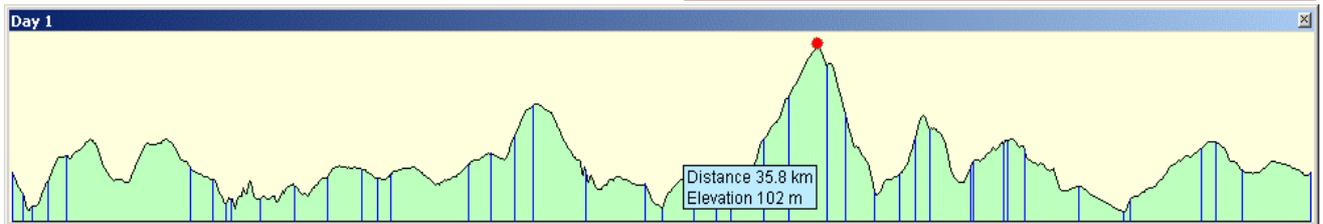
Of necessity a few footnotes have been inserted to explain some points.

The map profiles, because of the way they are created, vary in scale relative to each other ... but they do give a fair representation of the hills and valleys encountered each day.



Daily Statistics	
Distance Today	18 miles
Total Distance	18 miles
Distance to Go	917 miles
Weather	Rain & more rain

Daily Route Profile



Started off badly with the police being called to evict us from the train after Rob got stropky with the guard.

A cock-up somewhere meant that there was no room on the Inverness to Thurso train for the bikes even though we had booked and had a confirming e-mail.

After determining that it was their fault, First ScotRail then had to arrange a taxi (minibus and trailer) for us and the bikes.....120 miles! This was good because we got the taxi to take us to JOG instead, saving the 20 mile ride from Thurso to JOG.

Then it got worse because the weather was crap. Should be more sheltered from the wind tomorrow but it's still gonna rain and blow.....

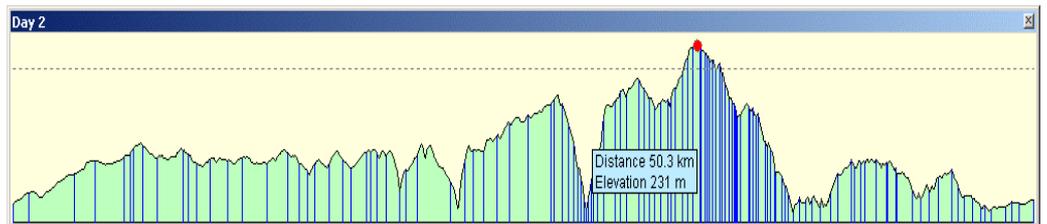


It seemed like a good idea when we planned this . . .



Daily Statistics	
Distance Today	50 miles
Total Distance	68 miles
Distance to Go	867 miles
Weather	Rain & more rain

Daily Route Profile



You know you're wet when you have to wring your underpants out

I think that sums up yesterday. Today was much better, only needed to wring the socks out.

50 miles compared to 18 but the difference was the lack of a 30mph or so wind and a route

that had downhill bits as well as uphill. The rain fritzed my bike computer today, it suddenly announced I had done 114 miles instead of 40, and also indicated I was doing minus 7mph, so I'm not sure if the later 36mph on a downhill stretch was reliable!

59 miles tomorrow. Weather looks like it will still be dodgy.



Ready for the off from Brora in (very) watery sunshine that was to last just a couple of hours



Daily Statistics	
Distance Today	59 miles
Total Distance	127 miles
Distance to Go	808 miles
Weather	Sun & some rain

Daily Route Profile



Yesterday afternoon it rained, yesterday evening it rained, it rained on the way to and from the pub and it rained at night. Just before I went to bed I threw my heavy bottle of sun tan lotion away. This morning we had 4 hours of sunshine! Coincidence? I think not. Tomorrow we visit Boots and I will discard a bottle every 25 miles (or less, whatever it takes)



Rob is having trouble keeping up with me, he doesn't seem to understand its a slow race where the last to finish wins. So he rides with me for a while then goes ahead and waits for me at a bus stop or similar. Tonight I caught him chatting up a young woman at one. He said it was for directions but since they were singularly useless I have my doubts.

We also stopped to get my gears fixed at a bike shop, they have been very bad since we started, courtesy of ScotRail's trailer bending the gear hanger. And I bought a new bike computer,

100 miles - Dornoch Firth Bridge

after the old one said I'd done 3.3 miles whilst sitting outside the chippy. BTW they really do have deep fried Mars bars on the menu here!

Nature Note: Saw Otters in the river right outside my room yesterday. And quite a few big bird hawky things with beaks and claws and so forth. And lots of bunnies (big bird hawky things dinner?) in the fields.

65 miles tomorrow to Fort William. Weather looks like it will be dodgy. Couple of big climbs up to 845ft in the morning and then mostly downhill to FW....I hope.

Right, now I'm going to RTFM for my new bike computer



Near the Glen of Tranquility - as in Glenmorranigie Whisky



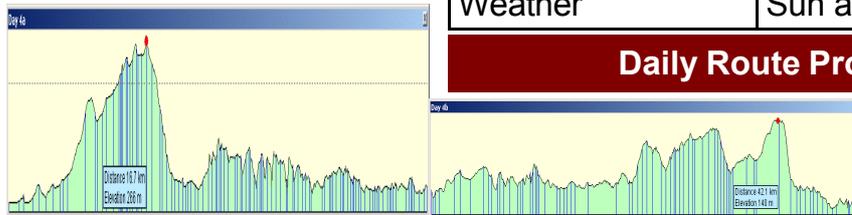
Joe's gadgets and accompanying chargers

Note

We took photographs at each 100 mile point, it may not be clear but we are holding up a progressively increasing number of fingers to indicate the number of hundreds ... we are not sure what we would have done if the distance had exceeded 1000 miles



Daily Statistics	
Distance Today	66 miles
Total Distance	193 miles
Distance to Go	742 miles
Weather	Sun and then rain



Daily Route Profile

Monster Ahoy

This morning we had 5 hours of great weather before it got ugly again. Mist on the slow slog up to 877ft, when the sun came out on cue, and then an exhilarating blast down at 30mph to Loch Ness in beautiful sunshine. Then cloud followed by rain becoming torrential for the next 3 hours until we arrived at the aptly named Underwater Centre where we are staying. No need for a scuba course at the Centre just cycle into Fort William.

Tonight Rob determined our seating arrangements at dinner surely a coincidence we were seated within inches of 8 young ladies and nothing to do with a lack of stops at bus stops today.

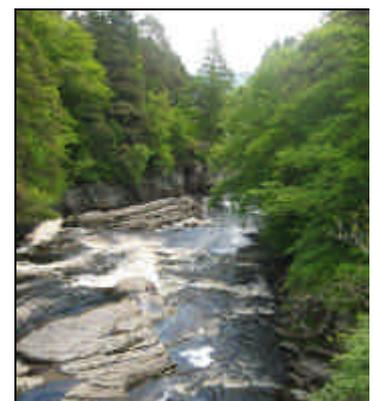
Nature Note: Saw one very big fat bird hawky thing with big scary beak and claws..... and no bunnies at all.....draw your own conclusions. And bluebells in flower. And a pretty yellow bird. And the Loch Ness monster, which I took several excellent pictures of but unfortunately a glitch in the camera meant they

were all accidentally erased so you'll have to make do with the postcard I bought.

67 miles tomorrow to Tarbet



Near Invermorriston, Loch Ness

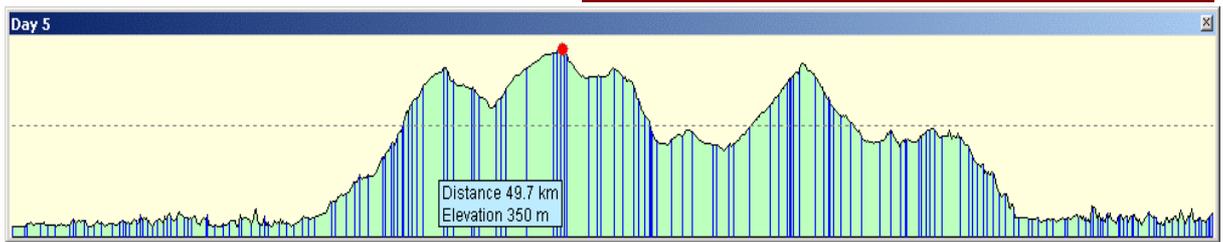


It's Scotland - you have to have a picture like this



Daily Statistics	
Distance Today	68 miles
Total Distance	261 miles
Distance to Go	674 miles
Weather	Sun, warm-ish

Daily Route Profile



Aching Thighs

Writing this looking over Loch Lomond which is just like a mirror this evening a pity as skimming stones is banned due to the massive cost of replacing it.

A good start to the day with mixed cloud & sun so my pearly white thighs were finally



200 miles - Ballachuilish

exposed to the elements so far I have been wearing black cycling tights.

To start, about 15 mostly level miles and then 25 really tough miles (for me) up to about 1300ftexhausting (for me) and then eventually down a few hundred feet to a pub

for lunch, so a total mileage of 40 without a real stop as there was nowhere to stop. That 25 miles was over bleak bog and heather & gorse, absolutely desolate. After the pub a mixture of terrain with some cruel climbs for miles and miles and very few compensating downhills. Even on some downhills I had to change gears “down” due to headwinds!

After 51 miles the turning to our destination, Tarbet, 17 miles away, started with a climb. Our hearts sank but then we started to go downhill and continued downhill for the next 12 miles ab-so-bloody-lutely fantastic. Also shows just how much we had climbed previously.

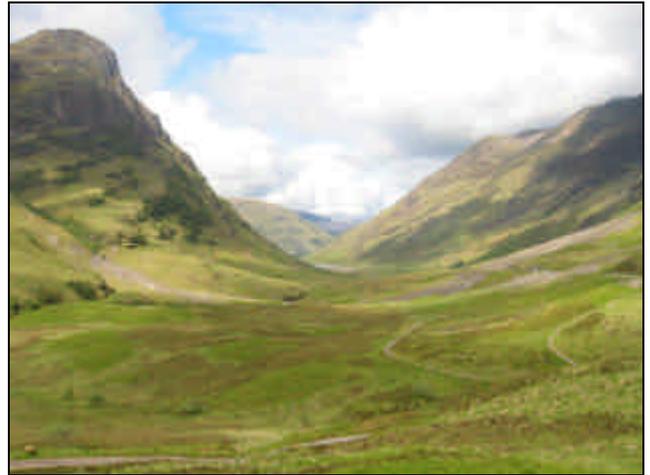
So finally we arrived in Tarbet about 5pm (we set out at 8am). Note that this is the first time we have arrived at our destination and it hasn't been p?¥¥?<g down.

After that my thighs were really aching. Collapsed into B&B room. Imagine my surprise when there was a knock on the door and Liz Hurley came in and started massaging my right thigh. Then there was another knock and Pamela Anderson came in and started massaging the left thigh. Then there was another knock and Rob said “Wake up it's time for dinner” Thanks a lot Rob. BTW despite my earlier comments about deep fried Mars bars, every meal except the first has been excellent. Rob had haggis tonight. I didn't.

Nature Note: Saw a deer (dead) and a sheep (also dead). And a single bunny on a roundabout in the centre of Fort William. Distinct lack of big bird hawky things today.

55 miles tomorrow to Glasgow. Should be a LOT easier than today.

Topics for tomorrow - Australian waitresses and Scottish curtains (no connection)



The start of Glencoe



Glencoe - about half-way up (Rob only uses one bike at a time the other one is Joe's)



Daily Statistics

Distance Today	58 miles
Total Distance	319 miles
Distance to Go	616 miles
Weather	Cloud then sun

Daily Route Profile



Glasgow the green city

Fantastic, cloud & sun this morning and pure sun for the last 2 hours. I now answer to the name of 'Johnny Rednose' and have just bought some sun tan lotion (just a very small one so as not to annoy the weather gods too much)

Yes, I was surprised as well but today's 58 miles, about 2/3 of which were across the city of Glasgow which was mostly green and pleasant beside the river (in it just wouldn't have worked, and we did that on the first 3 days anyway)

To start, about 18 mostly level miles beside Loch Lomond "before breakfast" [see below] and then 15 more miles beside a canal through Glasgow to a canalside pub for lunch, and then another 25 by the Clyde to Hamilton.. Still reasonably tiring but I think that's more to do with the previous 2 or 3 days.

Nature Note: Miles of Giant Hogweed growing on the banks of the Clyde. And a cat.

Why 20 miles before breakfast? Didn't fancy the look of the kitchen at our B&B. Which incidentally bought its towels either from Torquemada's discount store or B&Q's sandpaper dept. And their mattresses from "R U Uncomfortable?" I slept on top of the quilt.

Food ... I am starting to obsess about food on the ride. Yesterday I deeply wanted mashed potatoes (all Scottish potatoes seem to come in chip form). I mentioned this to Rob, and our Australian waitress (ALL the staff seemed to be Aussies) overheard and said she was missing them as well. Now, have you noticed the unfeasibly high percentage of waitresses and waiters who are Australian? I suppose people in Oz have to use self-service restaurants as there can't be any serving staff left there. Our pub yesterday was right in the Middle of Nowhere. It's hardly credible our waitress left Oz for the location or the climate

or the sheep or the men wearing dresses is it? So, I believe they must now have all their operatives in place and are poised ready to take power via a pincer movement marching on London from all directions.

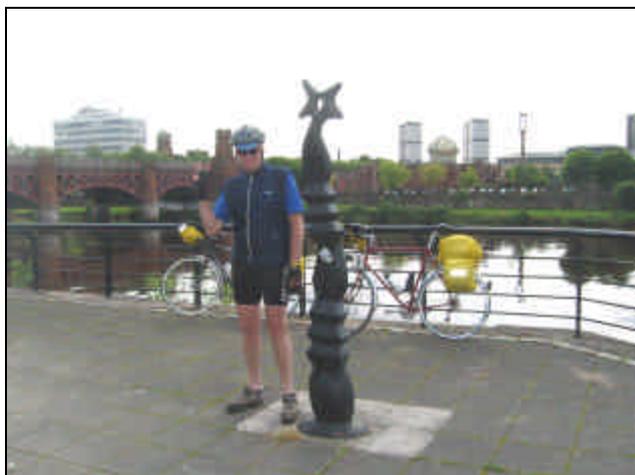
Whilst I am in Victor Meldrew mode, what is it about curtains and Scotland? - 6 nights, 6 sets of curtains made from material with the light stopping power of tissue paper. What's going on? I need darkroom quality stuff to get to sleep and avoid waking at 5am. Must buy one of those masks you get on airplanes.

And thanks to Rob for his outstanding navigation skills getting us here through the middle of Glasgow. My GPS wouldn't work today (now fixed) so the fact I had painstakingly programmed in our exact route and destination helped not a jot and it was down to Rob and his maps.

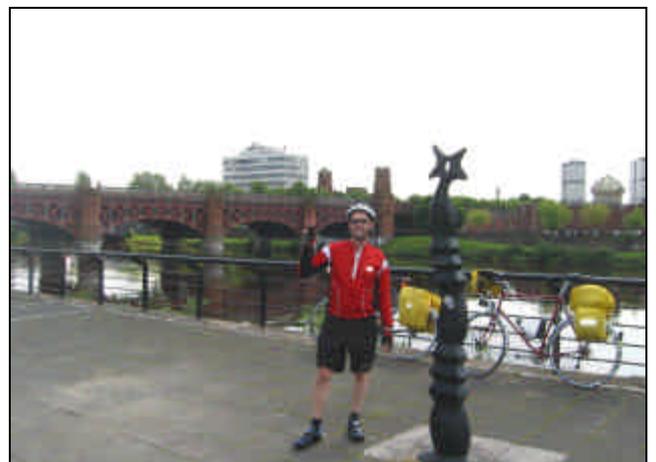
60 miles tomorrow to Lockerbie. Some serious uphill to cope with.



Early morning, near Luss on Loch Lomond

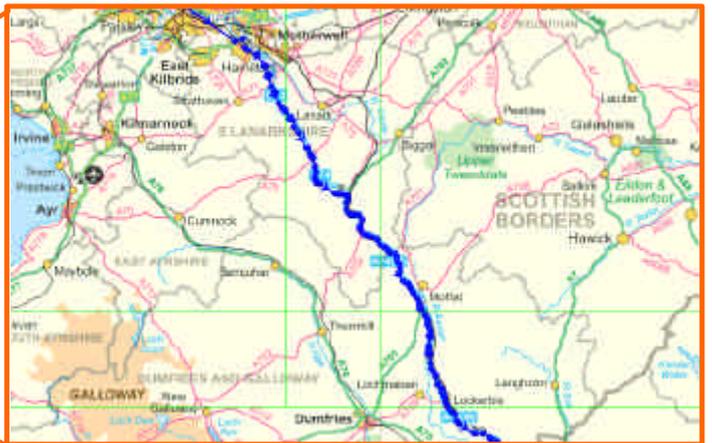


400 miles - Glasgow



The odd looking post on the quayside in these photographs is one of several styles of milepost erected by Sustrans along the National Cycle Network. There are around 1000 of these posts up and down the country.

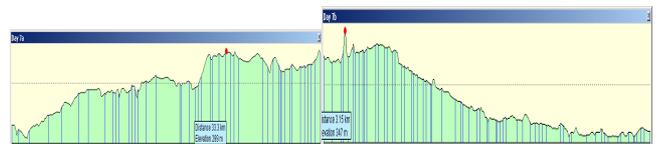
We used the signed NCN route to cross Glasgow, in an almost traffic-free environment using towpaths, riverside paths, parkland and a disused railway line..



Daily Statistics	
Distance Today	61 miles
Total Distance	380 miles
Distance to Go	555 miles
Weather	Sunny, with headwind

Other Statistics	
Max speed so far - Joe	36 mph
Max speed so far - Rob	38 mph
Max height today	1,055 ft approx
Max height so far	1,300 ft approx
Today's average speed ⁵	9.3 mph

Daily Route Profile



Up, up, up, up, down

Great weather again, sun pretty much all day long, which is just as well since it would have been a real struggle (for me) if we had had to do it in rain. The first 35 miles had about 30 miles uphill, to peaks of 550ft, 850ft, 1000ft and then 1055ft. Even on the downhill sections you had to pedal or the headwind would stop you (I tried). But later in the day around 2pm it got easier as the wind decreased and it became more downhill. Scenery was mostly rolling hills, with grass and trees rather than heather. We really have left the Highlands.

Nature Note: Strange looking bird (it probably thought I looked strange as well with my bright red nose & white thighs). It had a black head, white body, bright orange / red beak, probably webbed feet. Looked a bit like a big curlew but with a straight beak. It was at an elevation of 1000ft. Anyone know what was?
 Food mashed potatoes last night! Probably

will go for a pasta tonight. FWIW today I have eaten so far cornflakes, toast, scrambled eggs, scone, toast with cheese & beans, cheese sandwich, 7 bananas, raisins. That's a pretty typical day before the evening meal. And I think I have lost weight as well!

72 miles tomorrow to Shap, longest day so far. Some more very serious uphills .

Also, Rob's friend Steve joins us for a couple of days. Rob has explained to me that Steve is like a cross between Lance Armstrong & Tyler Hamilton (which either means he can really cycle or he can really cycle & has a rock chick mistress and takes drugs). In either case he can get the beers in when he arrives at the pub first. And also order Rob's usual dinner of a hot curry or Sezchuan Chinese & then late night kebabs⁶

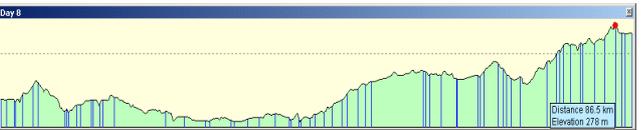
5 That's Joe's not Rob's - but normally it's more like 12. Shows how hilly it was
 6 It was established early on that Rob does not "DO" Indian, Chinese, Thai or any of that foreign stuff - hence the goading



Daily Statistics

Distance Today	55 miles
Total Distance	435 miles
Distance to Go	500 miles
Weather	Sunny almost all day

Daily Route Profile



I am not a banana fiend

I'd just like to correct something I wrote yesterday, I only ate 2 bananas, not 7! That's the vagaries of handwriting recognition on a Palm Pilot for you.

Steve (a.k.a. Lance) joined us today, like Rob he unfairly has the edge on me due to much smaller gears on his bike and much bigger thighs. He also disappointed me due to a complete failure to bring any hot rock chicks with him.

Great weather again, sun pretty much all day long, and a gradual climb up to 900ft, in two stages, up to 400ft (with a 600ft rise before that) over the first 45 miles to Penrith, and then up to 900ft to Shap for the last 10 miles.

Nature Note: I am reliably informed that the strange looking bird I saw yesterday was an Oyster Catcher. I can't see it's going to do very

Other Statistics

Max speed so far - Joe	36 mph
Max speed so far - Rob	38 mph
Max height today	920 ft approx
Max height so far	1,300 ft approx
Today's average speed	10.1 (9.3) mph



Leaving Scotland behind at Gretna

well 1000ft up a hill miles from the sea. 400+ miles and I haven't seen any oysters up in the hills for it to eat. Maybe they are hiding just like the bunnies.

Good news, we gained 17 miles today due to a combination of a spreadsheet error and a short-cut. The short cut was a bit scary, 5 miles on the A74 which was just like cycling on the hard shoulder of the M6 (not that I've tried that but it's no exaggeration) I'm amazed bikes are allowed on it. Anyway, that meant only 55 miles to cycle instead of 72, and 17 miles off the overall total.

Curtains. .. My *English* B&B room has proper thick curtains - result! What's the deal with Scottish curtains ?

Tan lines... I am getting some unusual tan marks. Because I am wearing cycling mitts the top two joints of my fingers are getting tanned, the rest of my hand including the bottoms of my fingers are white, then my arms are brown except where my watch is. SWMBO tells me I must rectify this situation.

Dinnerpasta with chicken last night. I expect we'll all have big steaks tonight, I understand Steve is a steak fiend.

FWIW today I have eaten so far - Weetabix, toast, scrambled eggs, a scone, jacket potato with cheese & beans, raisins, apricots, Victoria sponge. Dinner still to come :-)

65 miles approx tomorrow to Preston, I'm hoping there will be some good downhill stretches as we are 900ft up here to start.



Oyster Catcher



400 miles - Carlisle



Joe satisfying his craving for Victoria Sponge at The Walkers' Tea Room at Shap



Daily Statistics	
Distance Today	70 miles
Total Distance	505 miles
Distance to Go	430 miles
Weather	Overcast, no wind

Daily Route Profile



Just read the map

Those are approximately the words Rob said to me after I zoomed past a turning I should have taken. Though I only went 50yds past it before the GPS indicated I should have turned and noticed I was off course and then saw that Rob was waving. Steve (a.k.a. Lance A) missed it completely and had to cycle an extra 10 miles before he caught up with us again.

Where are we? Preston (which appears to be closed, how am I meant to buy my daily 2 bottles of Lucozade?)

Weather was very good again (a.k.a. not raining), but mostly overcast for the entire day in contrast to an over optimistic forecast of "sunny"

Started off with a 300ft climb to 1050ft (immediately after breakfast.....ooooouch), then several more climbs (after some dips) back to

Other Statistics	
Max speed so far - Joe	41.7mph Wow!
Max speed so far - Rob	43.8mph Wow!
Max height today	1050 ft approx
Max height so far	1,300 ft approx
Today's average speed	10.6 (10.1)

the same level. I was shocked when Rob⁷ had to get off and push on one "short sharp climb" (obviously I had to do the same) but Lance (a.k.a. Steve) just powered on through and up. That was the first 25 miles, the next 45 were undulating between 50ft and 150ft and a whole lot easier. ... But 45 miles is still 45 miles especially after 25 miles of hill climbs.

Best sight today - a Hawker Hurricane fighter in the valley - fabulous.

7 About 150 yards - and I did no more walking all the way to Land's End (Rob added this footnote)



Rob, Joe and Steve, high above Tebay in Cumbria

Most politically controversial sight - a lot of windfarm generators, completely stationary that won't boil a lot of kettles.

Nature Note: One dead bunny, lots of crows, a zebra, a curlew, some llamas, a hare, a West African Ankuli (sp?, big horned jobby), some Bactrian camels, a hedgehog (dead), house martins.

A very good day all-in-all, even if 70 miles overall made it the longest day so far. Went over the halfway point today, plus passed the 500 mile marker. The zebra was cool. And the camels. Llamas, pah! 10 a penny.

Route was mostly tiny little country lanes, very pleasant to cycle on. In contrast to a few miles on the A6 that weren't.

Tan lines... getting worse. SWMBO will not be amused.

Diet today: Porridge, toast, scrambled eggs, a scone, tuna melt ciabatta, raisins, apricots, banana, Victoria sponge, bruschetta, lasagne, bottle of wine.

Lap dancing: Rob pretended not to notice he was guiding us towards a lap dancing establishment even though the huge neon sign over the door read "Lap Dancing". A real clue I would have thought especially for someone that is a whizz at reading maps. And I'm not even going to mention the Latvian waitresses last night.

This evening we were joined for dinner by Rob's daughter, Tamsin, who delivered our parcels of fresh kit ... and took away our not-so-fresh kit to post home.

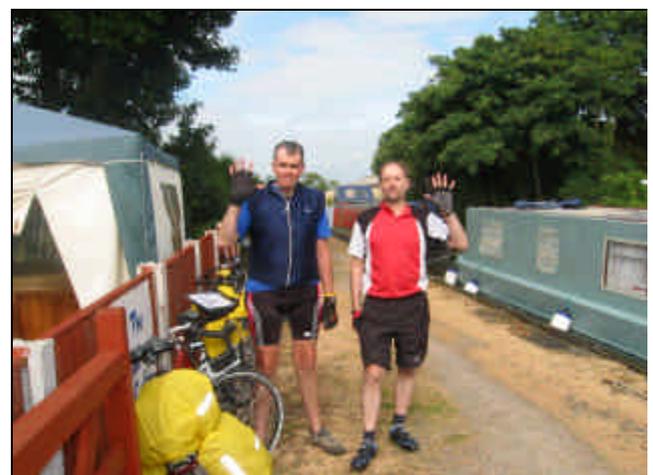
73 miles approx tomorrow to Whitchurch.



Half-way (approx) at Lancaster



Zebra, camel, llama etc



500 miles, 5 miles North of Preston (Steve took this picture)



Daily Statistics	
Distance Today	71 miles
Total Distance	576 miles
Distance to Go	359 miles
Weather	Overcast, 2 hrs sun

Daily Route Profile



You just cannot beat a zebra

After yesterday's triumph with the zebra there is of course no way I can trump that. (And no, we didn't pass a zoo). We did see 2 elephants (painted on the back of a van), and there is a picture of a lion in the rather grand entrance hall of our B&B but I don't suppose they count?

Our B&B is amazing, Queen Anne vintage, it's a small manor house, wood panelling everywhere. My bedroom is about 20ft square at least.

Weather was very good again, mostly overcast except for last 2 sunny hours.

Nature Note: No more zebras, but the bunnies are back. Also interesting to see how farms have changed just over the last couple of days,

Other Statistics	
Max speed so far - Joe	41.7 mph
Max speed so far - Rob	43.8 mph
Max height today	520 ft approx
Max height so far	1,300 ft approx
Today's average speed	9.9 (10.6)



Crossing the River Mersey between Widnes and Runcorn

from mostly grazing sheep or cows, to a lot of arable, barley, wheat etc.

A really hard day for me, 71 miles was just about my limit as you can tell by the drop in average speed today, the last 10 miles were really tough. Rob of course was OK. Must try and eat more on the move, Rob continually nibbles malt loaf. But we also need to stop more often, difficult today as there was nowhere between 20 & 40 miles.

Tan lines... not too bad, only sunny the last 2 hours.

Diet today: Cornflakes, toast, scrambled eggs, sausage & mash, raisins, beef stew, saute potatoes.

Today's Route: Was not good but unavoidable, a lot of urban sprawl to start, and patches of unpleasant single & dual carriageway with huge lorries coming uncomfortably close. That should be the end of that though, mostly country lanes from now on.

65 miles approx tomorrow to Bromyard, and then Bristol on Sunday.



The B&B House at Whitchurch



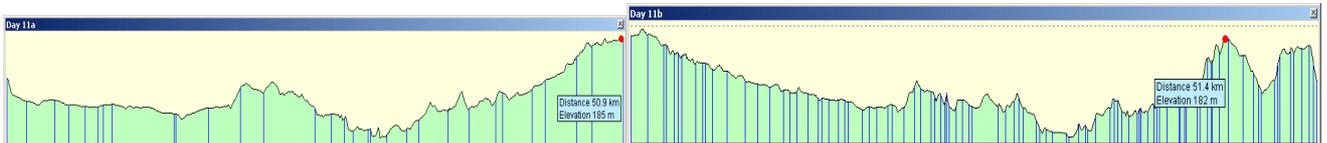
.... and the cycle parking facility!



Daily Statistics

Distance Today	72 miles
Total Distance	649 miles
Distance to Go	286 miles
Weather	Overcast, 2 hrs drizzle

Daily Route Profile



Other Statistics

Max speed so far - Joe	41.7 mph
Max speed so far - Rob	43.8 mph
Max height today	?520 ft approx
Max height so far ⁸	1,300 ft approx
Today's average speed	10.3 (9.9)

<fx Brummie accent>
Blimey we're in the Midlands

Yes it's official we are now in the Midlands according to a sign I saw at a garden centre. How did that happen ? Seems only like minutes ago we were cycling across some Scottish blasted heath or fighting off the Loch Ness monster.

It was a real roller coaster ride this afternoon, except I wasn't coasting up, more like gasping or walking.

Our B&B tonight is really nice, we are striking it lucky so far apart from the one exception a few days ago. It's a converted barn in beautiful quiet countryside at the bottom of a small valley which means a 400ft rise to start in the first 800yds in the morning. That will be

a "walker" for me I think.

Nature Note: Fox ran right in front of us just as we started out this morning. Also saw two really big, big bird hawky things later. And some bunnies for the aforementioned animals to eat.

A much better day for me riding-wise even

⁸ Not going to mention that again, it wont be beaten.

though it was the same distance as yesterday, I wasn't nearly as tired at the end. Average speed was slightly up. Better timed stops and more nibbles en route caused that, I think it was equally hilly to yesterday.

Tan lines... no change (no sun)

Diet today: Toast, scrambled eggs, jacket potato, 2 eccles cakes, Mars bar, toasted tea cake, soup, trout & veg & chips.

Today's Route: Excellent. Lots of tiny almost sub-single lane, country lanes. But still quite a lot of hills to climb, Every time there was a dip it seemed there was an equal or worse punishing rise later.

70 miles approx tomorrow to chez Joe's Brother in Bristol.

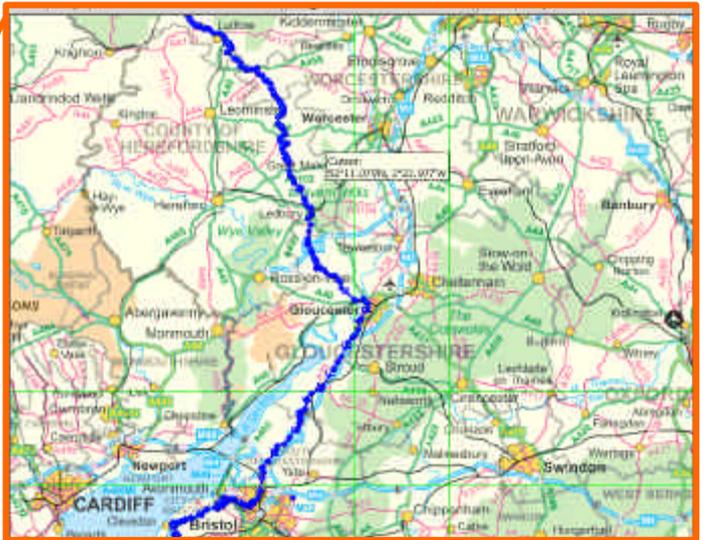


A typical lane on our route - this one is parallel to the M74 between Glasgow and Lockerbie



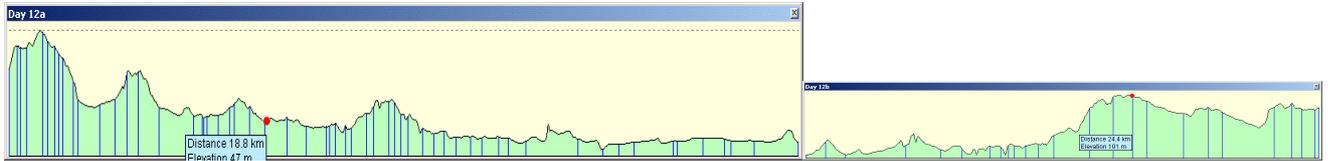
600 miles - Shrewsbury





Daily Statistics	
Distance Today	67 miles
Total Distance	712 miles
Distance to Go	223 miles
Weather	Overcast, no rain

Daily Route Profile



<fx chewing straw>

Ooh arr me dear we're in the West Country pass me a pasty

Well we are in Bristol anyway, taking advantage of my brother and his wife's hospitality. Thanks Pete & Jules. Living near Reading I never even dreamed I'd arrive at his house by bike, let alone via John O'Groats!

Nature Note: I understand that the really big, big bird hawky things I saw yesterday were buzzards. And also saw some kestrels today. hovering above fields. But not a lot else, we were on busy roads for a lot of the day.

A good day today especially as the mileage was 5 below our guesstimate of 72 at 67 (no, really?) Route was good, some hills to start and then after 20 miles several miles of downhill and then about 30 miles of mostly flat. Not that

Other Statistics	
Max speed so far - Joe	41.7 mph
Max speed so far - Rob	43.8 mph
Max height today	600 ft approx
Today's average speed	10.5 (10.3)

good scenically though, hopefully will be better tomorrow.

Diet today: Porridge, toast, scrambled eggs, eccles cake, scone, potato wedges, apricots, cake, pasta, fruit strudel.

65 miles approx tomorrow to Taunton.



700 miles - Stone, N of Bristol (Rob waited in the bus shelter)



Arriving at Chez Joe's Brother in Bristol



Daily Statistics	
Distance Today	57 miles
Total Distance	770 miles
Distance to Go	165 miles
Weather	Sunny, chilly wind

Daily Route Profile



Map 1 - GPS 1

Due to operator error the mid section of today's route was omitted from my GPS, which, much to Rob's amusement, meant I went slightly off course after ineptly following the map (even though I did notice thanks to the GPS and turned around). However later it stopped me zooming a mile or more down the hill into Taunton, unlike Rob, who then had to cycle up the hill from the town centre to tonight's excellent B&B. It's an old, pretty and immaculately appointed farmhouse, bizarrely in the middle of a modern housing estate.

Rob also broke a promise today, he started a "conversation" with the guy at SJS Cycles in Bridgewater about their delivery charges despite promising not to do so. Bad Rob.

On the subject of cyclists, after seeing v few over the past few days, we saw 4 LEJOGers

Other Statistics	
Max speed so far - Joe	41.7 mph
Max speed so far - Rob	43.8 mph
Max height today	350 ft approx
Today's average speed	10.1 (10.5)
Flies swallowed - Joe	2
Flies swallowed - Rob	1

today (two on a tandem). We talked to a couple of them, these guys are doing impressive mileage, in the region of 100 miles a day. Probably we'll see more tomorrow, I would guess it's a combination of the smaller choice of routes once you get towards LE, plus people generally starting out on weekends.

Phil & Jenny⁹ - sorry we won't be able to stop

9 Phil & Jenny are friends of Joe's, a close relative of theirs has a tearshop near Exeter

off at the teashop, it's too far off the route. And it would also be too dangerous. Both of us carry cycling multi-tools, which have the usual bicycle related implements such as a range of Allen keys, screwdrivers, chain splitter etc.

And a JOGLER's sharp knife, for the sole purpose of stabbing one's companion should they even suggest a diversion of more than 200 metres from the route unless for the express reason of shortening the route in time or distance or avoiding a hill. (I have managed to negotiate with Rob for a 50 metre extension to this distance should Liz H be involved)

Nature Note: Saw another zebra but this one was a crossing so I don't suppose it counts?

A really good day today. Weather mostly sunny, much of route flat, relatively short route, though with a cold & strong headwind for 10-15 or so miles which probably accounts for my average speed being slightly down.

Then our route swung more southerly and the wind was no longer a problem. Took a shortcut today to avoid a hill, a local cyclist suggested and then led us on it, very welcome.

Forecast for rest of the week is very good except for Wednesday which looks like rain.

Diet today: toast, then more toast, jacket potato with cheese & beans, Mars bar, apricots, penguin (the chocolate variety), whitebait, 1/2 lamb (Rob had the other half), veg.

65 miles approx tomorrow to Okehampton.

Contrasts - crossing the Avon on the M5 bridge at Gordano and an overgrown lane in N Somerset





Daily Statistics	
Distance Today	53 miles
Total Distance	822 miles
Distance to Go	113 miles
Weather	O'cast. some sun, wind



<fx Humphrey Bogart accent>
There ain't no gold in them thar hills

Devon and Cornwall are the hilliest parts of the JOGLE/LEJOG route, and we started to see that today. As a result, my average speed was down significantly and it will probably stay that way. Especially tomorrow when we expect bad weather and a long journey, Maybe 70 miles, with hills and rain. not looking forward to it.

Nature Note: Had a wren flying in front of me, a heron overhead, & a bunny in one of the lanes we cycled down. But not much else.

Went off our planned route for today to avoid the main roads and down some tiny lanes instead. Lanes so far off the beaten track they had grass growing across most of the width. Consequently saw hardly anyone else, just saw

Other Statistics	
Max speed so far - Joe	41.7 mph
Max speed so far - Rob	43.8 mph
Max height today	726 ft approx
Today's average speed	8.5 (10.1)
Flies swallowed - Joe	3
Flies swallowed - Rob	1

one other lone (female) cyclist doing LEJOG. At the end of the route had some nasty hills, including a 720ft monster 2 miles from the finish just when it looked like it would be downhill from then on. I walked up that for 1/3 mile.

Diet today: porridge, toast, scrambled eggs, ham egg & chips, fruit bar, apricots, doughnut,

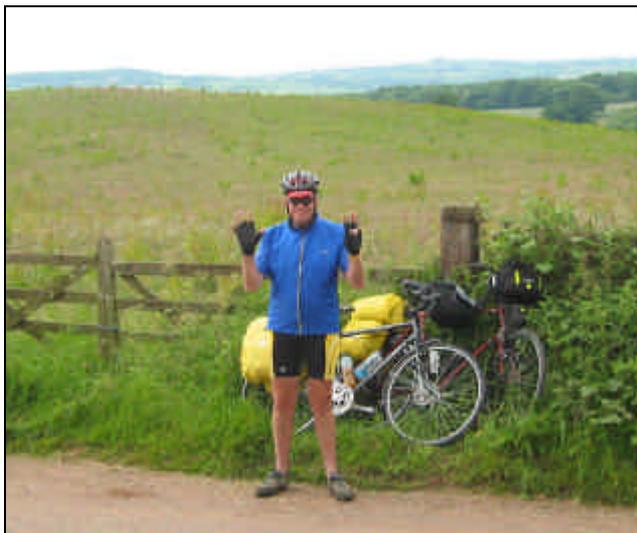
fish & chips, apple pie & custard.

70 miles approx tomorrow to just west of Bodmin..... In the rain..... With hills.... Could be a late finish.

Footnote : *Mrs Trellis¹⁰ of Stratford-upon-Avon (formerly N Wales) has written in and requested less (a.k.a. none) news of Liz H and more nature notes. I shall try to accommodate. But haven't seen a zebra for ages.*



Rob stocks up with yet another Soreen Malt Loaf at Wellington



800 miles

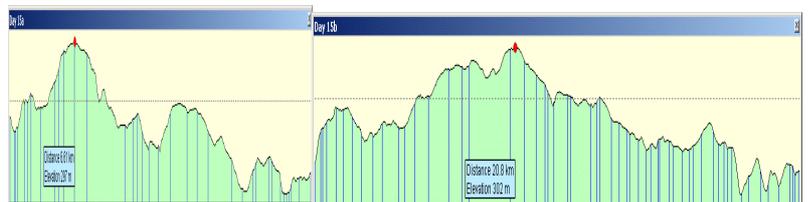


10 Aficionados of BBC Radio 2's "I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue" will be aware of Mrs Trellis who writes in to the show each week from her home in North Wales (but is in this context Rob's wife, Philippa)



Daily Statistics	
Distance Today	52 miles
Total Distance	875 miles
Distance to Go	60 miles
Weather	Sun, cloud, showers

Daily Route Profile	
---------------------	--



Cycling Companions Confidently Career into Cornwall Counting-down to Conclusion

Sun/cloud & slight showers in the morning, overcast with increasing drizzle in the afternoon getting rainy for the last few minutes. Very strong head wind most of the day.

We entered Cornwall at 11am, just as a pair of Aussies on fully loaded bikes were going the other way (doing LEJOG), no doubt taking the opportunity to check out their newly acquired domain. "Good on yer mate, yer nearly done" said one of them to me in strine.

Went off our planned route for the start of the day because of a nearby, nearly flat route alongside the railway, a good start for the first 8 or so miles. Then it got hilly, which led to an

Other Statistics	
Max speed so far - Joe	41.7 mph
Max speed so far - Rob	43.8 mph
Max height today	1017 ft approx
Today's average speed	8.0 (8.5)
Flies swallowed - Joe	3
Flies swallowed - Rob	2

average speed even lower than yesterday. Typical routine was: zoom down dip, wheel rims glowing red from the pressure on the brakes, crawl up other side of dip, face glowing red from the pressure on the legs.

Then up into the downs, getting to more than 1000ft up, right next to a wind farm. As you might expect, it was incredibly windy,

and right in our faces for much of the day, only the second day with significant headwind. One gust nearly blew me to a standstill whilst going downhill at 10mph.

Nature Note: [*especially extended edition for Mrs Trellis*] We are staying on a working farm, 4 miles west of Bodmin in a very pleasant farmhouse B&B, so plenty of animals to see. About 50 sheep plus 2 pygmy goats (Billie & Bertie apparently) on the front lawn, cows & calves in the fields. Two orphan bottle-fed lambs in the barn. As we arrived the wind was so strong a buzzard was hovering overhead the lane without effort.

Nearly forgot, stopped and took picture of Camel.

Saw more bunnies, plus lots of different small birds, along the lines of chaffinches, greenfinches, etc. And a Song Thrush (well, it was a thrush and it was singing). The lanes we cycled down were lined with numerous flowers, very few of which I could identify, but including thousands of purple foxgloves and yellow buttercups.

Diet today: toast, scrambled eggs, 4 penguins, 2 fruit bars, no apricots today!, beans & cheese on toast, chicken leg & veg, mixed fruit tart with Cornish clotted cream, cheese & biscuits.

Rob and I have identical food objectives for tomorrow: Cornish pasty for lunch and cream tea in the afternoon.

50 miles approx tomorrow to Penzance.



Livestock at the St Wenn B&B Farm



..... another Camel



Daily Statistics	
Distance Today	49 miles
Total Distance	924 miles
Distance to Go	10 miles
Weather	Drizzle then overcast

Daily Route Profile



A Day Of Two Halves

Until the last 3 hours, grey, drizzle/rain, misty, windy. Really depressing. Then much brighter but still overcast from about 2pm onwards.

Two entirely different sections today. The morning, 30 miles, was truly awful. Certainly for me, easily the worst period since the first afternoon. It started with perhaps a dozen or so small but very nasty hills, in fine to heavy persistent drizzle, so it took us nearly an hour to do just the first 6 miles. Then we got into some bigger hills, and then joined the A30. This was without doubt the most dangerous and unfriendly section of road of the entire journey, partly due to the road but mostly really bad drivers. Hats off to those excellent Scottish lorry drivers 2 weeks ago. Half way along the A30 section, I took a diversion to escape it, even though it was longer and hillier. Then back onto the A30, by now a dual

Other Statistics	
Max speed so far - Joe	41.7 mph
Max speed so far - Rob	43.8 mph
Max height today	720 ft approx
Today's average speed	7.6 (8.0)
Flies swallowed - Joe	3
Flies swallowed - Rob	2

carriageway, still with barely a hard shoulder, and also the Redruth bypass at this point.

To show how severe the hills were (for me), in the morning I would guess that I walked up as many hills as in the rest of the trip in total.

Then we went into Redruth for lunch, a disappointing experience. Little choice of cafes (2), neither that good. And they even created extra needless hills in Redruth by their bizarre

road system. From now on Redruth will forever be known to me as the armpit of Cornwall.

After we left Redruth for the next 20 or so miles to Penzance, we started climbing again, into increasingly severe mist, but then at the peak at 700ft plus around 5 miles in, it cleared quite quickly and unexpectedly as we started to drift downhill consistently, towards the coast. So the afternoon got better and better and we eventually appeared at the coast opposite St Michael's Mount, slightly hidden in the sea mist, with a 3 mile flat ride to Penzance and our B&B.

Nature Note: None, it was probably sheltering in the hedgerows from the dire weather. Though I did hear some of it being shot, off in the distance.

Diet today: Frosties, toast, scrambled eggs, 1 penguin, 1 banana, pasty, cream tea, spare ribs, chicken & potatoes.

One Giant Leap For Mankind: Rob sent me a text today, astounding ¹¹

11 miles approx tomorrow to LAND'S END!!!



900 miles



Objective achieved - a Cream Tea !

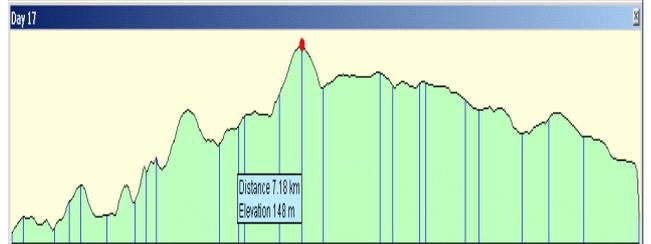
¹¹ Rob's view is that phones are for speaking into, and then only when absolutely necessary - the text was because Joe must have been cowering in the gutter, sheltering from a lorry, and couldn't answer his phone.



Daily Statistics

Distance Today	10 miles
Total Distance	935 miles
Distance to Go	0 miles
Weather	Overcast but warm

Daily Route Profile



!!!! Mission Accomplished !!!!

A fantastic feeling to cruise into Land's End this morning after an easy 10 miler.

Diet this morning : Frosties, toast, scrambled eggs, carrot cake, fish & chips.

Where are we ? On the train home from Penzance (no bicycle booking or ticket problems)

Thanks for all the messages of support that kept me going through the one or two bad sections. And there really were only a very few sections where the going was *really* hard and that was usually if there were no pub or cafe stops for more than 30 miles, or on very busy roads. More psychological hardship on those parts than physical, in either case.

Other Statistics

Max speed so far - Joe	41.7 mph
Max speed so far - Rob	43.8 mph
Max height today	720 ft approx
Today's average speed	7.6 (8.0)
Flies swallowed - Joe	3
Flies swallowed - Rob	2

A very special thanks to all those who sponsored me & supported both of us throughout the trip, especially of course Mrs Trellis and SWMBO¹³

¹³ This person being, of course, Joe's wife Bev



*Journey's end (the official photographer at LE took this one)**

* For the eagle-eyed, you will notice Joe's lack of luggage on the bike as we were going to Land's End and then back to Penzance he left his gadget storage facility (a.k.a. panniers) at the B&B and retrieved them later. Rob took his panniers to Land's End, although he did have less luggage, and significantly fewer gadgets and chargers, than Joe for the entire journey.

Afterword - Joe



From Joe

"Would I do it again?" I have been asked. No" is my answer.

But not because I didn't enjoy it, just because it was a great but (for me anyway) a one-off experience. I would certainly recommend anyone to give it a go. As has been said several times in similar accounts, the hardest part about doing it is actually setting a date and going for it. Once you have a date set and you have told lots of people you are going to do it, that will act as an incentive to get some miles in. And you don't have to be particularly fit, just reasonably so.

Some things I'd do differently/some random advice, in no particular order :

Make sure I had lower gears on my bike.

Use Rohloff gears if I could afford them.

Eat malt loaf en route

Book accommodation in advance if you are doing it during tourist season or even if not unless you are camping or have good help at home to try and find something near to your route. There were lots of "No Vacancy" signs in Scotland and this was early June. And I wouldn't have fancied, in bad weather, cycling speculatively down country lanes in the hope the B&B sign was still valid and they had a vacancy. And what would you do if there were

2 or 3 of you and only 1 or 2 spaces?

Use www.justgiving.com for sponsorship (much easier than passing a bit of paper round and no hassle collecting money)

Bring a GPS even if just to check your position on the map - we were never more than half a mile off our route at any point. Several accounts on the net report people cycling an extra 10 or 20 miles, and/or cycling in large circles, because they got lost, sometimes without realising. Rob is a map-reading expert but even he went off track (only by 1/2 mile but in two cases some way down a hill!) a couple of times, the GPS stopped me, a map-reading duffer, doing that, otherwise I'd still be out there somewhere.

Direction - LEJOG or JOGLE ? (most people do LEJOG) - In My Humble Opinion it really doesn't matter a whole lot, certainly the fabled 'prevalent' Westerly winds weren't. I'd say look at where you live, and try and finish closer to that. I am so glad we finished and then were home quickly. A day and a half getting back from John O'Groats would have been a real anti-climax, better to get that out of the way while fresh at the start.

Also, much less competition for scarce bike spaces on the Inverness train going North. We met someone at Inverness who had had to pay a taxi from Wick to Inverness because the train spaces were booked for the next 3 or 4 days! Get it Sorted, Scot Rail!

And lastly "Just Do It" !

Cheers

Joe
Wokingham, June 2005

Afterword - Rob



From Rob

"Would I do it again?" "No" - for no other reason than it was "one of those things you just have to do" - and I've now done it.

The experience was terrific - to see the country unroll before you on a bike, over nearly 1000 miles, is great ... from the austere far North of Scotland through a multitude of terrains and landscapes right down to Cornwall.

I'm glad we chose to do JOGLE, not just for the reasons at the start of this story but because the increasingly sparsely populated area of Northern Scotland would have been (I think) less welcoming than the green beauty of Devon and then Cornwall as the ride finished.

How tough was it? - some steep hills, but for a reasonably fit cyclist nothing daunting, and our fitness improved as each day passed on the ride.

What would I have done differently? Not a lot.

Taken a spare pair of shoes! My attempts at minimalist luggage were successful, but "clopping around like Dobbin" in the evenings, as Joe described it, in cleated cycling shoes was mildly annoying.

Slightly wider handlebars on my bike would have probably been a little more comfortable, although the machine behaved impeccably.

If I had been on my own I would have taken a

GPS, but **only** to check grid reference positions against my maps. (I can hear Joe clapping his hands together at this admission!)

.oOo.

The secret of a successful E2E is undoubtedly planning - that was much of the fun for me.

From a few sessions with Joe and numerous e-mails with route ideas and maps, to meeting Doc Martin in the pub to share route experiences from his 2004 LEJOG, and then creating the map extracts and the Road Book.

I must mention the bike again - being a bit of a bike nut (currently 14 machines in my garage) part of the pleasure was building the bike for the trip. Acquired for £60 on ebay, I stripped it to the bare frame, had it blasted and powder coated before re-assembling with some new components and many of the original parts. I must make special mention of Paul at the bike shop who built a superb pair of new wheels, as well as giving me loads of advice (and selling me some parts too!)

Joe is a great cycling companion ... and it was good to have Steve along for a couple of days.

This journal started out on the first day or two as being just a way of Joe telling his pals where he was (and using his gadgets) ... but as you will have seen it developed into something that made the ride even more fun. My humble role has been little more than to compile the thing in presentable form, for you dear reader.

What's the next adventure?

Having done **THE** E2E - I fancy cycling to the South of France, via Eurotunnel (yes, you can do it with a bike) to Calais, to Reims and then almost due South to Avignon, before turning right to finish around Montpellier*

Rob
Stratford-upon-Avon, June 2005

* Hopefully Mrs Trellis isn't reading this, she may have other ideas.

The Accommodation

WICK	Belhaven Bed & Breakfast Belhaven, Port Dunbar, WICK KW1 4JJ	Phone 01955 603411
BRORA	Selkie Bed & Breakfast Sumunder Villa, Harbour Rd, BRORA KW9 6WF	Phone 01408 621717
BEAULY	Ellangowan, Croyard Road, Beauly IV4 7DJ	Phone 01463 78273
FORT WILLIAM	Waterfront Lodge, The Underwater Centre An Ard, Fort William PH33 6AN	Phone 01397 703786
TARBET	Not recommended	
HAMILTON	Clydesdale Hotel, 12 Clydesdale St, Hamilton ML3 0DP	Phone 01698 891897
LOCKERBIE	Rosehill GH, 9 Carlisle Rd, Lockerbie DG11 2DR	Phone 01576 202378
SHAP	The Greyhound, Shap, Penrith CA10 3PW	Phone 01931 716474
PRESTON	Ashwood Hotel, 11-13 Fishergate, Preston PR1 8JB	Phone 01772 203302
WHITCHURCH	Ash Hall, Ash Magna, Whitchurch SY13 4DL	Phone 01948 663151
BROMYARD	Old Cow Shed, Avenbury, Bromyard, HR7 4LA.	Phone 01885 482384
BRISTOL	Not applicable, Joe's brother	
TAUNTON	Yallands Farmhouse, Staplegrove, Taunton, TA2 6PZ	Phone 01823 278979
OKEHAMPTON	Meadowlea GH 65 Station Road Okehampton EX20 1EA	Phone 01837 53200
St WENN	Tregolls Farm, St. Wenn, Bodmin, PL30 5PG	Phone 01208 812154
PENZANCE	Woodstock GH, 29 Morrab Road, Penzance, TR18 4EZ	Phone 01736 369049

Miscellaneous Overall Statistics

Max Speed Joe :	41.7 mph
Max Speed Rob :	44.2 mph ¹
Max Height overall	1 300 ft
Flies swallowed en-route: Joe	4
Flies swallowed en-route: Rob:	2
Malt loaves eaten by Rob	8
Punctures :	0
Liz Hurley Sightings :	1 (details available upon request)
Poached eggs eaten by Rob :	26
Zebras :	1
Camels :	3
No of times Joe used biggest gears :	2
No of times Joe wished he had smaller gears :	1,648,302 (approx)
Surprises :	Green-ness of route through Glasgow, and consideration given to cyclists by Scottish drivers.
Best Telling Off :	Mrs McKay (at Beaulieu) to Joe for not eating all of his porridge.
Best Gadget :	The GPS (sponsored by Duracell judging by the number of batteries it ate)
Most crunchy towels :	B&B at Tarbet
Best B&B :	Taunton (St Wenn a very close second)
Luxury item - Joe :	Spare pair of shoes
Luxury item - Rob :	Matchbox sized MP3 player (no spare shoes)
Gadgets - Joe :	5
Gadgets - Rob :	1 ²
Text messages sent/received - Joe :	13,289 (approx)
Text messages sent/received - Rob :	1

The Bikes

Joe :	Dawes Ultra Galaxy, 2004 model
Rob :	Dawes Galaxy, c1978 - rebuilt on the original frame with numerous new components

.... and finally, if you are wondering about the zebras etc . . . Under some pressure to come up with something better than 'big hawky things' and 'bunny rabbits', I couldn't believe my good luck when I spotted a circus just setting up. The thought occurred that there would be something out of the ordinary, and sure enough there were! I managed to persuade the owner to let me look around, and got pictures of a zebra, camels, llamas, and a huge African ox. Most people thought I was hallucinating until I produced the pictures! ³

¹ Not quite sure if this increase counts as it was achieved on the journey from Land's End back to Penzance, an increase of 0.4 mph

² Actually a watch but because it gave a pulse reading Joe insisted that it be called a gadget

³ The strange cast on the pictures is due to the fact they were under a coloured tent.