

20  20

**CYCLE TOURING  
FESTIVAL**



Hello! Welcome to the first ever  
Cycle Touring Festival Zine!

This zine was originally going  
to be made at the 6th Cycle Touring  
Festival, scheduled for May  
2020 in Clitheroe, Lancashire.

But then lockdown happened,  
and instead of a physical event,  
the cycle touring fest went  
virtual, so we figured the cycle  
touring fest zine could do the  
same!

We put out a call for  
contributions, and were so  
excited to see what folks sent  
in - this zine has stories,  
photos, drawings, routes, how-  
to tips and reflections on the  
cycle touring festival past and  
present.

Thank you to everyone who  
contributed, and we hope to see  
you in a field in Lancashire  
next year.

Abi and Lili  
@gearsforqueers

# MY BIKES

MAY 2009 -  
September 2009.

1st Adult bike

£150 new.

Terrible bike!

I had no idea  
what I was doing.

Went to Iceland

for one month

for my first tour.

Terrible gears.

Terrible brakes. HEAVY!

I had an AMAZING  
TIME.

Bike was STOLEN!!!  
V. Sad. Loved this bike.



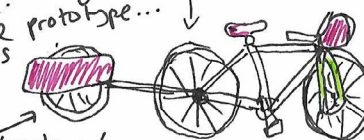
it was called a  
'Probike'  
HAH!!

Orlieb  
Panniers + Box  
Worth more  
than bike

Then cycled  
from Nice to Chamonix, up Col de Forclaz.

Sold to me by a friend

£150 2nd hand...  
Quality bike. Orange frame...  
racing bike prototype...  
loads of gears



Had to use trailer because  
frame couldn't have panniers.

SEPTEMBER 2009 - PRESENT.

Mountain bike. Commuting bike.  
My... beloved. Such a light bike!!

Aluminium frame.

We did: offroad bike tour in  
Scotland!

- Anglesey to Brecon - EPIC FUN!
- Landsend to Bodmin. → HILLY

VERY  
HEAVY  
Beautiful  
piece of  
kit. Amazing  
Quality Build.  
Comfy. Love  
her so much.



Frame can take so  
much weight.

September 2018 -  
Present.

KOGA MIYATA PURPOSE  
BUILT TOURER.

2ND HAND. £550 + tax  
HAD TO GET FROM eBay.  
CORNWALL TO HULL!!

SIX month tour in Europe. Alpine passes.  
Hull - Scarborough. Sheffield - Hull. MANY more to come.

@ruthandliamgoplaces



## The Oyster Wheel

### A multi-day circuit to heal the spirit

by Tim Boden

Do you want to circumnavigate the capital on a bike? Perhaps you've thought about doing a cycle tour but are worried about successive days in the saddle? Well here is a tour challenge that 10 million Londoners can easily achieve, on a day-trip basis and on a standard hybrid bike. I know because I planned and rode it myself last summer to get through a particularly low point in our lives.

*"When the spirits are low, when the day appears dark, when work becomes monotonous, when hope hardly seems worth having, just mount a bicycle and go for a spin down the road, without thought on anything but the ride you are taking."*

Arthur Conan Doyle

These words had never seemed so apt. A bombshell had hit our lives; we had both just retired, and were planning trips on our new tandem. Instead my wife's pancreatic cancer diagnosis meant we would often be in London for chemotherapy and certainly not touring.

I needed a challenge for an occasional day-trip basis; to "go for a spin" on the long days that beckoned in London. I researched a London orbital tour, but found only single day "M25" marathons, so I decided to create one myself - the Oyster Wheel.

The Oyster Wheel is eight Oyster rail/tube stations in a loop, connected together by a mixture of national and regional cycle routes, bridleways, with minor roads to fill in gaps. I wanted a predominantly off/quiet road route, accessible each day by public transport using an Oyster card, with about 4 hours cycling each day so I could enjoy the views and sights at a leisurely pace.

Eight individual days over four months later, I had completed it, and on the way had discovered some of the most beautiful scenery, cafes and viewpoints that the South-East has to offer.

What it gave me was a sense of achievement, but one I could fit round our new lives of chemotherapy cycles and hospital visits. I found a lot of green spaces and was able to feel at one with nature, if only for 4 hours a week. The satisfaction of finally finding a route through Essex that didn't involve dual carriageways and industrial estates cannot be understated.

Other highlights were the day traversing Epping and Hainault forests, the Mar Dyke valley in Essex and the butterfly-filled Pilgrims Way in Kent. Finally, of course, there was the finish up Box Hill.

I enjoyed the experience so much that I wanted to give others the opportunity either to attempt the route, or use it as the basis for their own tours. Hence I have detailed the route on my website <https://oysterwheel.wordpress.com>, and also written a series of blogs which describe how each day was put together and my experiences.

I hope you can enjoy this as much as I did.

Days 1 and 2  
Ranmore Common  
Thames Path



Days 3 and 4  
Lee Navigation  
Epping Forest



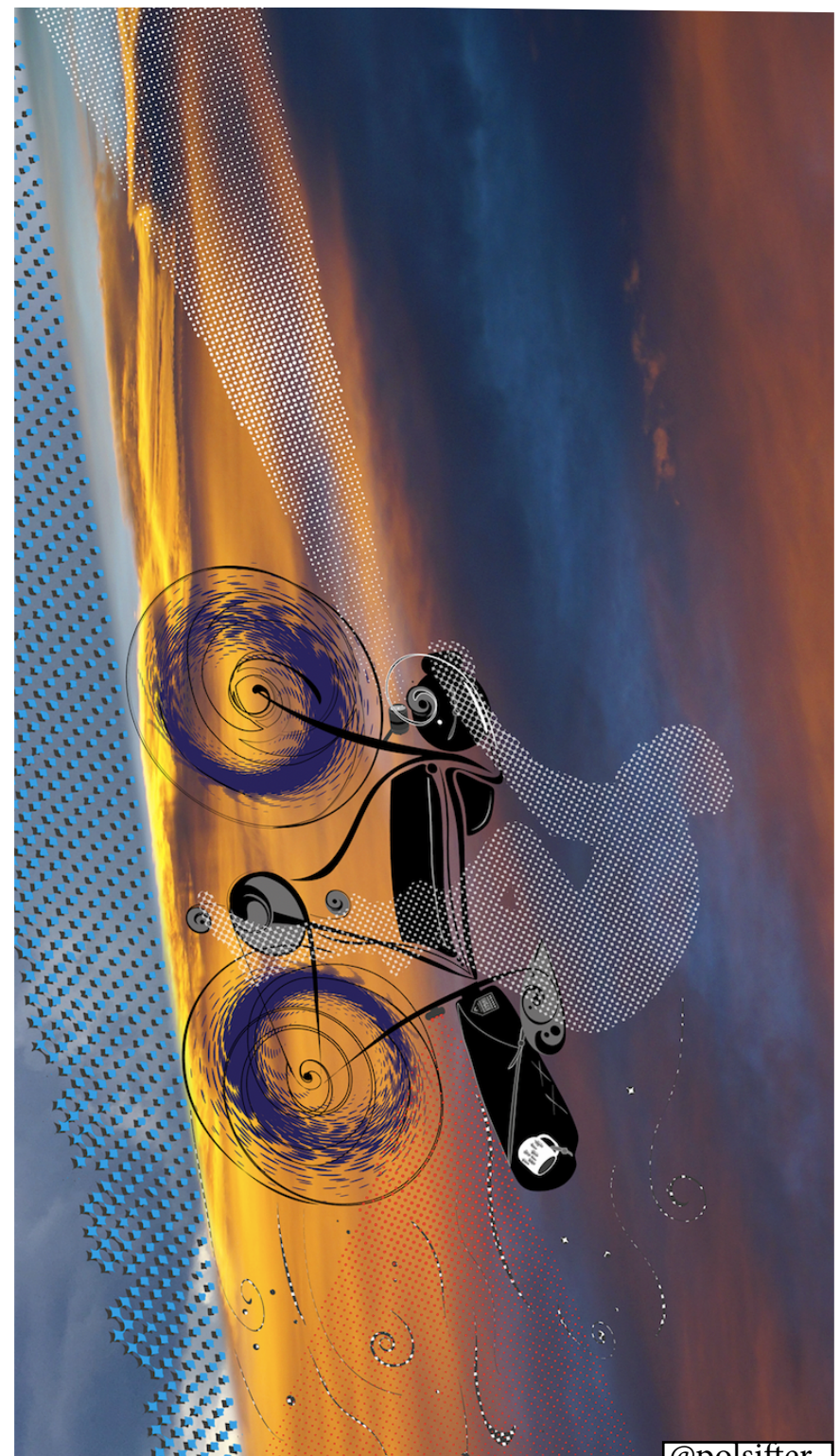
Days 5 and 6  
Tilbury Ferry  
Medway Valley



Days 7 and 8  
Gravelly Hill  
Box Hill



[www.oystewheel.wordpress.com](http://www.oystewheel.wordpress.com)  
@tb\_trekker



@polsifter

Tent  
Sleeping Bag  
Sleeping Mat  
Shoes  
Food

Head Torch  
Battery Packs x 4  
Cables  
SD cards  
Go pro Batteries

Washing Bag  
Chamoir Cream  
Bike Clothes  
Down Jacket  
Breakfast Porridge  
Coffee  
Waterproof Jacket  
Waterproof Shorts

Evening Clothes

Go pro  
Garmin

Cooking set  
2x inner tubes

Phone  
Tripod head  
Microphone

Snack Food  
Hydration Tabs

Genesis Longitude  
Maxxis Chronicle 29x3"  
Shimano XT groupset  
Alp kit Bags

14 Dried Dinners  
Extra Snacks  
2x Large Gas Cans  
Go pro Chest mount

Wallet  
Toilet paper  
2x Water bottles  
Folding Backpack  
Knife



Tent poles, Pump, Water bladder, Water Purifier, Tripod, Bike Tools

By  
Barry Godin  
@barrygodin



The first time I went on a cycle tour I was pretty clueless. I was going to join a partner in Venice. The bike was a Raleigh Mustang I'd got for £30 from a local bike project. It was shonky but it'd carried me miles already so it could do another 250. I was also broke, so there was that.

I figured out how far I could go in a day, and how to bed down leaving no trace. But I was unfamiliar with hairpin bends and exposed mountains. As we slogged up a mountain a lycra-clad local cyclist easily caught us up. The usual friendly questions came, and then, "no boyfriends? No help?" I got angry; I knew some (mostly well meaning but narrow-minded) people would find women travelling without men weird, but it still surprised me to hear it questioned. On top of that choosing to cycle and camp, is to many people, completely mad. I began to realise that queer is a verb, and I felt the world open up a bit more. We ended the trip dizzy with laughter in the rain, eating pizza we'd stolen from a bunch of assholes who were rude to us.

Many folks did not understand why I took my crappy bike, why I rode it to the airport, part disassembled it, reassembled it and rode it again. The bike shop laughed at me. The airport laughed at me. Onlookers watched with a mix of disbelief and awe as I rebuilt it in arrivals. Taxis beeped. I was frequently terrified, but I told myself I was allowed to take up space on the road, to be queer, to be poor, to make mistakes, and as we pedalled I allowed myself these things.

Years later I've been on tours alone and with partners. I've become a mechanic and built my own wheels. I've cycled the area around me, learned what grows here and there, identified some plants I can eat as well as what can heal or harm me, and watched my favourite places change throughout the years. There are many things cycling gives me, but what stopped me for too long was fear, mostly fear of things breaking and me being stranded. If you are reading this and feeling a bit nervous, here are some tips to help you on your way...

.....

**Any bike is a touring bike** if you ride it far enough and carry stuff on it!

Having said that, **it will ideally be a steel frame that can take a rack, be the right size, and have simple parts you can fix/replace easily.**

**Carry a pump, spare inner tube, tyre levers, and a decent multi-tool.**

I also wrap a bit of **gaffa tape** to my seat post and bring **cable ties, chain lube** and **superglue**. (Last summer I booted a split tyre with superglue, gaffa tape and old inner tube and it got me 20 miles to Carlisle).

If you're planning a big trip and want to feel super equipped, choose a sunny day and **strip your bike down then clean it all and reassemble it**. You'll find out exactly which tools you'll need, you'll know you can do it, and you'll spot any changes/repairs you want to make. **Alternatively set yourself smaller goals, e.g. repair a puncture or adjust the brakes.**

**Listen to your body, and adjust your bike (and your tour) accordingly.**

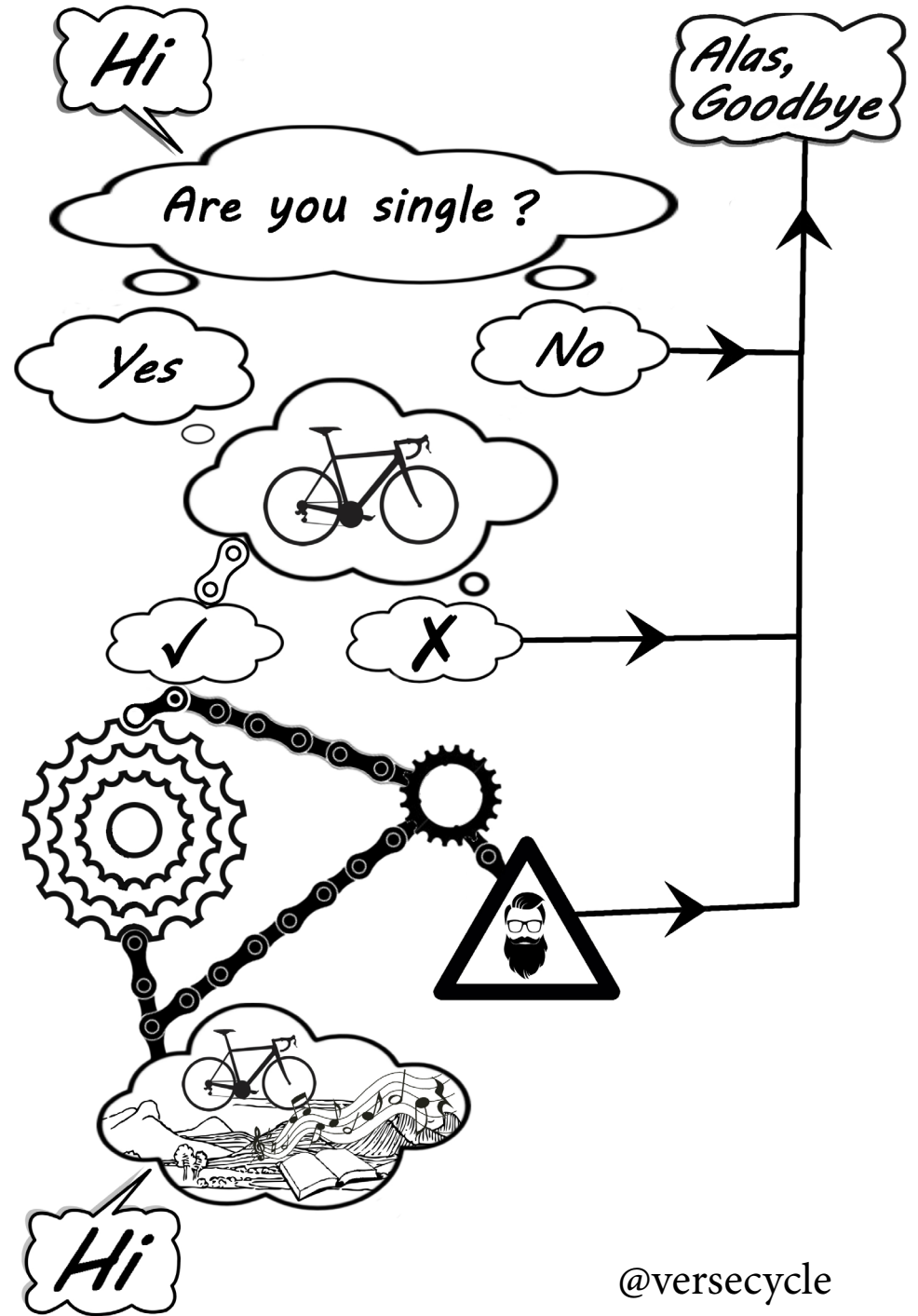
Fuck macho bullshit: If you need to then take it slow, get a train, stay in a hotel, have a day off. Discuss your needs with your cycling pal. When things go wrong you'll find out how capable you really are: the rest of the time **only you get to decide how to push yourself.**

Get in the habit of maintaining your bike yourself, and find a good local mechanic you trust to look over everything and advise you. **Support your local bike shop, Bike Co-op, or DIY bike kitchen. If you're on a budget they will usually look after you better than mainstream bike shops.**



(subversion of a print by an unknowb artist)

@mx\_s\_lang



@versecycle

13.



You might think that she  
was born on two wheels

Never looking back, I'm  
gonna make me mark

14.



Mom and dad behind her  
and the stars at her heels

@hetty\_m



# MICRO-ADVENTURING IN A SERIES OF SHORT LISTS

## IN PREPARATION YOU MAY NEED:

1. A BICYCLE WITH WIDE-ISH TYRES (AS YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT SURFACES YOU'LL ENCOUNTER)
2. FLAT SHOES/MTB SHOES & PEDALS (YOU MAY NEED TO WALK OR LIFT YOUR BIKE)
3. COMFORTABLE CLOTHES (NOT NECESSARILY YOUR FULL MAMIL/MAWIL/MA-ENBIE-IL KIT)
4. AN OPEN MIND WITHOUT A FULLY-FORMED PLAN - THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PREP: NO REAL PREP

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT:

- A LITTLE BIT OF DISTRACTION FROM YOUR LIFE AND CYCLING ROUTINES
- THINGS TO PHOTOGRAPH
- DEAD ENDS, DETOURS & UNEXPECTED CONNECTIONS BETWEEN AREAS ON YOUR MENTAL MAP
- KNOWN UNKNOWNNS & **UNKNOWN UNKNOWNNS**

## YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF RULES & RISKS:

KNOW THE LAW WHERE YOU LIVE REGARDING ACCESS!

UNDERSTAND & UPHOLD CODES OF CONDUCT WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER WALKERS, HORSE RIDERS AND OTHER CYCLISTS!

BE SENSIBLE, AS URBAN ADVENTURES CAN TAKE YOU THROUGH **DODGY** PARTS OF TOWN & RURAL ONES TO PRETTY **REMOTE** PLACES!

## WHAT ARE MICRO-ADVENTURES THEN?

WHATEVER YOU WANT THEM TO BE. MINE HAVE TAKEN ME THROUGH BACKSTREETS, DOWN BIKE PATHS, ALONG CANALS, THROUGH FARMLAND, UPHILL, DOWNHILL, TO A FERRY PORT, MOST OF THE LEGAL & ILLEGAL GRAFFITI WALLS IN TOWN, SOMEONE'S ACTUAL BACK GARDEN (SORRY!) & EVENTUALLY HOME **JUST TAKE THE SMALL LANES AND PATHS YOU ALWAYS RUSH PAST, WHEN YOU RIDE TO COMMUTE OR FOR EXERCISE.**

instagram @mikamakeszines twitter @michael\_gratzke

## Achmelvich Beach

In June 2008 I went on a cycling tour of Northern Scotland. One of the places I stayed was the delightful Achmelvich Beach Youth Hostel.

Sitting in the common room in the evening I heard other people talking about going to look at the sunset. On the west coast of Scotland at that time of year the sun sets after 10pm so I might have been thinking about going to bed but I decided to go down to the beach.

I didn't need to put shoes on because it's just a grassy slope down from the door. I went a short distance further to a smaller beach where I was on my own. The calm water reflected the glorious sunset.

The school I went to had an unheated outdoor pool and I find indoor exercise a bit dull. Since 1992 I'd got used to swimming in lakes and rivers whenever I found myself in the right place in good conditions but by 2008 I was forty years old and I'd never been swimming in the sea. Waves and thoughts of dangerous currents had always put me off.

That evening the surface of the water was almost flat. There was no wind so I knew it wouldn't feel too chilly getting back out of the water. It was clear enough for me to see a sandy slope all the way in. I knew that if I didn't swim in the sea in those conditions then I never would.

I undressed and waded out in to the water, which was not as cold as some of the Lake District tarns I've been in. I swam around in the small bay as the colours in the sky gradually changed.

Later on the same trip I went swimming again at Britain's most northerly beach at Skaw on Unst (a couple of miles beyond the end of NCN 1). The water was cold and far less calm than at Achmelvich so it was a very different experience but that didn't put me off.

It's a 43 mile ride each way to Reighton Sands from my house, so combining that with a swim makes a good day trip.

Jeremy Bradsell



NO HILLS  
NO MASTERS

@NORTHDAUGHTER

I want to tell you about when I spent the whole summer riding and wild camping the South East coast.

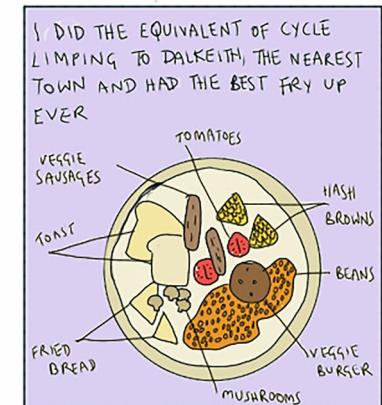
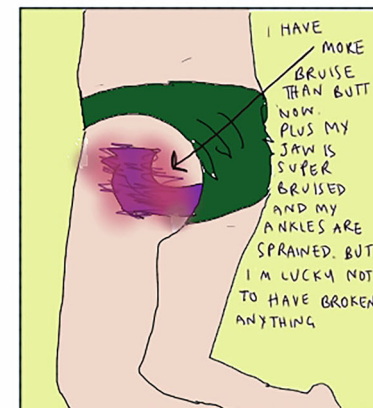
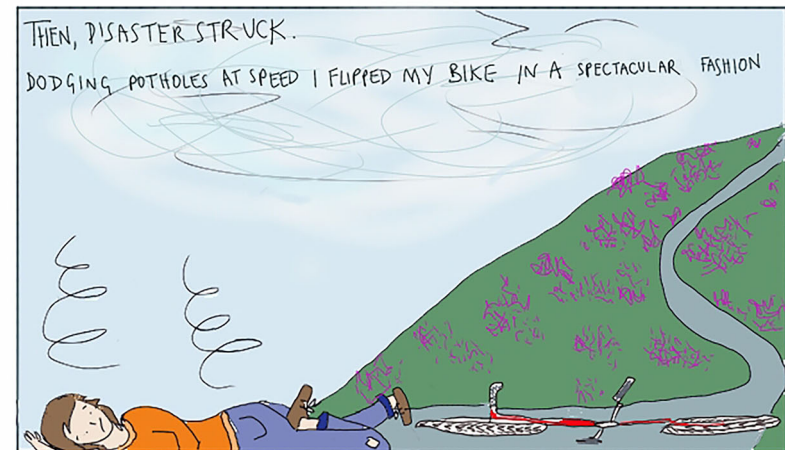
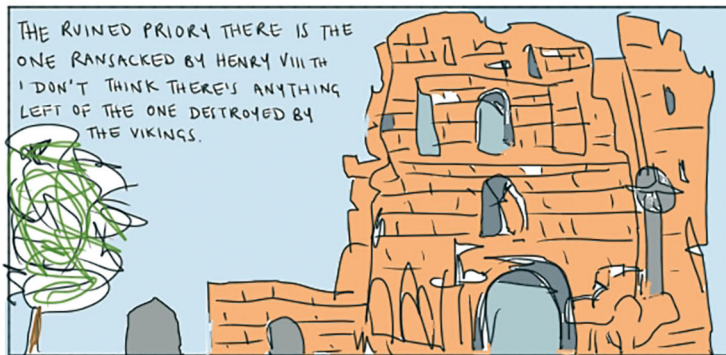
I'd just turned twenty five, quit my life in London and moved back to East Anglia, super broke, emotionally burnt out and unemployed. I'd also cut in an excellent mullet and started a folk band. So of course I romanticised the fuck out of packing my bivvy and thermals, and riding out into the woods.

I would add that while it's been a valuable (and relatively cheap) form of therapy, I advise caution when loading your 'rad and sad folk punk' playlist onto your mp3 player and

cycling alone through a stunningly bleak forest at sunset after a breakup. But as raw and heartbreaking and liberating and lonely as that ride is, the coffee you brew the next day as the sun comes up, with a stiff back and aching legs, has always been, for me, one of the simplest and best things, and enough of a reason to see another morning. Ditto the life saving hip flask of \*insert your favourite booze here\*.

I had a nomadic upbringing, and living on my bike speaks to that persistent sense of freedom and outsider-hood. The constant cycle of passing through towns, stopping to get a free wash in a public toilet, a refill of cherry brandy, some supernoodles and a paperback, then riding on to the woods to string up a hammock and make a brew. Reducing daily life to its bare bones, if just for a while. Probably saved my life, that.

# CYCLE TOURING AUGUST 2014



# Cycling the Eurovelo 15 by Rachel W

Our second cycle tour was arranged by my partner (I planned our first trip). We decided to do as much of EV15 as we could, starting from the source of the Rhine at Andermatt in the Swiss mountains.

We arrived at our accommodation, meeting our airbnb host and went to bed. In the morning I got up to get croissants from the bakery, and discovered what my partner described as "a mild dusting on the car". He then admitted that the lady from airbnb had suggested to him about the possible weather conditions in April, but he disregarded it with a very "we're British attitude" of "a little bit of snow won't stop us"!



DMA

information  
larger choice  
modation, sig  
tractions, al  
ne Cycle Ro  
found on

Stiftung SchweizMo  
www.schweizmobil.ch

We were travelling with friends and after the photo taking and snowball fighting we discussed cycling in the snow. Reluctantly for some it was decided that perhaps it would be wiser to drop down below the snow line before setting off for the first day's cycling. So off we drove reviewing the weather as we went.

After about 45 minutes we reached an industrial site next to the small village of Zizers and here it was decided that the three of us, less the driver would get rigged and start the day's cycling. So we added layers, put on waterproofs zipped up zips we didn't know we had and began to unfasten the bikes off the roof rack.

We now made the grisly discovery of a small bird, 100% dead in the spokes of my wheels! Goodness knows where it flew into the wheel - Exmouth, France, Germany? So after poking it out with a stick we were now ready to set off.

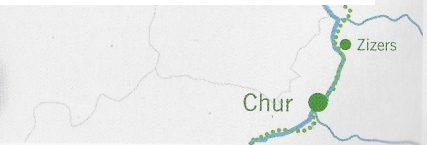
Until Nigel decided he needed a wee! So we huddled round as Nigel tried to hide in his reflectives whilst having a wee in flat farmland next to a large industrial site. We cycled for about an hour, with sharp sleety snow in our faces, getting progressively hypothermic, trying to decide was the water in the gloves acting as insulation or just making our hands even colder? The latter me thinks. I don't know who made the sensible decision, not me, to cut it for the day and seek out a hot chocolate location.

We called the driver and decided upon a small village called Maienfeld, the land of the Heidi novels. Here we found the ideal location - a café with an annex which had a stone floor and heaters dotted around all well placed for drying out gloves and jackets. So after the pleasantries were exchanged we dripped into the café, ordered hot chocolates with extra marshmallows and reflected on the day.

CHU  
92 km

STAG  
Chur  
Flasc  
senbe

wald - Rugell (LI) - Oberriet - Widnau - Au - Wä-  
lenhausen - Thal - Rorschacherberg - Heiden -  
Rorschach - Arbon - Eggach - Romanshorn -  
Sommeri - Altnau - Kreuzlingen - Constance



5 hrs)



Z

... i love the feeling of  
getting back on my bike in  
the morning ...

... taking off with a full load  
and feeling totally at one with  
my bike ...

... the weight is  
familiar,  
the breeze on my  
face ...

... being in the tent and  
having a day off - a lazy  
morning with a cuppa in  
bed ...

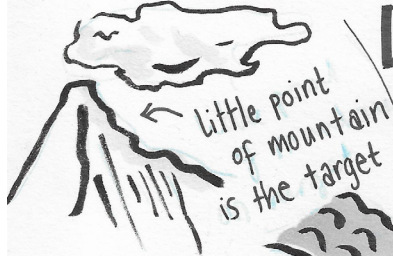
amanda  
brisbane  
australia

For the last 5 years I've been taking part in the Cycle Touring Festival at Clitheroe, sometimes as a speaker and sometimes not. This should have been the sixth year and like three hundred others, I was looking forward to an event around which, many of us arrange our yearly diary. The festival is run by volunteers and all the presenters are unpaid. Sadly, the weekend was cancelled a month ago and the ticket money was refunded, so we were resigned to the fact that the whole thing was off. But when someone suggested to Laura Moss who runs the festival, that maybe we could have a virtual festival weekend, the wheels were put in motion. She contacted people who were willing to present from their homes on Zoom, and a programme was quickly put together.

So this weekend I've been all round Britain, visited Spain and Portugal and most of SE Asia and even had a virtual cake break on a Zoom session with a number of regular festival go-ers (there's a lot of cake eaten at the live event). It was an unusual experience for audiences and for the speakers themselves, but we certainly lived the spirit of the real thing. It was a great success, and I've ordered a T-shirt as a souvenir (usually we get a free water bottle with the festival logo on - a different colour every year).

Today, like other people on the festival Facebook are saying, I've got that same flat feeling you have after coming home from Clitheroe, but it has certainly brightened up my isolation here in Ulverston.

Ann Wilson



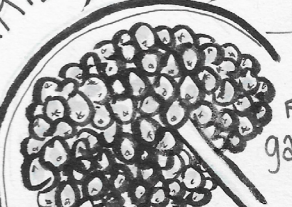
Little point of mountain is the target

DES PERATION CAMP

FAT BIKE



(A 2ND TRIP?)



gathering blueberries

BIG (STINKY) GOATS  
GLACIER!

arriving into Greenland

CROSSING THE FJORD

OFF TRAIL RIDING

NEED PERMIT FOR THE ICE CAP

PLAN B RESILIENCE

willing to put up with hardship for a good bit of riding



Sit and watch the ice

SOME OF THE BEST RIDING WE'VE EVER DONE



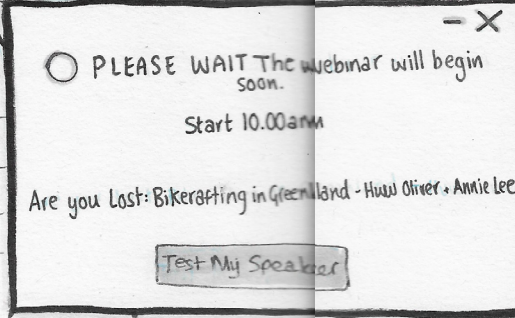
HUW & ANNIE

PARADISE VALLEY

TIDAL EDDIES

SURREAL RIDING ON THE TUNDRA

THE VALLEY!



PLEASE WAIT The webinar will begin soon.  
Start 10.00am

Are you Lost: Bikerafting in Greenland - Huw Oliver + Annie Lee

Test My Speaker

big birds

PARADISE RIVER

ANTICLIMACTIC CLOSING OF A LOOP

CONTRASTS

DESERT ADVENTURE

ARKTISK KOMMANDO

NOWHERE TO BE!

different ways of strapping the bikes on



BEWARE MUSK OX

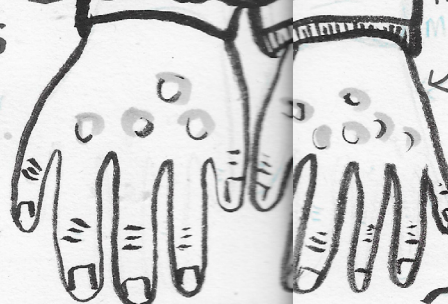
HAROLD

WIND

PACKRAFTS not the most efficient water vessel! If the tide or wind is against you, you will go...  
!pskwrq!

WE WERENT REALLY EXPECTING SO MUCH SAND...

DAY 1 = 13 HOURS!



MOSQUITO BITES

ARID AREA

Digging for water  
FOLLOWING ANIMAL TRAILS

HAVE TO BE PREPARED  
YOUR FIRST OPTION ISN'T GOING TO WORK

QUICKS AND!

## Lancashire

Laura Moss

I've cycled lots of places  
Around Europe, Oz, Japan.  
Biked across America  
(But much preferred Iran).

My favourite place for riding  
(And here we set the tone  
For the theme of this collection)  
Is somewhere close to home.

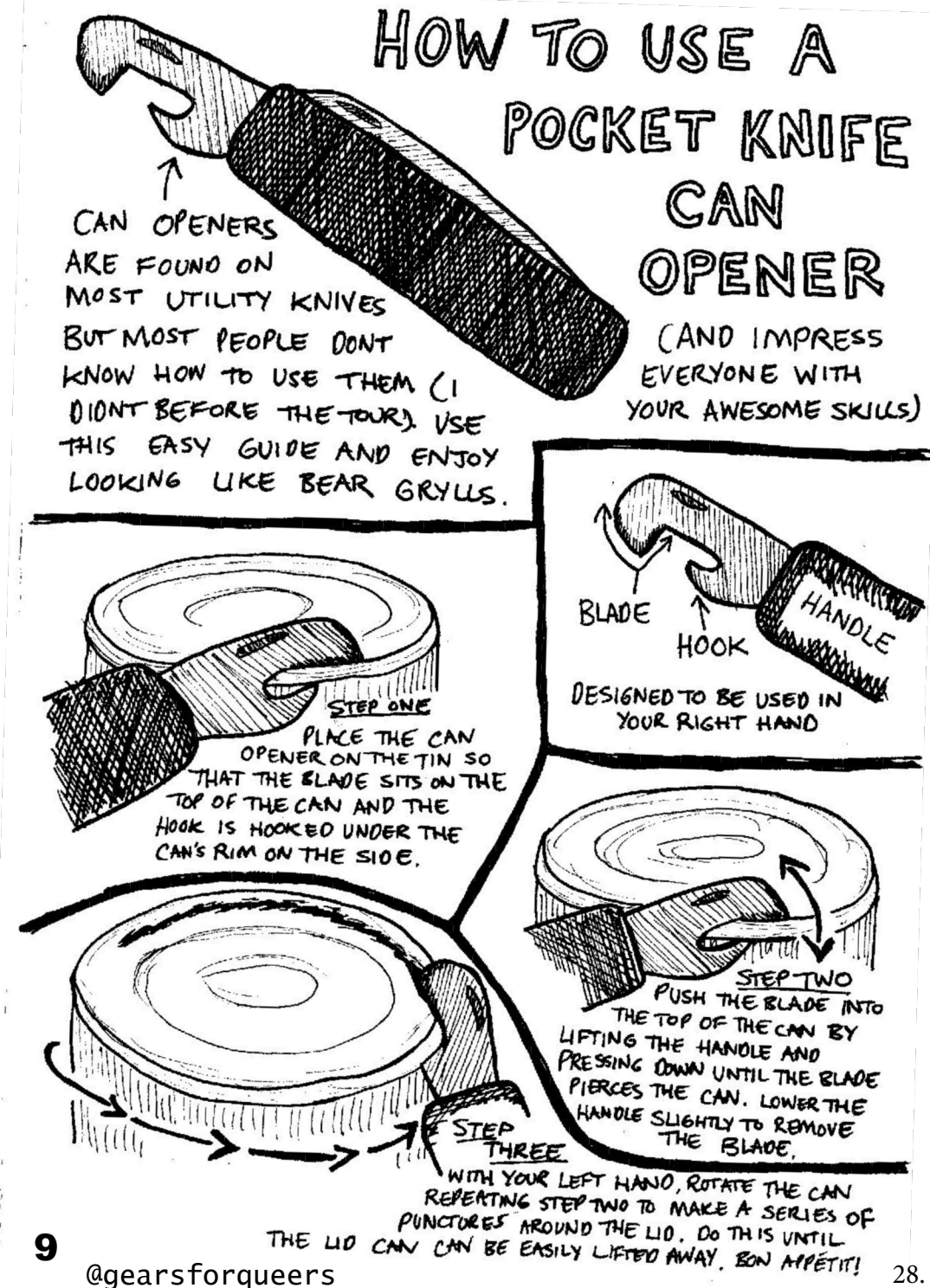
As folks zoom past up to the Lakes  
They often pass us by  
They leave the roads for me and you  
Beneath the open sky.

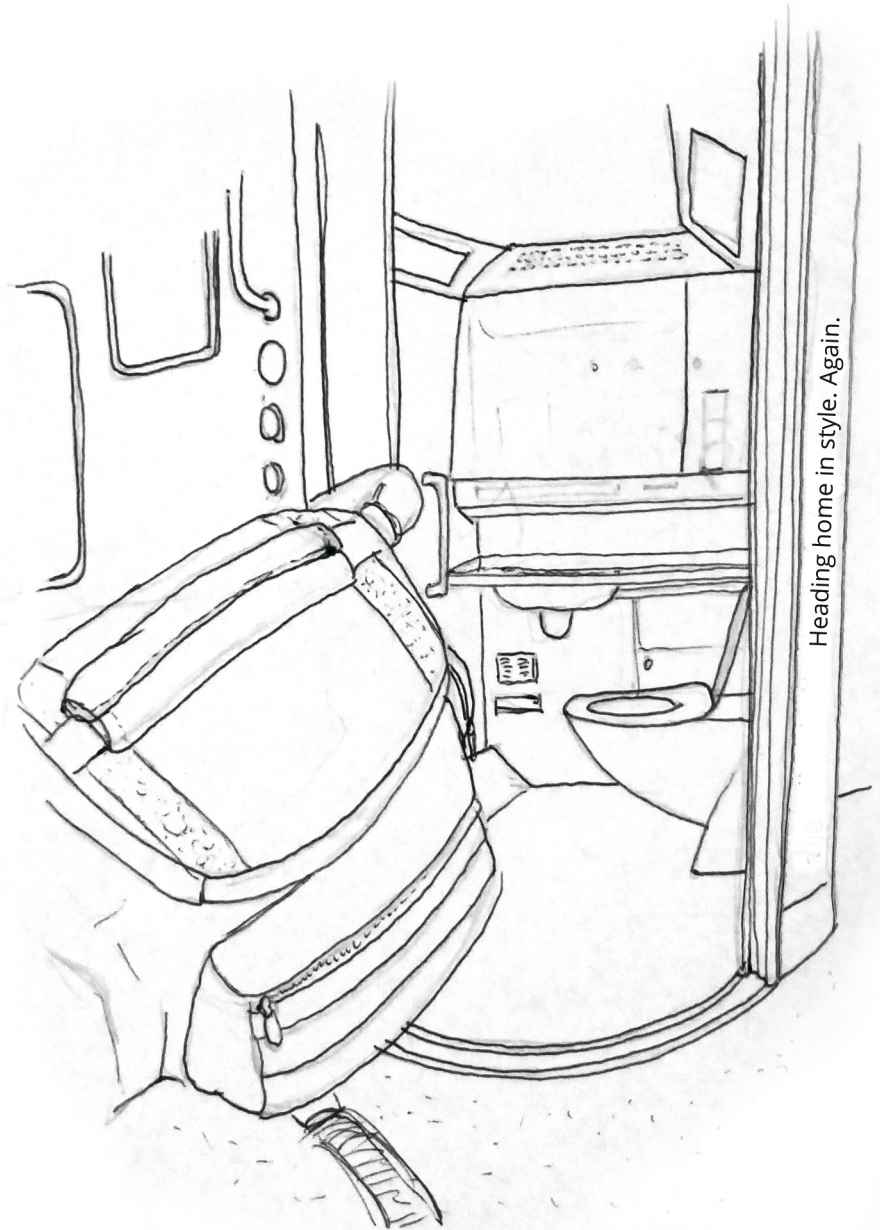
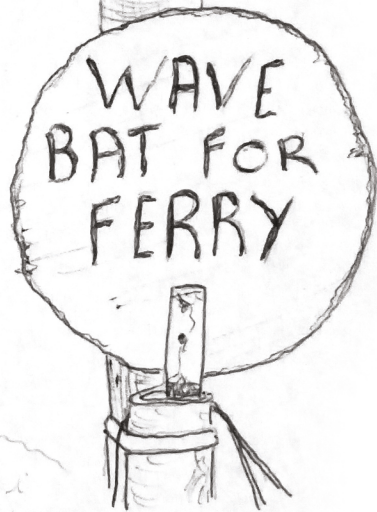
The fields are green here for a reason  
And that's the famous rain  
But wear a coat – we don't feel sorry  
For those who just complain.

From coast up to the moors  
Such history in these hills  
The looming relics in the mist  
Of dark satanic mills.

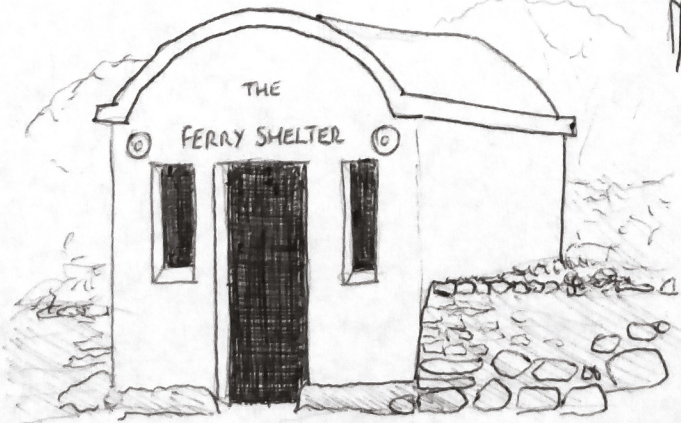
The food is so exotic  
They eat something called 'hot pot'  
Mushy peas, pies, black pudding  
With gravy on the lot.

When life gets back to normal  
Come see just what I mean  
It's where you'll find the festival  
For it's a cyclist's dream.





Heading home in style. Again.



water crossings scaled to the size of a bike and a couple of panniers



## Further Resources

If you've enjoyed this zine, you might want to find out more about cycle touring, or about zines! There's so much great stuff out there, and this is not a comprehensive list by any means, but if you want more and don't know where to find it, these are some places to start!

For more about the cycle touring festival, head to [www.cyclingtouringfestival.co.uk](http://www.cyclingtouringfestival.co.uk), or find the cycle touring festival on fb, twitter, or Instagram.

For more about the Edinburgh Zine Library, which we help run, you can find us on Instagram, twitter, or online at [www.edinburghzinelibrary.com](http://www.edinburghzinelibrary.com).

Zine libraries are a great place to start finding out more about zines, and you can see if there's a zine library near you (in the UK and Ireland) through the UK and Ireland Zine Librarians group - <https://uizl.wordpress.com/> - or internationally at <https://zinelibraries.info/about/>

If you want to find out more about cycle touring/bikepacking, there's plenty of places to start. The WTF bike explorers collective website has a great selection of resources:

<https://wtfbikexplorers.com/resources>

There are lots of zines about cycling, and we've got a review of cycling zines on our youtube channel ([gearsforqueers](#)). You can also head there to watch our workshop video if you want to have a go making your own zine.

We are [@gearsforqueers](#) on twitter and ig, and our book *Gears for Queers*, born from a series of cycle touring recipe zines, is out now.



This zine is free, and please distribute it wildly. However, please respect the creative commons license it's under - which is

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This zine was compiled of contributions collected digitally over April/May/June 2020. It was edited by Lillith Cooper and Abigail Melton of [@gearsforqueers](#) and first distributed on the 28/06/2020.