

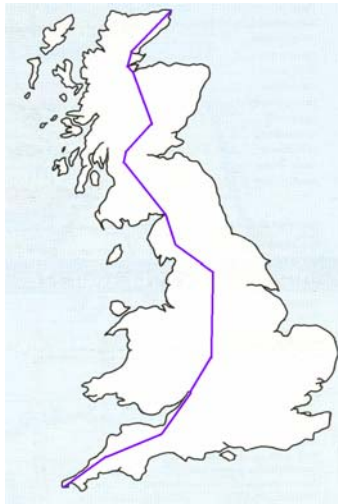
900 Mile Charity Bike Ride

John O'Groats to Land's End in Five and a Half Days

August 1989, 4 middle aged businessmen from 'The Gentleman's Dangerous Dining Club Association,' were advised that money collected for The National Society Protection of Cruelty to Children had reached upward of 70,000.00 pounds sterling. The money had been donated for a major sponsored riding event.

Sadly, the cyclist Mark Farrell due to perform the ride was killed, thereby, the 4 old boys who hadn't been on a bike for 5 to 20 years, advised they would step in and ride 900 miles from John O'Groats in Scotland's far North East, to Land's End in England's most South Westerly location.

With only 4 weeks preparation, the 4 devised a training program, consisting of 20 miles a day cycling, getting muscles and derriere parts used to the rigors of



being on a bike 20 hours a day, for five days. "Never has one's rear end, felt so sore, by so many." I can feel a Winston Churchill quote coming on.

September 29th, 1989, meeting at The Birmingham Post & Mail Newspaper Offices in Birmingham, where the team were greeted with Best Wishes and a major media send off. Having loaded their bikes, food and drink provisions onto the camper van, the task of driving 600 miles north by road was ahead of them. The time it would take to get to John O'Groats enabling the fine tuning of the project.

It was pitch black, 4am, on September 30th when the camper van rolled into John O'Groats, giving the team a chance to sleep, prepare food, drink bottles and make sure the bikes were set up properly. On awakening at 10am, the above photograph was taken of three of the riders.



Long Stretches of Beautiful Scenery — Helping Take The Riders Minds Off How Truly Hard This Project Was

Midday, September 30th, 1989, the team set out on the first leg of the ride, over some of Scotland's toughest mountains. 12 hours after starting, at midnight, the lights of Inverness shone brightly, as four cyclists crossed

the bridge into Inverness, a sudden interest from the police stopped them in their tracks. "What are you doing," was the police query. When we explained, we followed them to their station, where somehow they managed to persuade

that nights intake of prisoners to contribute a financial donation, which they sent by cheque to the charity. After cups of tea and 4 hours sleep in the camper, the riders mounted up and continued on their way to Perth,

avoiding trucks, sheep and a wind into the face which made cycling extremely difficult, the mountains were nearly finished, with team members taking it in turn to do the pace making up front, on Scotland's narrow roads.

276 miles covered in 31 hours — 451 miles covered in 55 hours

The A9 from Inverness to Perth was very difficult terrain, taking a lot out of the cyclists.

276 miles had been covered since the start line, with only a day and a half's riding. John Taylor telling his fellow team mates about it taking 5 days to run on his last "End to End run". Taylor has been "End to End" by Ford Fiesta, Daihatsu Charade TD, Jaguar and Range Rover, breaking fuel economy driving Records en route. Added to that Taylor had already walked "End to End", as well as run "End to End", surely this ride would be his last Top to Bottom jaunt.



Breathless In Perth

Preparation for the ride was far from ideal, yet, with less than a month's training under their belts, 4 rather unfit podgy businessmen had jumped on 4 mountain bikes, which to be frank were more suited to cross country riding, rather than main road cycling.

Next stop was 175 miles South West in Carlisle, the English side of the England — Scotland Border. The terrain was becoming easier, with less effort required on kinder inclined roads.

Two and a half days on the road, half the ride was complete.

Support Team - Camper Important To Ride Success Story



Behind every success, is a team of volunteers, who without their unselfish support, driving in shifts for 20+ hours every day, cooking, providing special drink mixes, setting up beds, fixing punctures, encouraging riders out of the camper windows, life

would have been intolerable. Allan a fireman and Mike a police constable had volunteered their time, as well as twisting arms of their respective colleagues to contribute financially to the cause.

Not one cross word, only positive reiteration by the support crew, being a major factor in completing the ride — Thank You — Great Job

PUB STOP OFF IN STOKE

150 miles South, a major brewery had heard the riders interviews on the radio, contacting the riders to detour to a pub in Stoke, in the Midlands.

The boys were happy to stop at the pub, have a few drinks (lemonade of course) and go along with the brewery's PR machine, where local media coverage followed. Steak and kidney pie and chips, combined with

a warm bed in the pub, a fund raising evening with the locals, giving the boys chance to catch their breath, rest their bodies and medically treat their bloodied posteriors. A lesson had been learnt, if you don't ride a bike for 20 years, you cannot expect your body to be able to handle something shaped like a saddle, for long periods of time.



Two Thirds Over — It's All Down Hill From Now On — Says Who

Ian, Gabriel, John and Phil, looked at the map, only three hundred miles to go and it's all down hill. WRONG, the riding from Stoke to Bristol was leisurely enough, but the final 191 miles from Bristol to Land's End was a far tougher riding experience than the boys had anticipated.

Gail Force Head winds, roared into the riders faces, big Ian, all 22 stone of him, helping the lighter weights in the group, by pushing them up hill as he rode like Goliath, his strength, as well as the never ending verbal support of the camper drivers Mike and Allan, pushing the team to finish what they'd started out to do, ride 900 miles from End to End.

RIDE OVER — FINAL RESPECTS

9pm, Five and a half days after starting the ride, 900 + miles had been completed, a photograph at the Finish Line commemorating this wonderful achievement.

Prior to the photograph, heads bowed, a minutes silence to remember Mark Farrell, who's sad death, gave these riders inspiration to conclude what Mark had started.

