

# London to Reims Cycle Challenge

## 16th - 20th June 2006



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We would like to say a very big thank you to you all for your very generous help and support that you gave to the charity bike ride. 18 cyclists took part and the ride was completed in glorious sunny conditions over 4 days starting at St Pauls Cathedral in London and finishing around 450kms later at Reims Cathedral .(see attached photo)

The current running total raised is over £32k , where some money has already been dispatched to support several much needed research initiatives.



**Thanks again for your support and perhaps you may wish to consider joining us next year where we are currently organising another 4 day trip from Avignon to Monte Carlo. If you do take part I promise that it will be a trip to remember for a very worthy cause.**

A long weekend of great fun and cycling begins at St Paul 's Cathedral and finishes in one of the famous champagne houses in Reims covering approx. 410k m (260 miles) cycling on road in 4 days.

We started at St Pauls Cathedral London at 6:45am then over Tower Bridge and through the streets of Southeast London then into undulating countryside heading towards the port of Newhaven . We board the ferry to Dieppe arriving in the early hours of the next day. The next morning it was back on our bikes through sleepy Normandy villages to Gournay en Bray with quite a few hills to conquer along the way.



## **Day 1: Friday**

**Tower of London – Newhaven**

**104km approx.**

**Ferry Newhaven – Dieppe**

**Dieppe Ferry Terminal – Hotel Windsor, Dieppe**

**1.7km approx.**

As we approach Reigate and Redhill and cycle to the other side of the M25 the scenery starts to become very pretty and more rural. Some 58km from our starting point we stop for lunch at “The Crown” on Turners Hill, a 16 th century farmhouse which has been converted into a public house. We will be ready for a break after a challenging climb to get there.

After lunch it is gentle downhill along a straight road past the South of England Showground. The rest of the afternoon is spent cycling south towards the East Sussex border. The scenery is pretty and the roads undulating. As we approach Lewes there is a steep climb but we are rewarded with views of the South Downs once past the town.

After around 103km we see the “Welcome to Newhaven” sign and make for the ferry terminal. Our ferry departs at 21:30 hrs for the 4 hour crossing to France . We will have dinner at a restaurant in Newhaven before wheeling our bikes on-board (check-in at least 1 hour before departure). During the journey there will be the opportunity to change clothes and relax with our fellow cyclists. The boat is due to arrive in Dieppe at 02:30 hrs



We disembark with our bikes and will cycle the flood lit route, 1.7km to the hotel. We will overnight at the Hotel Windsor, which overlooks the sea.

## **Day 2: Saturday**

**Dieppe – Gournay en Bray 80km approx.**

After a late mid-morning start ( 09:30 wake up for 11:00 start) we are reunited with our bikes and set off through Dieppe , an old fashioned port town nestled between two limestone cliffs. The streets are likely to be busy due to the traditional Saturday market. Within 2½km we are into the pretty Normandy countryside. We pass through typically French villages all of which seem to have at least one boulangerie and bar / tabac no matter how small.

The route to our first stop in the village of Torcy le Grand is gently undulating. The terrain is similar as we approach the centre of Saint Saens with its pretty central square and church, where we'll stop for lunch (at Relais Normand). From here we encounter a few uphill sections some longer and more challenging than others, and

then from Bosque Eveline (51km into the day) the route becomes undulating once more.

The last stretch to Gournay en Bray takes us through another succession of sleepy villages along quiet roads. We cycle through Merval with its beautiful Chateau de Merval, which is currently used as a college. This evening we are bound to celebrate today's achievement over a glass or two of French wine or beer in these picturesque surroundings of Gournay en Bray.

### **Day 3: Sunday Gournay en Bray –**



### **Compeigne**

### **110km approx**

We leave Gournay en Bray early in the morning in an easterly direction. Normandy is known for its bocage, farmland criss-crossed with hedges and trees and we are soon cycling amongst this type of rural landscape. We pass through numerous villages this morning and see the locals heading to and from church. The terrain is mainly undulating but there are some short climbs. After 25 km we cross the river Therain near Beauvais and continue our journey. Lunch will be taken in the village of St Just, Chaussee, after approx. 67kms.

The terrain is fairly undulating but at times challenging and goes through typical little villages, many with medieval churches. After crossing the river Oise we arrive at our overnight stop at Compeigne.

## **Day 4: Monday**

### **Compeigne - Reims**

### **115km approx**

After an early start from Compeigne we cycle over small country roads and cross the river L'aisne towards the town of Soissons. A narrow country road takes us uphill and we are greeted with wonderful views over the countryside.

After a long descent the road meets the river L'aisne again and we continue through forests and fields. At this point we reach the famous champagne growing area of the Hills of Reims, the capital of the champagne region. After approximately 60km we reach the village of Bourget Comin where we will have a well-deserved lunch. After

lunch at Restaurant de France in Vailly sur Aisne , the route continues undulating along the limestone hills covered with vineyards and forests.

Towards Reims the road levels out and we enter the city along the banks of a canal. A broad avenue leads to the famous Notre Dame Cathedral where 25 kings were crowned. This is our finish line! We will spend our last night in a hotel in the centre of Reims and celebrate our achievement.



**Day 5: Tuesday**  
**Reims –**

**Eurostar DisneylandParis - Waterloo**

After breakfast, we take a short coach transfer (5/10 mins) to take a tour of the Pommery Champagne House (included in the tour cost). The rest of the day will be free, but we have arranged an optional group lunch (to be paid for by the participant) before we depart for the Eurostar (approx. 16.00). We arrive at Disneyland Paris Eurostar station around 17:30 for our 18.46 departure back to London . This service arrives in Ashford at 19.37 and London Waterloo at 20.27. On arrival at London Waterloo station we are reunited with our bikes.