



News from Dan

Hello there! I thought I should say a little about how I am doing. I've now been cycling for three weeks and have covered 1200km, round Snaefellsnes and (almost) round the Westfjords (I got to Bolungarvik and Isafjörður and have cycled back to Holmavik, but I took a bus trip to Latrabjarg, the westernmost point in Europe, to see some of the fjords I wouldn't get to see otherwise - and to have a little break from cycling, do some washing, and spend a little time on the computer!) I have sung for maybe 25 people I think, though I am camping as often as I am staying in people's houses - thank you to everyone in Kvennakor Kopavogs for your help in finding people to stay with! Legs, bike and voice are all coping well - thank you also to the weather which for the most part is also being very kind to me! The next stage of my journey will take me to Akureyri by maybe Thursday or Friday - probably travelling via Hvammstangi, Sauárkrúkur, Hofsos and Siglufjörður - and I think I will take another break of a day or two in Akureyri. I am still looking for places to stay if possible in Sálberg and Siglufjörður, and maybe Akureyri too! If time is on my side I may go further north again between Akureyri and Egilsstaðir but I do have to get back to Reykjavik in September so we will see! One of the hardest things on this trip is finding computers I can use on my route - certainly as they can be expensive to use at cafes or similar places along my route, and I may not pass them at a good time of day if I have a long journey or I don't pass through any towns! So if people can let me use a computer it really helps too - I cannot promise to update my blog or go on Facebook very often, and uploading photos takes ages! Ah well - I came here to cycle and sing, not type. Maybe I can do more of that in Akureyri or after my trip.

Take care! Best wishes from me, and any from you are also welcome! Cheers! Daniel

Brompton World Championship 2011

Sunday the 21st August 2011 and the weather in Oxfordshire is warm but overcast. Nearly 8,000 cyclists and spectators have descended on Blenheim Palace, birthplace of Winston Churchill, for Bike Blenheim which includes a road sportive, time trial, family fun ride and the Brompton World Championship. The BWC alone has attracted 750 entrants. This has always been an international event with entrants coming from as far afield as Japan and the USA. This year some countries have held national championships with first prize of a ticket to the World Champs. It promises to be more competitive than ever.

Riders are released from pens in groups of 125 and are required to run to their folded bikes, unfold the bike, push to the road, mount and pedal across the line. Each bike has a chip which is activated when the bike crosses a pad at the start/finish line. We are all wearing jackets, ties and cycling helmets. I am wearing a pink bowtie, courtesy of Breast Cancer Care for whom I have raised sponsorship funding. The starting horn sounds. My bike is near the front. I run and fumble the unfold, consequently changing gears without realising it. This causes more fumbling when I mount. But I am accelerating as I cross the start, heading straight towards the gates of the palace. Then a sharp right, swooping down over the bridge. Hardly a glance at the lake as the road narrows into a steep uphill followed very quickly by a dangerous left-hand drop into the next valley. We thunder across a cattle grid, thankfully covered with industrial matting. Crossing a cattle grid at speed on 16" Brompton wheels is an experience that will rattle your fillings. Now up the long hill into the forest. I can hear heavy breathing all around me. We hit the crest. In 2009 I couldn't keep up with the bunch at this point because my two-gear Brompton didn't have the gears for me to pedal down the steep hill. Since then I have installed a Sturmey Archer hub and have six gears available. Now I am not only able to pedal but also to overtake on the downhill. I hang in with a bunch over the hump-backed bridge at the bottom but they slow down on the uphill. I break away just before the start/finish line only to be caught again a few hundred metres further. On the second lap some of the faster riders from the second group begin overtaking and I catch a wheel here and there. But the traffic is heavier now and we are dodging slower riders. I find myself coming up to the finish just behind the same group that I dropped at the end of first lap. I prepare to sprint for the line but my timing is wrong as we get funnelled down a finish lane with no space for overtaking. As I stop I realise that the sun has come out and it is very hot. I rip off my jacket and sink a Gatorade while a race official pulls the chip from my bike. I feel that I have done better than in 2009. In that year I completed the race in 26' 20" making me the fourth veteran. The next day the results are posted on the Brompton website. My time is 26' 15", a reduction of only 5 seconds but I am now eighth veteran...Thank you to all the friends who sponsored me, especially those at Huthwaite International, Wheel Easy! and Harrogate Jive. On race day my sponsorship stood at £5,235. If you intended to sponsor me and never got around to it, you can still do so by going to my Just Giving account at: <http://www.justgiving.com/Ian-Newall> When you have five minutes to spare you can view a delightful video of the 2011 BWC at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGMstwEQUeg&feature=player_embedded

Saturday Ride Report

There were 3 of us out on Saturday, Sarah E and John and myself. We decided upon a short ride to Knaresborough, Scriven, Lingerfield, Farnham and the direct route back to Waterside for a coffee break. Then up Beryl Burton where we went our separate ways at Bilton lane. Around 16 miles. We managed to get drenched on 2 occasions on the ride. Jean

Sunday Ride Reports

Short Ride Report

2 Sue's + 1 Kirsty = the short ride today as we left Hornbeam and headed via the Showground to Rudding Park and thence to Follifoot and Spofforth. The weather was perfect for cycling and against the backdrop of a cloudless sky, we entered the Millennium Garden for a photo shoot. It had occurred to me that a Wheel Easy photo of just two people (I had left my "Gorilla" at home and, therefore, could not include self!) really required a pretty impressive background to compensate. All of a sudden, our group number rose to five when the heads of Paul and Andrea appeared over the wall and joined us!

Thank you, Paul, not just for your geographical knowledge but also for your photographic skills. The newly increased group then forged ahead to Little Ribston - to myself and Caroline this is known as the "Sloe (not slow) Gin Ride" owing to an awareness of nature's bounty to be garnered later this year. A brief discussion outside the Brethren Meeting House in Knaresborough confirmed the need for coffee and hot chocolate so we wove our way through crowds of Bank Holiday Sunday pedestrians and Paul found an excellent table beside the boats on the Nidd - bliss! The conversation ranged from the joys of retirement - Andrea has just finished, Sue could be debating and Kirsty is far too young even to consider it - to the infinite pleasure of reading from a book as opposed to an electronic gadget. The sun continued to shine and all was well with our Wheel Easy world. Like all good things, this happy state had to end - a strong breeze was blowing Sue's collection of cream cartons onto the people below...In fact, the breeze blew ever stronger but, alas, not from behind us. I was just drawing breath to conquer the heights of the cycle path up Harrogate Road when Andrea whooshed past like lightning and was later found waiting beside the seat opposite Bilton Hall. I have to say that I had espied a long metal container on the top of Andrea's rear mudguard but had resisted the temptation to ask its purpose. My resolve to stay quiet had been caused by another ride which I was leading when I noticed that one of the new riders had a bag attached to his bike and a tube leading into his collar. I instantly decided that he must need oxygen for some dire condition and that I must set a considerate pace and be ready to resuscitate at any moment. When he shoved the tube into his mouth and drank, I was very relieved. I had, therefore, concluded that Andrea's tin must be full of ciabattas! She very nobly explained that she was power assisted by her magic box and was not relying on Italian bread...We returned via the lovely but windy Bogs Lane having done a respectable and enjoyable 15.5 miles. Thank you all. Sue D

Click on slide show for all the weekend photos

Medium Ride Report

Dennis stepped in at the last minute to lead the 16 riders in the faster group whilst 9 chose the sedate option. Apart from a few mechanical difficulties all riders (except Sue T who was feeling rather worn out after other exertions), managed the route to Farnham, Bishop Monkton (the 9 via Burton Leonard), Markington, then down through Bishop Thornton to Hampsthwaite. Both groups met up at Sophie's caff after doing the slightly hilly last bit. A propos hills, Monica passed on a tip. She finds it helpful when climbing hills to breathe as in labour. Hopefully, she'll start classes for blokes. Thanks to back markers Alison and Steve. No photos because I forgot my camera. Approx 28 miles x 25 athletes, total 700. Paul B

The riders on the slightly faster medium ride, pressing on at times to keep ahead of the slower group, also took the diversion via Burton Leonard to Bishop Monkton. (no short cuts for us). An excellent ride with super clear views over to the Cleveland hills and Rosebury Topping to the north east and Nidderdale on the return leg. Dennis B

Medium Plus Touring Pace Ride Report

We set off with 11 riders, and were joined by Rob (+1=12) at the crossing with the A59 opposite Menwith Hill. From there it was a real grind into the wind up to Stumps Cross café where we took refuge from the tornado that had obviously popped across the Atlantic to envelope Wheel Easy! During our stop at Stumps Cross Café, Sue and Alec decided to continue at a slower pace whilst we continued with the route (-3=10). Steve also left us to return home WITH THE WIND ON HIS BACK (-1=9). When we reached Cavendish Pavilion it was like a different day - calm sunny, no wind in your face. From there we continued on to Beamsley and headed for the Cockpit Café tea rooms. After coffee, chickens and cakes, some of us decided to go back over the tops, and others decided to take the less windy route along the valley to Pool, Castley, and on to Kirkby Overblow. Best decision of the day? 55 miles with 11, 12, 9, 7, 5 riders depending on where we were on the route. Yvonne

Medium Plus Ride Report

Ten foolhardy adventurers set off to battle hurricane Irene's little sister across the plains of Yorkshire.

All went well until the puncture fairy struck outside Beckwithshaw. Then two of the party had to head home just before Menwith. The remaining eight tried to do what doesn't come naturally to the medium plus group i.e. ride in a group to have half a chance against the headwind up and out to Stumps Cross. We must have done something right because we managed to breeze into Cavendish Cafe just after midday. After securing mortgages for the delights on offer everyone soaked up plenty of sun. All were desperately hoping for a tail wind on the return leg. Mother nature duly obliged and the pace went along to match, particularly along Penny Pot Lane towards the end of the ride. Back to Hornbeam just after 2:00. A great day out and great but tough ride! Say 59 miles x 8 Steve

Long Ride Report

One benefit of having no pre-determined route is that you can take account of the weather when deciding in which direction to point. As our strategist, Jill got it absolutely right when she proposed north to Masham and then further north until we turn south and thereby avoid any long stretches into the wind. The really subtle move came after Brimham Rocks where an inevitable turn directly into the wind on the B 6265 was downhill although it was the first time I have descended it without brakes. A good lunch propelled us through Thirn, Thornton Steward close to Bedale and then, remembering to lean to the right, South through Snape and Wath. A stop at Spa Gardens was unavoidable before returning through Knaresborough. The mechanical attrition rate was rather high including an unruly chain, a broken spoke and a puncture. These required an inner tube and Elastoplast!! Six riders left and all completed the 72 miles, Peter R

Bank Holiday Ride Report

Four riders started out from Hornbeam Park with two more joining in Knaresborough for a Bank Holiday Bonus Ride. As we hit the first small rise in Farnham Malcolm disappeared into the distance never to be seen again, so our numbers were reduced to five. We headed out towards Beningbrough Hall via Boroughbridge, Milby and Aldwark and although it was intended as a steady ride to recover from the previous day's medium plus ride, once our legs were warmed up the pace soon picked up. After some tasty treats at the Farm Shop cafe at Beningbrough we started our journey back towards Harrogate, into a strong headwind with Martin leading us out and keeping the pace high. 45 very blustery miles at a not-so-steady 17 mph. Thanks for a great ride. Alison

2011 Wheel Easy Miles (approx) Weekend 2675 YTD 119181



