

## Summer cycling update 1 (9/8/24)

We hope you're all well and enjoying the summer holidays. Just a quick update about how we fared on the first leg of our summer of cycling.

Rotterdam to Amsterdam - ticked off but it was *tough* going.

Couple of valuable lessons learnt, should we ever attempt such an ambitious endeavour again:

- 1) Don't try and cycle the length of the Dutch coast on the same day as waking up at 4am in London to catch a train across Europe. It's quite tiring.
- 2) As above, but check the weather forecast. 28 degree heat when a bit sleepy was not ideal.
- 3) Check the bikes you're getting from the hire shop. We weren't expecting speedy Tour De France road bikes but we didn't expect 3-gear shoppers as heavy as mopeds. To say they were slow was an understatement...
- 4) Large parts of Holland are flat. Everyone knows this. However, the hilly parts weren't easy on the bikes we rented. They were easy on the electric bikes that mockingly passed us on countless occasions.
- 5) Think that's enough lessons.

Anyway, we did a large chunk of it. But it was hard work. We left Rotterdam just after 11 am, darted through Delft, got lost in The Hague and wound our weary way over numerous sand dunes to the coastal resort of Zandvoort, home of the Dutch F1 track. As quick as Max Verstappen, we were in Amsterdam (having thankfully caught the train!) nearly 15 hours after leaving London.

Resting our tired legs, we decided that Amsterdam back to Rotterdam two days later would be tricky. With a Eurostar to catch at 3pm, we would have to leave the Dutch capital in the very early hours (or the night before) if we were to stand any chance of making the train in time. Impossible on our heavy metal cycles, with an average speed of about 8mph.

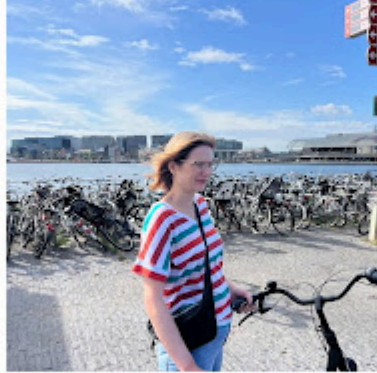
So, we decided to have a day riding around Amsterdam to make up for those missing miles. Two wheels took us to the Van Gogh museum, Anne Frank house and three times around the incredible 120-acre Vondelpark. Hopefully the pictures show you how much fun we had cycling around this fascinating city.

That's the end of update 1. Update 2 will let you know how the second leg of the summer of cycling goes: the Coast to Coast. Wish us luck.

Thanks to everyone who has sponsored us so far. Your money is going to a very good cause. If you haven't dug deep yet, here's the [link](#).

Take care and see you all soon,

The Jones family.



## Summer cycling update 2 (20/8/24)

Here's the second update about our summer of cycling - the Way of the Roses!

The width of the country, Lancashire to Yorkshire, west to east, Irish to North Sea, Morecambe to Bridlington. Whatever you call it, it's a long way: 3 days, 170 miles, more than 3,000 metres of climbing and 15 hours in the saddle. At least we didn't do this on those pesky three-gear Dutch hire bikes...

We left the stunning skyline of the Lakeland fells behind at 10am on Saturday morning and headed west, thankfully, with the wind behind us most of the way. After stop-offs in Pateley Bridge and York, we arrived in breezy Bridlington at 4pm on Monday.



The famous red and white rose signposts kept us, mostly, on route. From ridiculous 20% hills through Settle, 70kph descents in the Dales, picturesque villages on the Wolds where



the only residents appeared to be a handful of sheep, through to majestic abbeys and cathedrals in Ripon and York. It was an unforgettable journey.

Thanks to Kyle for keeping spirits up with his constant singing and for putting up with my bad jokes and painfully slow descents.

Thanks to everyone who has donated to Brainstrust. You helped keep us going this summer over those blasted hills and Dutch cycle paths. If you haven't had chance yet, here's the [link](#). At the time of writing we're only £15 from £500, which would be a nice milestone to reach.

Thanks again,

Dan, Kyle and the Jones family.

