

How it all began.....

8th June 2009

This cycle ride, to raise funds for Us in a Bus as part of the 20th Anniversary celebrations of Us in a Bus's founding, has come about from a casual comment by one of my colleagues. "You could do something to raise money, couldn't you Charles?"

Together we looked at ready made fundraising trips on various websites. To start with these all involved great expenditure and were not wildly exciting. Though not the most original of ideas either, my ride came to me on my way to work one day- a solo trip from East to West across Britain on my bicycle; something within my capabilities, if I trained for it, and requiring minimal outlay, on the assumption that I could find sponsorship.

At the beginning of June, as I write, the financial sponsorship is beginning to trickle in as a result of flyers handed out to people I deliver Riverford vegetables to on Saturdays! To make a success of the trip, I really need the support of a local bicycle shop, prepared to give some of their mechanics' time and possibly equipment too, either free or at least at a hugely discounted rate.

Help would be welcomed in the form of contacts for sponsorship; names of people I could contact with a view to staying with them on my way; people who might be able to help publicise my venture, and any other ideas that might be useful.

Support does not only have to be financial.

Thank you.

Charles

Update, June 22nd 2009

Since starting my notes, I have not been able to do terribly much training on my bike, but did, on Saturday 13th, go out on my new bike for the first time. I had to resort to buying a replacement bike. I took my ailing 15 year old, but in its day, very good, bike to Fullers in Dorking for them to assess the cost of replacing the chain, which had stretched beyond belief and service, and several parts that had worn out or were on the point of doing so. Inevitably, the parts and labour would have exceeded the cost of a new machine and Fullers gave a very good discount and a week later I took my new bike away.

Back on track though, I am please with the machine and it has improved my speed. Fullers will service it before I leave, by which time the chain, at least, will need replacing again, I need to add a rack and panniers, another rear light and I will feel ready to go. I shall indulge in "puncture proof" tyres for the trip to reduce the amount of time spent fiddling about once I am under way.

The response from B&Bs I have contacted has been encouraging to date.

Update 3rd July 2009

Several B&Bs have offered me free accommodation which, would be illogical not to take advantage of as the aim is to raise money. So; this response and my thinking as I ride round the Surrey villages in the evenings and at weekends, has changed how I am looking at this ride.

Initially I thought the distance itself might suffice to impress, but now I think I should, as I do locally, push myself as hard as I can, introduce an element of athleticism into the thing! How much better to cross the country in as short a time as I can? So, from aiming at 50 or so miles a day, I am now aiming at around 80 miles to complete the journey in 5 days. The first day will be a little shorter than the rest as I am planning on leaving Ness Point, the disc on the ground marked with cities around the world (also, incidentally the location of the largest wind turbine in the UK, an inspiring sight and sound in itself) at 10.30 am in exactly the opposite direction from that on one of the photos when I attempted to return to Czechoslovakia. On the following days, unless I am rigid in bed and unable even to walk, I hope to be on the road as early as I can having allowed a little time for my breakfast to start to be of use to me and put in at least 6 hours cycling.



I have to confess that for a long time, even after I had spent hours and hours planning the route I was still unclear as to how I would find myself at Ness Point at 10.30am? Then inspiration came to me; we have our Sole Bay Cottage in Southwold, some 10 or so miles away; I would make sure it was not let for that weekend and invite friends and helpers to stay and and both take me to and see me off from Lowestoft on the Monday morning. I would have to go without Adnams` beer that weekend and hope that I will be at my peak of fitness. The country gets progressively hillier as I travel Westwards but at this point, with over 2 months to go, I feel OK.....



The turbine at Ness Point, worthy of a visit in its own right.