



Three and a bump on a bike

Jo Evans toured Holland with her husband and their two-year-old – while pregnant

Is it possible to fit three-and-a-half people on one bike for a week's cycle-camping? Yes: my husband, myself (5 ½ months pregnant) and our two-year-old! It had to be easy going, so Holland was the obvious choice.

What a fantastic week! We left the car in Hull and got the overnight ferry. The access ramp was broken so we had fun fitting the tandem into a bus and then a passenger lift to get to the correct car deck. But we arrived in one piece and set off south, gazing in disbelief at the size and quantity of safe, smooth cycle paths.

We averaged only 25km a day but it still took 4-5 hours, as keeping the two-year-old happy meant stopping at nearly every play area and cafe we passed. At the end of the day, after putting up the

tent, we felt a sense of achievement that we had made it somewhere new and unknown even if the distances covered were small.

We did not manage to reach the more touristy part of Zeeland but even so the campsites were pleasant, the views pretty, and there were plenty of impressive engineering works to keep the interest up. We saw windmills, dykes, and dams, and cycled across a 6km bridge. We discovered the 'Dutch hill' (a force 9 headwind) but luckily it dropped for the last two days along the coast and there were plenty of sandy beaches for sandcastle stops.

It was great to be cycling in a place where no one thought twice of seeing us with a small child and bump on board. Holland really is perfect for family-friendly touring. Now can we manage a repeat this year with an eight-month-old as well?

Barmouth to Yarmouth

John Gallagher and his friend **Kevin James** plotted their own coast-to-coast route

We rode from Barmouth to Yarmouth last April because it rhymed and because it sounded like a good idea in the pub. Kevin and I left King's Youth Hostel near Dolgellau, crossed Barmouth Viaduct at the mouth of the Mawddach Estuary and rode into Barmouth for the 'official' start. We left on the northern side of the estuary and crossed Penmaenpool toll-bridge.

The steep climb out of Dolgellau was rewarded by a very fast descent at a maximum 1 in 7 gradient. The road was deserted – no cars to impede our progress. With Snowdonia behind us, the countryside was more open, but there was a long climb from Mallwyd towards Welshpool. Here we took quieter roads to Shrewsbury.

We then headed for Newport (not that one), Gnosall, Penkridge and across Cannock Chase to Rugeley. Further east, we rode into Leicestershire and Ashby-de-la-Zouch. A steep climb at Whitwick and a slog up Beacon Hill near Loughborough surprised us.

After a B&B in Mountsorrel, we took country lanes into Rutland, rode through Oakham and south of Rutland Water, stopping briefly to admire dinghies on the lake. The next town was Stamford, whose honey-

coloured limestone buildings were superb. Beyond Peterborough, we entered the Fens and progressed to Wisbech, then onward to King's Lynn for the next B&B.

We rode around the north Norfolk coast, travelling through gently undulating countryside and picturesque villages. We saw two great windmills at Mundesley and Horsley, the latter adjacent to a navigable watercourse on the Broads. At Happisburgh, the red and white lighthouse dominates the village. From here it was a short ride via Caister-on-Sea into Great Yarmouth, for the 'official' finish by the pier.



NEXT ISSUE

Dropping through your letterbox in two months:

MOUNTAIN BIKES A LA MODE
Two bikes that show 2010 trends

TOURING WITH A TODDLER
CTC Vice President Josie Dew explains how

COMMUTER TUTOR
Skills training for riding in traffic

RECHARGEABLE LIGHTING
A user's guide to powerful front lights

Cycle wants your Travellers' Tales. Write or email the editor – details on page 79 – to find out what's required.