

Friday 8th May 2015

Day 0

Train from Worcester - Cheltenham - Plymouth - penance

Arrived at 15:15, had to cycle 10 miles to land end, and struggled after 6 hours on train. Weather was misty with the wind against us.

After lands end, on to Yha at St Just. Why is the yha so full of oaps ? Nice meal in the evening and a couple of beers for me!

7:30 for breakfast tomorrow then we start proper. Nerves starting to kick in...

Mileage: 15

Ascent: 365m

Descent: 288m



Saturday 9th May

Day 1

We're on our way!!!

Started the day with a full Cornish, which we shouldn't do! Slight drizzle, met a support crew for a supported group leaving the next day, taking 14th days.

Forgot to start the GPS for the first 3 miles. Wind behind us this morning so flew into Penzance. First problem following the coastal cycle path that turns into a gravel path, so had to carry the bikes over a bridge to the a30 to continue. After that, proceeded back up north via Redruth (Tom got first puncture!), but by now the sun was out and no sign of the gusty weather that had been promised. Made good time, bought a pasty at the oldest pasty bakery in the world in Redruth, then up to Goonhavern for a drink.

Stayed on the A39 with great views of Newquay and Paidstow, then down into Wadebridge and finally got to Camelford at 16:15.

Now the first thing to say is that the route was pretty quick - until we came off the main roads after Wadebridge, where the minor roads go up every single 1 in 4 hill there is!

But we made it, first day done, next hilly day tomorrow to look forward to.

Had a shock when we looked at the GPS stats, climb for the day of about 1600m!!!

Mileage: 74

Average: 14.5

Max: 38

Ascent: 1600m

Descent: 1477m



Sunday 10th may

Day 2

Started the day in good spirits (porridge for both of us plus a bacon sarnie for me & fried egg for Tom).

Got away at 9:15, conscious that today would be harder than yesterday, and we would be proved correct.

Once again, made good time but more overcast than yesterday which is probably a good thing... because we now started the relentless up and down. In Cornwall and Devon (crossed the boundary at 10:45, but too late to take a photo as doing 20mph at the time) there is not one piece of flat ground anywhere, it is all either up or down ...

Got to Torrington for lunch, but had trouble finding somewhere, eventually found a pub who would let us take our bikes through to the back, and ended up having a full roast - not ideal halfway through the day, but there is nothing where we are staying tonight, and need to keep fuelled up.

After lunch, more up/down (got overtaken by a cyclist out for the day with no panniers who then refused one HUGE hill that we had no choice about).

Got to South Molton and stocked up with pasties for tonight.

Then had to join the main road to Barnstaple for half a mile which was horrible, more like a motorway. After that, last 15 miles into Bampton was OK, but we were both getting tired so lots of breaks.

One downer at the end of the day, my rear wheel has a slight buckle, so will need to find a bike shop, not sure it will last.

But So far so good, we've survived the first 2 (probably hardest days), not met many cyclists but everyone else we've met have been so friendly and helpful.

More tomorrow, and yes, the ascent for today IS correct!!!

Mileage : 74

Average: 14

Max: 40

Ascent : 1927m

Descent:1993m



Monday 11th May

Day three in the big brother hoose!

Once again, started in good spirits (again? This is getting worrying!) , porridge for breakfast (golden syrup wasn't Tate & Lyle though) but B&B was very nice. So far coping with the mileage & hills, today should be easier, basically hills___flat___hills, didn't tell Tom about the last set of hills, he'll find out soon enough.

Managed to find a local bike shop on the way (run by Ben Turner no less), but wasn't familiar with the type of wheel so was reluctant to start messing with it. Decided to carry on with the wobble and try and fix in Worcester.

After a couple of big hills, joined the A38 into Taunton & then onto Bridgewater. Nice fast road but a bit like a motorway. Then onto the A39 east where we started travelling on flat minor roads across farmland. Sun was beating down by now, so the smell of sun lotion made us feel like we were on holiday. The only drawback with the sun was my favourite bugbear ... flies ... gazillions of them. We were absolutely covered with them, as well as digesting quite a view (at least tom is getting his protein, despite being a veggie!)

Stopped for lunch after 40 miles at Mark, found a lovely pub with a garden, only to discover it's closed on Mondays! Managed to find another one though ...

Then it was back to the road, 33 miles to Keynsham, up the A38 again and then some more big hills finally arriving at 17:15. Thanks to Ruth & Alan for putting us up & cooking for us, it makes a huge difference being able to relax somewhere you know.

Tomorrow back to Worcester to finish off the first 4 days with the promise of a hot tub in the evening!

And now the scores on the doors...

Mileage: 72.6

Max:37

Average:14.8

Ascent: 1100m

Descent: 1160m



Tuesday 12th May

Day 4 ... (No more big brother jokes!)

Good night's sleep for me, woke up to cloud & rain, but forecast is good for later on, more importantly, wind still in the right direction.

This ride was one of our training rides, so no surprises today. Started off early (8:15) to hopefully get back to Worcester in time to get to the bike shop & get the wheel fixed.

Normal start (porridge & toast), then off to Keynsham through the rush hour and then on to the Bristol & Avon cyclepath around Bristol - why can't all cities have a cycle infrastructure like this? From here, underneath the M4 and then the M5 up to the A38 across to Thornbury. The sun was once again breaking through and we were making good time to our lunch stop at Frampton on Severn, along some lovely minor roads doing 20-25mph.

Then after a quick stop at Berkeley, got a sharp pain in my left knee. Applied some gel and took some pills but pain continued.

Got to lunch at 40 miles, arranged to meet Andy W and Steve along the route to Gloucester.

Tom had his favourite nachos, calamari for me, then off to meet Andy & Steve.

Met up with them 5 miles outside Gloucester, then proceeded into Gloucester and then on to Tewkesbury again making good time along the A38 with Andy doing some pacemaking and giving me & Tom a tow,

Took a break in Tewkesbury, stopped off at the abbey to take some photos. At this point, some jobs worth came along and told us that we couldn't "park" our bikes in some reserved parking spaces ... Now, I didn't swear, I wasn't rude, I was maybe a bit sarcastic. I wasn't going to cycle over 300 miles to stop and take a photo and have some idiotic ^&^%&^%&^ tell us to move our bikes!!!

Anyway, back on the road, Andy and Steve escorted us all the way back to Worcester, I got straight into a cold bath, got the rear wheel fixed (thanks to Stuart at Worcester Cycles!), had the BEST spag bol in the world, then over to Warwick & Tracey to sit in the hot tub ...

Tomorrow is going to be hard, as much as mentally because up until now we've been coming home, now we're heading off again. Just hoping that my knee is okay tomorrow, because I'm not giving up!!!!

Mileage:74.1

Average:15.8

Max:33.7

Ascent:600m

Descent:607m



Wednesday 13th May

Day 5

We knew today was going to be hard, not so much physically, but more getting up the motivation to leave home again and start afresh, particularly after the effort of the last 4 days. Got away at about 9:30, Gay was meant to be working, but managed to get back home to see us of which was nice. So said goodbye to her, Ben (good luck!), and the diggy dig dogs, and headed off north through Worcester, up rainbow hill and beyond...

Almost immediately my left knee started to hurt. Popped some more pills but seriously thought that I could not cycle another 700 miles with this pain every time that I rotated the pedals. For inspiration, I imagined what Gay must have gone through giving birth to Tom, so what is a little pain in the knees compared to that? I know it sounds cringy, but you have a lot of time to think sitting on a bike for 6-7 hours a day.

So, got to Droitwich, 10 miles became 20, moods began to lift, and started getting used to the constant pain. Then we got to Stourbridge... Having cycled around Bristol yesterday with its wonderful cycle paths, I suppose we were a bit spoilt, but what complete, raving idiot designed the traffic system around Stourbridge? Whoever it was thought that people only ever travel in boxes with 4 wheels and an engine... It didn't help that my gears were playing up and my knee hurt - luckily Tom was calm and understanding, and I guess that is what this trip is all about. A quick break at Wombourne (Gay, I'm actually asking people in the street for Information!), then onto lunch at Bishops Wood at 42 miles. The barmaid was from Scotland and couldn't believe that not only were we cycling there but that we actually WANTED to cycle there. Mind you, she didn't know where John o groats was...

From here it was North West to Gnosall, then Eccleshall (a lovely little town) and on towards Nantwich.

On another break (we tend to stop at farm gates for calls of nature), we had popped over a gate to relieve ourselves, after which a car pulled over and an elderly lady asked us what we were doing in her field. My normal response is not repeatable, but I was polite, explained the lack of public conveniences in rural England, and told her that we were cycling Lejog for charity. After a few minutes chatting, she ended up giving Tom £5 towards his charities! I must be polite more often ...

Back on the bikes, then eventually into Nantwich and on to the B&B which has to be one of the loveliest and hospitable ones I've stayed in. Will do a full review of where we've stayed later, but this will take some beating.

Onto tomorrow, day 6, I have a total mileage of over 400, 600 to go :-)

Mileage :80.2

Max:32.4

Average :14.4

Ascent:1136m

Descent :1104m



Thursday 14th May

Day 6

Today should be one of the easiest days, not a lot of climbs, but still found it difficult to get going. Knee painful again to start, so still popping pills and hoping it will hold out. Left Nantwich at 9:30 (thanks to Clare and Brandon for your wonderful hospitality) and proceeded north criss-crossing the M6, M56 and M62 heading towards Leigh, crossing the Manchester ship canal via the toll bridge (free for bikes!). Have to admit that the countryside on this leg is not awe inspiring, but it is pretty much flat for the day. Stopped for a pub lunch after 42 miles, locked up bikes and carted the panniers into the pub, only to find it deserted & not doing food... Recommended to try Darby's Deli just down the road, which we did - deli must mean something slightly different up north, but it filled us up.

After lunch, found a bike shop, but no joy, the guy said he couldn't look at it before Saturday, so will have to struggle on for now and hope it lasts. Now north again to Wigan, then onto Lelyand and Preston and the the B&B at Larbreck just 10 miles inland from Blackpool. No food here so had to stock up on snacks from a co-op in Preston. Bought maltesers thinking Tom didn't like them but he does!!!

Pretty uninspiring day all together, strange that in 6 days we have moved across so many counties, dialects and scenery. Tomorrow is going to be harder, aiming for Penrith via Lancaster and Kendal and hills... Wish us luck, and please keep commenting, we do read them and it helps keep us going. Xxx

Mileage: 74

Average: 14.5

Max: 30.8

Ascent: 745m

Descent: 795m



Friday 15th May

Day 7

Lunchtime update.... We're halfway :-):-):-):-):-) Only 500 miles to go....

Evening update

The good...

- This morning the weather was glorious, the start of the ride was nice and flat, the sea to the west, a view of the hills to our east, and a tailwind behind us. Later on, the fantastic views in Cumbria make the climbs and hard work worth it.

The bad...

- My knee... It still hurts, but I'm getting though the day, and I suppose that you're all getting bored with it. I'm not, I feel it every pedal revolution.
- My bike... The gears are getting worse, it's not going to last so it either needs repair or a new wheel first thing tomorrow

The ugly...

- My language and temper loss at my bike. Poor Tom ... Gay knows what I'm like with inanimate objects!
- The roadworks on the A685 controlled by traffic lights went on for such a long way that we didn't have time to get through before meeting a torrent of traffic the other way head on. Once again my language was completely appropriate.

Well we are now over halfway. It's very strange because it doesn't feel like a chore. It is hard work at times, but then you get days like today when the view makes it worth it. Plus we're staying in a pub tonight (Robinson's no less, proper Manchester brewery), so I can have a few pints. Once again, poor Tom...

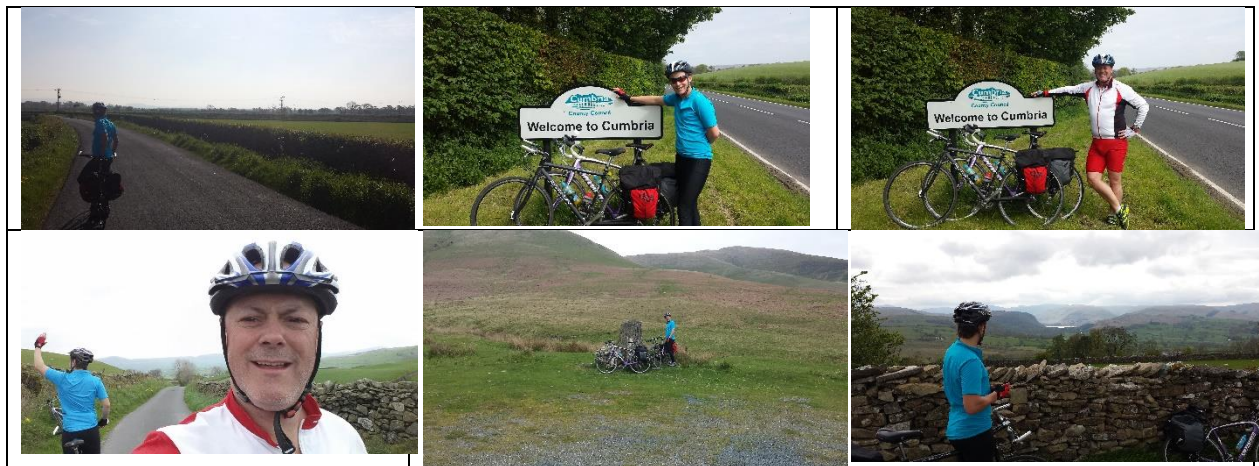
Mileage: 75.2

Average: 13.7

Max: 33.2

Ascent:1496m

Descent:1318m



Saturday 16th May

Day 8

Tom and I are lying here watching Britain's got talent. We're so tired, we can't even change the channel....

Started the day getting into Penrith after finding a local bike shop online. Not sure what was going on, seemed to be lots of cyclists about, and managed to get second in queue for the surgery. Spoke to another cyclist who was doing the coast to coast, so Penrith seems to be the cyclist place to be.

Bad news was that bike could not be repaired, so had to stump up for a new wheel ...

On the bikes at 10:15, bike OK, knee bad (still...) and worst of all, westerly winds forecast all day. Decided to stay on the A6 up to Carlisle to make up time. Had originally planned on using minor roads, but they do slow is down...

Speed was slow but finally got to Carlisle, took a break then on a cycle route to Gretna. Roads were OK until we ran alongside the M6 at which point the headwind really kicked on and we had to just grind along for not much more than 10mph for what seemed like an eternity. What made it worse was the cyclists going in the opposite direction at twice the speed and not even pedaling. Luckily my bike was fine so that was one less thing to worry about.

Finally arrived in Gretna and Scotland!!!! Stopped for some snacks and suddenly no-one could understand a word we said.

Back into the headwind once more, next stop Dumfries at 55 miles. Got back onto the main A road at Annan, but still not managing much speed. With the wind behind us we were making 20-22 Mph earlier in the trip; into the wind we were lucky to hit 14.

Finally got to Dumfries (55 miles) at about 15:15, found a pub that did food... At 17:00. But they let us get some food from the deli over the road and eat it in the pub whilst having a drink and recharging the satnav.

Then onto the centre of Dumfries and onto the A76 towards Thornhill and Sanquhar. At last, rising gradually with the river Nith on our left, sheltered from the westerly wind, speed improved and we got back into a good rhythm and could appreciate the stunning scenery. Got to Sanquhar at 18:15, where most of the locals seen to have been drinking all day!

Today is one of those days to tick off, only 52 miles tomorrow so a late start, with Arran to look forward to on Monday and a reunion with Gay.

Can't believe we've completed 8 days and over 625 miles, 5 days to go...

Mileage; 82.3

Average; 12.5

Max; 32

Ascent; 980m

Descent; 1040m



Sunday 17th May

Day 9

Lunchtime update....

Although only a short day (52 miles), have had the worst weather so far... Torrential rain and headwinds have dampened our enthusiasm, got to Kilmarnock (30 miles) but very cold & wet, hope the hotel where we're going has a bath!!!!

Evening update

More on this morning, left the Glendyne hotel in Sanquhar at about 10am, and once again decided to stick to the main A76 up to Kilmarnock. The westerly wind was still strong, and after 10 minutes the rain began to start as well. Within 30 minutes we began to get quite cold, so it was another 'grind' morning - just get the miles done. The combination of wind, rain and traffic made this unenjoyable and stressful. Got to Kilmarnock after 3 hours, and managed to find a friendly hotel that let us dry out and warm up with some homemade mushroom soup and tea. Off on the road again, got confused by the one way system in Kilmarnock, but by now the rain had died down and we started making good time again.

Then on the last 20 miles to Adrossan and the Lauriston hotel. This is a proper, old fashioned quality hotel. Huge rooms, good food, and the best surprise was when we got into our room - a note and chocolates from Pete & Jane! They are traveling ahead of us and it was such a nice thought and gesture. Early start tomorrow, catching the ferry to Arran at 8:20 tomorrow, then 90 minutes to cycle north to catch the ferry off the island back to the mainland. Normally this would not be a problem, but with the weather as it's been, we will have to see how it goes. Meeting Gay tomorrow, back to proper mileage and 4 days to go!

Mileage: 48

Average:13

Max:26.8

Ascent:638m

Descent:764m

No photos today, weather was miserable, so a day to forget ...

Monday 18th May

Day 10

Woke up early as planning to catch the 8:20 ferry to Brodick on the Isle of Arran. Breakfast not up to much, wind & rain outside...

Got to the ferry terminal at 8 am to find out ferry cancelled due to bad weather! Next ferry at 9:45 so just had to wait. Last onto the ferry (cyclists are the lowest of the low), got to Arran at 10:40, but took 10 minutes to get off. We had planned to cycle across the Island to Lochranza to catch the ferry back to the mainland at Claonaig. The next one was at 12:00, with a wait until 13:15 for the next one. 14 miles in just over an hour should be no problem - apart from the 700ft climb in the middle! By now the rainclouds had disappeared and the sun was shining. Got to the base of the climb with 30 minutes and 6 miles to go, I knew it was going to be tight and didn't want to rush it and still miss the ferry, but Tom said we should go for it. We got to the ferry with a few minutes to spare, but it was running late anyway, so no problem. A motorcyclist who was on the Brodick ferry couldn't believe we made it in time. The only downside is that we couldn't appreciate the stunning scenery of Arran, but we were already behind on time, so will return another day. Arriving at Clanaig we were greeted off the ferry by Pete & Jane, a welcome sight after seeing nobody we knew for quite a few days.

Then up another long hill and onto the A83 going north towards Oban. Had heard from Gay that she was heading our way, so on the lookout for her. Stopped at a little hotel just outside Tarbert, not done many miles, but was 13:30 by now and getting hungry. After about 10 minutes saw Gay drive past, luckily she was on our bikes, so turned around and a joyful reunion was had between mother & son, husband & wife. Pete & Jane soon arrived, we removed bike racks and panniers as we had our support vehicle. Back on the road, we made good time north on the A83 as it followed the contours of the coast, then up the A813 to Kilmartin for another rendezvous. After Tom finished Gay's cake, we then completed the last 30 miles to Oban in about 2 hours. Roads were undulating again, and lots of showers but in good spirits without all the baggage. Getting into the highlands, we have seen some of the most spectacular scenery, this is one area that we will definitely revisit.

Mileage:72.2

Avg:14.5

Max:34

Ascent:1281m

Descent:1250m



Tuesday 19th May

Day 11

Stayed at the Oban YHA, room was very nice, had a meal there in the evening, up for breakfast at 8 and started at 8:40. 95 miles to be done today up the Great Glen, so important to crack on. Headed north of Oban on the coastal road which then turned into a cycle path with some extreme ascents through Ganarvan before rejoining the A83. Weather was overcast, but dry. Lots of cycle paths along this route, some quite new and actually useable! The route was fairly flat as it followed the contours of the coast heading for the Great Glen.

Took a break opposite Castle Stalker (where I remember staying as a kid 40 years ago!), then proceeded on only to spot Pete & Jane again, so stopped for more photos then Gay turned up as well.

Off once more, heading towards Fort William for lunch. Fantastic scenery again, could see the wonderful weather patterns (it was raining on the other side of Loch Linnie, but dry on the south side), and as we approached Fort William could see the snow-capped mountains to the north. Met Gay at a car park just south of Fort William, then tried to find somewhere to eat, and found a quaint Scottish hamburger chain (McDonalds), and decided we had to do it once. At least they had free Wi-Fi for Tom.

About 45 miles completed, Tom wanted a rear mudguard as it was now raining and he wanted to keep a dry posterior, found a shop that sold him just the rear for £4.50, then back again to the A82 for our next rendezvous at Spean Bridge (Spleen Bridge according to Gay's spellchecker). Made good time even uphill as the roads were good, fantastic views of Ben Nevis before dropping back down to Loch Lochy. Were glad that we were no longer carrying gear, saw cyclists going the other way pushing their bikes uphill laden down with panniers & gear. So far we had ridden every yard ...

Our route now followed along the Great Glen, beside Lochs Lochy, Oich & Ness. You don't realize how big Loch Ness is until you ride alongside it for mile after mile. Scenery not quite as spectacular here, and roads very straight and uninteresting, but at least they were fast.

Got to Drumnadrochit at about 7pm – Gay had scouted ahead, we were staying at the Loch Ness backpackers. She found that about 15-20 members of a European Harley Davidson club had arrived before us. The place was not fantastic, they had plans to open the bar for a party in the evening, so things were not looking rosy, but we had no choice as there was nowhere else available to stay ... Tom and myself needed our sleep, tomorrow would be our longest ride ...

Mileage: 94.5

Avg: 14.2

Max: 33.8

Ascent: 1055m

Descent: 1052m



Wednesday 20th May

Day 12

Ate last night at the Fiddlers in Drumnadrochit – very busy, but Scotland doesn't really cater for vegetarians very well ... then back to the backpackers for hopefully a good night's sleep. Luckily the bar hadn't opened, so all was quiet; all Tom had to put up with was snoring ... The Harley Davidsons were all lined up like dominoes, the riders had set off our car alarm twice by leaning against the car, Gay was so tempted to 'clip' them on the way out, once one went they all would have toppled. After having to share 2 loos & showers with 15-20 bikers, looking forward to a nice b&b.

Set off at 8:30 after a meagre breakfast, 98 miles to do today, ending up in the highlands in the middle of nowhere. Headed along the A82 towards Inverness (could have taken a shorter route, but that involved a huge climb out of Drumnadrochit which we weren't keen on – in hindsight though it may have been the better route). At Inverness, followed Gay for a bit towards Dingwall only to find she was going the long way round – we had planned crossing the Moray Firth on the Kessock Bridge, so headed back into Inverness and followed the A9. The route across the bridge was very exposed & windy. Then on cycle lanes alongside the A9 and A835 over the hill to Dingwall. Going was hard as there was quite a headwind. Taking the route mentioned earlier would have missed all this, but too late now ...

Once on the north of the Cromarty Firth at Dingwall, going was a bit easier, joined the main No.1 national cycle route parallel to the A9, and started making good time towards Alness and Tain. At about 50 miles Tom got his second puncture of the trip – looked at his back tyre and it was getting quite worn and may not last, but we had the spare bike if needs be. Got to Tain and waited for Gay. When she arrived got the news that the car was playing up, & losing power. I took it for a quick spin and it was OK, but she was convinced there was a problem. After a late lunch in Tain (we still had about 50 miles to go), set off once more past the Glen Morangie distillery towards Bonar Bridge. After 15 minutes, feeling quite low ... Needed the loo (not a stand up one! Difficult when there's nothing around), knee was playing up, headwind was strong, 50 miles to go and not sure if the car would make it. If the car broke down, that would be the end of the trip. When you have nothing else to think about, those are the times when you have to be mentally tough.

Finally got to Bonar Bridge, Tom beat me to the one toilet cubicle (didn't he know I was busting to go!). Gay had found a car mechanic who tried the car and found no problem (was it her?), then up towards Larg and the last leg of the journey up to Altnaharra.

Past Larg the road turned into a single track, the road surface being quite bad at times, and becoming more desolate, reminding us of the end of the film "Skyfall".

Going was tough, heading uphill and into the wind for 15 miles until the last 5 mile descent into Altnaharra. Passing the Crask Inn, we finally reached the crest and started the descent into Altnaharra. This ride made it all worthwhile, hitting nice high speeds with wonderful views, carrying the speed into uphill sections, and cycling through wonderful flowing S bends, we both arrived with a grin on our face; that was best ride of the trip.

The b&b at Altnaharra is popular with cyclists, and rightly so. The welcome was warm, Tom got a room to himself and I had a deserved beer. Peter & Jane had once again called in earlier and left us some Kendal mint cake!

Mileage: 101.2

Avg: 14.0

Max: 29.5

Ascent: 1217m

Descent: 1189m

Thursday 21st May

Day 13

The last day!!!!!!!

How on earth have we made it this far???????

After a superb night's sleep, only 75 miles to do today, but some hills once we get to the north coast. The cycle route would take us up via Tongue, but we decided to take the road adjacent to Loch Naver. Three estates own the fishing rights here, but only six rods are allowed on the Loch, charging a thousand pounds a day for salmon fishing – and you have to put them back!

The route was fairly gentle, we met Gay at Syre, then along to join the A836 just before Bettyhill. A campervan travelling the other way gave us the thumbs up, then a few minutes later were cheered on by Gay, Pate & Jane. From here it was on to the climb through Bettyhill and onto the coastal road. Along here we would climb & descend for 30 miles towards Thurso. We were being blessed with a westerly wind pushing us along. Gay reported that the car was still playing up & struggling up hills, but was fine when I tried it ...

After lunch, carried on along the A836 rather than taking the inland cycle route (not really much difference), and past Dounreay power station and the RAF base, at which point we were absolutely flying with the wind behind us.

Got into Thurso, then on the John o' Groats road where we had a stop at Dunnet with the support team, before heading off again on the last 20 miles. Could start to see the Island of Hoy at this point, with the end point nearly in sight. Thoughts now started turning to what we had done & achieved, met up with Gay one last time before the last push. About a mile from the finish saw the support team again lining the route and cheering us through. Then it was onto the final straight and down to the signpost at John o' Groats, with lots of hugs and pictures (and a few tears from me!). Tom and I crossed the line together, so after 1025 miles it was a dead heat! We were presented with medals and a hoodie each with the route on the back – totally unexpected and real surprise.

Trip home and final thoughts & stats to follow.

Mileage: 74.1

Avg: 15.2

Max: 38

Ascent: 1143m

Descent: 1217m



Monday 25th May

The end of the trip ...

Stayed at the Seaview Hotel in John o' Groats, had a meal with Pete & Jane, a lovely relaxing evening. Woke up next morning heading for Glasgow with the bikes on the bike rack and headed off. Immediately I could feel the car playing up (so Gay was right all along!), it would not rev above 2000, and would not make the 600 miles back to Worcester. Stopped the car, restarted and all was OK ... So off we went again, but after 10 minutes lost power so had to do the same all over again, stop and restart. After doing this 10 times, got to Brora on the A9 and saw a garage, so pulled in. The mechanic connected a computer that told us that the fuel pump was failing, and that would not be a roadside repair. Called up the roadside recovery, who told us that we would be recovered back to Worcester via Glasgow (we had a stop planned in Glasgow anyway for Friday night). The first recovery would happen to be from the garage we stopped at, so after a bite to eat the car was loaded up and we were in our way.

After a stop in a hotel south of Glasgow (with a pool, Jacuzzi etc.), we then got picked up at midday on Saturday to be taken back to Worcester. What we didn't realize was that this would be done by relay, as one driver could not do the whole journey due to driving restrictions.

Eventually got home at about 9PM, but at least we were home.

And that was the end of our journey.

And the stats for the whole trip:

Distance cycled: 1010.13 miles (this was the GPS reading, our cycle computers read about 1025)

Average Speed: 14.2 mph

Max Speed: 40.6 mph

Total cycling time: 71:12:43

Elevation gain: 41.264 ft (about 7.8 miles!)

Elevation loss: same as above!

Calories burned: 53092 C

Punctures: 2 (Both Tom!)

Mechanical: New rear wheel for me, new fuel pump needed for car

Injuries: Sore knee for me ...

And that's about it. We cycled every yard of the way, no walking the hard parts. Was it difficult? Yes, but as much mentally as physically. I think that most people could physically achieve it, but you have to be pretty stubborn to get up day after day and get back on the bike. Luckily it seems that is something Tom and I have in common.

I also don't really think what we have achieved has sunk in yet, as I've said before, all we really did every day was to sit down and pedal away each day!

Next challenge please

