

Why We

ride



Why We Ride

A zine by Allysse Riordan

Why would anyone travel by bicycle when we have planes, trains, and cars? They allow us to go further, faster, and explore more with a limited amount of effort in a limited amount of time. So why choose to go slower, to sweat, and to travel less distance?

It's a question to which I've never had a fully articulated answer. It just makes sense. But this is not satisfactory to baffled friends, family, and co-workers. I've tried many times to explain in more details.

'I go cycle touring because...'

My voice normally trails off after those five words. Memories flood me, highlighting moments in time, bringing back heightened feelings, and it's all too much. How can I bottle up all of this in one coherent sentence? I can't. Instead, I chose to ask other cycle tourists why they do it. The Cycle Touring Festival was the evident place for it.

Armed with my cameras and my audio recorder, I went around asking people their reasons to go touring. I also asked them to share one of their memory as I believe those are linked to why they travel this way.

I only spoke to 16 people, so this is by no means a scientific definitive answer. But nevertheless, it gives a glimpse into the various reasons why. I can relate to all of them, whether it's an escapism, a way of exploring and to meet new people, a sense of adventure, an excuse to stay fit, or a challenge to overcome.

Maybe you'll recognise yourself in one of the answers. Maybe you'll want to pick up your bike and ride and bring back your own reasons as to why you ride?



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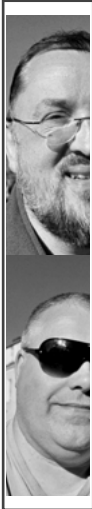
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BEN



The reason I go cycle touring is... escape. Freedom. Just to be alone and away from the world and not be bothered by anything.

My memory, favourite memory is cycle touring in Scotland last year. I went to a bothy right on the outer tip of the Outer Hebrides on a cliff top. It's called the Eagle's Nest. It was one of the most beautiful places I've ever been in my life. It was fantastic.

It was a rough storm build shelter with a timber roof and just stones piled on top right on the top of a cliff, right on the edge. If you went out for a wee in the night you had to be really careful. And you could just... there was no, it was just rough stones. So you could just hear and feel the wind coming through the building and hear the waves crashing at the bottom of the cliff at night. And just to be... to be there... it was amazing. Just look out over the sea and the next thing you'll see is America. Well you can't see it but... (laugh). The next thing you would have come across of significance would have been America.

I met someone else while I was cycle touring up there. And we said... She said, 'Alright I'm going to this point.' I asked if I could join and she said, 'Yeah.' Off we went.

And we liked it that much we stayed for a couple of days. And we only came out 'cause we hadn't any food. And that was the only reason we came away. It was... fantastic. Absolutely superb. One of the memories of... of when your life flashes before you on your deathbed, you think, 'Yeah I'll remember that.' And that one of those, I think.



Rohini



Me and my husband Darren, I'm Rohini, we just really like cycling, I guess being outside and using physical effort. It feels good at the end of the day of having done something to get somewhere. And you see places and you're face to face with people. You get a real experience of where you are, good and bad, either. You can just be really in the thick of it. And you can stop wherever you want, and you can eat really well (laugh). Which is really really important. And we can go to lots of different places.

People seem to... like you for cycling. You know, as if they... maybe because it is a more human approach, you know. If you ever stop and talk to anybody or whatever, children always wave at you. It's quite a happy thing to do I think.

Couple of years ago we were cycle touring through the north of France and we were using the municipal campsites which are absolutely brilliant. But we came to one, it was about 5 o'clock on the evening. It was horrible. It was like somebody had vandalised the only toilet. And its sink area it was disgusting, and the camping area was more like a little car park. I thought, 'I can't, I can't stay here.'

And we cycled into the town and there was a tourist information - 'cause I can speak French as well. I spoke to the ladies there and explain my situation and they're, 'Oh no don't worry, look we'll sort you out, we'll find you somewhere to go and we'll get them to wait for you.' So they found me... a campsite 20km away, another municipal one. And we cycled really really fast 'cause being municipal they're only there at certain times. And the lady at the other hand had... she'd deliberately come back and waited for us to make sure we were okay, we were settled in, and showed us where everything was. She was so amazingly friendly. It almost makes it worth it having the bad experience to appreciate the good experience. And then we met a German couple on that campsite who were again so friendly and invited us to have a glass of wine with them, and sit with them, and chat. It was, it was wonderful. It was just like a bad experience turn into one of the best experience of our tour in France. Yeah. Memory stick.





Wendy



I love the freedom of cycle touring and I love being in the landscape on my bike. And the simplicity of the lifestyle of just... the basics of sleeping, eating, cycling, and that's it. I just love it.

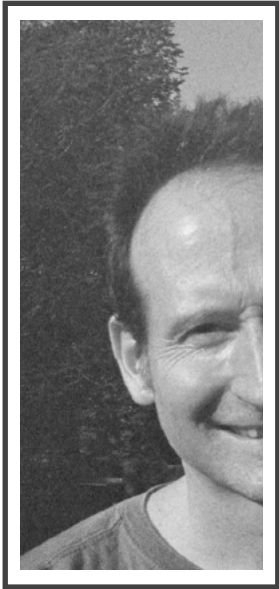
I love the, the scenery and the landscape. And travelling by bike is the best way to travel. There is no better way to travel. And I think also, you're just, you're living the whole time. You're not waiting. You don't wait for, you know, if you're travelling by bus you have to wait and then you're on the bus. You're actually experiencing everything so you're living the whole time. Just love it.

A memory? Oh goodness. I guess, it's a... big memory is probably the first big trip I did was seven years ago with my partner. And we cycled across France and Italy. And that trip as a whole, for four months, really is the memory. Because he's actually unwell now, so he can't cycle with me. The memory of that time that we had together on the bikes. You know, as a whole thing. It's just the most amazing time of my life.

It was just perfect. Everything was just... perfect. The weather was perfect, the food was perfect. And it was the first time I was doing a big trip and I had... found... what I wanted to do with my life, was the cycle touring. And getting to do it with him was just so... I felt so lucky to find the thing I wanted to do and have the person I wanted to do it with. So that whole trip is just... yeah... amazing memory for me.



TIM



I like cycle touring because it gives me the chance to see other places and to travel without worrying about cars. I like the idea of being self-supported, where you are your own engine, you've got your own house with you - your tent. I kind of like exploring but that said, to be perfectly honest, I've done a lot of research on maps and where I'm going. So although I'm exploring I'm going to somewhere I've already discovered only or with maps. And it's not really self-supported because I'm not taking all the food with me. I'm going to the shops, I'm going to supermarkets. But I just, I like travelling. I did travelling before I did cycle touring but I just like the freedom it gives me. I like seeing places I've not been to. So far it's only been either France or a little bit of Spain, and America at the end of a work trip. I'm ever hopeful seeing some more in... some more exotic places. I nearly said interesting but that would be wrong. They're all interesting, they're all different. The whole world is different. And there's a whole load I haven't seen yet.

The memory I wanted to share was cycling over the Camargue. It was so nice... It... What I liked about it that it was relatively car free. It was... it was man made tracks. It's obviously been a man made dyke that I was riding on. But I also have an interest in aerospace, I'm interested in photography. And on that trip I took a GoPro camera and a kite and combined the two, and used the kite to give me some aerial photographs of the area, and of me cycling along. And I know drones can do that but... but that, that was a fun thing to do. It combined a couple of interests.

The GoPro I had a year before. The kite was a birthday present of about two days before so I hadn't really had a chance to combine it and to try it, and certainly to look at results and work out what to do better. I just set it to take a picture every ten seconds. The GoPro is swinging around a lot of the time so. I think I had about tens shots I'm really pleased with out of the hundreds or so that it took. But it was different. You could do this thing with a drone but it was way cheaper than drone, way lighter than drone. I didn't have to charge two great big batteries. It was just the GoPro battery. And that's the only time I've done that. But on the other hand the Camargue is one of the few locations where there were no pylons. There were a few trees but for most of it there weren't trees. And though I've taken the kite with me on three other trips since, and the GoPro, I've not repeated that yet.

I've seen some great cycling touring films where people film themselves but in doing that they... They probably end up doubling a lot of the travelling. So they'll, they'll stop, run forwards to 15 metres, put the camera down, run back to the bike, cycle along, stop, and then turn it the other way, then go back, then pretend that they've cycled continuously. And that's, that's great and that looks like fun but... I'm no film maker.

I think for me to try to do film like that, it'd be detracting from what I like about cycling, the freedom, seeing places, and chatting to people. Because I cycle on my own, you end up chatting to lots of people. I think if you're in a couple, people don't tend to talk to you because you're a unit, you're self-contained and, there is a crowd, people don't... Whereas on your own, you see other people, you chat to people, you chat to other people on your own, whether they're going the same way or the opposite way.



Steve



Why did I go touring? Gosh, I'm not sure I really had a r... If I think of a reason now, I'm thinking after the fact. The reason I went touring was just 'cause it was exciting, and it was an adventure. And I couldn't think of any other way I wanted to go. Because every, every trip I do is human powered. Whether it's walking, or kayak, or the cycling. And that's the way I wanna go. It was just so much fun. It's always been a lot of fun. Big laughs going with friends. So that was, that was my reason. It's just obvious.

I just got too many memories. One? Okay the one that just come to mind is hmm... I went down the California coast. I went down three times actually. I went down once on a touring bike and that was hilarious, and then I went on a mountain bike. And I just remember one day when... we just cycled stoned all day (laugh) and we just had the giggles, and we felt everything, and we really were in touch with nature. That was incredible, just the, the breeze flowing over your body. And the feeling every little pebbles in the road, and feeling exactly how much air was in your tyres. And yeah, we were about 10% slower, and sometimes we just had to pull to the side of the road and giggle. But it was so funny and so carefree.





LEE & ALEX



Lee: Why do you go cycle touring? It's an addiction, isn't it? You get the endorphin rush.

Alex: How about saying how you started getting into cycle touring?

It's a form of exercise that you can't give up on 'cause when you're really knackered and far away from home you still have to make it back.

But that wasn't your original aim. Your original aim was, 'I haven't seen a lot of my mates for a long time. They're just scattered.'

My original tour, I put all of my friends that I hadn't seen for years onto a map and joined the dots. So I cycled all the way around the country having party after party, visiting all my friends. All the way from Manchester, down to the south coast, then back up to Liverpool and all the way up to Aberdeen in one six week cycle touring party. That was my first one. That's what got me addicted.

He mastered touring on a hangover.

You wouldn't believe the miles I've done on a hangover. I was going through some random country park up in Scotland on a gorgeously sunny day and you're going along... and then there was birds everywhere. And it's getting loud. But as I was going down the road, and effortlessly. All the birds were, you know, flying alongside me. One or two bounced off my helmet as you're going down. And it was so gorgeous. That memory sort of stuck with me.



I got into cycling 'cause I live in Cambridge, so in an effort to stay fit I started cycling to commute to and from work. First cycle tour I did was when my friend Lee convinced me that what we really wanted to do was for our friend's 40th birthday, instead of just flying to Frankfurt, what we'd do is we'd get the boat from Felixstowe to the Hook of Holland. And then cycle down through... to Arnhem and then down through the Rhine and all the way to Frankfurt. We did meet an interesting guy in a cycle shop. So I went onto my normal commuting bike which has, just had straight handle bars. And after I think, was it three days? Three days we were in Germany... My hands had sort of turned into claws. I couldn't actually feel anything on the inside. I couldn't actually open them. So we went to a cycle shop to get these... to get some decent handlebars to replace them. We came across this guy who just went - 'I describe it as magic. It wasn't Reiki... it was a hand massage but a proper hand massage. It was the best feeling that I've ever had after... 'cause it just like magicked my hands suddenly. I opened up again. I could feel again. It was, it was just, it was an interesting interaction meeting random people on the road.

And he was a massive racist.

Yeah I wasn't going to mention that.

You're being thankful to a masseur racist. What do you do?

It was just... it was just interesting. The people you meet on the road.



ANN

Why do I go cycle touring? To see the places in between really. The things that you can't see when you're in a bus, or in a car, or what have you. You can't stop every 5 minutes, but on a bike you can stop whenever you like. And it's a good pace to see a country and get a bit closer to the culture really. I think it's broadened my outlook considerably. And also when, when things are in the news, you know where places are and you may have been there and you... it means so much more when people are talking about something in a part of the world that you've seen. And you do realise how little people do know about a lot of these places and it's just words to them whereas it's more like pictures to you.

My most memorable experience going around the world was to be in Iran, really. And the hospitality that I met with the family that invited me into their home. It would be unequalled anywhere else really. They treated me like royalty really because they lay... a table. There was no furniture in this house. And they brought in a plastic chair like we have here, the garden chairs to hmm... because they knew I was struggling to sit on the floor. But I felt so ridiculous sat on this chair, sitting, and they were all on the floor. And I said, 'I can't do that,' and I sat on the floor. And I would keep sort of... leaning to the side. And the sisters would come and shove a cushion under me so I could lean on it. They were helping me to stay upright. I suppose that's quite humorous.

But hmm, but no, it was just... wonderful to be, to get so close to... a family and the people that you hear such, well, a country you hear such bad things of and it's so frightening and... And also in this family they didn't wear a headscarf or long clothes. The young girls, especially the youngest who is just like any teenager in a jeans and fashionable t-shirt and her hair cut. I didn't have to wear a headscarf but the mother did have to wear a headscarf. It's obviously the old school. Yeah... It was a wonderful insight. You couldn't, unless you'd been there, you couldn't possibly have experienced it and felt how it was... it's such a different country to ours, to an English one.





Nikki



I go cycle touring because I'm a penniless artist and it means I can go on holidays but also hmm... I don't know. I rediscovered I love camping. Newly discovered a love for bicycles and riding, and it's just a perfect match. And just the exploring, it lets me do and discover part of the country you just wouldn't get to see any other way.

My perfect kind of vignette from the journey up (to the Cycle Touring Festival) is: I stopped off at the Jodrell Bank radio telescope science park, hmm, place... for lunch one day and just outside was a man in an OpenReach telecoms van stood at, looking at a telegraph pole scratching his head. And it just seemed to be the most kind of inadequate thing ever. Just a perfect second that doesn't exist anywhere except from my memory.



Piotr & Magdalena



Piotr: I'm a bicycle touring beginner. I only tried it a couple of time so far. I want to do it... for adventure I think. So to basically to break the routine, the daily routine. Get out of work, get out of home, clear the head I think. For me in a way, it's a replacement of activities I've been sort of doing for the last few years which was all related to mountains like, hill walking, scrambling, climbing but I cannot really do it anymore because my knees are deteriorating. So it's sort of practical. I'm trying to find, it might sound bad. Cycling being just a replacement but it's a similar activity because it's outdoors, it requires physical exercises. The physical side is important. It gives me... it provides me with exercise. So that's also a reason I think. That's the two main reasons as it is. In the future it might be some more component that could be important. It could be travelling, sort of... seeing new places in a different way that you normally do. I don't like to do like a traditional holidays when you... pay for everything in advance and you just spend two weeks sunbathing in one spot. I don't like doing it so. So cycle, cycle touring ticks a few boxes.



Magdalena: I think I'm doing it because I want to challenge myself. I think that's the main reason. I want to see how far I can go. I think that's the main bit. And yeah, just kind of cutting on costs like travelling cost and living in tents that's, that's also...

Ah yes there's camping component 'cause we were camping like, wild camping so... you can do travelling on a bike. You can travel, travel without spending too much money. And... it's not that we don't even want to spend money, it's just we take more enjoyment I think if you just don't spend too much money. It sort of just feels better. I don't know. Like the majority of

people they just go to some location because the weather is better. They don't care where, it could be in South America, it could be in Spain as long as it's currently blue skies and 30 degrees. Which I like! (laugh) I would be happy but they're coming back, they don't know where they were. Which is again... I simply don't like it. But who knows when I'm old and cannot move about much, I might go for something like that.

I've never been to like a proper tour.

So you don't know what to say yet. Are you inspired? Do you feel inspired? Maybe something inspired you during this event?

Yeah. I feel like coming back and buying panniers and going on a trip.

But what inspired you do you think?

I think mainly people. Yeah mainly people and all the stories I can hear. That's very inspiring. I think that the idea of just taking stuff and going that's what I like. Just not being like thinking about other stuff. Just taking the stuff and go. I like that freedom.

I think in my case because I don't... I didn't even know that this existed really, until late last year to be honest. I think I started to watch quite a few YouTube videos from hmm this American guy, Bicycle Touring Pro. I like his videos and quite practical and yeah. I thought that's, that's to me was the main thing. I just say, 'Well, I want to try it, looks good.' It involves camping and you know... he's, he's quite modest. He likes to stay low key and this sort of looks like something I can do.



cali

I started cycle touring I think because I really love travelling to different places all over the world. But you know, riding buses and staying in hostels got quite boring and all felt the same. So I think getting on a bike seemed like a great way to still be able to travel but also do be doing something that kinda makes you feel good and makes you feel like you're out doing something sort of different than everyone else.

Hmm... a story? There's lots of them. Okay, I remember cycling out of Delhi for the first time and feeling really overwhelmed with the idea of going out in all that traffic and trying to find my way to the right road. And I think I even stayed three extra days 'cause I just couldn't face trying to cycle through Delhi. And when I finally got on my bike and I'm going through the traffic, about ten minutes in I kinda looked around and realised everyone was on a bike. There was just all these bikes around me, and like mopeds and scooters, and everyone was just sort of moving together in this one clump. And then it just suddenly felt kinda really fun and comfortable. And someone gave me a coffee and it was a good start to leaving Delhi.

I don't love cycling in India (laugh). There is yeah, a lot of traffic and really scary drivers and people pestering you all the time. But I go up north in the Kashmir and then it was really lovely. And the landscape changed and the people changed and that part was great.





DAVID

In the early days it was because it was a cheap way to get from A to B and it was more convenient because you could explore the out of the way places. Latterly it's just an escapism, again it's freedom. You're free to move around where you want, pretty much.

And you can explore things at a slower pace. Whereas in the car everything goes by so quickly. Not so easy to see. You go from point A to point B but on a bike you might go to point A to B and then to C and then to D and then back to B again. Although you have to carry everything on your bike which is a struggle but it's also sort of satisfying as well.

Freedom, I think.

A memory of going when I was really young to the south of France. Going to... St Raphael by train from Waterloo, overnight. So you arrive in St Raphael in the morning. And then cycling along that road from St Raphael to St Tropez. And then being in the campsite with just a bivvy bag on a massive pitch, around Easter time, so it wasn't terribly warm, there weren't too many people there. But that was lovely.

And then more recently, there's a lovely little hmm... freibad, an outside swimming pool, in Berchtesgaden in Germany. It's absolutely gorgeous. It's just a lake... that they've cleaned up and it's crisp... it's gin clear water... it takes a bit of effort to get there by bike because it's uphill, and it is a bit of a struggle. It's about half an hour ride from the campsite. It's a lovely thing to do. And again it's that freedom. You don't have to worry about parking the car you just lock your bike up and hopes nobody nicks it. Yeah...





CHRIS & PENNY



Chris: We enjoy cycling and it's a great way to see the countryside wherever you are and it burns off a few calories and helps your cardio vascular fitness.

Penny: So I go cycle touring just 'cause I love being out of doors and although I love walking you can get so much further when you're cycling. And I also find when I'm cycle touring that... your bike makes you very sociable. When you're stopping in a village to have your lunch people come up to you and talk to you. And you get to the most wonderful parts of the countryside that a lot of people never see. Fortunately, 'cause they stay in the towns.

Well one of my best memories is cycling up in the Yorkshire Dales. When you get... hmm. I'm not sure where it is, I think it's above Dent. There's the most amazing gated road over the moors. Every time you stop and open and shut a gate you feel fairly confident there won't be any cars on that road and you can see for miles and miles. And all you can see is the most fabulous English countryside. And people moan about all the new building. Fortunately there's so much fantastic countryside still. A lot of wild lands still in England and in Britain. And the memory of the cycle ride over that moor always lives with me. It's out of this world.

It's like when we, we did the cycle coast to coast journey and you're going across the hmm, the Pennines. You realise how much wilderness there is, there is in this country where there's just, there's just nothing other than a small road and a lot of sheep.





Andrew



Why do I want to go cycle touring? Well, I like travelling, I like cycling, you know. It's cheap, it's easy to do, you know. You can decide where you're going. You don't have to follow any, any guides or any, any railways or routes. You can just go wherever you want to, go at your own pace which is good.

Well, I went to Italy last year. Now it was just like a one day I hired a bike and cycled round. I did about 70 miles which was really nice. And that was really nice. It was really hot but, you know, going up the hill and then coming down again, it was amazing. It got amazing views and things, and hmm... Yeah it was just a really really good day. And it was just, it was amazing how far you can go on the bike and see so many different bits of a country, you know. On, in just in one day which is good. So yes, that, that I'd definitely recommend. If you haven't got a bike, hire a bike and go off for a day.

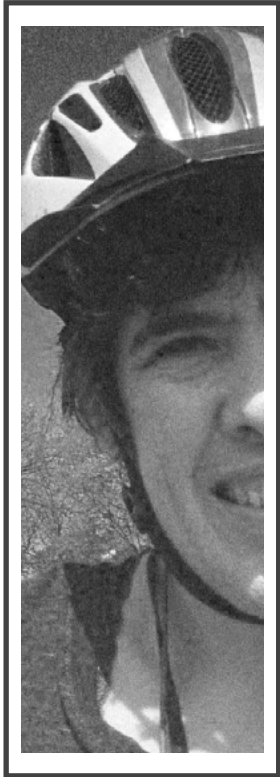


URSULA

I cycled all my life in lots of different... just getting to and from school, work. I come from Germany so cycling is a very... common thing there. It's part of life. But I like cycle touring because it's the pace. I like to stop and look at things and meet people. I like the idea of being self-sustained so you don't have to rely on any other... form of energy other than your body to get there. And usually have some adventures and unexpected experiences when I've done it.

Now I haven't done that much cycle touring in compared to some of the people here (Cycle Touring Festival). I've done very small trips like this, or maybe gone to European countries and never really camped. This is my first time camping with all my equipment so it's quite a challenge for me today. Usually I stay in places. So I want to do more of that so I came to this festival for that reason, to meet more people and be more inspired.

So getting here was a bit stressful. I came here on Friday. My plan was, I left where I was setting off from at three which, it shouldn't have taken me more than two to three hours to get here. About halfway along the journey I went through Skipton and over the top there's a hill... near a place called Earby, which is one of the towns on the way. I was gonna go away from the main road. I thought, I'll cycle on the side roads. And I came to this junction to check where I was going and I had the route on my mobile phone, on the Google Maps. And when I got to the junction, the phone wasn't there. I thought, 'I must have lost it somewhere between the top of the hill and the bottom of the junction,' which was at least two, two or three miles stretch, quite steep downhill. So I thought 'What am I gonna do now?' I thought, 'Oh my God. I can't... I need that phone, it's got everything in it. All my contacts, my map, the ticket to camp here, everything.' And it had fallen off the... it was on a special



holder but the whole holder had fallen off. It must have been because it was quite bumpy coming down the hill.

Anyway, luckily it was the bottom of the village so there were some people around and I noticed this family having a barbecue in the garden, so I went in there, and said, 'Look. If you guys have got wifi, can I just...' there's an app you can get on an iPad called 'Find my iPhone'. Luckily I had my iPad with me. Now I didn't normally want to take it with me because it's extra weight but I'm glad I took it on that occasion because hmm... with that wifi locator thing I could find the phone and I looked at it and it wasn't that far up the hill in fact. However because the phone said it was there doesn't mean it was easy to find. So this... It was a very nice afternoon in the end 'cause the children from this family came and help me. And we spent about an hour and a half searching along the banks of this road for this phone, and it wasn't there. But it was very near, the location kept saying it's very near. But it wasn't there.

Anyway, what had happened was a farmer had actually seen it and taken it inside their house. And when they saw us looking for the phone eventually they came out of the house and said, 'Did you lose your phone?' I said, 'Yes.' So they had kindly helped me but in fact if they'd left it on the side of the road I would have probably found it more easily using the app, you see what I mean? Anyway that delayed me about an hour and a half and I had to thank the people and chat to them for a bit and it was lovely. But it meant I did get here quite late and I was really exhausted by the time I got here, and really stressed. But it was fine and it's, it's like that woman had just said - I've just been in the talk, just now. She said, 'You know sometimes these things happen. But people always help you out.' Which is what I like about it, you know? It's a completely different experience of human interaction you have on a bike than any other way of getting around, you know. All other human interactions either involve money or some other deal. You know, you're working with them, or they're friendly to you because they have to be, or in fact they could be aggressive. Whereas with the cycling and this kind of thing, I really like it because it's... you're sort of like equalised, aren't you? And people... I've never had anyone... very rarely, I've had the occasional abuse but almost, always people are really friendly. So, it's really good.



JACK



I love cycling because it was kind of a family passion. And I needed to take it one step further and carry more gear than the rest of my family. My two older brothers in fact and, kind of take cycling to another level. As kind of like a bravado thing among my family. But then it became more about seeing the world, meeting people, taking my passion for art and drawing to kind of... kind of record different faces and push my skills as an artist as well, seeing the world. That's kind of why I kind of changed and grew as a cycle tourist, and an artist.

Maybe one of my kind of best memories is meeting a man from Warmshowers and he had one arm and it was a complete shock to me when I met him because I had no indication he was going to have one arm. And he was one of the nicest guys I ever met. And he was a cycle tourer as well, and he custom-built his own bike to cycle with only one arm and I just thought it was just the most fascinating thing. It was just like, any one can do this, any one without any limitations can do this. And that, that was a great memory I always think about when I cycle.

(<http://www.warmshowers.com>)

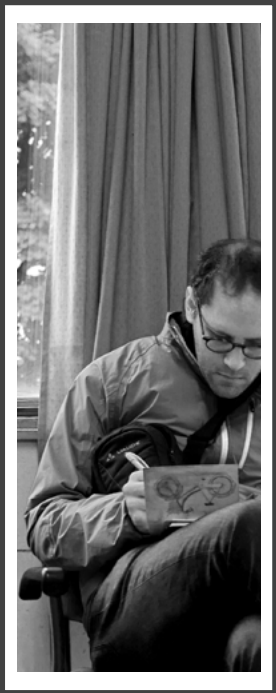


Arthur

I go cycle touring now for a specific project that is to raise awareness about diabetes, type 1 diabetes and Africa. And also to show to the public, or to people that have diabetes, or another chronic illness that they can go beyond what they think are the limits of their conditions.

So I did start my trip in October 2017, early October 2017. I went to Marseille, from Brussels to Marseille. And there I boarded a container ship. And I think that the journey I had on the container ship is one of my best memories of travel. It's not cycle related but if I had not had that cycling project it would not have happened and so... I was welcomed on that ship by a Turkish crew.

They gave me a huge cabin, bigger than my house in Brussels on the ship. I could go everywhere on the ship. I could even manoeuvre the ship at some point. They were really kind. I could see all the... everything on the ship like the machines, the engine rooms and so on. And they made some things... they start calling me King Arthur, which I'm not a royalist. I'm actually against the royalist system. But coming from them, I felt it was very kind and very... very friendly. And at some point I heard them on the radio, and they were talking about yeah... And I heard my name like King Arthur, and I was wondering what was happening and so I asked, it was the captain on the radio, and so I ask the chief officer what was happening, why it was, something... if it was something administrative or whatever. And he said, 'No, no, no. There is a ship that is further that we're going to cross but we're asking them to change course so they can salute you.' And so, that, that was impressive



because they... the other ship accepted to go beyond the rules that they normally have. Ships normally have to cross at one nautical mile from each other. Apparently those big ships... it's a huge ship. Sixty-five thousand tons, both of them. And we crossed each other at 200 or 300 metres from each other. And while we crossed, the captain of the other ship was on the bridge and all the officers of their ships were on the monkey bridge - which is above the bridge where all the antennas and all the radars on the ship are. And they were all saluting me, and they were pushing on the horn. something that... that only happen, happens only very rarely. It's hmm, and yeah, that was, that was quite something. And yeah, so, when I got off the ship I told the guys that... my trip could end that day and I would be happy anyway, 'cause of what I lived with them.

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