

Aidan's End 2 End Lands End to John O'Groats



27 September to 4 October 2013 – 941 miles

There had to be a coffee shop open in Wick at 9am on a Friday I thought, as I pushed my bike around the town centre. I was cold and wet and badly in need of some hot coffee. I was about to give up when I spied the sandwich shop and without bothering to lock the bike I headed in. “Do you want a 'milky'?” said the lady behind the counter. “What's a milky” I asked? “It's a coffee made entirely out of hot milk and coffee, no water”. “Oh yes, brilliant” I replied, “and I'll have one of those cakes as well”.

20 minutes later I set off again, refreshed and ready to finish the journey I started seven days ago. With 15 miles to go the rain stopped, the sun came out and the wind carried me along. It was a glorious way to end my trip from Lands End to John O'Groats.

Before the off

Preparation time was minimal. I had mapped an outline route months before, but between work, house moves, school appeals and Institute of Internal Auditors work, I ran out of time to refine the route. It was all I could do to pack and prepare the bike before catching the 21:00 train from Aylesbury to London. I would just have to wing it!

Journey to the start

Riding through the London streets from Marylebone Station at night was straightforward although it took a while to find the entrance to Paddington behind all the construction boards. Paddington was having a makeover!

On paper, the sleeper was the best way to get to the start. In reality, as I had elected for a reclining seat instead of a berth, I slept very little between Paddington and Penzance. I also injured my knee somewhere between Marylebone and Paddington, which proved problematic during the ride.

The train stopped at every station on the line and there was plenty of coming and going in the carriage. A large number of school kids got on near the end, which persuaded me to give up trying to sleep and start preparing for the ride.

So off I got at Penzance and cycled the ten undulating miles to Lands Ends. The excitement of the start winning over my lack of sleep.

Day 1 – 27 September – Lands End to North Tawton



I arrived at the Lands End tourist village at 9am, and everything was closed. There were signs saying the shops would open at 10am, but I didn't want to wait. I took a picture at the sign and then waited around while it uploaded to facebook. While I waited, a group of about

12 cyclists, all in the same yellow t-shirts and on lightweight road bikes filed past. Their group photo was taken by their extensive support crew and then off they went with the crew following in a minibus. I wistfully noted their lack of luggage and then eyed my heavy panniers and tent. Maybe next time I'll do it their way I thought.



Photo uploaded, I was off, but after half a mile I realised I'd not started my gps tack log! So I turned around and retraced my steps.

It was about 10am before I finally started properly. The first hour was plagued with faffing. I stopped several times to adjust various bits of clothing and switch food to my front bag to make it easier to reach, and back again when I realised I couldn't fit anything else in there, and I wasn't hungry anyway. After telling myself to stop faffing and get on with the ride, I was soon into my stride and making better progress.

There was a strong head wind which, when coupled with the hills of Cornwall, made progress rather slow. I stopped a few times to take photos along the south coast and by the time I reached a Shell Station for lunch, it was 2:30pm with only 40 miles done. It was going to be a long day if I was to make my planned 120 miles.

Liskeard square was a handy place to stop for tea, and the fish and chip shop was great. After chips, beans and a fishcake, I put on my lights and set off into the evening.



The headwind continued all day and evening and after 119 miles at 11:30pm I started to look for somewhere to stop. Almost immediately I found a patch of land by a river, just the other side of a locked gate. I locked my bike to the gate, pitched my tent and got a few hours rest.



Day 2 - 28 September – North Tawton to Severn Bridge

When rough camping it's best to rise before dawn and be away before anyone notices. So I was up at 6 and away by 7am. I don't know why I can't be ready in less than an hour, but I just have to accept that this is inevitable. It was just getting light as I set off, and it was raining.

In fact, there were thunder storms all morning. I had noticed flashes while packing up the tent but had passed them off as a faulty head torch! However I could not pass off the rumbles as I cycled, nor the torrential rain bouncing off the road.

Unfortunately, my sat nav decided it needed a battery change while the rain was hammering down. I sheltered under a tree to change the batteries but by the time I had found them at the bottom of the pannier, everything else in the bag was wet.

However, the route through Devon was on much quieter roads than the A roads through Cornwall, so the going was pleasant enough in the afternoon once it stopped raining and I began to dry out. The head wind stayed constant, and again there were many undulating hills, some quite steep.

Day 2 was most notable for routing mistakes. I followed Cycle Route 3 for a while, but parted company with it when my sat nav directed me through a field! It must have thought it was a short cut, but I didn't like the look of it. I picked my way along some narrow single track roads instead, greasy with mud and rain, until I picked up my route again. I was then surprised to see that the gps track was incomplete and finished 6 miles from Taunton! I made a mental note to be meticulous with checking the downloads next time, and worried what else my sat nav might have in store in the days to come.

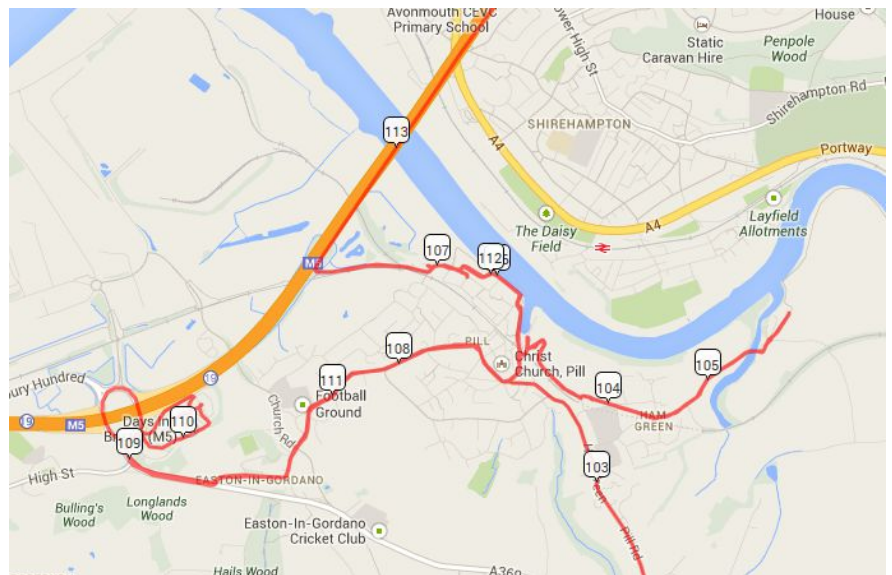
During lunch at a Co op in Taunton, two girls sang songs outside a Barnardos Charity shop for a collection. I put some money in the box, and left as the sun came out.

I had insisted on including Cheddar Gorge in the route, because I always remember visiting Cheddar with my wife, Jenny, many years ago. It would have been quicker with less climbing to avoid it, but the view from the top was outstanding in the late afternoon sunshine and well worth it. The road from Wookey Hole was probably the steepest one of the entire trip, but I stayed on the bike all the way up.



Then came another navigational nightmare. I had memorised the location of the Travel Lodge at the Severn Crossing before setting off, so was confused when I came to the crossing ten miles sooner than expected. “Oh well” I thought, “must be something to do with the route changes earlier in the day” and went with it. Ignoring what the Sat Nav was telling me. After a couple of wrong turns and dead ends in the dark, passing one seedy looking pub in Bristol five times in my bright orange jacket (calling attention to myself was not the best idea on a Saturday night), I eventually found my way to the services where the Travel Lodge should have been. Only it wasn't there! I parked the bike and then had a careful look at the sat nav map. Then it dawned on me what had happened. What I thought was the Severn Crossing was actually the Avonmouth Crossing. The Services I was after, and the Travel Lodge, were 10 miles further on! In my defence I did all of this in the dark, but I still felt particularly stupid.

I was tired, still a bit damp from the morning thunderstorms, and very annoyed with myself. However, with the prospect of a warm shower in an hour, I headed off again into the night (passing the same seedy pub again, which now had a police car outside and people arguing in the street), over the Avonmouth Crossing and through the deserted Bristol industrial parks along the docks.



It was 10pm by the time I arrived at the Travel Lodge. The services were closed but I managed to get a Ginsters Pasty from the petrol station shop and some porridge for morning. As luck would have it, the Travel Lodge receptionist had been selling cakes for Macmillan all day and had some left. With a contribution to the charity, I purchase half a sponge cake and feasted on the pasty and cake in my room. Happy days.

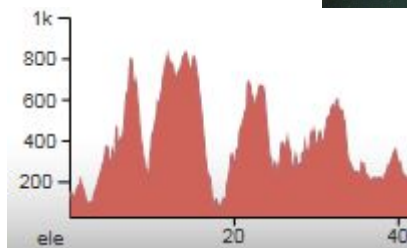
I can't praise Travel Lodge highly enough for their approach. It is no frills, but they had everything I needed and even let me take my bike into the room. I unpacked all my gear to dry it out and after a short night's sleep, I was good as new in the morning.

Day 3 – 29 September – Severn Bridge to Cheadle Hulme



With everything dry and safely packed in the panniers, off I went over the Severn Crossing. It's not as picturesque as the Forth Road Bridge, but still pretty impressive.

As soon as I got into Wales the hills started again, and boy were they steep. I made my



way through some quiet windy lanes, big ups and big downs, through many small villages. I stopped at Wormelow for a coke (they didn't have any chocolate milk), which I presumed at the time was still in Wales but is actually in England. There wasn't a sign saying 'England starts here', so it was difficult to know. The hills made my knee flare up again and I took some ibuprofen to try to limit the damage.

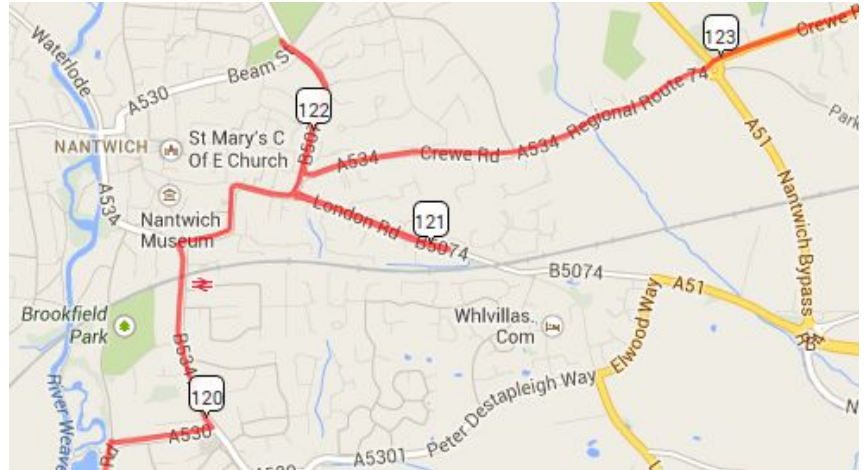
I then had a fairly uneventful time through Hereford and Leominster on and off the A49. There was triathlon taking place around Leominster, with lots of tired looking people on the last leg of the run. Poor them, I thought, I had over 100 miles still to go that day!

My route did not take me past any shops apart from a massive Tesco in Leominster. I didn't fancy wandering around a busy superstore so I kept going and ran out of water shortly after. After an hour or so without, I was really starting to tire and was relieved when I happened on a Nisa store in Craven Arms. I loaded up with water and hot cross buns and set off to meet my cousin Jason at Church Stretton.

Jase had run the Macclesfield half marathon that morning, then got the train from Cheadle Hulme to Shrewsbury, and then cycled 15 miles back down the road to meet me. He didn't seem phased by the fact that we still had another 75 miles so go. Amazing. No wonder he's been able to complete Iron Man UK, twice. I had already covered 75 miles, and it was a real lift to see Jase. We headed off at a decent pace along the busy A49. We chatted as we rode, the pain in my knee forgotten. It was difficult to keep the conversation going on the A49 with the busy Sunday afternoon traffic and it was good to get to quieter roads north of Shrewsbury, where we could ride side by side without the horns of angry motorists.

Jason was going through cereal bars at speed after his morning half marathon, so I introduced him to chocolate milk. Packed with nearly 500 calories per 500ml bottle and plenty of protein as well as the carbohydrate, it is perfect for keeping you going on a long day's ride. I'm not sure he was convinced by the taste though.

We had a few navigational issues again in Nantwich, but I found the feature on my sat nav that gave turn by turn directions and soon found the right road again. We put our lights on and headed through the dark to Jason and Jaynie's house in Cheadle Hulme. I had overcompensated on the water after running out earlier and had to keep stopping, but it wasn't so much of a problem in the dark. Especially when Jase reminded me to switch my flashing helmet lights off to avoid drawing attention to myself on the verge of a busy dual carriage way.



Some of the roads between Crewe and Wilmslow were fairly busy and I felt a bit exposed in the dark, but we made it safe and sound to Jason's house at around 10:30pm. Jaynie's pasta bolognaise was perfect and I slept really well after the long day in the saddle. 152 miles, which was the longest daily mileage of the trip.

Day 4 – 30 September – Cheadle Hulme to Penrith

Breakfast was toast with home made lemon curd and a banana, which was brilliant. I set off at 8am into the Manchester rush hour.



The first 30 minutes were very slow because of the many traffic lights. Once I got to the traffic free cycle ways I thought it might be faster, but I regularly had to stop to lift my heavy bike over obstacle course style barriers. The low wooden fence gates were designed presumably to prevent motor vehicles from entering the cycle network, but they also prevented the cyclists! It was absolutely bonkers that you can't get on to a cycle path without lifting your bike over three sets of knee high railway sleepers!!

The route took me directly past Old Trafford and I took the time to salute the stadium as I passed. Then on through built-up areas past Bolton, Chorley and through Preston before getting out into the countryside once again. I got a little lost in Preston town centre, and walked the bike down a couple of one way streets to find the A6 again.

I stayed mostly on the A6 until Lancaster where I stopped for lunch at my Aunt Betty's flat (Jason's mum). We discussed my route options out of Lancaster over tuna mayonnaise sandwiches and decided on the canal tow path, which led to the aquaduct over the river Lune. It was a great engineering achievement and I had to be careful to concentrate on the path rather than the views to ensure I did not fall into the canal.



Along the busy A6 I went. I had switched my route away from some quieter roads to avoid the hills so was making up the new route as I rode along. Unfortunately it took me onto the busy A590 and then the even busier A591, which is the main dual carriageway from the M6 to the south lakes. With no alternative and no cycle path I just had to keep my head down and peddle for four scary miles as the cars and lorries wizzed past at 80 miles an hour. Scary stuff.



Back on the A6 through Kendal I stopped at a filling station to stock up with cinder toffee and strawberry milk before attempting Shap. I had heard stories of the road up to Shap being the hardest part of the journey. It was a slog but I didn't really find it particularly difficult and, once I reached the top, the road down to Penrith was a constant downhill for miles and miles, which was a brilliant way to end the day.

The camp site at Lowther Park had it's own bar and restaurant, but did not serve food on a Monday night! So I cycled another couple of miles to a KFC on the outskirts of Penrith for food. I was a little wary as the last time I ate a KFC on a cycle ride I felt really sick all night. When some local lads started gathering around the vicinity of my bike, I knew it was time to make a move. Luckily my stomach was all right after this KFC and I headed back to the camp site for a warm shower and bed.

Day 5 – 1 October – Penrith to Dunfermline

Up at six and away by seven, the ride from Penrith to Carlisle was all downhill and I made good time in the early morning sunshine.

I went looking for a coffee in Carlisle and found a Subway doing a deal on coffee and a bacon sandwich for £2. It really hit the spot.



It was pretty flat through to Gretna along some nice quiet lanes on Route 7. I had been this way before when cycling from Blackpool to Rosyth. That time I had got terribly lost in Gretna, but no such problem this time with the sat nav. I did, however, have a run-in with a truck on a blind bend on a single track road. I was forced onto the verge, but managed to stay on the bike with no real harm done. It could have been much worse. A quick stop at the “Scotland welcomes you” sign for a photo and I was away up the long straight Route 74 all the way to Abington. It wasn't quite as bumpy as I remembered it, so happy days. I stopped at the Johnstonbridge M74 Services for lunch.

It was good to be cycling in Scotland again. The roads were generally quieter and scenic, especially when I turned off Route 74 and headed towards Edinburgh. Having said that, I had a second run-in with a truck at a roundabout near Abington Services. This time the truck turned right, across my path, and I jammed on the breaks to narrowly avoid it.

There is a very long uphill stretch through the borders and the following plateau was pretty bleak. The constant uphill and blustery conditions started to get me down, especially when the rush hour traffic began as well. Eventually I made it to the downhill into Midlothian, which was fantastically fast and easy going.

It was dark by the time I got to the Forth Road Bridge, which was a shame. It was great to ride over it every day when commuting to Edinburgh from Rosyth and I felt quite emotional when I stopped in the middle to take pictures. The bridge shakes in the middle when lorries pass by on the main carriageway, and although I'd felt it many times before, it was still pretty unsettling.

After a quick stop in Rosyth to pass by our old house, I rolled up the hill to Andy's house. Pretty much spot on with the estimated timing for the day for the first and last



time on the trip.

A hot shower and another fantastic pasta bolognese put me on the road to recovery again, although I'm not sure I was making much sense as I caught up with Andy, Ruth and their two children over dinner.

Andy helped me with the necessary chain clean and re-lube. The bike was holding up pretty well overall.

Day 6 – 2 October – Dunfermline to Newtonmore

Andy noted that I did a lot of faffing in the morning. It was probably because this was my last stop with a decent bed and I wasn't looking forward to the last two nights in a tent.

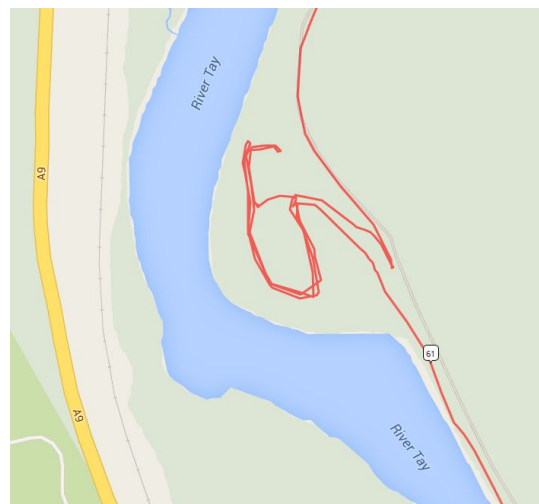
Dunfermline to Perth was straightforward on familiar B roads and a nice relaxing way to start the day. It was still windy in exposed areas, but trees and hills provided enough shelter to protect me from the worst of it. It rained quite a lot that morning.

Lunch was at a Co-op in Blairgowrie in the pouring rain. I spoke to a resident who was planning a trip along the North coast of Scotland the following summer, from Lands End to Durness. Sounded interesting and one for the future, perhaps including the West Coast as well down to Glasgow, and then maybe on to Stranraer, and then maybe across to Belfast my mind wandered and the rain stopped. It was time to get on with the current trip!

I was in unfamiliar territory again from Blairgowrie. A sign said that the road ahead was closed and I checked the map for alternatives. There were only long detours available and I decided to ignore the sign and carry on. I reached the A9 without finding the road works, so I think someone must have forgotten to remove the sign.

However, that is where the day started to get interesting. I had not done any research on the cycle path that followed the A9, but thought, mistakenly, that it followed the road for the majority of the A9's length. In fact, it meandered around Scotland, only coming back to the A9 when it felt like it. Every time it split away, I had to decide whether to follow the path to places unknown, or join the main carriageway. I made a few wrong decisions, as I'll get on to, and I regularly told myself I should have planned this part of the trip better. "That's all very well now" I replied back to myself. Then I told myself to "stop moaning and get on with it". Too much time by yourself is seldom a good thing!

Anyway, when I reached the A9 a nice looking tarmac cycle path split away, signposted for Pitlochry, which was where I was headed. Great, I thought, and cycled down the road for a couple of miles until it reached a posh golf club and abruptly turned into an off road track along the river. It was very scenic for a while and I carried on into the forest, where the path abruptly disappeared! Round and around I went through the mud trying to find the path again. The gps was very slow through the trees and I got more and more frustrated. Eventually I backtracked and found the signposted route further up the hill. I was muddy and tired, but back on track along the off-road route through the forest.





The track eventually led back to the A9 and then dumped me out onto the carriageway. Then came a harrowing ride along 10 miles of the busy A9 all the way to Pitlochry. Cars and lorries were whizzing by and I had to negotiate a couple of busy motorway style junctions with vehicles joining the carriageway from my left while others sped by on my right on the main carriageway. Not pleasant to be caught in the middle doing 15mph when everyone else was travelling in excess of 70. I was relieved to leave the A9 at Pitlochry and pass through the picturesque and cycle friendly town centre. Pitlochry was at the start of the Etape Caledonia closed roads race, which I had taken part in the year before, so it was familiar. I also passed by Blair Atholl but didn't see the distillery.

Then there was a really nice run along minor roads by the side of the A9 all the way up to the pass at Drumochter Summit. This was at 1500

feet and although it took a bit of effort, the quality of the roads and purpose built cycle paths made it less of a chore. It was misty, drizzly and cold at the top, so I didn't hang about. I remember the mist making the power lines crackle!



The purpose made cycle path across the top and down the other side were also good. Some of the little wooden bridges were a little slippery in the wet, but negotiable with care. Bizarrely, as I started down the other side of the pass there was a man, maybe 20 years old, running up the hill towards me in joggers and a sweatshirt. He had no rucksack or any other equipment. I'd hardly seen anyone all day because of the poor weather and remoteness of the location, so I have no idea where he came from or where he was going. He looked tired but very focussed and determined, so I didn't stop to ask. Maybe he was in the middle of some extreme challenge, or simply out for a jog. Either way, he had a long way back to civilization and I admired his determination.



The next highlight was passing the Dalwhinnie Distillery. Andy had mentioned that it was on route, but I hadn't realised I would pass right by the front door! I stopped for photos and vowed to get a bottle when I got back. The smell coming from the place was awesome.



With lights on and the dark descending, I continued down the gentle slope along quiet roads all the way down to Newtonmore. It was a really nice end to a wet, but relatively short day.

I found the camp site quickly but nobody was around. There was a sign saying to knock at the nearby house, which I did. I had called ahead, so a wet cyclist at her door in the dark wasn't a surprise. She told me to camp anywhere and would not take any money as I was cycling for charity. She suggested camping on the flat ground outside the toilet block, and I took her advice. I was the only camper and the toilet block gave me somewhere to lock the bike to and a convenient place to shelter from the rain while I unloaded the bike. It was only after I'd pitched the tent that I noticed the nearby sign "Septic Tank". Oh well, I couldn't smell anything and wasn't about to re-pitch the tent.

I went in search of food in Newtonmore and immediately came across a greasy spoon truck stop diner. Brilliant! The truck drivers came in with their towels, used the shower room, had a meal and then returned to their cabs to sleep.

One portion of garlic bread with cheese and a fish supper later, I was back at the camp site. I had caught up with my emails, texts and even charged the phone a little during dinner. The truck stop shower was probably a lot nicer than the camp site showers, which were bare brick and not very inviting. I decided to give them a miss and turn in for the night at about 11pm. I was feeling good and ready for an early start for the long final full day.

Day 7 – 3 October – Newtonmore to Dunbeath

It was fine when I woke up, so I took the tent down quickly, had a wash and was ready to go. Then the heavens opened so I stayed for a while talking to the campsite maintenance guy.

The downpour was not stopping so I set off in the rain through Newtonmore and on through Aviemore. When I got to Carrbridge I realised I had not had my morning coffee and stopped at the village store for a quick one before resuming the route along quiet roads shadowing the A9. I came across my second Distillery at Tomatin. I stopped to take a picture and again vowed to get a bottle on my return. I wondered how many more distilleries I would pass! The showers were on and off all morning, but more off than on so I had a pleasant ride through some wonderful countryside.



I arrived back at the A9 near to Inverness. There was no cycle path and the route around added another 10 miles to the trip! Do I tackle the busy dual carriageway or take extra miles? After taking another look at the A9 and seeing how busy it was, I opted for safety and cycled back up the hill to resume Route 7 to Inverness. It was pleasant but a long detour.



After lunch at a Scotmid on the outskirts of Inverness, I continued to the town centre. Again the A9 was too fast and busy to negotiate and I picked my way through the streets of Inverness through the extensive one way system. It took me ages but I eventually found my way back to the Kessock Bridge, with its separate cycleway along the side. Great views on either side, and the obligatory photos in the middle of the bridge made up for the frustration.

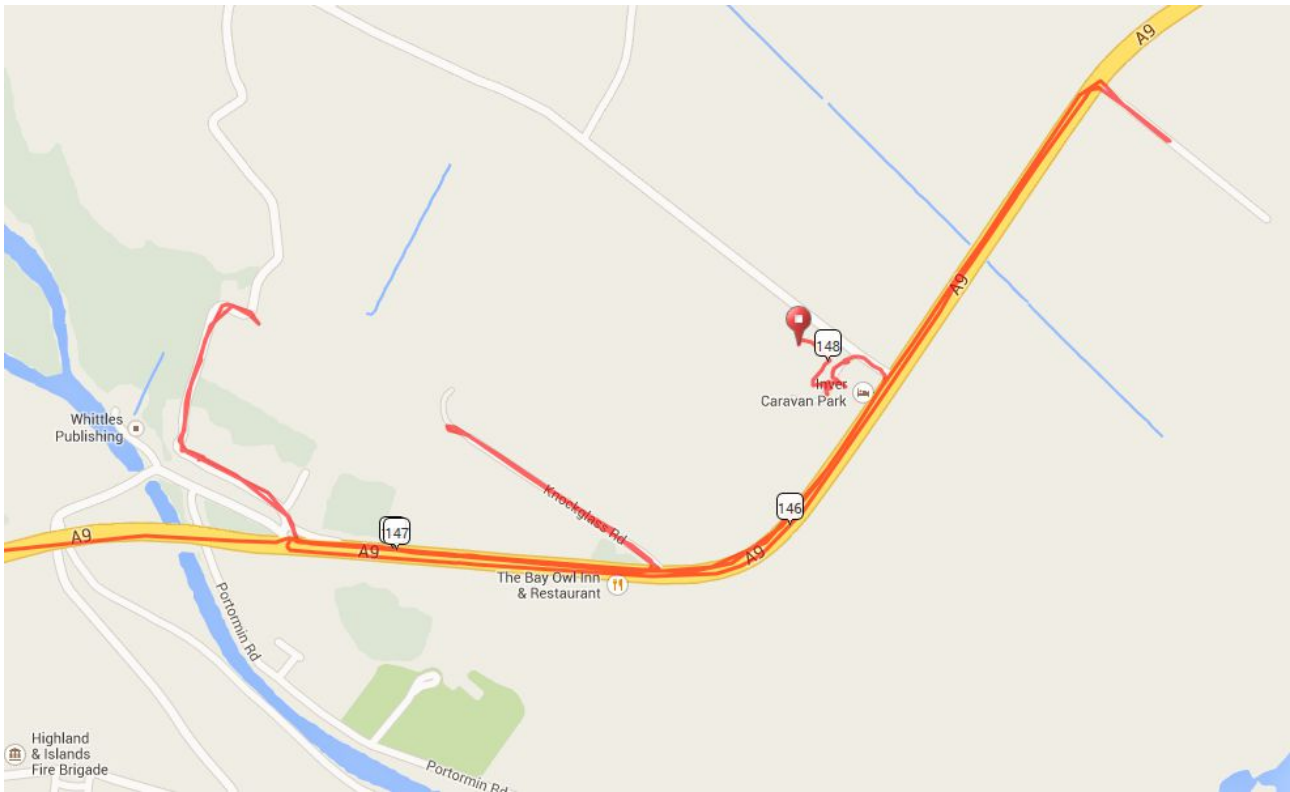
I had never been further North than Inverness before and it felt really exciting to ride on into the unknown. As it turned out, there are a series of large towns all the way up the North East coast of Scotland so it didn't feel as remote as I thought it might.

I managed to avoid the A9, travelling on B roads as far as Tain. Then I was faced with another decision. Do I follow Cycle Route 1 to who knows where, or do I follow my planned route along the busy A9? Route 1 seemed to pass through few towns along the way, and as it would be dark soon, I decided for the more populated route. With hindsight, I probably made the wrong decision.

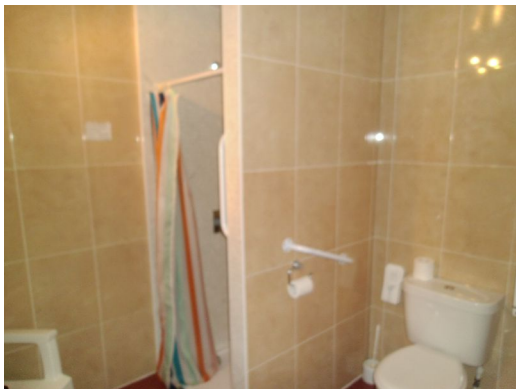
The A9 was a constant nightmare. Vehicles were overtaking at speed on a road where the verge often deteriorated into a crumbling mess. I was fully dark by the time I reached Goldspie where I stopped for a tray of chips and a coke. I carried on through Bora, occasionally picking up a phone signal to let Jenny know I was still ok. The wind had picked up again and the driving rain was beginning to get me down. It was dark, but I could sense the steep mountains on my left and hear the crashing waves on my right. Due to the weather there were very few people out, even in the towns. There was still plenty of traffic on the road though. I just kept my head down and pedalled on. My pep talks were having little effect and I even contemplated pitching the tent on the grass strip by the side of the A9 and wait until morning. However, that would not allow enough time to get to JOG and back to Thurso to catch the train, so I didn't succumb. Helmsdale appeared. A rugged outpost in the dark and the rain, lit up with its bridge across the river.

Then, when I thought the ride couldn't get any worse, I cycled up into the mist. Visibility dropped to just beyond my front wheel I was seriously worried that car drivers wouldn't see me despite the three sets of rear lights and my fluorescent jacket.

At last I arrived in Dunbeath. I knew the camp site was just off the main road at the far side of the town, but had not marked it properly on the map. I arrived at the far side of the town and couldn't see it. In a farcical display of incompetence I rode up and down the main road and side streets looking for the camp site, but it was nowhere. At one point I stopped to look around, but the bike overbalanced with the weight of the panniers and tent and I ended up sitting in a puddle in the road. I was getting more and more tired and depressed. Eventually I went back on the main road close to where I had started the search and saw the sign in plain view – Inver Caravan Park. How I had missed it first time round I'll never know.



Gratefully I went in. The proprietor had said if it was late to pitch the tent and pay in the morning, so that's what I did. It was still pouring down and although I had put the tent up as quickly as possible, the inner was soaking. I then realised that I had pitched it the wrong way round and my head would be lower than my feet as I slept. Not wanting to wake up in a crumpled heap at the head of the tent with a headache, I pulled the pegs out again, turned it around, put the pegs back in and headed to the shower room to get warm.



As it turned out, the shower block was wonderful. It was lovely and warm with individual rooms for each shower. The water was piping hot and it was just what I needed at the end of a very long day. Warm again, I went back to the tent at about midnight to get some sleep in my damp sleeping bag.

I'm sure that much of my ordeal that evening was simply down to seven days of accumulated tiredness, but as soon as it got light in the morning I felt the stress and depression melt away and I was ready for the final push to JOG.

Day 8 – 4 October – Dunbeath to John O'Groats

I was up early and away by 7am with only 40 miles to go. I did not want to disturb the camp site owners or spend time re-living the night before, so I left the money outside their front door with a note thanking them for the fantastic showers.

It was raining again but I made good time to Wick, and I wanted a coffee like I'd never wanted a coffee before. After wandering around the town centre for a while I came across a great sandwich shop and cafe. I ordered my 'milky' coffee and a cake and stopped for twenty minutes to send some texts, make a quick call home and get my caffeine fix. The waitress kindly told me I'd left my bike lights on. I really didn't care.

I thought about staying for a bacon sandwich but decided to push on. I didn't think anything would go wrong in the final 15 miles but you can never be sure. Leaving the cafe I found the rain had stopped and the sun was out. Fantastic.

An hour later I rolled down the hill to John O'Groats with the wind at my back and warmed by the sun. A perfect way to end the trip.

I stopped at the sign and took some photos. A couple from Arizona kindly took a photo of me and my bike and we chatted for a while. After updating facebook and sending texts to confirm I'd made it, I went into the cafe for soup and a sandwich. Talking with a couple of engineers, I discovered that the sign I'd taken my pictures against was not the 'original' sign. The original sign was around the corner so I headed across for another round of photos with the professional photographer.

Then I wandered around a little bit more, wondering what to do now that my mission had been accomplished. When nothing came to mind, I headed off for Thurso station and the train home.





Thanks

Thanks to all my family and friends for your support, and to everyone who sponsored me. Your generosity raised £1,400 for Action for Children, which will go towards helping vulnerable and neglected children achieve their full potential.



<http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/>

Thanks to Jason and Jaynie and Andy and Ruth for providing a bed, hot shower and great food. A welcome break from camping. Thanks to Aunty Betty for the tuna mayonnaise sandwich and cake that kept me going all the way to the top of Shap.

Thanks to Pam, Howard, Susan, Andy, Andy, Simon, Gary, Raymond and everyone else for your texts during the ride and emails of support, especially Pam for keeping everyone else updated. I never felt alone.

Thanks to Simon, Iain and Norma for offering assistance if I needed it along the way.

And a special thank you to Jenny, for letting me go in the first place, for putting up with three of my bikes stored in the living room and for giving me the confidence to succeed.

Aidan

Statistics

Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Date	27/9	28/9	29/9	30/9	1/10	2/10	3/10	4/10
Start Place	LE	North Tawton	Severn Bridge	Cheadle Hulme	Penrith	Dunfermline	Newtonmore	Dunbeath
Finish Place	North Tawton	Severn Bridge	Cheadle Hulme	Penrith	Dunfermline	Newtonmore	Dunbeath	JOG
Start Time	09:33	06:57	07:10	08:00	07:07	07:28	07:19	07:08
Finish Time	00:06	21:41	22:38	20:38	20:21	19:46	23:10	11:04
Distance (Miles)	118.6	124.0	152.2	112.3	133.9	114.7	148.0	37.7
Elevation (ft)	+11742/-11567	+8928/-9198	+9280/-9185	+6313/-6108	+6996/-7269	+6497/-5927	+8921/-9546	+1837/-1977
Max Grade	21.5%	12.3%	10.7%	8.7%	8.7%	12.2%	9.2%	5.5%
Ave Grade	0.8%	-0.1%	-0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
VAM (Vm/h)	495	455	423	421	433	406	422	572
Ascent time	07:14:05	05:58:52	06:40:49	04:34:08	4:55:17	04:52:50	06:26:58	00:58:46
Decent time	03:43:15	04:24:45	04:46:17	03:25:35	03:52:39	03:29:02	04:44:30	00:51:02
Total Duration	14:33:37	14:44:36	15:28:17	12:38:45	13:14:18	12:18:22	15:51:29	03:56:01
Moving Time	11:18:04	11:03:45	12:17:36	08:34:01	09:17:31	08:54:37	11:46:43	01:57:35
Stopped Time	03:15:33	03:40:51	03:10:41	04:04:44	03:56:47	03:23:45	04:04:46	01:58:26
Max Speed (mph)	38.0	32.2	35.3	34.9	28.3	31.8	34.1	25.1
Ave Speed (mph)	10.5	11.2	12.4	13.1	14.4	12.9	12.6	19.2
Pace	00:07:22	00:07:08	00:06:06	00:06:45	00:05:56	00:06:26	00:06:26	00:06:16
Moving Pace	00:05:43	00:05:21	00:04:51	00:04:35	00:04:10	00:04:40	00:04:46	00:03:07