

Day 14 – Into England

My judgement was severely clouded by the price of a budget single room at the Townhouse, Dumfries. You tend to get what you pay for, and, for £42 I found myself in a small one room cabin with attached shower and loo, in a converted shipping container. The nearest restaurant was miles away but there was a microwave and the basics for cooking, and an Aldi on the opposite side of the road. I rustled up cottage pie and cauli cheese with ice cream and raspberries to follow. A bottle of drinkable white finished it off. With all my stops during the day I didn't arrive until after 6pm, so by the time I'd sorted everything out and blogged it was bed-time: not a good experience. The bed was awful, the base falling apart and the mattress on its last legs, so I hardly slept and got up feeling poorly. My one pair of trousers are so covered in bike oil and grease that a trip to Matalan, half a mile away was called for. On the way there I was harangued by a loony complaining in a loud voice that paedophiles were looking at his bum. He followed me up to Matalan and continued in the same vein. Having bought my trousers, I was able to get away from him. I had to return by the same route so called into Aldi for much the same breakfast as I had yesterday. With all the toing and froing it was 1030 before I cleared the outskirts of Dumfries, heading for Annan, a substantial market town on the eponymous river



It was time to stop and get off the bike to stretch my legs which I did at a bus shelter. Well on my way to Gretna, a town I have visited on most of my cycle trips to and from Scotland, I was shortly back in England



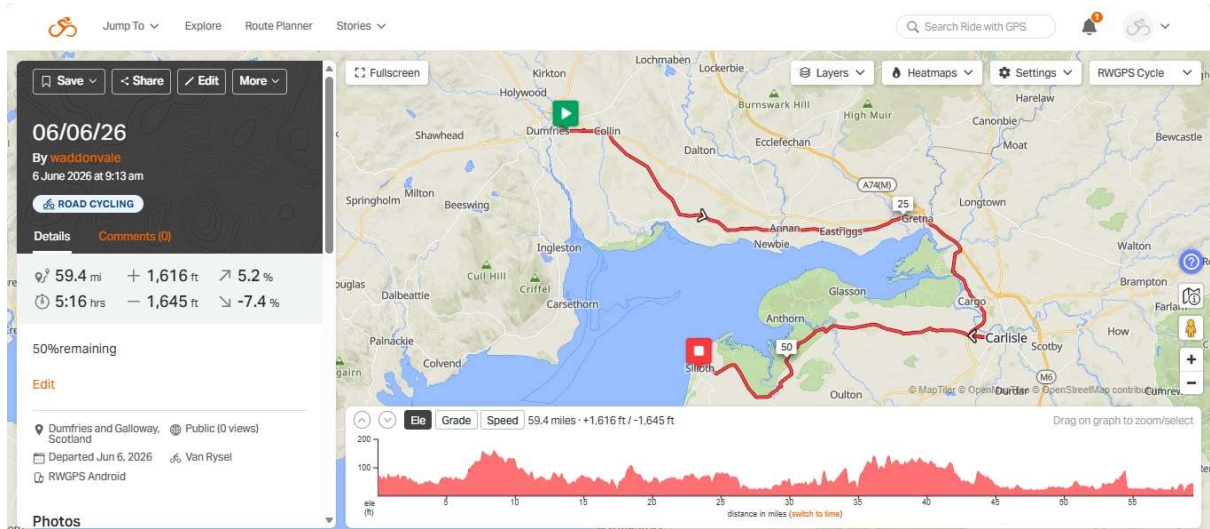
The next three miles follow the M6 with consequent traffic noise but once over the River Esk the road takes to the countryside and is a road I have travelled often.



As it wiggles its way towards Carlisle. 35 miles in, the road crosses the River Eden and heads west. At this point I was feeling rather jaded and needed some food to buck me up, so I headed towards the centre of Carlisle, finding a One Stop where I bought some Jaffa cakes which made me feel considerably better. I was still about 20 miles from Silloth, my destination but a combination of food and liberal use of the motor got me there about 1530 and I got to see the Solway Firth close to for the first time in 2 days



It's been overcast all day but, once again, no rain; so my shoes are dry and all that was needed was to wash what I wear next to my skin. It's also been rather tedious with no good views or sights to see. Hopefully a good night's sleep will put me in a better frame of mind tomorrow for my journey along the Cumbrian coast.



Day 15 – Blown away

I've been to Silloth before. In 1995 the National Trust celebrated its centenary with a 100 mile bike ride starting from Druridge Bay in Northumberland and ending in Silloth. My then 14 year old son Rob and I joined Patrick Watson, in whose memory I'm doing this current ride, and his son James and we successfully completed the one day challenge. I also think I may have stayed in the Golf Hotel previously: since leaving the Royal Agricultural College Cirencester in 1971 several of us have met up annually to reminisce and play a gambling game called Continental billiards. Whilst I was putting my bike away last night, I stumbled upon a snooker table in the basement and, as these are becoming rare as hen's teeth in hotels I Wapped the "boys" to ask if we'd been to Silloth and the answer was affirmative. So there.



The Golf Hotel is a bit tired. It was once quite grand, but it needs a facelift and, with the current economic climate it's unlikely to get one. My room was on the second floor and was perfectly acceptable. A single comfortable bed and enough room around it, windows that opened and allowed the washing to dry and a slightly temperamental shower.

I ate in the restaurant with very few others: excellent fritto misto with mayonnaise and a badly overcooked steak pie that I should have sent back but ate anyway and chips and peas. A couple of pints of John Smiths helped it down. The staff are stretched, manning both the hotel and the restaurant but the service was OK

I slept quite well after putting the blog to bed with a bottle of SB which I bought in the Spar round the corner. There was quite a lot of life in the pubs as I walked off supper but if they're not doing business on a weekend in June, they might as well surrender.

FC(umbrian)B was well cooked and produced promptly so all in all it wasn't a bad experience and cheap at £67.50 for B&B.

The weather forecast was daunting: 25-30mph winds from the south west which was the direction I was heading. There was also a high chance of rain at some point. I dressed accordingly and was wearing 5 layers and overshoes.

The first 7 miles were gruelling, and I had to run the motor just to keep going. During that time, I used 15% of the battery which was unsustainable on a 64 mile journey.

I was beginning to wonder if I would be best to call it a day and catch a train. Fortunately, the west Cumbria railway runs all along the coast and down to Millom, my final destination.



I thought I'd keep going and, if and when the battery died, I'd hop on a train which are quite frequent even on a Sunday.

The conditions improved and I was now on dedicated cycle paths that were more sheltered. Through Workington I was entirely off road and cycling was enjoyable. The other side of town I had a climb into the country and back down to sea level to follow the coast below the cliffs at Parton



Round the corner was Whitehaven, little industry now but the harbour has been developed to provide for the small fishing fleet and a yacht marina



I paused at the top of the climb out of town towards St Bees, to have a walk and eat the rest of a bar of fruit and nut that I started in Workington. The country was rolling with rain shrouded fells in the distance. The barley was just starting to turn colour and the wheat was growing strongly



St Bees lies in a fold of the hills, on the railway line, and has a famous school in the centre



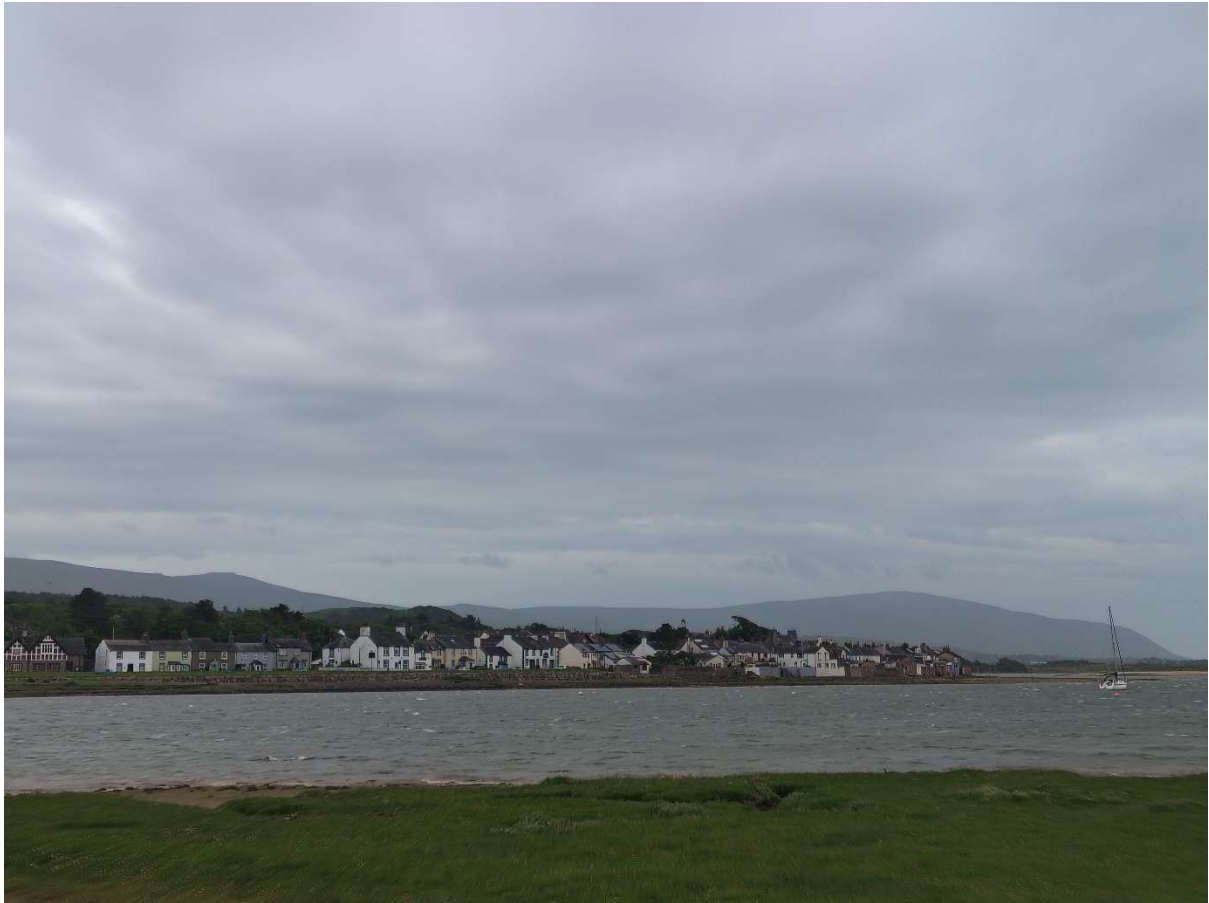
Beyond St Bees the route stayed on top of cliffs above the stormy sea until, at Braystones, it jinked inland to avoid part of the Egremont Estate. This was a pleasant interlude because it took the wind out of my face. In the distance I could see the towers and buildings of Sellafield, Europe's largest Nuclear Power site. Originally known as Windscale, in 1950 the two nuclear reactors were built to produce weapons grade plutonium but were shut down in 1957: they have still not been fully decommissioned, demonstrating the complexity of nuclear fuels. Also on the site are the Calder Hall power station, the first to export energy to the Grid in 1956, and now decommissioned, and a plant for reprocessing fuel. Its main purpose is now to store spent fuel from other nuclear reactors. Nuclear power seems a wonderful carbon free way of generating "free" electricity but the costs of cleaning up and decommissioning are huge, as much as £120 billion for Sellafield alone.



I probably could have stayed inland but there appeared to be a coastal path between Sellafield and the sea, and I decided to take it: not a good experience, though it had a solid base sand had blown over it and I had to GOAP on a couple of occasions



The path came back onto hard top at Seascale village about 42 miles into the journey and I'd managed to save sufficient battery power not to have to worry about using it as the road rollercoasted along to Ravenglass



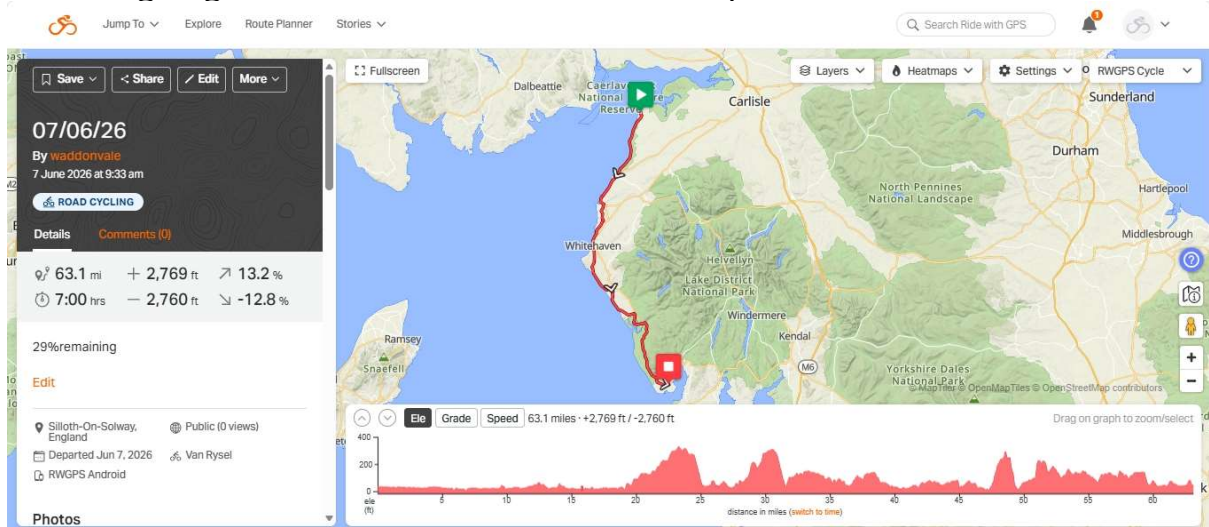
where I crossed the Mite estuary on an iron railway bridge and turned inland passing the station which serves both the main line railway that I had been following, and the Ravenglass and Eskdale steam railway, originally built to transport iron ore but now a popular visitor attraction.

Just around the corner is Muncaster Castle, another visitor attraction and, as I was passing, a steam engine was being strapped down onto a low loader. This later passed me about 10 miles further on with a long queue of traffic behind it. On wards and upwards with views down across the Esk valley



The last ten miles of the journey were a real roller-coaster but I had sufficient battery power to be able to use the motor freely and arrived at Millom at about 1800hrs.

It's been a hard day but satisfying to have been able to complete what looked as if it was going to be defeat at the start. And to top it all NO RAIN.



Day 16 – around the inlets

Gerri is an Essex girl who spent her working life with the Post Office and, when she retired 8 years ago, decided that Cumbria would be the place she'd most like to be. So she bought Pavilion House in Millom and has been running it as a B&B ever since. I'd guess it's a Victorian building with decent sized rooms, a comfortable double bed and a good FCB in the morning. At £64.40 it was good value for money. I pitched up at about 6pm feeling pretty weary after my battle against the wind: the bike had to stay in the front garden but was secure enough. Gerri said that food was available in town but probably only until 7pm so I quickly got washed and changed and walked the 100 yards down the road to Da Vinci, as one would expect, an Italian trattoria. In fact, they were open until 8 so there was no need for hurry, but I sat down and was quickly given a Peroni. Excellent sweet pepper soup to start with decent bread, penne alla Carbonara and a very good cheesecake to finish: £29.99 for the 3 courses. I had another Peroni and wandered back via the Spar and bought a bottle of undistinguished white to write the blog.

After a good breakfast I was away at 0908. I wanted to follow the coast as much as possible so first had to head north to Broughton in Furness to cross the River Duddon. There were excellent cloud formations as I looked back at the estuary and more climbing and descending than I had bargained for, but the sunshine helped.



Past Broughton and Grizebeck I was heading south to Barrow In Furness, home to our nuclear submarine building industry. Just past Dalton in Furness I noticed this hill. From a distance it looked like a spoil heap but it is clearly a geographical feature



The BAE sheds used for warship building stand out as you come into town. Behind them is Walney Island



I stopped at Aldi for a drink and some Jaffa Cakes before moving on along the coast. Barrow has a fine Town Hall and clock



Once around the corner the road follows Morecambe Bay and there is a decent cycle path for the first five miles. The Bay is a treacherous place with quick-sands and fast flowing tides. There is a public right of way connecting Kents Bank on the Cumbrian side with Hest Bank on the Lancashire coast; but it should only be attempted with a qualified guide. In 2004 21 Chinese illegal immigrants were drowned when they were overcome by the tide whilst cockle picking.



On up the coast to Ulverston which is dominated by the lighthouse on Hoad Hill. Although it could have had a use for navigation and, indeed, a Grant of £100 from Trinity House towards building it stipulated that it should, it has never housed a light and stands as a memorial to Sir John Barrow a local worthy who rose to be second secretary to the Admiralty



I was forced onto the main road to Greenod where I was able to cross the River Leven by way of a footbridge, the tide filling the channel



On the other side I had to negotiate a very rough track for a couple of miles before hitting the blacktop and heading south past Holker Hall and Cark and Cartmel railway station. Everywhere I have been during the last couple of days I have seen signs for Cartmel Races at the end of the month. I've attended in the past, and the course is known for good viewing and a very long run to the finish. It's a good day out for the family.

Through Grange-over-Sands with some swanky hotels and a bustling high street and then into the countryside at Meathop, generally flat country but every now and then there was a short sharp climb to keep me on my toes.



I see in hindsight that I could have easily avoided the A590 and some very fast moving traffic but instead braved the hard shoulder for three miles until I was able to turn off at Levens and move past Levens Hall, noted for its topiary garden, onto the A6 as it headed south to my final destination the Bulls Head Hotel at Milnthorpe.

It's been a good day in the sunshine although still not warm but, once again I've avoided the rain.



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RWGPS Cycle

08/06/26

By waddonvale
8 June 2026 at 9:08 am

ROAD CYCLING

Details Comments (0)

63.8 mi +3,405 ft 10.4 %
5:58 hrs -3,392 ft -12.3 %

Millom, England Public (0 views)
Departed Jun 8, 2026 Van Rysel
RWGPS Android

Photos

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10MB max file size



Day 17 – Cumbria to The Fylde

The Bull's Head in Milnthorpe was a good choice. I was welcomed warmly, given a space for the bike in the courtyard and shown my room which was up a couple of flights of stairs which was the usual struggle with two panniers and a battery. However the room was a good size, the bed very comfortable and the shower adequate. As it was only about 4pm when I arrived I had plenty of time to wash everything and hang it to dry by the window. I pootled about for a bit and went down to supper at 7. A table had been reserved and leek and potato soup, chicken casserole in a cheese sauce with (wonder of wonders) seasonal greens and potatoes and an unnecessary sticky toffee pudding sent me to bed feeling a bit bloated. I also had a couple of pints of good IPA, the first proper ale since Inverness. This morning breakfast, included in the price of £75, was cooked and served by the landlady and very good it was too.

The weather forecast was not good, strong winds and showers throughout the day. I set off at 0942 and went across to the Morecambe Bay coast, surprised by the steepness of some of the early climbs. I dropped down to sea level at Arnside, looking across the Bay to Grange-over-Sands where I had been yesterday



The tide was rolling in rapidly as I climbed up a steep hill to Arnside Knott and back down to sea level round the corner at Silverdale. I headed on to Carnforth with occasional squally showers spoiling the journey. I took shelter on more than one occasion, and the camera didn't feature for much of the early journey.

Next stop Lancaster where I got a bit lost before joining a rough canal path which deteriorated so much that I diverted onto the nearby road



The wind was howling as I made my way south through Cockerham and on to Pilling where I stopped at a bus stop to eat a bar of chocolate and rest for a while. The roads were straight and I was caught up in road dressing which gummed up my tyres for a while.

My original plan had been to cross the River Wyre at Knott End as it disgorged into the sea at Fleetwood but the ferry was unreliable so I decided to go and make the crossing at the first bridge which was about five miles upstream. By the time I got there the wind was so strong that I had to GOAP over the bridge for fear of being pushed off the narrow cycle way.

I was now at the northern end of Blackpool and hit the coast at Norbreck



From now on I was on cycle paths all the way to my destination at Lytham but I still had to contend with very strong winds which were blowing me sideways. Past Blackpool North Pier, looking out for trams



And the iconic Tower



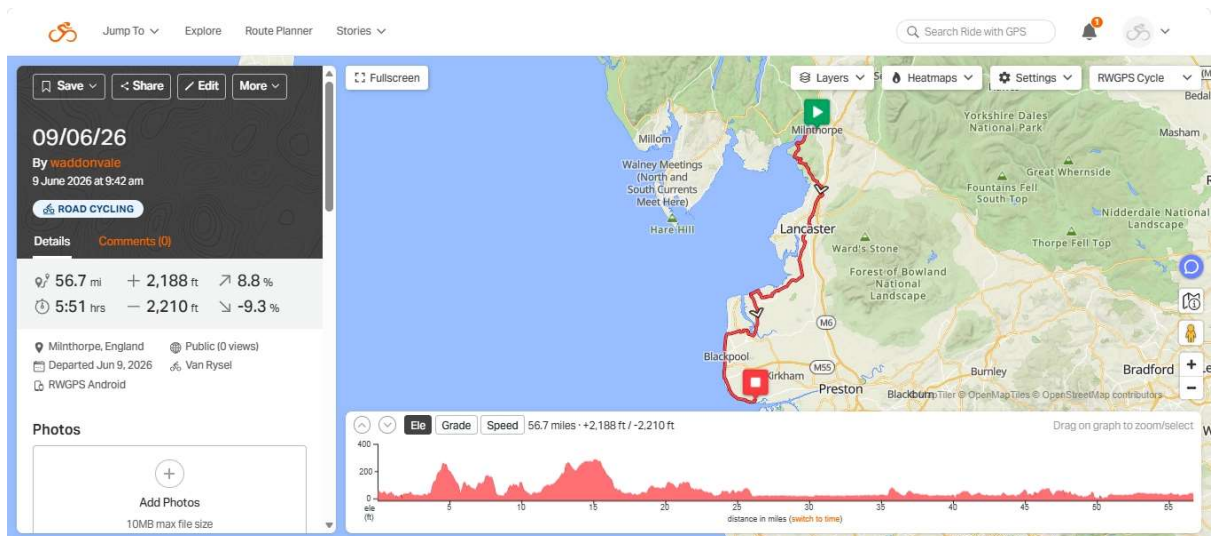
And Pleasure beach on which we have had hours of fun as a family when we lived in nearby Lytham for five years



Rounding the corner, so that the wind was helping, to St Annes-on Sea, full of hotels and retirement homes and finally on to Lytham, with its windmill on the Green, where I am staying the night with a friend.



The wind has been a pest, and I can only hope that it drops away for my final leg tomorrow to Chester. The forecast is for more rain but I'll trade that for less wind



Day 18 – Full circuit

In 1977 my employers Guardian Royal Exchange Assurance asked if I would go to Lytham St Annes to take over the Management of their estates portfolio in the North Of England, including about 3000 acres of in hand agricultural land and Lytham Hall a Georgian gem designed by John Carr of York. Kate was a year old, Jim was on the way and neither Annie or I had any connection with the area, so It was a leap of faith to uproot ourselves from our quaint little cottage in Oxfordshire and head north. It took a while to settle in, but we made some true friends in our five years in Lancashire. Meg and Ian Hargreaves lived around the corner and had children of a similar age to ours and it was to them that I went in search of a bed and some company for the night. Sadly, Ian is very ill in a care home, but when I rang, Meg immediately offered to put me up and produced a lovely meal that we shared with another old friend, Michael, the retired family doctor who oversaw the birth of Jim in 1978 and his friend Sally. On these long cycle trips one of the things I miss, is a relaxed evening reminiscing and relaxing.

I knew I was in for almost 80 miles of riding today on flat ground: no chance to stop pedalling so it's exhausting work. I got away after breakfast at 0850 and headed east because the Ribble estuary cuts 10 miles inland to Preston. It was overcast with a bit of rain in the air and I was dressed accordingly. There is a cycle lane beside the road and once in Preston completely off road cycle ways



Yesterdays wind had, thank goodness, abated and it wasn't until I reached Southport 25 miles into the journey that I was aware of it at all. It's a trifle ironic that Lytham and Southport are only about five miles apart as the crow flies but you need to travel 25 miles to get from one to t'other.

Last year on my final day of riding the East Coast I took a picture of the longest pier in Britain at Southsea. This year my final day included the rather less magnificent pier at Southport



Out in Morecambe Bay was a host of windmills



And I made my way down the coast past Royal Birkdale Golf Course, host of the Open Championship on many occasions and Formby GC which has also hosted international tournaments. At Crosby I was moving into suburban Liverpool and soon passing the docks, now mainly container shipping. There were plentiful cycle ways and I passed the new football ground that Everton have built.



Soon there was the Liver building in front of me, and it didn't take long to find St James station.



There is no cycle way across the Mersey: cycles are banned from the tunnels so it's either Ferry across the Mersey or you can put your bike on the Metro at St James and travel one stop to Hamilton Square in Birkenhead on the Wirral - which is what I did. Very simple with good lifts but expensive at £ 3.95 for the short ride.

I played rugby at Bedford in the 70s and amongst my team mates was Alan Towersey who has retired to the Wirral and arranged to meet up with me at some point today. I gave an ETA and amazingly we arrived at the station within 5 minutes of one another. Alan kindly bought me a cup of tea and arranged to follow me down the Wirral to take some pictures so here is the only action picture of me that you are likely to see



Thanks Alan for chasing me around the countryside.
The bottom part of the Wirral is marshland, some of it firing ranges and I was surprised to go into Wales for almost ten miles of the journey



As part of my circumnavigation of Britain included my trip around Wales in 2020 it should not have been; and the main purpose of today was to mark the end of that journey. I crossed this bridge in 2020 and that is where the paths crossed.



I now had a long hard 5 mile slog along the canalised River Dee before I reached the outskirts of Chester and followed the river past the racecourse



Arriving at the Townhouse Hotel at about 1815.
So that's it: over a period of 12 years I have cycled all the way around the island of Britain. I'll sit down later and work out the distance but it must be somewhere around 6000 miles. I think this stage has been the hardest, both in terms of terrain and, particularly, the weather.

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10/06/26

By [waddonvale](#)
10 June 2026 at 8:50 am

ROAD CYCLING

Details Comments (0)

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Lytham St Annes, England Public (0 views)
Departed Jun 10, 2026 Van Rysel
RWGPS Android

Photos

The map shows a cycling route starting at Blackpool and ending at Chester. The route passes through Southport, Bootle, and Liverpool. Major roads shown include the M55, M6, M61, M62, and M56. The elevation profile below the map shows a relatively flat route with a slight rise towards the end, reaching a maximum elevation of approximately 200 feet. The profile is labeled 'Elev', 'Grade', and 'Speed'.

Blackpool Southport Bootle Liverpool Chester

Manchester Black Hill Kinder Scout Peak District National Park

Amiwh Llangefni Bangor St Asaph

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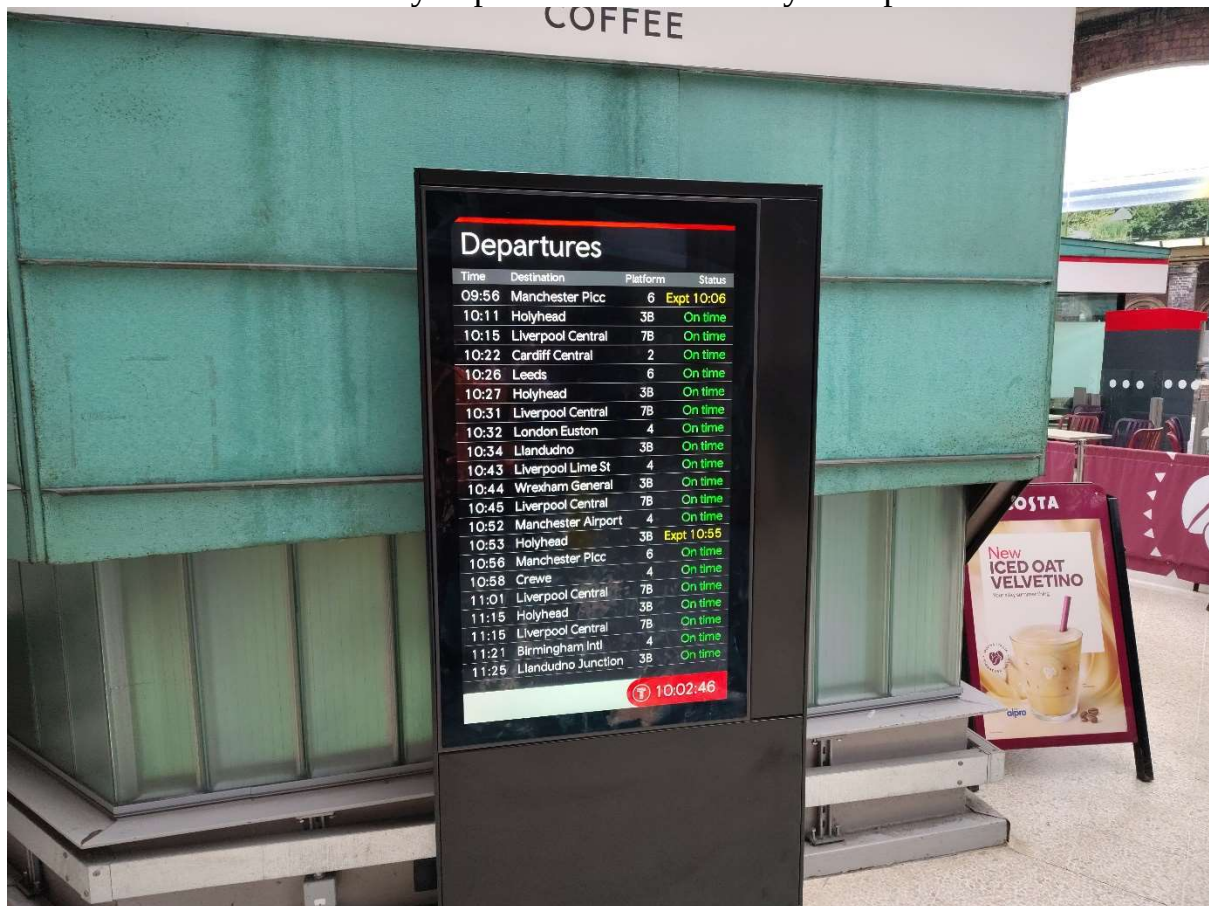
distance in miles (switch to time)

Day 19 – Going home

I stayed last night in the Chester Townhouse. The bike stayed round the back in an overflow restaurant area and my room was, for once, not on the second floor. The room was small and pretty much filled by the comfortable double bed but it had all the amenities including a fan to dry the cycling kit. There was a desk and good light to write the blog and the modern bathroom had a powerful shower though it was hard to control the temperature: for £61 room only it was excellent value.

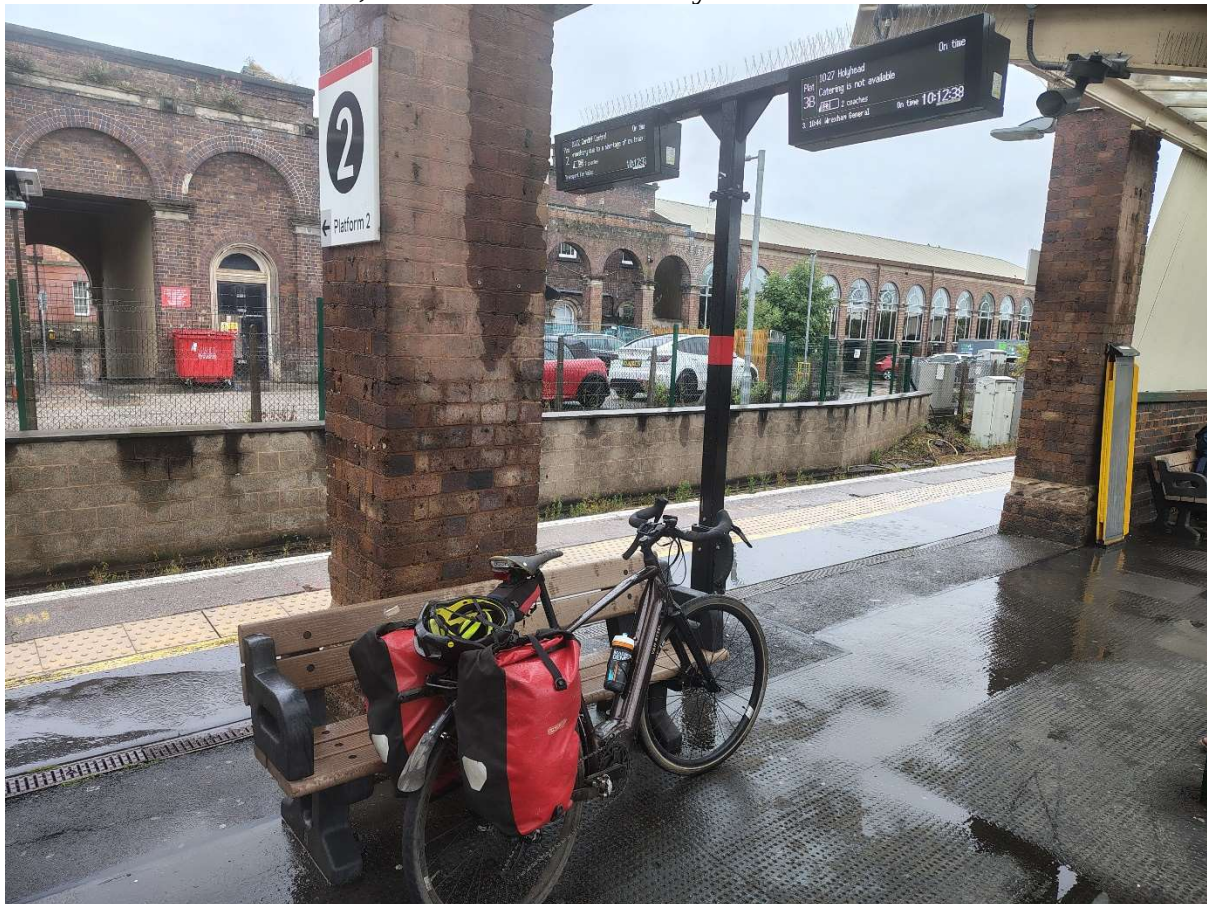
I went out looking for food. There seemed like a good candidate with lots of different ales, but it was quiz night and the kitchen was closed. I contemplated trying to muscle in in a quiz team but decided, after finishing a very pleasant IPA that food was more important. I wandered up the hill and found the Olive Tree which served Mediterranean themed food and enjoyed Fritto Misto and a Caesar salad with sweet potato chips on the side. Perfectly pleasant but not outstanding, though the waitresses were friendly and chatty.

I woke this morning to heavy rain and needed to travel a couple of miles across the city to the railway station: I got wet but not badly so and arrived in plenty of time for my 1022 train to Newport (Gwent). A cup of tea and a bacon sandwich from Costa was ridiculously expensive but what do you expect?



The train is a little two carriage job that started in Holyhead and came along the north Welsh coast, stopping everywhere. It comes into the buffers and then

proceeds in the opposite direction, ending in Cardiff but stopping at all the stations on the Marches, the route I took on my bike in 2020.



The bike space already had one in place but David, who was getting out at Shrewsbury, moved so that I could put mine on the inside.

We got talking: although originally from Lincolnshire he has lived in Scotland for many years, currently near Fort William, and has had a couple of days cycling across Wales before supporting his son on a 15 peak hiking challenge, which he hopes to complete in under 22 hours. It's called the Welsh 3000s, so the equivalent of Scottish Munros, roughly 50km with 4000m in elevation gain. David much prefers off road cycling but on a Gravel bike whereas, although I enjoy going off road for short sections, I generally stick to minor hardtop roads. He congratulated me on my achievement and wished me well for any future challenges. So, there it is in all its technicolour glory, the map of my circumnavigation achieved over a period of ten years but mainly in the last six.



I got off at Newport with 46 minutes to wait for a train to Westbury. I'm not sure why I booked it this way originally, because I could just as easily have got a train from Newport to Castle Cary. My original plan was to get off the train at Westbury and cycle 25 miles home through the grounds of Longleat House and past the Safari Park, but when I got off the train the wind was blowing and it was spitting rain and I wimped out, went onto Train Pal and booked a ticket to Castle Cary, only 17 minutes down the line, for £7.90 and rang Jim and asked him to collect me, which he did at about quarter past four and we were back home before five.

Thanks for following me and to all those who have supported the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance. Between you you've already raised £1885 and I hope there may be a few more contributors now that I've finished. It's been a trying journey battling the weather and especially the wind. I'll take a week off cycling and see how I feel. What next.....?