

Diary of a Cycle Ride: 874 Miles for Unique!

Richard Carroll, whose 15 year-old sister Annie was born with a rare chromosome disorder, is riding the length of the UK, from John O'Groats in Scotland, to Land's End in Cornwall. That's a mind-boggling total of 874 miles! Richard is doing this to raise much-needed funds for Unique, so that we can go on supporting families like his own with support and specialist information about rare chromosome disorders.

Richard takes up the story:

"On New Year's Day of January 1995 my Sister Annie was born. At the time nobody knew that there was something wrong with her mentally. She had however acquired one major setback in her little life thus far; her feet were bent inwards, the doctors called it clubbed feet. She would be wheelchair bound.

My parents were then hit with an even bigger hammer blow; my sister had a chromosome disorder. In terms of my sister it meant that she would have severe learning difficulties".

"Yet despite this Annie is still a wonderful person and while she hasn't learnt the works of Chaucer, she certainly has learnt to smile ten times better than I ever could. Just being in the same room with her for a few minutes can light up my day, because she is so darn contagious! Me and my family love her and despite not being able to talk she is a pivotal member of our entire family."

If you would like to sponsor Richard, any amount, however small will make a huge difference to our work. Please visit: <http://www.justgiving.com/Richard-Carroll>

Diary of the ride

We will be receiving regular updates about Richard's progress from his proud mum, Debbie so please check back regularly to keep up with him.

21st August – THE END!

Delighted to say that Richard is home. They reached Land's End at 11.30 am on Saturday 21st August 2010. Richard is absolutely exhausted but very pleased that he completed the challenge.

Congratulations and a huge thank you to Richard from all of us at Unique!

18th August – the end is in sight!! Cornwall here we come.

Richard has now reached the penultimate county, Devon. He was staying at a B&B in Shillingford last night, watching East Enders! No idea why as he doesn't normally, probably did not have Sky! He tells me that he has already cycled well over 800 miles as the route has been a bit circuitous but he was very upbeat as he is now so much closer to getting home and back to his creature comforts.

16th August – 620 miles down – Bristol next stop

Richard had reached Ross on Wye near Hereford yesterday (Sunday 15th) and the bike ride was put on ice at 4.00 pm due to the Liverpool V Arsenal Football Match on TV. Richard (and I) are keen Liverpool supporters.

As the crow flies, 620 miles covered to date and the aim is to reach Bristol tonight. Annie is at residential school in Bristol (she returned there yesterday after a holiday with us at home) and if he can, Richard will try and visit her. St Christopher's School is a fabulous place with only 40 pupils all of whom get 100% 121 support. Annie has come on in leaps and bounds in her 18 months there. She was not getting anywhere near enough support or stimulus at her day school.

Both Gary and Richard have had a couple more technical issues with their bikes, but I am very proud of the way he has met and dealt with all obstacles faced to date.

Intention is to hit Lands End on 21st August.

13th August – Leaving Scotland behind.... 450 Miles cycled so far!

Richard left Scotland 2 days ago. His last fond memory being the bakery in Gretna Green where they make the best meat and potato pies! Also the baker gave them an easier route to follow to the border.

They have covered about a further 150 miles and found the mountainous route into Carlisle and then Sedbergh to be very difficult and both boys were too tired to eat when they set up camp at one point. Apparently they got an offer for their bikes at this stage and were sorely tempted! They did enjoy jumping from one country to the next on the border for a bit though! This part of the country is very familiar to Richard as he holidayed in the Lake District every year as a child. My Dad comes from Cumbria and had a caravan on the coast road near Ulverston.

Yesterday they arrived in Clitheroe in Lancashire and decided to treat themselves to a pub lunch - Lamb Shanks and Fosters - best meal ever I am told, although a I quote "massive chip butty for £1.10" came close.

Food features a lot in this blog. The calorie intake is very high but he is losing weight (not too much I hope) and has very muscular legs now. The other impression I have from him is the friends they have made en route - Italian girls borrowed their gas burner and they are now

proud owners of "Italia" socks and a Korean guy called Steven who is as mad into films as my son is (Richard is currently studying media arts at University). Plan today is to land in Knutsford in Cheshire so they are going well.

08.08.10 saw a mad cycle sprint to catch the last ferry at Hunters Quay in order to cross the Firth of Clyde. The cycle continued to Wemyss Bay and to their dismay, the campsite earmarked for the night did not allow tents! Parents and Google to the rescue, a site found, additional 10 miles in searching for one added to the journey and two stressed and tired guys.

07.08.10 cycled all day and very tired. No campsites on this stretch (Loch Awe) so a couple of good Samaritans to the rescue yet again, these are called Douglas and Diane, who own a garden centre and allowed them to pitch up there for a nominal sum. Also threw in sultana bread and a cooked breakfast. A fresh water spring flowed through the centre and the boys made good use of it - very novel for them!

06.08.10 a very wet Scotland = very wet kit so a night at a hostel for the boys to get dry. The hostel was close to the base of Ben Nevis so although it was wet, they really enjoyed the scenery.

05.08.10 having cycled about 70 miles, Richard and Gary pitched up at Borum Farm, Drumnadrochit for the night. This is quite close to Loch Ness which they hope to cycle past tomorrow - no time to go monster hunting though!