

A Wee Dram, Perhaps?

A tale of this summer's edition of LEL, as told in third person through Facebook posts made at (or shortly after) each of the controles during the ride.

■ Photographs, text and layout by Patrick Chin-Hong

4

...is at Pocklington, where the sleep gods have claimed the consciousness and dignities of several riders. Real estate under the canteen tables is scarce.

3

...just parked his bike at Market Rasen after bantering deliciously inane banter with Susan and Lesli the past several long, humid miles. Food, as he understands, is in order, and lots of it!

2

...rode with a ragtag group: an Italian, a Swede, a Japanese, a Frenchman, and a Pole, not a word exchanged anywhere for 30 miles before the garrulous British group caught up and pulled him away for the next 20 miles. He is now being serenaded by the Kirton Brass Band and their vast repertoire of ABBA hits.

1

...made it to St. Ives with a bundle of garrulous Englishmen, and is settling down to lunch after a morning of cycling the countryside under spectacular blue skies.

0

...has wrapped up the prologue around scenic London and is waiting with a thousand of his best friends from around the world to start. M27 is ready to roll!





LONDON
LONDON
LONDON
LONDON
LONDON



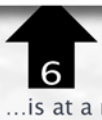
...is in Edinburgh, where the festive mood is tempered by alternating bouts of rain and sunshine, cyclists constantly whizzing in and out whoosh-whoosh-whoosh. Time to turn around!



...crossed into a foggy Scotland under cover of darkness, the 3am moon blotted purposefully into cloudy night skies. On the sides of the roads, within tantalising reach of the stinging nettles, the occasional rider lies sleeping, his body curled tight into a ball, his bicycle splayed out in the nearby ditch. At the Moffat checkpoint, dawn gives way to morning.



...came as close to that special place in his heart as he has in some years when he experienced the 20-mile Yad Moss climb and all her desolate and inconsolable beauty.



...is at a mellow Barnard Castle after battling less-than-mellow headwinds through the beautiful countryside with Stephen. At the controle checkpoint, the energy is muted, the din of conversation punctuated by an occasional laugh or crashing of silverware from exhausted cyclists.



...is at Thirsk, marking the first night of riding with bleary-eyed and famished randonneurs staring rapidly into their oatmeals and toasts.





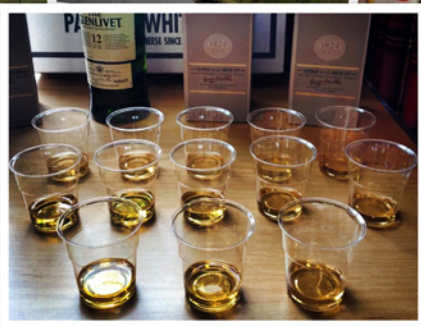
LONDON EDINBURGH LONDON EDINBURGH

LEL 1400km 34 Nations 1100 Riders

LONDON EDINBURGH LONDON

Welcome to Traquair Scotland

Only 653 km to go



10

...has arrived in Traquair, where he's being encouraged by the ride organisers to indulge in a wee dram o' whisky. Tartan kilts abound.



...was treated to some proper Scottish weather the past several hours, and is now at Eskdalemuir, half-frozen and sopping wet from head to toe and every nook and cranny in between. Nothing some hot soup, homemade bread and fresh-baked pies can't remedy.

11



12

...had an excruciatingly tough segment with the hundred miles leading in to the Brampton checkpoint, with sleep deprivation, cold, rough rollers, dense fog, and sheer exhaustion playing tricks on the mind. Lots of nodding off occurred while riding. A quick thirty-nine winks will now be had.



Welcome to ENGLAND

13



...had a really tough third night of cycling, struggling incredibly to stay awake on the bike, but dawn brought the most incredible vistas on the return climb up Yad Moss, and a new best friend David brought great conversation and laughter.

14

...met a farmer on the way to Thirsk who was terribly embarrassed to smile for the camera. But smile he did, even though he had an appointment with a dentist first thing in the mornin' to fix just about everythin' in there.



THE BOWES MUSEUM



15



...is back at Pocklington, a little more than utterly soaked through and through, a little more than chilled completely to the bone. The little tidbit he learned while cycling the charming country roads with Stephen, Paul and Daniel: today is Wednesday, not Thursday. One additional day to try to get this thing done!



16



...rolled into the Market Rasen checkpoint after an eventful fourth night of riding, what with snapped rear derailleur cables, broken chains, and a malfunctioning GPS. There was much walking up the hills over the past fifty miles, but oh, what spectacular views of a dawn approaching!

17



...left Market Rasen this morning to a brand new day, and joined a curious little ragtag group of Brits, Swiss, Germans and Americans fighting the fierce headwinds together, folks hopping on and off the train as they pleased. Here at the Kirton checkpoint, cyclists are passed out from the exhausting heat.

18



...just barely made it to the St. Ives checkpoint, the heat and extreme blustery headwinds on the wide-open expanse of land taking their tolls, leaving just eleven minutes to checkpoint close. How did that happen? If there is ever a need to dig deep, this is it.



19

...made great time to the Great Easton checkpoint, making up 1.5 hours with wonderfully inane banter about this and that and nothing in particular with new best friend Andrew, zooming up and down the hills and rollers with giddy abandon, the sun setting behind and elongating shadows as the hours passed. Mental preparation for the final night of cycling is in progress.

20



...would like to thank you for following him on this episode of "And That's What One Of These Things Looks Like," featuring LEL, the 900-mile cycling ride from London to Edinburgh and back. Happiness!

