

Cycling USA 2016



July – August 2016

Dominic Andrew & Jack Anthony

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Introduction

Aims and Objectives

The initial aim of this trip was to cycle the length of the United States of America, starting at the east coast, and finishing at the west. We would carry everything for the trip on our bikes, and will stay overnight at campsites, hostels, motels and using warmshowers.com.

Primary Aim:

- Travel from Boston to Portland Oregon primarily by Bicycle. The aim was revised a few months before setting to travel between Boston and Chicago.

Secondary Aim:

- Document the trip using a diary and photographs

Background

Location

We chose the USA for our trip because of the culture, varied scenery, and the security that water, food and other facilities will be available throughout the journey. The expedition will start in Massachusetts, crossing the Berkshires and the Taconics (the foothills of the Appalachians) before reaching the border with Canada at Niagara Falls. We will then ride west, crossing Lake Michigan by ferry to Chicago and past Devil's Tower into Yellowstone National Park. We have chosen a low route through the Rockies to avoid excessive climbing and we should eventually reach the west coast at Portland Oregon six weeks after our departure.

Similar Previous Expeditions

Unassisted cycling across the United States

There are several websites and video-blogs documenting cycling trips across the United States. We found three particularly useful examples:

Steve Garufi: an American cycling enthusiast who has crossed the USA twice. He provides a very useful and comprehensive guide to bicycle touring for beginners on his youtube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vn6P5RqEBq0>)

The Candourist: A young adult who provided the inspiration for our trip with his heartfelt blog he created whilst cycling solo across the country having had very little previous cycling experience. (<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLaJmxBFPY3CXHNDYYOQjzOtfAv8jH-III>)

Shane Little: a very experienced cycle tourer with more than 30,000km under his belt over 4 continents. His website contains lots of useful advice for bicycle touring in general. (<http://www.shanecycles.com/cycling-across-america-info/>)

Assisted cycling across the united states

Several cycle tour operators offer vehicle-assisted tours across the United States, and display the details of the routes on their websites. We have used some of these routes as the basis for some of the legs of our trip, especially the Portland to Portland trip, which shares much of the same route as us.

Portland to Portland: <http://trektravel.com/trip/cross-country-usa-bike-tour/>

America by Bicycle: <http://americabybicycle.com>

Crossroads Cycling: <https://crossroadscycling.com/tours/cross-country-tour-2/>

USA Bike Tours: <http://www.usabiketours.com/bike-tours-in-america/across-america-north-ride/>

Past cycling tours awarded funding by the Imperial Exploration Board

The Imperial Exploration Board has supported several long distance cycling tours including: Paris – Dakar 2012, Mongolia 2014 and Silk Road 2015. We have met up with members of the Silk Road expedition who have given us valuable advice on equipment and other practical tips for long distance touring trips.

Expedition Members & Experience

Dominic Andrew

Academic Background: Imperial College London, Royal School of Mines, Geology MSci, Yr 4

Experience: Dom is a motivated and enthusiastic all rounder with a diverse range of sporting experience. Growing up in the South Downs he has taken an interest in trekking which has taken him from Snowdonia to Greece. He has been playing competitive football from the age of 10 captaining the departmental university team between 2014-15. He has taken courses in sailing and windsurfing, competing in the Around the Island Race, Isle of Wight 2013 and is also a keen cyclist. He has an interest in restoring vintage bikes and commutes up to 40 miles per week in London.

Medical experience: outdoor fieldwork first aid training: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016



Jack Anthony

Academic background: Cardiff University, Chemistry, Year 2

Experience: Jack is a driven and inspired sportsman with a passion for big challenges. He has been a competitive runner and will have completed his 3rd marathon by the time the trip departs in July. Jack also plays table tennis to a high standard, which has seen him travelling all over the British Isles competing. He has visited the USA on two separate occasions, most recently being to work at Camp Jewell YMCA in Connecticut, which has given him a good knowledge of the area in which we will be starting the trip.

Medical experience: American Red Cross training in first aid, CPR and AED



Itinerary and Route

Schedule

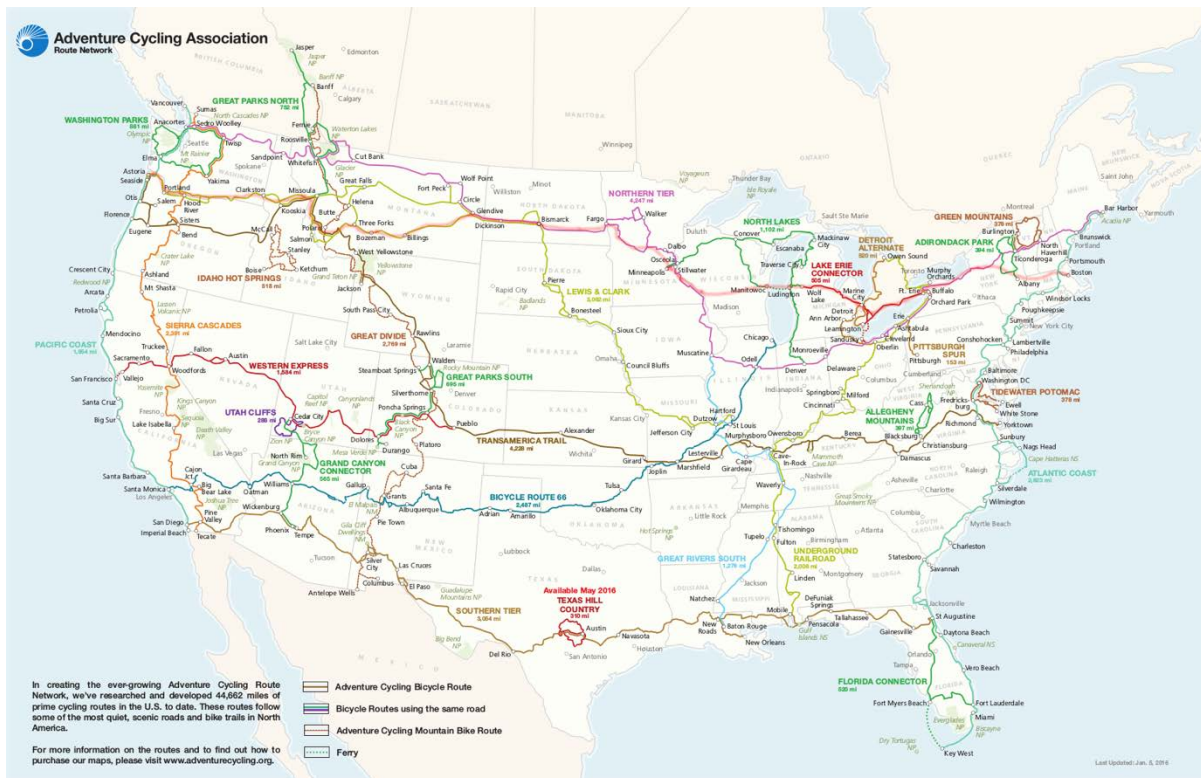
Flights to Boston have been booked for the 4th July. We will depart on the 6th of July and cycle through some of the most beautiful and scenic areas in America. From the natural beauty of the Cascades and Rockies to spectacular river crossings like the Columbia, Missouri and Mississippi. We will attempt to average 60 miles per day for 2500 miles, with 42 days in the saddle and several rest days to recover and explore the country.

The Route

For the majority of the trip we will be using the Adventure Cycling Route Network. These are a series of low-traffic bicycling routes through some of the most scenic and historically significant terrain in North America, mapped by the Adventure Cycling Association (ACA). The ACA is a non-profit organization that aims to inspire and empower people to travel by bicycle. They provide a series of detailed maps for their routes which contain GPS waypoints, services, bi-directional narratives, elevation profiles and contours, distances, historical & cultural notes, points of interest, weather charts, riding conditions and detailed maps of built-up areas to facilitate safe travel. Sticking predominantly to these routes will allow us to find lodging, bike repair services and will increase the likelihood of meeting other cyclists travelling within America.

The planned route (shown in red) stays strictly to the northern states to ensure temperatures remain comfortable for the long days of cycling. The route also bypasses the most difficult climbs of the Rockies, since our bikes will be heavy with equipment.

The distance we will cycle is flexible. Depending on our progress we may take other methods of transport through the middle of the country to ensure we reach our goal and do not exhaust ourselves and risk injury.



Accommodation

Accommodation will vary along the trip and we will use a combination of 8 different types:

1. RV type campsites: large sites with lots of facilities \$20-30 per night
2. State parks: varying size, quality, facilities and price \$0-30 per night
3. Forrest service campsites: simple sites with limited facilities ~\$10
4. Wild camping: free, but only possible when land is not private
5. City parks: permission required beforehand, free.
6. Warmshowers.org: hospitality site for cyclists
7. Couchsurfing: with friends in the United States.
8. Hospitality: Americans are nice people and will sometimes invite cyclists for dinner or offer for them to stay.

We will use a combination of these lodging methods, often using the cheapest option possible to make our way across the country. We will usually organize accommodation several days before arriving at each destination, providing flexibility to tailor our daily cycling mileage to our physical condition. We will find the accommodations using the Adventure Cycling Association maps, the internet, and local knowledge and state maps (which usually retail at about \$5)

Navigation

We will use a combination of ACA maps, state maps bought locally and road signs to navigate our way in conjunction with a Garmin eTrex 30 GPS handheld system. The majority of navigation will be easy and ACA maps are very detailed, providing distance, elevation and

other useful information about the routes we are taking. State maps are common and are usually ~£5, and will be used when we leave the ACA routes.

Logistics

Transport

Outward flights

Norwegian (£299 + £50 for bike each)

We are travelling outbound on flight DY7147 departing at 16:50 from London Gatwick on July 4th arriving at Boston Logan at 19:05 local time. From here we will stay in a local hostel on this night, and spend the 5th July in Boston, collecting any items it was not possible to bring with us to the states, and preparing mentally for the journey with a goal of departing on 6th July.

Visas

The US Visa Waiver Program (VWP) allows most British Citizen passport holders to visit the US for up to 90 days without a visa, however since we are arriving via plane, we need to apply for an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). The ESTA is simple to attain and permits the holder right to visit the USA for trips not exceeding 90 days for a period of 2 years. Jack has visited Iraq in since 2013 and has been approved for a 10 year visiting visa.

Money

We will use US Dollars for the duration of our time in the United States. The conversion rate at time of writing is 1.40 USD to the GBP. We will take some money in cash, storing it in multiple locations to avoid loss, however it is easy to withdraw dollars abroad.

Communication

The UK mobile network 'Three' offer a 'Feel at home' sim card, which allows customers to use their UK price plan in selected countries, which includes the USA. Jack will be signing up to a sim card to ensure that we have a source of contact for back in the UK, or if any assistance is required on the trip.

Environmental Responsibility

We aim to complete our journey in an environmentally responsible manner, leaving minimal trace of our presence along the route. Any solid human waste will be buried away from water sources when no toilet is available. Litter will be disposed of responsibly, and recycled where available.

Road Travelling

The major risk of this expedition derive from cycling on roads with traffic, therefore we will take every precaution to mitigate this risk. To reduce the risk of traffic we are avoiding busy roads entirely, sticking to single carriageways with shoulders. We are fixing mirrors to the bikes once in the USA (UK mirrors will reflect the wrong side of the road) to increase our awareness of the traffic behind us, and will stay vigilant to the presence of traffic on these roads.

The road surface is the second major consideration, and the condition of road surfaces will be variable across the span of the country. Typically, roads will consist of straight single carriageways with substantial hard shoulders as shown below (left). Some of these shoulders have rumble strips which can reduce the effective thickness of the shoulder by up to 40cm (middle), however these hard shoulders are generally in good condition. This will not be the case for the entire trip however, and we expect to come across some roads with significantly reduced hard shoulder quality (right).



Working in a team to reduce drag will be an important factor to consider during the trip, especially when travelling into a headwind and at high speeds. As a result, we will often travel directly behind one another, rotating the leader to maximize the efficiency of our journey.

Climate

The American climate is variable; however, our route never strays below 41 degrees north ensuring that we avoid the worst of the summer heat. The state average temperatures along our route will typically have highs of 28 and lows of 15 degrees Celsius. Precipitation is variable averaging 90mm per month in the east, and dropping as low as 23mm per month in Idaho within the rain shadow of the Rockies. We expect to see an average of 22-26 days of sun per month across the country (sunny days and partly sunny days).

Prevailing Wind Direction

The prevailing wind direction at altitude across the united states is west to east, however, at ground level wind is dominated by local weather systems. On average a prevailing northerly wind is expected, however actual wind directions are highly variable.

Daylight Hours

Day	Location	Sunrise	Sunset	Hours Sunlight
1	Boston	5.13	8.24	13.11
7	Niagra Falls	5.48	8.55	15.07
14	Manitowoc	5.26	8.27	15.01
24	Minneapolis	5.56	8.42	14.46
34	West Yellowstone	6.21	8.38	14.17
44	Clarkson	5.41	8.06	14.25
50	Portland	6.05	8.26	14.21
52	Seaside	6.11	7.45	13.34

Insurance

For insurance we will be looking at getting cover from <https://www.ctc.org.uk/insurance/ctc-cyclecover-travel-insurance> which will cost £194.63pp for year round cover. This premium insurance covers up to £10,000,000 of medical expenses, trip cancellations, and most importantly covers our bicycles up to £3,000 in case of any damage or theft.

Equipment

Bikes

The journey takes us across 10 states travelling predominantly by road. As a result we have chosen bikes designed predominantly for road cycling, with steel frames and eyelets for attaching racks. Dom has a 2016 Genesis Croix de Fer 20. Jack has a 2015 Charge Plug 4. Both are fitted with Clement X'Plor USH, 60TPI, 700x35c tires which provide a good compromise of road efficiency and off-road flexibility

Tents

Since we intend to use campsites wherever possible, we are taking lightweight tents which can be easily carried on the rear panniers. We are interested in borrowing tents from the exploration board.

Sleeping

We will each bring a 2-seasons sleeping bag with us since night time temperatures will vary due to the altitude and weather variation. We will supply our own sleeping bags and liners.

Food

Research has shown us that we should be to complete the trip without the use of any cooking equipment, relying solely on food bought at grocery stores and bought at restaurants. Our calorie however may be in excess of 6000 calories per day, and we are considering buying a camping stove in Boston, using the local advice to ascertain which fuel-type stove to buy.

Water

Regulations imposed by US Environmental Protection Agency in the Safe Drinking Water Act mean that drinking water is safe to consume across the United States. We will each carry 6 liters of water each, in the form of portable bottles attached to bottle-holders, and a larger supply in the panniers.

Medical

Dominic has taken four Fieldwork First Aid courses, providing a solid foundation to the for the basic first aid which will be needed for the journey. Jack has completed an American red cross first aid course, which provided a lot of basic first aid training, including training in CPR and the proper use of AED.

We will be taking a first aid bag consisting of adhesive bandages, gauze pads and rolls, medical tape, antiseptic wipes, antibiotic cream, blister plasters, blunt edged scissors, safety pins, tweezers, thermometer, surgical gloves, sealable plastic bags, eye drops, rubbing alcohol, cotton tip applicators and an irrigation syringe.

Training

We will do their own separate training programs. We have both bought Minnoura B60 turbo trainers and are cycling 1 hour per day in addition to commuting and other exercise. Dom is playing regular competitive football twice a week. We will both do some test journeys as we approach the trip loading our bikes up to the same weight to simulate the conditions we will face in the US. This will allow us to find and solve any problems before we embark on the actual journey.

Dom will do several practice trips between his university in London and his home in Sussex, a 50-mile trip, which can be adapted to increase the distance and incorporate climbing sections. He has also started other training trips around London including a 112km cycle around Winsor.

Jack is using his turbo trainer indoors for at least an hour a day, combined with training for the London marathon and Cardiff University World Half Marathon Championships in the coming months. I will be doing some practice trips from my university in Cardiff to my home in Suffolk. These trips will require an overnight stay as they are about 220 miles so will be perfect for determining the kit required and sorting out any troubles I may find on route.

Reporting the Trip

We will be aiming to keep friends and family in the UK updated about our progress on the trip. This will be through the use of our Facebook and Twitter accounts, which we will be updating regularly. Dom and Jack will both be taking GoPro cameras on the trip which are small 'bulletproof' video cameras which can be affixed to the handlebars of our bikes.

Trip Diary

Day 1: Heathrow to 40 Madison Hostel, Boston

We arrived at Boston airport and after initially thinking our bikes hadn't been on the plane, they finally arrived after 2 hours through the oversize luggage pick up. We checked in at the hostel and made it out in time for the 4th of July fireworks.

Day 2: 40 Madison, Boston

Spent the day touring around Boston by foot, walking 30,000 steps in total. We started the day by going to a bike shop and fixing a minor issue Jack's bike had acquired during the transit costing \$60, however they did a great job. We walked the famous Freedom Trail, took a trip to Harvard and made an impulse visit to go and watch a Boston Red Sox game at Fenway Park. American sports seem to concentrate more on the whole experience (beer, donuts etc) rather than the actual sporting activity which, to put it nicely, is rather sedate.



Day 3 40 Madison, Boston – Pine Acres Campsite. 108km

Day 3 saw us set out on the bikes for the first time fully loaded and on the right side of the road. We soon realized that Americans are much nicer to cyclists than drivers in the UK, with the exception of black-pick-up drivers who occasionally shouted words of encouragement such as: "assholes!" at us. The infrastructure is very cycle friendly and we took the Minutemen cycle trail going west out of the city and onto the country roads going through forestland. We found a campsite, which turned out to be more of a luxury resort and some Texans invited us onto their plot at a highly discounted rate. They gave us some Texan beer.



Day 4: Pine Acres Campsite – Andrew’s house, Amherst. 104km



We left early and cycled west Amherst. Much of the journey was along the Mass Central Rail Trail, which followed the path of a disused railway through the Massachusetts forest. The trail was tediously straight at times, but there was some great scenery. We arrived at Chicopee in the late afternoon but were unable to find anywhere to stay, so we used Jack’s warmshowers.com contact and decided to go a further 20 miles north to Amherst. Although google tried to take us through a US Airforce base, we got there before sundown and Andrew and his housemates let us stay in the house. They gave us some beer, watermelon and we had a great evening with them.

Day 5: Andrew’s House – Motel 6, Albany. 148km

After fixing the first flat tire of the trip we left for the hills. In the morning we climbed three huge hills climbing in excess of 3000ft over the first 45 miles. Post Walmart, the afternoon was supposed to be an easy downhill ride, however during another uphill struggle we found ourselves in the middle of a torrential thunderstorm and hard shoulder turned into a torrent causing us to stop. At 4:30 the rain eased we made the decision to push on to Albany and booked a motel as a form of motivation. This was a very long day, however eventually we crossed the Hudson river into Albany and cycled uphill into the city though a sketchy neighborhood to our budget motel.

Day 6: Motel 6, Albany – Schnectady Yachy Club. 50km

We left the motel at 12, and Dom realized that he developed fairly severe cyclists palsy in his left hand. Cyclists palsy is a condition where putting continuous pressure on the center of the hand compresses the ulner nerve and limits the movement and dexterity of the fingers. We went to a bike shop where he bought a stem raiser, to adjust the handlebar position and made a conscious decision to keep moving grip positions. We cycled up the river to Scenectady and stayed at a beautiful campsite by the Mohawk river.



Day 7: Schenactady Yacht Club – Little Falls. 107km

First day cycling along the Mowhawk Hudson Canal Trail and although flat, it's difficult into the headwind. Dom briefly saw a snake before it was bisected underneath his front tire. We finished the day at Little Falls and set up camp at Lock 17. All the Locks along the trail can be legally used as campsites. Despite its charming name Little falls is in fact a dump and we would not recommend visiting here. The campsite across the river, despite the frequent 100 carriage long, ever tooting freight trains, was lovely.

Day 8: Little Falls – Jenny, Olin & Zita's House, Syracuse. 135km

A day of perfect weather we cycled through the towns of Utica and Rome. Rome is not as nice as its European counterpart, but it does do good steaks. In the afternoon we had a few minor incidents: Jack lost concentration at one point, and found himself cascading down the embankment off the road into the long ferns below. Amazingly he didn't fall. Later Dom stopped abruptly at some traffic lights and Jack went into the back of him, however the bikes made it out undamaged. We spent the night at our second warmshowers.com hosts Jenny, Olin with their daughter Zita. They gave us dinners, had beds for us and were amazingly friendly. Their dog was a boy named Sue.



Day 9: Syracuse – Newark. 95km



We went to a bike shop in the morning to fix my front gear and made good progress in the afternoon through the open expanse of northern New York state in the sun. We ran low on water at one point but were helped out by an Amish lady who also gave us ice pops (I didn't know Amish were allowed these). At this point in the journey we realized that we both wanted to get different things out of the trip. Dom wanted to see more of America, see the sights and have regular rest days. Jack wanted to challenge himself and do more miles attempting a cross country cycle. We decided that we would part ways in two days' time at Buffalo to pursue what we wanted from the trip having enjoyed the time together. We

spent the night camping by a river surrounded by fireflies.

Day 10: Newark – Nancy’s House, Lockport. 169km

We left early and spent the day in 40-degree heat pedaling against a strong headwind. It was a tough day and we decided to split early and Jack cycled the 200km miles to Buffalo, Dom did 169km ending at a warmshowers.com host, a very strange lady with several cats called Nancy and spent the night in her moth-infested basement.

Day 11: Nancy’s house – Gorge View Hostel, Niagara. 39km

Dom cycled the short cycle to Niagara and spent the day seeing the falls. Jack cycled 40miles west but the wind coming off lake Eerie had knocked him off his bike twice. He decided to change route and met me at Niagara for a boat ride and minigolf.



Day 12: Gorge View Hostel – A1 star hostel, Niagra, Canada

We spend the day organizing ourselves and planning the rest of our trips. Dom decided to take a train to Chicago, then a further train to San Francisco to cycle in the Redwood forests along the coast. Jack decided to take a train to Portland and cycle down the entirety of the west coast.

Dom’s Journey

Day 13 (Dom): A1 star hostel – Andy & Nat’s house, Buffalo. 96km

We parted ways again and I cycled north to see lake Ontario along the Niagara gorge. The air was clear enough to see Toronto across the water. I spent the night at another warmshowers host watching original 60s batman and admiring their extensive bike collection.



Day 14: Andy & Nat’s house – Sleeper train

Buffalo is a strange town. It used to be one of the richest in the states, however since the highways were built there is a lot of disparity between the poorer black and richer white neighborhoods. The black neighborhoods where I had stayed are very friendly however, and

I spent some time chatting to the locals and taking pictures before my train (which was 4 hours late).

Days 15-17 Chicago

Chicago is a beautiful, ultra-modern, cycle friendly city with lots of culture and things to do. My host (much to my surprise) was a very wealthy septuagenarian lady. There is a great cycle highway that runs parallel to lake Erie which made for great cycling. I spent the second day walking the city,

and in the evening I met my host's second guest; the most amazing man I've ever met in my life and we talked for hours. His name is Heinz Stücker, and he left his German village on bike at the age of 22 and didn't stop cycling for 50 years. He's toured all 196 official countries and had some amazing tales to tell. He's crossed the Sahara in 52 degrees heat, been shot in the toe by Zambian militia, been in the soviet union during the breakup, slept in cock



fighting pits in Malaysia, had his bike stolen 6 times, found his bike 6 times, had his teeth knocked out in South Africa and much much more. There's a nice piece about him on the Brompton website: <http://www.brompton.com/News/Posts/2015/Journey-Heinz-Stucke>

Days 17-19: Riding the California Zephyr from Chicago to San Francisco

The California Zephyr is a 52 hour, 2438 mile train passing through Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Colorado, Utah, Nevada and California. The journey has stunning views, especially as it snakes up through the Rockies in Colorado and carves through the canyons in Nevada. These can be seen best in the observation cart with commentary from volunteer park rangers, and I spent nearly all my waking hours in this cart. The train was a great place to meet fellow travelers and before long we had formed a little group together. My one tip would be to consider booking a cabin, which are a very good price. Coach seats don't offer a

great night's sleep and the free food and comfortable beds of cabins looked great.



Days 19-22 Cycling around the San Francisco area. 132km

The train terminated at Emeryville and I took the ferry across the Bay to San Francisco. Accommodation in San Francisco is expensive but there are some hiker/biker campsites in the woodland to the north. The next day I cycled across the Golden Gate bridge into the redwood forest. The scenery is excellent with sweeping mountain roads, low flying birds of prey and tall tall trees! I stayed at Pantol campsite for just \$5 and woke up the next morning to the sound of a wild turkey. The morning started with 20 minutes of continuous descent to Miur woods national park and then back through the fog towards San Francisco.



Jack's Journey

Day 15-17 (Jack) Train to Portland

Jack boarded the 2 day train from Rochester, NY through to Portland, meeting up with Dom for lunch in Chicago. The train was one of the strangest experiences of the trip, being in an extremely confined space for 2 days was challenging, but managed to see some fantastic scenery especially in Glacier national park which made the trip well worth it.

Day 17 – Portland

I arrived in Portland in the morning, and spent a couple of hours eating, refueling and rebuilding the bike from the train journey so that I could head out to the coast. I then cycled

the 90 miles into a challenging headwind through Oregon's wine country to the coast arriving at Lincoln city, OR in the evening which is where I set up camp for the night.

Day 18 – Lincoln city to Searose beach

This day involved a lot of climbing and descending though the stunning backdrop of Oregon's coastline. The weight on the bike meant some descents were a little fast reaching speeds of up to 50mph with the wind behind me! There was lots of other holidaymakers out driving RV's and other touring cyclists as well who were good to chat to for a few minutes.

Day 19 – Searose beach to Port Orford

This was a very long day, in which I cycled over 200km but it did not feel difficult as a strong wind pushed me down for most of the day. The views were again stunning, with steep cliff edges and lovely weather to enjoy. I ended up stealth camping in the port in Port Orford that night.

Day 20-21 To Crescent City

Another long day, in which I left Oregon and entered the state of California, which was a big moment as I had to be searched and provide identification at the 'border'. The hills were getting much larger now and the weather was getting colder at the top with freezing fog commonplace and the odd bit of rain. When I arrived in crescent city, I decided to take a rest day and explored the local redwood park the next day.

Day 22 – to Eureka

I headed again down route 101 in California towards Eureka this day, again battling the hills and the weather to make good time. I stopped in Eureka for the night.

Day 23-24 To San Francisco

The next two days would take me to the San Francisco bay area , I headed inland, for a faster more flat route, only to be hit by 40 degree Celsius heat in which my tyres were melting into the road. It was very hard to cycle in and I wish I had more knowledge of the weather before these two days. I arrived on the golden gate bridge to thick fog to meet my mother who was to cycle the remaining 500 miles to Los Angeles with me.

Day 26

Leaving San Francisco, we negotiated the steep hills had a conservative day, cycling around 70 miles to our destination, a campsite near Pescadero, CA. There were lots of other cyclists doing this route. The weather was still very cold from the bay area.

Day 27

On this day our destination was Monterey, CA. The route was similar to Oregon, with winding hills and coastline. The weather was getting warmer as we went further south.

Day 28

On this day we passed Big Sur National Park, where a forest fire had been blazing for a few days. All sorts of emergency vehicles were passing constantly throughout the day, making for hazardous riding. We could see smoke in the distance coming off the mountains due to the wildfire. Big Sur was the biggest climb that had been in the whole trip, with over 2500ft of climbing in one stint.

Day 29-30

In these two days the destination was Lompoc, CA. An old military town which had become prosperous due to the local Vandenberg Air Base which has been used for space shuttle launches in the past. We stayed in a motel to recuperate and wash clothes before the final push to Los Angeles.

Day 31-33

In the final few days riding to Los Angeles, we headed east passing through Santa Barbara and many other affluent areas on our way into the 2nd largest city in America. The roads were becoming more and more busy with traffic commuting into the city and the lights of Los Angeles could be seen in the distance. We finally arrived on Santa Monica beach in the morning, and enjoyed a cool can of Coca-Cola whilst sitting on the sand for a few hours.



Advice to future travelers:

- Make sure everyone in the group has the same goals. Although the trip turned out well for Jack and I, it was not what we planned
- You don't need a very heavyweight bike for touring in the USA, a normal road bike with 2 paniers is fine. We both found handlebar bags useful too.
- Warmshowers.com is the best accommodation method. You get to meet fantastic people and a free beer at the end of the day tastes phenomenal. There are a few odd hosts, but these can be fun in their own way. It's best to message lots of people well in advance on warmshowers as not all hosts reply. Another platform (untested by us) is couchsurfing.com.
- Wild camping is great. It's perfectly legal in some states and you can often find great spots for a good night's sleep.
- From our experience hostels in the US are more expensive, however this problem was slightly exacerbated by a bad £-\$ exchange rate during our trip
- Keep changing grip position and make sure handlebars are high enough, they can be easily adjusted using spacers and stem raisers. Cyclists Palsy is a common affliction, but is easily avoidable.

Risk Assessment

Risk	Consequences	Prevention	Likelihood	Seriousness	Risk factor
Heat Exhaustion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion, dizziness • High temperature • Nausea, headaches, thirst • Appearing sweaty and flushed • Delayed progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping hydrated (drink 500ml per hour cycling) • Have regular breaks in the shade • Cover back of neck and head • Seek routes that travel through wooded areas 	2	6	12
Sunburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritation • Possible infections • Long term effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use high strength sun cream • Cover body from direct sunlight • Seek shade 	4	2	8
Road traffic accidents, Bike crash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe injuries • Damage to bikes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycle carefully and responsibly • Stay away from very busy roads • Travel at a sensible speed • Don't cycle at night • Affix mirrors to bike handlebars 	2	8	16
Wildlife (bears and mosquitos)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of food • Injuries • Irritation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry bear and mosquito spray at all times • Cook at different location to camp • Don't store food outside • Apply afterbite if bitten by a mosquito 	2	4	8
Getting lost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dehydration • Running out of supplies • Panic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use GPS to locate ourselves • Have both of us navigating 	5	2	10
Theft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of time and equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lock bikes • Don't leave valuables unattended • Be smart 	4	3	12
Breakage of bikes/racks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delay • Possible irreparable parts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry all necessary tools to fix most problems • Have knowledge of local bike stores, repair shops 	5	2	9

Breakage of GPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delay in map reading • Lost time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be careful with valuable items 	1	3	3
Poor weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have places to stay to hold out for the weather to improve 	7	1	7
Lack of fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won't make the flight home • Could overstay visas and face deportation • Increased risk of injuries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all trained to an adequate level before trip • Will adjust cycling distance accordingly 	2	3	6
Small injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to use body part • Reduced cycling efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating hazards • Comprehensive medical kit to be carried at all times 	5	2	10
Large injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large delay whilst seeking medical help • Slow progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry phone at all times • Know details of local medical facilities • Carry spare and warm clothing 	1	8	8
Dehydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry mouth, muscle cramps • Headaches • Dizziness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry water supplies and research water sources • Take immediate rest in shade • 	2	7	14
Hypothermia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core body temperature drops below 35c • Confusion, shivering, loss of coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take adequate clothing and emergency warm clothes • Remove wet clothing • Remain vigilant at higher altitudes where it is colder at night 	1	9	9

Bike Maintenance

As a resident of Hammersmith and Fulham, Dominic has enrolled for free on the One Day Maintenance Courses run by Bikeworks. The level 2 course covers the following:

- Removal and refitting of brake cables
- Reconnecting and setting up new brakes
- Limit stop screw demonstration
- Principles of adjusting front derailleur
- Wheel truing
- Recommendations for routine bicycle servicing

Finance

Item	Notes	No.	Cost (£)	Total cost (£)
Flight Gatwick to Boston	Norwegian airlines	2	299	598
Bike fee		2	50	100
Flight USA to London	TBC	2	300-400	600-800
Charge Plug 4 2015 bicycle		1	800	800
Croix de Fer touring bike		1	999	999
Raleigh lightweight touring pedals		2	14.99	29.98
Bike eye bike mirror		2	13.44	16.88
Ortlieb back roller classic pannier		2	81.06	162.12
Handlebar bag	Ortlieb	2	46.85	93.70
Topeak alien	Bike multitool	1	28.25	28.25
Topeak microrocket AL	Compact pump	1	14.99	14.99
Topeak QR beam rack	For Jacks bike which is not fitted with a rack	1	37.59	37.59
Spare chain links		-	10	10
Schwalbe road inner tube		6	4.49	26.94
Spare spokes			15	15
Puncture repair kit	For patching tyres	1	4.49	4.49

Anker foldable solar charger	For phones, cameras, etc	2	20	40
Local maps				
Jacks visa	Does not qualify for ESTA	1	115	115
Doms ESTA		1	14	14