

Ride to Morocco
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Dedication

To all the motorists who avoided me

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Ride to Morocco

Day 1 of bike ride at 25,249 days old

I finally set off from home at 12.34, according to Moves, on my latest bike ride heading towards Weymouth to get the ferry to Jersey and then St Malo. Hopefully getting to Ibiza and Morocco.

Today's ride ended at 18.10 at my daughter's flat in London after a pretty exhausting 52 miles at 10.9mph. Perhaps it wasn't a good idea to do the 600 yard swim first ? plus the SW headwind didn't help. The front gears on the Dawes Galaxy also aren't shifting properly, apparently the mechanism isn't suited to click shifts ?

Tomorrow it's a ride through Central London emerging at Farnham, probably better than riding through Hertfordshire lanes with Chelsea Tractors being driven at high speed by mums collecting their little dears.

My Strava for the day is [here](#)

Day2 Em's Place to Winchester 25,250 days old

Phew what a scorcher as the tabloids used to say! with the temperature in the thirties, a bit like riding in South Africa / Cuba except for the traffic and awful state of the roads.

After a bad night's sleep, the Turkish food did not agree with me leaving me with an urgent call to nature at 2.30am ? I left with Em at 8am.

First stop was The Olive Tree cafe around the corner for some brekkie then it was a ride through the hilly capital with its disgusting road surfaces ? except interestingly up millionaires row around Hampstead Heath. The ride through Richmond Park was gorgeous except for the obligatory hill ?

In Kingston I met up with Nigel & Margie friends from my Cavendish days in the 70's for a drink and natter then I cycled past Pirbright and onto Farnham a town that has decided to give its centre over to cars ? After Farnham hill I entered open country for the first time where I was hoping to find a country pub to stay in. Alas it wasn't to happen, the pubs not closed down were either full or didn't do b&b.

Finally after 11 hours on the road I arrived in Winchester to find the hotels full ? eventually I homed in on the [Westgate Pub](#) and its last available, expensive, room but at least the bike has slept in the pub overnight!

Strava made it 88.6 miles and 2415 feet of ascent, or though it seemed a lot more ascent than that! You can find [it here](#)



Day 3 Winchester to Weymouth - 25,251 days old and still pedalling

Oh boy what a glorious cock up today was ??

I arrived in Weymouth after 9 hours on the road to find no ferries have left here for over a year ? They now run from Poole ?? where I was a few hours ago.....

The day started OK although starting of up a steepish narrow busy main road wasn't ideal in fact once I found a spot to stop I decided to deviate from the route chosen by Strava to one created by GMaps which went very well picking up the old railway track around Poole, although it let me down grotesquely just after Winfrith Newburgh, where it decided a track across a field up onto a ridge was OK, it wasn't ? but it proved again The Galaxy is an OK mountain bike ?

Favourite spots of the day were the lovely village of Fordingbridge and of cause the cream tea in The New Forest. I enjoyed the converted railway track around Poole ending in The Costa at Upton which is where I should have dropped down to Poole Harbour. Plus of course my very reasonable Seaspray Guest House in Weymouth

Real problems with my gpx devices today with the ETREX20 deciding to close down half way, Strava app conking out and Memory Map failing too. However good old Moves came up trumps with th missing bits easily pulled out of [Moves Export](#)

Christopher came to the rescue by finding a train from Weymouth to Poole a quick 45min ride. So I've booked the 10.30 crossing to Jersey.

Todays Strava is in two parts [here](#) and [here](#) a total of 78.5 miles and 2,353 feet of climbing

Trip Day 4 - Weymouth to St. Lawrence (Jersey). Life Day 25,252

After yesterdays faux pas of riding to Weymouth to find the ferry had moved to Poole. I escaped by taking the 7.23 train from Weymouth back to Poole, by the time the train arrived in Poole there were 15 bikes squeezed into our compartment!

Gmaps once again came up trumps to navigate the maze of cycleways from the station to the port in 15 minutes. I had a bit of a long wait for the ferry but chatted to a couple from CTC Nottingham on their flash bikes who are also touring around. The ferry itself was very efficient and we made the 150 mile crossing in just under 5 hours including stopping at Guernsey it clags along very smoothly at 40mph.

I had an awful night's sleep at Seaspray, soft beds and sea sounds don't suit me, the landlady was very



helpful though, making me toast and coffee before I left. The triathletes were already bombing up and down the bay.

The weather in Jersey was pretty bad, overcast and drizzly. To get to [The Village B&B](#) it was uphill all the way to St Lawrence. The place itself is very organised but my poor bike has to stay outside ? in the drizzle.

Tonight I met up with Peter at the neighbouring Saint Laurent pub which has only two beer taps, lager & ale! I met Peter from my luxury stay in Les Gets earlier in the year. Tomorrow he is taking me on a bit of a tour of the island on his bike.

[Today's exciting Strava](#) shows 2.3 miles and 166 feet of climbing.

Day 5 a whirlWINDY tour of Jersey on my 25,253 day.

What a wet and wild night that was, thank goodness it was only my bike outside. After a much better nights sleep, on a firmer bed I had a gorgeous scrambled egg breakfast and left The Village b&b to a windy but dry morning.

I freewheeled down the hill and biked to St Aubin to meet up with snowboarder Peter, my guide for the morning. When he arrived on a uber lightweight carbon bike, I knew I was in for a struggle especially when he started talking about 8min running miles ? in ParkRuns

We shot off up the old railroad track to the lighthouse at Corbiere Point and met the full force of the huge westerly wind ? It was really stunning scenery and I was glad of a breather :-). At the bottom of the hill Peter suggested a rough track around the hill although it meant carrying my heavyish bike up a flight of steps..

Once down at sea level again and along the bay we stopped at the Jersey Pearl shop for a much needed cream tea. ?

Then it was of again up a very steep hill appropriately named Mont du Vallette , after a rest at the top to admire the view and Peter's old childhood haunts we biked on, a bit inland of the coast, to our next tea break at the Durrell Wildlife Park. Then it was time for Peter to do his domestic duties so he flew off. I continued at a more leisurely pace, even spotting my first red squirrel, around the island. It really is beautiful with well maintained roads and on the whole courteous drivers. With the ferry from Portsmouth it probably makes a decent long weekend trip from the UK.

Once in St Helier I make a quick recce of the seawater lido, looks promising for a dip! Instead of returning back to the b&b I started the circuit again this time dropping down to St. Brelade's gorgeous sandy bay. However, The Crab Shack had closed for an afternoon nap so I discovered the Wayside Cafe for my crab salad instead.



Once back at the b&b I confidently started to book a ferry to St Malo for tomorrow. However, to continue a theme, no ferries run that way on Saturday ? so it's another night on Jersey for me! I've moved myself to a place in St Helier so I can use the lido etc.

A good day and it was great to have Peter, a local, to show me around. [The Strava shows](#) I did 44.7 miles and 2094 feet of climbing

My pictures of the day should be here [on Dropbox](#):-

Day 6 - A days holiday in a holiday in retirement and 25,254 days old

Due to the vagaries of the monopoly supplier of ferries to Jersey, Condor Ferries, there was no ferry to St Malo today ? So an official holiday was declared by me.

With the unexpected day here I decided to revisit the North coast, this time dropping down into the coves and also practising the [Boulay bay hill climb](#) unfortunately I had a laden saddle bag etc so the heart rate went out through the roof on the 24% gradient:stretch -(It still brought back many fond memories of the Bolsover hill climb, which was 33%, that I used to do as a kid.

Jersey with it's so called "Green Lanes" is a bit of a cycling paradise. Quiet, well surfaced roads are ideal plus you can choose to do some pretty good hill climbing short and sharp! A lovely prevalence of reasonable cafes means you are never far from a cuppa or cake.

It's easily accessible by bike from England (Condor Ferries willing) using Portsmouth, bikes are carried free and compared to flying totally hassle free. So I'm sure I will be back for a long weekend with Sally ?

After the ride I took a 10 minute dip in The Sea Lido, [apparently the oldest in the UK](#) even more astonishing is that at high water the pool is 40feet under water ? as usual I was perished when I got out and after chatting to the oldie regulars :-), fortunately The [Runnymede Hotel](#) , where I'm staying, is literally 100 yards up the road so a hot shower did the usual thawing out trick.

All in all a very relaxing day for me, at this rate will I make it to Ibiza? even more does it matter ?

The [Strava says](#) I cycled 16 miles and 1132 ft of climbing. Meanwhile my son, [Nick RAN](#) nearly 41 miles and over 5,500 feet of climbing ? shurely shome mishtake....

The pictures will be [found here](#) at some point.

Day 7 - I make it to France with my bike, 25,255 days old.



I arrived in St Malo with 15 Belgium Harley Davidsons just before midday, Condor had bought the start time forward by 2 hours because one of the boats engines had failed, apparently they needed to make sure it would catch the tide to dock in St Malo.

I couldn't easily change my booking at the F1 Hotel so I had a whole afternoon to do some sightseeing and checking out a route to get to Spain.

Whilst on the net in my rather dismal room, sans WC (Well for €35 what else do you expect) I happened upon the Cycling Brittany website which described the R2 [route from St Malo to Arzal](#) with a convenient gpx file for the first 110km to Rennes, so a decent day's biking along the canals & rivers. It was quickly added to my Gaia app ?

The next find was [La Vélodyssée](#), the 1200km Atlantic cycling route from Roscoff to Hendaye on the Spanish border. My route from St Malo should hit it at Redon which is only 75km from Rennes. So hopefully, should be a decent route all the way to Spain.

First task tomorrow is working out a route across The Rance Barrage to get across to meet the R2. A task made really easy with the maps.me app, although it has a bug which wants you to go around roundabouts the wrong way ?

St Malo is well worth a visit. a historic walled town with lovely sands and a busy port importing timber from Russia

The very feeble Strava of 16 miles and 626 feet [is here](#)

The pictures [are in Dropbox here](#)

Day 8 St Malo FI Hotel to Rennes on my 25,256 day

I had a really great sleep, rock hard beds suit me I think, Should modify the bed at home with a sheet of plywood as a topper ?

At brekkie two English cyclists were complaining at the hills between Rennes and St Malo they didn't seem to happy when I said they was a canal side path and a old railway line. How nice to be smug sometimes ?

I set of to on a route suggested by maps.me that avoided the dual carriageway. However when I reached the Parc de la Briantais its gates were firmly locked ? ? I followed the track around the humungous wall and slid down to eventually reach the dual carriageway fortunately they drive on the right so I didn't have to attempt



a perilous crossing of one high speed traffic lane.

I was quickly onto the Barage de la Rance and just to see the sheer power of the rising tide going through the turbines was amazing. To think the Severn Estuary barrage could generate 8% or so of UK electricity and we can't be bothered to build it ? After a bit of side roads I was soon on the old railway line at Pleurtuit and the V2 cycle trail. Excellent riding and at Taden smoothly dropping onto a riverside path. Dinan is truly incredible not only for its ancient buildings but its patisseries ?

The route then carried on the Canal d'Ille et Rance. I dropped of at Tinteniac for a bite to eat and started chatting to the young couple next to me. Turns out that they are friends with Paul & Diana in Jersey and he is a pilot too! small world.

Eventually I reached Rennes a bit parched & hungry as I couldn't find any shops after Dinan – must try and stock up tomorrow. The Hotel Lorient is OK although it only opens at 5.30pm.

[Strava says todays ride](#) was 72 miles with 1,579 feet of climbing. So not quite flat ?

The [photos should be here](#)

Day 9 Rennes to Nantes now reached 25,257 days old.

After another good nights sleep on a firm bed I was out on the road at half past eight after my croissant and coffee.

It was amusing to see all the kids walking to school with their duffel coats, hats and scarfs on with me feeling OK in T shirt and shorts :-). Once out of the city, skilfully guided by maps.me I met the really thick mist with quite poor visibility and my spectacles getting steamed yp all the time.

At Chavagne I managed to find a Carrefour open so I could stock up on water and Mars Bars ? By 11 the sun had burnt through and it turned into a lovely day.. The route Strava had worked out for me last night was perfect, not to much traffic at all. Its certainly faster on the road than the towpaths etc. I re-discovered the V2 cycleway at Maure de Bretagne so I thought I would give it a try, but it was a real pain having to zig zag around barriers every 5 minutes so I rejoined my trail at Lieuron.

I discovered the Atlantic trail that runs alongside the Brest to Nantes canal at Blain. However, I was going so well I stuck to the road although I've got to be a lot more careful on which way to look first at junctions! and which side of the road to ride ?

Nantes is a vast town with a maze of trams and cycleways so the last 30 minutes were quite exciting, compared to the UK a set of lights is missing at every junction ?



I'm staying at The Grand Hotel de Nantes, Grand is in the name but not inside! I forgot that when booking.com gives it a 8.2, it's only for the location element not anything else. The bike is down in the basement, a first and it will be a struggle bringing it up the spiral staircase tomorrow.

My Etrex says I did 81 miles and 2511 feet of climbing at 11.5mph so [thats on Strava](#)

The pics are on Dropbox [here](#)

Day 10 Nantes to La Rochelle at 25,259 days old

Another brilliant day of cycling South. It was a bit of a nightmare leaving Nantes in the rush hour with its maze of cycle routes, some physical cycle paths and some painted jobs like in Cambridge. I fell off the bike once when my foot I thought was unclipped was actually still clipped in ? bashing my shin in the process. I survived anyway ?

Crossing the Loire I was amazed at how wide it is equally crossing over the peripherique I was equally amazed at how busy the road was! Oh the joys of pedaling on country roads.

It was an over 90 mile day so I tried to keep stoked up, however obviously Wednesday is a national closing day for shops & patisseries, perhaps that is why there were so many cycling groups out today!

Moutiers-sur-le-Lay was having a market day so one patisserie was open ? I loved it when I said I wanted a fromage sandwich sans jambon, she just opened it up and whipped out the slice of ham ?

At Marsilly I decided to hand over navigation for the final stretch to the hotel to Google. It proceeded to take me around field edges across field tracks and through snickets in housing estates but I stuck with it as I discovered the backwaters of La Rochelle.

I was more dismayed passing through huge grain silos and other industrial stuff to find my hotel, The La Jeteé Sud and its famed seaviews was right next to them and its seaviews were through the port fencing ? However, the guy who runs it is really friendly and speaks good English. I loved the open plan bedroom/toilet/shower just like I made in Glisson Road all those years ago ?

In chatting, he mentioned that Ryanair runs flights to Stansted from the immediately adjacent La Rochelle airport. So I quickly booked a return flight from thursday to tuesday so ~~I could pick up my new iPhone 7~~ so I could see Sally ? He is willing to look after my bike and bits here so I can continue my trip next wednesday.

All in all a very enjoyable day and my legs seem to be overcoming their stiffness, it will be interesting to see if it returns ? although Sally mentioned a Sportive on Sunday!



[Strava says](#) I did 91.8 miles and 1,494 feet of ascent at 12mph – the fastest average for this trip! Interestingly the Strava iPhone app keeps crashing, I think it can't cope with the Gaia, maps.me & gmaps been open all the time! so the data comes from the etrex20 which plods on.

The days photos can be found on dropbox [here](#) I would be interested in any feedback about this way of displaying photos.

'Rest' Days 11,12,13 & 14 on my bike tour

With the owner of Hôtel La Jetée Sud happy for me to leave my bike & to drop me off at the airport. I was wafted away on a busy Ryanair flight back to Stansted for a long weekend ?

Whilst on the plane it occurred to me that rather than buying up apartments around the world all I needed was to leave my bike overseas and then commute back home at regular intervals from different airports ? thus pleasing [Sally](#), Three & the various insurance companies who worry if I'm away too long ?

Eventually I managed to sync my old iPhone 6 to the new iPhone 7 taking the best part of 12 hours! due to the awful Virgin Broadband connection trying to sync 30+ GB of data ? In the process losing all my passwords etc due to having to reset my keychain ?

Of course the biggest loss was having to lose the [Fatwatch app](#) which it's owner has removed from the app store. So thus ending my almost 12 year run of daily weight measurements ?

In fact a by-product of the daily weighing schedule at home is I now know I've been home 2,718 days out of the possible 4,311 days. That is I've been away from home 47% of the time ?

The rest of the weekend was spent with Sally and following her demanding exercise schedule ? comprising a [18 mile walk](#) on Saturday plus a [72 mile high speed](#) (for me) bike ride on Sunday. We managed to get to see the enjoyable [Bridget Jones Baby](#) at the ultra cheap Kings Lynn cinema as well. I loved to see Vodafone sponsoring the iPhone.

A very enjoyable break indeed, now to see if the iPhone 7 is really waterproof ?

Day 16 La Rochelle to Soulac Sur Mer on Day25,265 of my life.

What an amazing day ? It's just so pleasurable to walk of a plane to a nearby hotel and pick up your bike. Have a great night's sleep, yep OK the salmon steak that I ordered for dinner was I reckon part of a cow's behind, but we won't that let ruin a great day ? Neither will convincing myself to buy a Fitbit blaze heart rate



monitor from Dixons at Stansted ?

I set of this morning with various routes planned to Royan, Strava and maps.me wanted me to avoid the centre of La Rochelle. However, the hotel owner and Google maps shrugged their shoulders, so I went through the centre with no problem ?

All went well until I hit the Route Barree signs, which I ignored of cause. The problem was they were rebuilding a level crossing at St Laurent, the guy resolutely refused to let me cross, even though i could easily have done ? So France has jobs worth characters too. My little detour all went well although I thought I could never turn left as Gmaps kept wanting to send me across fields.

Then it was the awesome crossing of La Charente although quite why the bridge is so high is a bit of a mystery to me.

I arrived at Royan to find that I had missed the ferry by 15mins and the next was at 4pm so I made a quick return into Royan to devour three scoops of delicious ice cream ??

Eventually I made it across the Gironde Estuary on the €5 ferry across to Verdun. On arrival, all the map apps had ceremoniously crashed! the gps thought I was still on the other bank ? Eventually Apple maps came to life (I ended up deleting Google maps and reinstalling it later) it took me on on a very circuitous route to Soulac, which has to be said is a rather gorgeous town especially on a warm evening, although the Germans on the next table at Restaurant La Station kept complaining, so much so i moved outside so the poor dears could seal themselves in ?

The Hotel Neptune is adequate although I had to remind him of the free pression donated by booking.com

All in all a great day after a lovely weekend with Sally ? The Blaze is disappointing as the heart rate only appears much later and the screen is difficult to read on the move.

Strava says I did [57.4 miles](#) and [6.7 miles](#) so 64 miles of very pleasant riding.

Some pics [are here](#)

Day17 Soulac sur Mer to Biganos - Livingday 25,266

With a late breakfast I didn't hit the road until just after 9am but it was a totally gorgeous day without a cloud in the sky all day ?

Amazing to find real dedicated bike tracks for 90% of the day on the La Vélodyssée. It's lovely & smooth well marked and totally perfect. It's so cool not to have to worry about vehicles behind you.



Such a pity that we sold off all our disused railway tracks, government policy of the day to prevent any likelihood of railways making a comeback, they make such perfect cycling ways.

The only bugbear of the day was the headwind, all day from the south – the direction I'm going. Plus the lack of cafes since it was mainly through woodland. After the one litre water stop at Aldi in Montalivet Les Bains there was nothing for the next 36 miles to the very upmarket restaurant La Bicyclette Jaune in Lacanau ? I slurped a one litre bottle of water in a few minutes followed by a totally delicious fresh fruit salad and ice cream.

The next stop was an Intermarche in La Vignas where a one litre bottle of some yogurt was summarily despatched.

Since I was making such good time I decided to progress further and booked The Hotel Delta in Biganos. Probably the best hotel yet on this trip – the shower was really strong ? For dinner I potted down to Malhibou Ananas restaurant which amazingly is run by an English lady!

The success story of the day was using the cyclema.ps app really simple will suck in a gpx file and let you follow the route with the direction of travel in the up mode. It shows cycle paths etc and even with no signal you can still follow the route.

The Strava for the 77 miles covered and 597 feet of [ascent is here](#)

The pictures are [on Dropbox here](#)

The heart data from my Blaze is:-

Associated Facebook posts:

Day 18 Biganos to the French Leon. Livingday 25,267

The Delta Hotel had a great buffet breakfast which I probably pigged out on ? Just not used to having a choice.

Strava had decided to take me along roads rather than the more circuitous Atlantic cycleway. So not as pleasant riding with all the juggernauts, I worked out why I lost some of my average speed yesterday. The problem with taking the etrex on walkabout especially in supermarkets is that it still thinks I'm cycling ? So today I stopped at a bricolage to get some cable ties to mount the Etrex onto the bike frame ?

Mimizan was a bit of an eye opener. I've never seen so many restaurants in such a small town. I guess in the



summer this whole coast line is heaving given the number of camping sites & holiday places. I ended up at the Post cafe as most places were full. I think the omelette I chose really slowed me down in the afternoon as my poor stomach was digesting it.

Once again the head wind appeared so by the time I reached Leon I decided to call it a day, especially since booking.com was only showing campsites or hideously expensive places. The Hotel du Lac de Leon doesn't demean itself by using booking.com, just resorting to a small roadside sign ? Needless to say I think I'm the only guest tonight!

[Strava says I did 67.7 miles](#) and 745 feet of climbing.

The pictures will eventually [end up on dropbox](#), but the internet is as dated as the place.

The Fitbit Blaze had a bad day only recording 108mins of heart rate ?

Will update the post once I get on the internet!!

Day 19 Leon to to Espelette Lifeday 25,268

The thunder, lightening and torrential rain kept me waking up through the night ? Fortunately the rain had stopped in the morning but the clouds still looked threatening.

No chance of overeating at this breakfast! one small croissant 1/4 of a baguette a bit of butter and some jam plus a black coffee and a drop of orange juice was the order of the day.

I extra carefully packed all the bags as it was obvious rain was on the menu plus unbelievably I booked the nights accomodation before departing! such organisation.

Cycling was easy to begin with hitting an average of 14mph for the first hour ? I really like the CycleMa.ps plugin, its excellent, very simple. It shows you the gpx route previously entered but as a bonus shows you the neighbouring official cycle tracks too, very handy and well used today. Another feature is the map can be made so the direction of travel is always up. useful for dyslexics like me. However, things went pear shaped when i fell of trying to navigate a sharp right turn with diagonal bollards fitted to make it that bit harder ? No long term damage the iphone broke of at the ball joint so was easy to plug in and start of again.

Not many stops today, a short one for a tartiflette in Capbreton then a longer one in Bayonne for some Macaroni, I'm trying to cut down on eating when riding. The weather suddenly turned cold so I disappeared inside for a coffee when I came out it was hammering it down ? the first test for the iPhone7 ? It worked OK although it needs a sponge to wipe the screen as once its covered in rain swiping doesn't really work.



I continued in the wet hugging the bank of the Nive River, interesting to see the Eights with a guy in a powerboat shouting orders rather than the Cambridge cyclist. Eventually at the first weir I left the river and started climbing up to Espelette and the previously booked Chilhar Hotel arriving at the early time of 3.24pm. The town is on a very steep hill and seems to be based, historically anyway, on chillies. Now its a bit like a film set with decorated houses all very much a pastiche and a tourist honeypot. But I must say arriving at 3.30ish is to be preferred.

I had an excellent meal in the restaurant downstairs and the room is great with views, now the rain has cleared, of the hills to climb tomorrow something like one mile of vertical ascent ? to get me into Spain

The [Strava of the 52.6 miles is here](#)

and a few [pics are here](#)

The Blaze conked out again although it managed to work on me climbing up the hills at the end:



Day 20 Espelett to Pamplona Lifeday 25,269



The evening meal at Chilhar was magnificent way more



than my stomach, used to its simple life, could handle so I had a disturbed night's sleep ?

Breakfast was equally outstanding, which was good as today was crossing The Pyrenees so I needed to be fit. Whilst loading up the bike the hotel's cycling neighbour and the hotelier proceeded to muse about which way I should go ?

In the end I settled for the route generated by Strava. The first 500ft climb awaited me round the corner ? Dropping down to the Spanish border at Dantxaria I noticed large groups of cyclists heading into the Venta Paco cafe, so I joined them. Crikey was it crowded with very fit men (no women) on their expensive bikes. I had my Coke and just as well as it was the last cafe for a while. Then it was up the 1800ft climb (I thought it was the main climb ?) which I did OK with a long drop down to Truita. In the square there was a old fashioned village shop where I could buy a coke and crisps. Thinking to myself that was easy...

Alas, the 3000 foot brute was still to come, a never ending zig zag climb up the Erreka valley finally ending at The Arteslaga Col at 984 metres a 2 hour climb without seeing a single cyclist.

The downhill is clearly magnificent and one of the reasons I love cycling so much over walking. Although the red/white markings where the GR12 crossed at the col made me feel nostalgic.

Even more nostalgia as I crossed into Pamplona on the same Camino bridge which I used exactly 12 years ago when I walked The Camino to celebrate my retirement and my first long walk.

Tonight I'm in the budget Alojamiento Olga to try and average out last night's splurge ?

[Strava reveals the facts of my mega day 6,692 feet of ascent! in 57.8 miles](#) and 6hr 15min ? which compares very favourably to our [Teide ascent](#) of 8,806ft in 51.1mi in 5hr 45min.

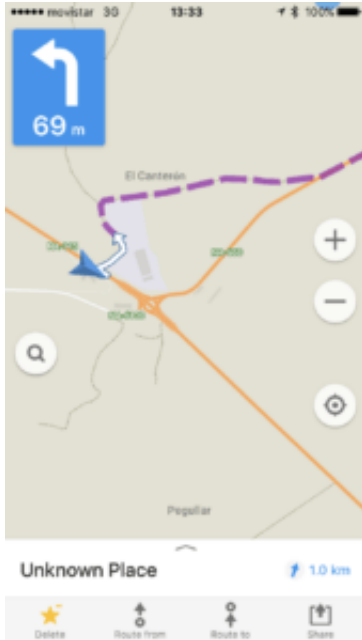
My poor heart suffered and you can see it peaked at 135bpm. I managed to get the Blaze to stay on for the whole activity too:

compare to elevation profile

A few pics [are here](#)

Day 21 Pamplona to Tudela. LivingDay 25,270

I must have been tired! I didn't wake up till 8.15 and then the Blaze decided it's battery was empty after 6 days use ? So I had to hang around to give it some electrons and then unbelievably after I was ready to go I discovered I had packed my cycling socks right at the bottom of the saddle bag ?



Eventually at 9.42 I started biking after a coffee and croissant next door. It was pretty well straight into a 500 foot climb out of Pamplona. I soon found myself with the juggernauts on the N-121 certainly not my idea of fun ? Definitely a fail on the cyclena.ps plug in routing software, obviously way to simplistic. After 10 miles I pulled in and set the maps.me app to work, it might take 5mins to grind away but it came up with a route down a stony track to a delightful village and then on quiet roads until Villafranca where I took some of the GMaps Koolaid to find myself on 10 miles of stony tracks by the river.

It wouldn't have been so bad except earlier on I suddenly thought I hadn't seen my pump for a while ? I inspected the bike to find not only the pump was gone but its plastic mounting bracket had sheared off ? Probably up that big hill yesterday when my foot slipped out of the cleat ? So I was now really worried to be on a stony track miles from anywhere ? Fortunately all went well and there is even a Specialized shop right next to the hotel in Tudela so a new pump was purchased and now kept in my bar bag ?

An excellent biking day overall apart from the wretched South wind in my face all afternoon with the temperature hitting 30deg according to one sign.

The Tudela Bardenas is excellent with an awesome shower, Dinner is only served after 8.30pm the meal itself was very nouveau in portion sizes but very tasty. The price is incredibly reasonable too ?

[Strava says I did 64.8 miles](#) and 1598 feet of climbing

The photos on [Dropbox here](#)

and what a delight to be on real internet with 44 meg upload speeds ?

and nearly forgot the heart rate, the Blaze decided not to capture first hour ?



Day 22 Tudela to Zaragoza Airport Lifeday 25,271

A good early start at 8am from the Hotel Tudela Bardenas after an excellent breakfast. I zoomed along the NA-126 with pleasant views over the Rio Ebro plains, fascinating to see the cliffs made out of ancient mud. All went well, apart from lack of places to buy drink until just after Tauste where the road was blocked with warning signs about the Puente across the Ebro being closed. I decided to take heed, after the railway crossing fiasco and followed the diversion over the nearby bridge.

This diversion then put me on a very busy road ? At Cabanas de Ebro I at last managed to escape the road and find a very disguised shop to get some much needed drink. Whilst stopped I researched Gmaps and true to form they came to the rescue and sorted a route down very stony farm tracks, poor for the touring bike, but much better for me ? even so I had to ignore a few Privado warnings but I finally made it to the airport.

Tickets for the 5pm Ryanair Stansted flight were no longer available online but after 3pm you could buy them at the airport at some inflated price ? so at some large cost I bought a ticket. With the ticket at least I could make it back to Kings Lynn by 9pm to take [Sally](#) out for her birthday meal ?

The next problem was where to leave the bike and my assorted bags etc. Booking.com came up with the nearby new Hotel Diagonal Plaza so I pedalled around, they agreed to look after my bike in their office for a couple of days and then for me to stay the night on Thursday before continuing my tour ?

The only problem left was then how to return to the airport – turned out a 30 minute walk did the trick – walking along the road, good job it wasn't busy ?

Ryanair, as usual was on time, landing early, however the mega queues at passport control are ridiculous the software on the new auto gates is abysmal very slow with no visual feedback. Why not fit them with a video screen showing the image of your passport with an overlay of the correct position then to revert the screen to an image of your eye with overlay of the correct position.

Finally made it to Lynn station at ten past nine ? unfortunately Marriotts couldn't be bothered to cook a meal – such inflexibility is mind blowing to me ? However, Prezzo was open ? so the day ended well ?

Oh and I almost forgot my heart rate data taken via the Gyroscope app:

Day24 Zaragoza to Baguena Lifeday 25,274

The more observant of you may wonder what happened to Day23, the answer is not much! I basically I flew back out to Zaragoza on Ryanair for considerably less than the flight the other way! Just as well I called in at home as the central heating had deflated so when Nest told it to wake up nothing would have happened ?



The flight back was uneventful except for getting some great aerial pics ? The taxis refused to take me to the hotel (to close I suspect) so told me to get on the bus instead, The Hotel Diagonal Plaza is OK except for lack of staircases and a shower like in a second rate British B&B ? Their dinner was nothing to write home about either.

So today it was Geoff meeting the Sistema Ibérico mountain range with it's over 3000 feet passes ? I left Zaragoza on a very stony path alongside The Canal Imperial de Aragón before hitting the really quiet N-330 road, lots of road bikers around all of them happily waving to me. Compare and contrast to Germany ?

I noticed that the front light was looking rather limp, poor things bracket had suffered metal fatigue and sheared in two ? I started searching the industrial estates for the likes of McKays but to no avail. Eventually at a garage I worked out a scheme using ty-raps to hold it in place until the next bumpy track.

Then it was the major climbs, really interesting to see how the road has grown over the years, as I crawled up, from a twisty track to the highway I was on to the motorway zooming over my head



The town of Daroca is quite stunning with its castle and medieval centre, should have stopped there but I had booked the Albergue in the next village at Baguena.

A great days biking in excellent weather. [Strava says I did 67.9 miles](#) and 3,285 feet of climbing and I'm well pleased with the 11mph too, given the stony track & cruising around industrial estates ?

Today's [pics should be here](#)

and the heart data is here:



First 1000 mile Europe trip roundup

I've now cycled 1,051 miles on this latest trip and ascended 31,615 feet according to Strava. The elevation gain is slightly more than one Everest.

I've cycled on 18 days in the 26 days since I left home. Giving an average of 58 miles per day and 1,756 feet of ascent. The missing days were travelling to and from Cambridge/Kings Lynn

So far it's been amazingly enjoyable with good weather apart from the Southerly headwind and a half day of rain.

Spain seems to be a great place for touring with some very inexpensive places to stay and lots of accommodation and bars.

Tomorrow I continue towards Valencia which I should reach on Sunday. For some reason ferries to Ibiza are half the price than from Denia even though the crossing is nearly twice as long.

Once on Ibiza I aim to tour the island and maybe to go to a all nighter or two, if the clubs are still open. Plus I've got to find somewhere to leave the bike for when I go home to take the twelve of us to Butlins ? Then I'm returning with Sally so she can see the delights of Ibiza and some of Valencia for a few days

Day 25 Baguena to Teruel Lifeday-25,275



Today started with no real breakfast as all, as the Auberge was only offering a coffee and a cellophane wrapped bun ? But I guess for €25 a night it's all to be expected.

At 8.15 outside it was a cold morning, only 7 degrees which in shorts & tee shirt is cold! I had to put my rain jacket on. In fact I didn't get warm till 11.30 with the sun out full blast. Adding to the cold was the fact I couldn't find a bread shop ?

For some reason at Luco de Jiloca the route left the N-234 and took me down some of the worst stony lanes yet! At one point it was pedal height in water ? I at to persevere for over two miles before I could hit the tarmac again ?

It wasn't until after 22 miles I found a bread shop and cafe open in Monreal del Campo quite a thriving community compared to the very poor villages like Baguena. All stoked up even with a banana and an apple I set of warmed up at last.

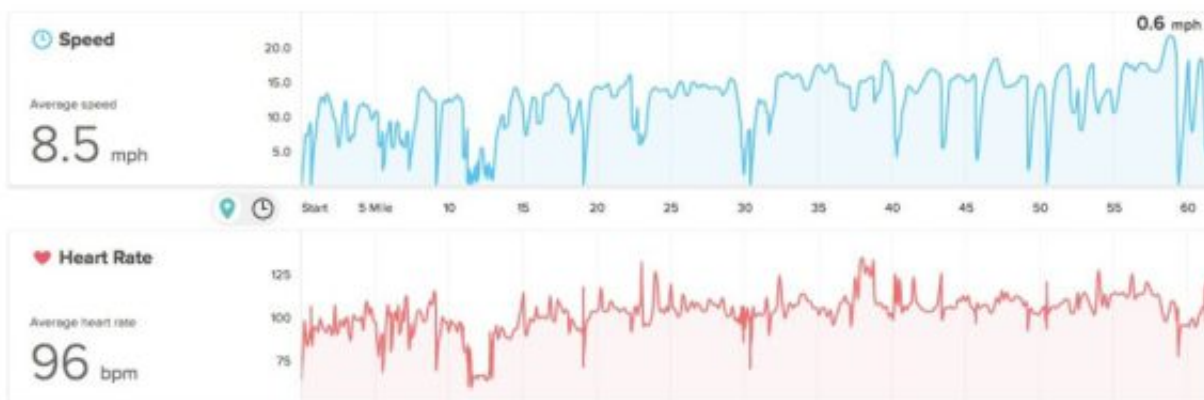
The route was then a totally deserted road to Villafranca and its rather empty bread shop & rather sad bar, Later I found myself on yet another old rail track going around the huge chipboard factory and then going past the Caude-Teruel Airport apparently it's used for storing upto 225 aeroplanes ?

Finally it was a 500 foot drop down from 3,300feet to Teruel plus a pedal up through the town to the Hostel Aragon, a great find right in the centre and very adequate accommodation, The town itself has quite stunning architecture and feels very prosperous,

The 61 mile ride and nearly [1000 feet of ascent is on Strava](#)

I tried uploading pictures to my [SmugMug account here](#), but alas it has gotten itself all screwed up ? So it's back to [Dropbox here](#), but I'm still seeking some software that will display the location of the images on a map like Picasa used to do ?

The heart rate is here:





Day 26 Tercel to just past Gilet. Lifeday 25,276

A late start today due to me not waking up till twenty past eight, the hostel was as quiet as a morgue. I paid my €25 dues and started to load the bike up. When horrors I noticed a rear spoke had snapped ? the wheel still span OK if a bit wobbly, I made a mental note to steer clear of tracks today.

The local panaderia made a delicious breakfast for €3 ? So I set of at 9.37 with a view of doing the 100 miles to Valencia, well I had 3,000 feet of vertical descent in my favour so I thought.

First mistake of the day was finding myself UNDER the bridge I was supposed to be crossing, a very fine bridge too. I started climbing on the deserted N234 road when suddenly the programmed Strava route told me to do an abrupt left turn down a track ? and then down a steep 15% descent on loose gravel ? this was then followed by 4 miles of track riding through a forest with only runners looking on bemused. An abrupt left turn up a very steep slope took me onto the old railway line. Followed by amazing viaducts, cuttings, embankments & tunnels. Must have cost a fortune to built in 1907! Even more amazing is a modern railway line runs parallel for most of the way with its own tunnels & cuttings.

All the time I was ascending upto 4,000 feet on rough ground equals slow going, suddenly Valencia seemed a long way away ? I suspect using Strava for route creation is not sp good in areas of high MTB usage ? The downhill stretch of the line is even more amazing with gradients unheard of in UK railways. Just before Masias I rejoined the N234 and proceeded to bomb down the hills at high pace ?

Just before Alger I left the N234, hopped across the tracks of the new railway and rejoined the Via Verde, (I could see a hill coming up). rejoining the N234 before Torres Torres.



It was starting to get late so I got booking.com to find the cheapest and most local place. They gave me the €25 a night Complejo Turistico La Pinada with its 25 metre outdoor pool etc. (water is about 20deg according to my white fingers after 8 lengths). Problem is there is no evening meal as such so it's a Tortilla for me.

So the 'easy' descent turned into a 3,931 feet of ascent as well ? and [83.7 miles according to Strava](#)

The pictures on [dropbox here](#)

My heartrate is reaching new highs:





Day 27 & 28 Tercel to Valencia and boat to Ibiza

I left Complejo Turistico La Pinada at just before 9am after breakfast. It was a fast ride down to the coast through the gorgeously scented orange groves, the small oranges are a bit sharp to eat ? Valencia seems to start miles away and has a complex series of bike paths so it was well over an hour before I finally I reached the “Do You Bike” shop.

The guy in the shop said he would replace the spoke whilst I had a coffee across the road unfortunately he didn't have a spoke the right length ? However, I've been carrying a spare spoke for years so one coffee later the job was done ?

Next on the agenda was a ferry ticket, so I biked down to the Trasmediterranea terminal to get a ferry. They had one sailing at 10pm reaching Ibiza at 5am unwisely I didn't book a cabin ?

Next job was to find the closest hotel to the terminal as I will be returning with Sally (no Easyjet/Ryanair flights from Ibiza in November) so she will have to return to the UK from the mainland. The hotel closest to the port is hotel Marina Atarazanas so I booked a room for us on booking.com, the receptionist said it was cheaper that way.

I then spent some time biking around the transport terminals of Valencia to see if there is any straightforward way of getting to the Castellon Airport, simple answer is no. Anyway I then discovered that Ryanair also flies from the main Valencia airport with its 15min bus service to the city centre! A wasted 30 minutes on the Ryanair chatline now means that Sally can either fly from Castellon in the morning or Valencia in the late evening ?

After all that a visit to the beach was called for and a drink to while away the time before the ferry, Fascinating fact that in Valencia there are several river bridges which no longer cross a river. How weird.

The crossing was smooth but my sleep certainly wasn't I arrived at 5am to a deserted town, feeling wrecked. I rode around and eventually found the catamaran terminal had a coffee shop ? At 9am I thought I would give the Hotel Lai IBZ a try, amazingly they let me have my room, a quick shower and I was asleep ?

Later I explored the old town which is really very pleasant and I found an ironmongers shop as well to get a bolt for my light plus finding Can Manola a bike rental place so Sally can rent a bike when she is over later this month.

The place is winding down for the end of season but I discovered Pacha had a gig on starting at midnight so I bought an amazingly expensive ticket and went to bed again ?

The gig itself was disappointing, one thing I can't stand are bad sound systems, having spent my youth



building power amps and sand filled loudspeaker enclosures I just hate resonances when the ceiling starts rattling and putting stuff on loudspeakers so they rattle is just awful. The drinks are a staggering price too. No wonder Pacha own hotels & retail stores.

So after 48 hours I finally went to bed at 3am ?

The 18.6 miles to [Valencia is on Strava here](#)

A few pics are on [Dropbox here](#)

Still trying to work out how to get past heart rate data ?

Touring Ibiza - Lifeday 25,281

Oh dear lost track of which touring day I'm on ? Senility is creeping in and anyway does it really matter?

I'm now doing a very leisurely tour of Ibiza. The island is about 100 miles around and I have a week before I have to jet back to the UK to take my whole family, 4 grandkids, 3 kids and 3 spouses plus Sally & I, to Butlins for a fun filled half term break.

I'm going clockwise from Ibiza Town which actually in Spanish is called Elvissa. The first stop was at San Antoni which is the second town of Ibiza & famous for its sunsets. With the British its famous for the Irish Bar and other home comforts like Bacon & Egg breakfasts with beer, totally different atmosphere to the more dignified Ibiza Town. For me the most awesome thing was having a true 50MB Down & Up internet at Hostal Mari where I stayed ? I enjoyed the ride, the road was in excellent condition but quite hilly. [Strava made it 2384 feet of climbing in 30 miles](#)

Yesterday it was a 800 foot climb straight out of San Antoni on my way to the northern tip of the island at Portinatx with a total of [3143 feet in the 27 miles](#). I dropped down to Port de San Miguel to get in some more climbing and take a peek at another bay. The roads were good and pretty empty. In Portinatx I had booked into an 'all inclusive' Apartamentos Club Paradise Beach. A bit dated place with a pretty rubbish internet connection, especially with 50+ teenagers hanging off it. It must have been a gorgeous cove in the past, think I'm about 50 years late visiting here.

[The photos are here now](#) I've sorted dropbox out

Portinatx to Cala Boix. Lifeday 25,282



What a gorgeous day and how I enjoy cycling in the warm sun ? I didn't even mind the close on a thousand feet climb that starts the minute you hop on the bike! My climb time was 38:30 whereas the KOM is nearly 25 mins faster but then I guess he isn't lugging the kitchen sink up with him and I would guess considerably younger ? Great fun though

Then a short descent into the very upmarket Sant Joan town and the lovely Giri Cafe selling its 'volcanic purity' water whatever that means – volcanoes to me mean sulphurous smells ?

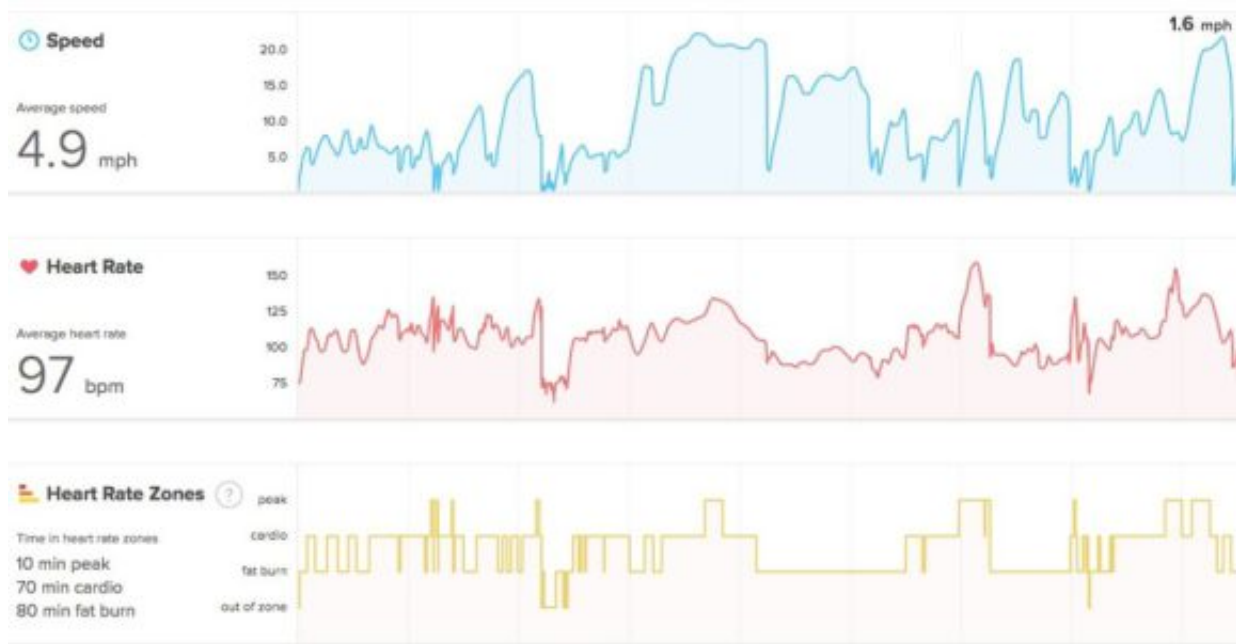
At the top you get the pleasure of the 5 mile descent into Cala Sant Vincent with its huge hotel as a backdrop to the beach ? I didn't stop but continued along to the Cala Boix hostel where I'm staying for some reason the beach has been left largely untouched apart from a cafe. So I may go for a swim later.

[My Strava says a whopping 16.5 miles](#) covered and 2,057 feet of ascent ? but still an excellent ride,

All my lovely pics are [here on Dropbox](#)

My thoughts however reach out to poor [Aleks Kashefi yomping his way](#) through Scandinavia to try and reach the sun in Spain ?

and here's my heart rate stuff:



Valencia to Chinchilla de Mont Aragon Lifeday 25,307



Apologies for the 22 day hiatus due to my very pleasurable weekend with all the family in Skeggie, so enjoyable I booked it for next year too. A first ? Plus a week of the time was pleasurably spent introducing Sally to the delights of biking around Ibiza ?

Yesterday I started my tour again from Valencia, and its excellent Hotel Valencia Center, I liked it so much I stayed a couple of days extra after dropping Sally off at Valencia airport. In fact I could easily see me returning for longer ?

It was a very tough day too, with a huge climb [according to Strava](#) of 6,423 feet over 67 miles with a wind direct from the West and yes I was heading West ? It was cold too and I was dressed for the sun not high altitudes :-(. Finally arriving at the delightful Hotel Jalance with its very steep driveway ? frozen and totally wrecked.

This morning I dressed in every bit of cycling clothes that I had, the wind continued and perhaps I should have stayed, that's the problem with booking a hotel the night before ?

The day was pretty murderous climbing up to 3,000 feet and then, due to the strength of the wind, having to pedal down the hills in a low gear ?

The day finally ended with a climb, as the name suggests, to Chinchilla de MONT Aragon and the freezing cold bedroom at El Volante with its very tepid warm water shower (I didn't bother as I would never have warmed up again ? You can [view the Strava](#) here.

I think I will be sleeping in my clothes but I guess for €25 what else do you expect. My slowest average speed ever according to Strava of 8mph and not a speck of sun all day.

Motril Beach to Malaga - Living the dream day 25,314

Living the dream I certainly am



? Waking up, packing, having a toasted baguette covered in liquidised tomatoes and a long black coffee. Hoping on the bike in warm sunshine and away for another day in the saddle.

The day started as it usually does with a roller coaster of 400 foot+ hills then straight down to a beach and up again! rinse and repeat for 27 miles and you have your 1 mile of ascent ?

The road was quite busy with traffic since the coast is now getting built up, the greenhouses have been replaced with thousands of white houses all soaking up the sun on this the Costa del Sol. None of the places I went through took my fancy at all, just huge holiday towns.

The Acueducto del Águila (Eagle Aqueduct) at Nerja, is truly amazing to see, just think of all those bricklayers ? there is its [history here](#)

Lots of cyclists out today including families, on the flat section near Malaga and I saw my first tourers, but going the other way ? so no time for a chat.

I'm at the Hotel Zeus tonight in Malaga centre close to the rather posh train station. The WiFi doesn't quite make it to my room so I'm in the lobby listening to some weird Spanish comedy show.

Strava on the iPhone worked perfectly today, whether it was the recent iOS update or the maps.me recent track feature that was causing the problems I don't know ?

[So I rode 59.3 miles](#) and climbed 5,238 feet most of it in the first 25 miles. The average speed was 11.2mph, pulled down by all the traffic lights and stops in the town centres.

The pictures of the [day are on Dropbox here](#)

Malaga to Sabinillas Liveday 25,315



The day started very well with a Spanish breakfast at the cafe next door to The Zeus. Then I was on my way along the wonderful snaking cycle path behind the promenade in Malaga. All was bliss..

At the sports stadium the cycleway vered right, I needed to go straight on. The only problem it was an horrendously busy road leading to an even busier roundabout, I was amazed after all this time, Spain isn't going to force me to ride on these roads? At the roundabout I was bemused and so was the prostitute (most Spanish roundabouts seem to have a resident worker) as I went round a couple of times. I bit the bullet and went over the bridge amidst the huge trucks! I made it only to find the exit I wanted was blocked so more messing about and eventually I arrived on the MA-21 and it's traffic. I hugged the kerb and perimeter wire to the airport to try and avoid the trucks . After Fuengirola it got worse and became the A-7 ?

Action was needed, so I had Google Maps plan a new route. This avoided the main road but proceeded to take me around estates built on the cliffs with incredibly steep hills leading to steps, obviously Google's satellite resolution isn't quite good enough yet ? Later on it took me to the ocean's edge expecting me to wade around ? I gave up and returned to the traffic and the A-7

The problem with biking on urban motorways are the numerous slip roads a total nightmare with cars each side of you and then some nutter cutting you up in front. The other problem is that they leave a 'footpath' behind the barriers but the lighting clowns erect their posts dead centre making it impossible to steer around. Plus they suddenly end!

Just amazing that their premier tourist road has such appalling provision for cyclists, walkers and mopeds etc. I guess the EU money ran out.

Anyway I survived to live and tell the tale. However, I will not be cycling South from Malaga ever again!

The Hotel Dona Luisa in San Luis Sabinillas is very pleasant almost on the beach, a very welcome sight after [66 miles, 2,900 feet of climbing at 11.6mph according to Strava.](#)

[The days pics are here.](#)

Tomorrow I should make it to Gibraltar and the southernmost point of mainland Europe at Tarifa.

Sabinillas - Gibraltar - Tarifa. Lifeday 25,316

A very full on day. Starting with five miles on the dreaded A-7, less busy today so not to bad. I turned of and explored the once huge gated community of [Sotogrande](#) very posh indeed ? Then with relief along the old road alongside the A-7 until I reached the A383 and then a climb to over 600 feet before swooping down into Concepcion and Gibraltar whose passport control was totally perfunctory.



Gibraltar was incredibly busy, especially with my pet hates of scooters & taxis everywhere plus lots of tourists, not my sort of place at all, although interesting to see how England used to be but in the sun. I decided to take the cable car to the top, leaving my bike with the Fire Station below ? Took loads of pics of the so called wild apes for Sally and the view. Before quickly descending and escaping the turmoil.

Then it was off to Tarifa climbing to well over 1,000 feet before dropping back to sea level in Tarifa and the finish of the European bit of my bike ride. This has taken 31 days of riding (excluding Ibiza) to do 1,907 miles and with 77,679 feet of ascent ? I left home 68 days ago but have been flitting to and fro quite a bit plus spending two weeks in Ibiza so all very leisurely.

Tomorrow its the ferry across the straits and a night in Tangier, Morocco.

The Strava's for today are:

[To Gibraltar](#) 24.7 miles 1,234 feet of ascent

[To Tarifa](#) 31.6 miles 1,843 feet of ascent

The pics are on [Dropbox here](#)

Tarifa to Tangier Lifieday 25,317

A lazy day as you can imagine, it's not possible to cycle across the Straits of Gibraltar ? Instead I took the €36 high speed ferry to do the 18 miles separating Europe from Africa.

I had booked the Continental Hotel which overlooks the harbour in Tangier, easy to see but not so easy to get too up the steep alleys. The hotel itself is totally stunning, if a bit past its prime, inside with its gorgeous elaborate tilework covering every wall and its right in The Medina so very easy walking once the bike was stowed inside.

First task was to get a SIM card for my MiFi dongle. There seems to be a lot of competition with the main players having guys in the street all dressed up in their company's livery. I ended up getting a SIM on the Meditel network, the first gig of data & SIM card was 40 MAD I bought an additional 5 gig for 50 MAD so 6 gigs for £8 compared to Three's roaming charge of 6 THOUSAND pounds per gigabyte!!!! Word of warning though for 3 customers – make sure you deactivate roaming after leaving Spain on their Feel At Home plan.

The next task was getting the strap resewed on my Carradice bag, easily solved by a guy working in a tiny place just big enough for him and an industrial sewing machine – amazing and why I love places like this.

The rest of the time was spent clocking up well over 8 miles walking around The Medina I enjoyed it so much I think I will winter over here rather than Spain ?



Tomorrow I'm going 110km down The Atlantic coast to Larache. So it will be interesting to explore Moroccan roads & drivers.

No Strava [today but some pictures here](#)

Tangier to Larache. Lifieday 25,318

Apparently I started on Twitter 10 years ago today ?

However, today was another toughie with a strong headwind most of the way plus I discovered Moroccan garages only sell fuel and oil no fridges full of cold drinks and chocolate ? I did find one selling bottled water from a locked fridge. I guess its a poorness indicator the shops are also poorly stocked.

Lots of cyclists coming the other way on their Sunday rides giving me a wave. It's amazing the different styles of driving, cars overtaking coming the other way seem very common forcing the cars on my side of the road into dangerous manoeuvres around me. I haven't at to leap off yet like in South Africa but I'm certainly keeping my eye open for the ditches.

Tanger beach is stunning with new apartments selling for £23,000 but it's miles from anywhere and you have to cross the busy road to get to the beach. Every village and town has massive apartment construction underway all very cheap in European money terms.

Arriving in Larache I tried to find the previously booked Lukus Hotel, The pin on the booking.com website is in the wrong place and Google couldn't find it. Eventually after asking loads of people someone said ask at the Hotel Espanol down the side street. I did, and the reception guy had a scruffy bit of paper with a note of my name, spelt Jeff, so obviously it had been telephoned to him. By far the worst booking.com experience to date.

Larache itself seems to sell trainers and track suits in every shop and on the pavement. My main problem, apart from the lack of beer, is that every one speaks French so you can imagine I don't get understood very much!

[Strava says I did 56.7miles and 2,068ft](#) of climbing at a very pathetic 9.6mph but that contains a lot of riding aimlessly to find the hotel and also leaving The Medina in Tangier another tricky part of the day.

Tomorrow is a long one especially since rain is now forecast for the next week. So maybe the train will be taking some of the strain...

[The pictures of the day are here](#)



Larache to Kenitra. Lifieday 25,319

The weather forecast yesterday was so, so right ? I awoke to very wet roads a very threatening sky and a wind that was going to be in my face all day long and a very long day at that.

The breakfast at the neighbouring cafe was excellent 2 fried eggs, bread, coffee, orange juice and a small pudding all for less than £1 ?

I finally hit the road at 8.11 a whole hour after sunrise, must be getting old. The wind was awful, straight into my face especially with the frequent rain squalls ? plus the road was quite dull essentially like the fens with long straight roads and abrupt bends .

The tiny poverty stricken roadside settlements were marked in Romanian style, loads of rubbish dumped on the village boundary. The kids run out and try a grab stuff of the bike, very annoying. One advantage of the rain was it kept the number of kids down.

I reached the area where they are constructing the new Kenitra – Tangier rail link. What a mess they are making of the road, it now comprises islands of tarmac separated by gravel/sand potholes. Totally a nightmare to bike on.

The rain became heavier and me more and more fed up with the traffic, I eventually reached Kenitra in the dark and raining heavy, not a good combination. I eventually found the station hoping to get a train to Rabat. Suddenly I heard shouting when I was wheeling the bike to the info boards. A very brusque guard made it clear that bikes are not allowed in stations and certainly not on the trains ? He escorted me to the parcels office outside (identical to the Red Star at Cambridge Station of old). They said my bike would go overnight to Rabat. I said no way and left.

I found an equally miserable coffee place to rethink. Booking.com hotels were all sold out ? so I checked maps.me to find there was a Hotel Europa. I zoomed around arriving like the proverbial drowned rat. They had a room on the fourth floor as long as I didn't mind the bar music! after 80 miles biking in those conditions they could have had an orchestra playing and I would have slept, especially after lugging the bike all the way up the staircase.

[Strava says I did 80.1 miles and 1,473 feet of climbing at 9.4mph](#) probably one of my toughest days ever,

[Some pics are on dropbox here](#)

I

Kenitra to Rabat. Lifieday 25,320



I woke up to the rain and finished my ride in the rain, in between I saw blue sky for perhaps 5 minutes.

Thank goodness today was only a short ride of [24 miles and 559 feet of ascent](#) as it just hammered down. The worse problem was the gigantic puddles everywhere, as my son Nick will tell you, cycling through puddles is very fraught, as you cannot see the potholes! but going around is equally fraught with the oncoming traffic. So not very pleasant. The road was also very busy since the motorway is a toll road everyone seeks to avoid it ?

Coming into Rabat over the bridge was equally a problem as cyclists aren't allowed so I had to navigate over to the footpath on the other side of the bridge.

I was soaked, but was very pleased to arrive at the previously booked Hotel Lutece. The hotel is very pleasant so I'm here until I go home on Saturday.

Yep, I've decided to go home on Saturday via Ryanair, after 2,000 miles of biking. I'm leaving mainly because of the weather as rain is forecast at least for the next week. Cycling on wet, busy roads in Morocco is not the most relaxing. Also the bike is in need of TLC, the saddle bag mount has broken and the gears are not at their best after 6,000 miles of wear plus the rear wheel is slightly buckled.

Now the problem is to locate a cardboard box for the bike or do I go to the souk and get a carpet bag made.....

[The pictures of the day are here](#)

End of Morocco bike trip. Lifeday 25,324

I'm returning home from Rabat today 76 days after leaving Cambridge. Although I've returned back to the UK a couple of times. Once from La Rochelle and once from Zaragoza both times with Ryanair. Total days in the saddle including the time when I was biking around Ibiza with Sally was 39 days and distance covered 2,218 miles (3549km) and ascended 92,287 feet (28,129 metres) or 2,300 feet per day ?

It's been a very pleasurable ride and I really enjoyed Spain, apart from the dreaded section from Malaga to Sabinillas. Which interestingly I met at breakfast this morning a guy from Munich who is cycling from Malaga to Agadir and he agreed ? I don't envy his ride today in thunderstorms and the dreaded headwind! I wonder if he will hop on a bus again.

All the hotels have been OK with the most expensive at well over £100, of course at to be a pub in the UK. The cheapest were a couple of places in Spain charging £21 per night. Overall I've spent about £2,500 on accommodation for the 58 nights I've slept away so about £44 per night mainly with breakfasts.



The reason for returning earlier than anticipated is that the weather in Morocco is now atrocious, heavy rain & high head winds. So really it's gone from a very pleasant ride to a bit of an ordeal.

Ryanair insist the bike is in a box, so the very friendly owner of Hotel Lutece in Rabat took me around to the local courier in the next street who gave me free run of their empty used cardboard boxes. I at to dismantle the bike a lot more than I normally do to get the bike in a box that would fit in Nick's car back at Stansted.

I've blogged every moving day and the set of posts are [here](#)