



5.000 km in 50 days with a recumbent bike

Introduction



My name is Erik Bleeker and I am 60 years old, lost weight 14 kg, length 1,85mtr.

Ever since feeling much healthier and stronger....

When I read on the internet that the North Sea Cycle Route was opened in 2001, my cycle fire was lightened.

It is the world's longest signed international cycle route encircles the North Sea, passing through no fewer than 7 countries: the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Scotland and England. From Harwich and Hook van Holland in the south to Bergen and the Shetland Islands in the north.

To make this extreme long cycling route (6000 km), with heavy climes, up to 20% in Norway (also downhill.....) and many times dangerous, because there where no separate cycle paths along auto routes, it is the ultimate cycling adventure challenge for me.

Note

Whishing that this contribution is inspiring you to do the trip and dare to cycle on a recumbent because it is so comfortable, easy and much faster.....when you really try in the beginning.

This way of cycling is, and certainly on a Challenge Fujin, very advanced.

Shortest resume:

Thanks to Challengebikes.com, the voyage has been without any delay and very fast enabling me to have enough time site seeing and enjoying impressive nature, not any damage, no flat tires or accidents on a super recumbent bike, fantastic weather (*only one whole night rain and half a day, I am told that this is unique*), fascinating, inspiring, the bike is an eye catcher, people are admired....never seen before....follow your intuition when you lost the road....

Motivation to travel on a Recumbent bike And Motivation why chosen a Challenge Fujin

It was in 1999 that another great bike travel was made in France: through the Alps on a Giant Expedition. An experience with much pain in the ash, neck and wrists and low speed and comfort. A year later it was in the dunes of the Northsea Coast that the trigger for a recumbent was pulled: it looked so relaxed and fast.

I visited and hired that year many types of recumbents: Nazca, M5 and Challenge. When I met, during a trip to Maastricht, a physiotherapist who was so enthusiast when he saw me and explained why the Hurricane was the best and also why a recumbent had so many advantages I was convinced. It took me three months that I could cycle as easy as on my expedition bike without any pain or fear for the traffic. Summarizing his explanation:

- aerodynamics: less air resistance
 - ergonomics: best usage to of your back, no pain in the ash, neck and wrists!
 - physiologic: most efficient way to transform your energy into cycling movement
- No gold back any more!

Subscription: I can fully subscribe these three points and in addition don't be afraid for the traffic: people respect and admire you more!!!!!!!!!!!!!! In addition I claim that it much more easier and faster to pack and unpack. Certainly in combination with super light tent of Hilleberg!!!!

A secondhand [Challenge](#) Hurricane-sport was bought. A year later the [Challenge](#) Hurricane Tour. It was during the exhibition in October 2003 that [Challenge](#) Fujin was introduced: I felled in love for the bike and ordered the [FUJIN](#) immediately especially for the [NSCR-voyage](#).

[Challenge FUJIN](#) fully equipped and ready for the [NSCR-voyage](#):



Danish Coast

Now I am hooked to this way of cycling it is a pretty decease...on the Challenge Fujin:

See:  **FUJIN**
WWW.CHALLENGBIKES.COM



On the Danish Coast taken by Gerard.

This report only highlights the most interesting site seeing aspects of the travel and especially by showing pictures: they say much more than long stories of daily reports.

When you can "click" (hand is showing when you move your mouse) you are guided to specific websites....

For questions you can mail me: challengefujin@chello.nl or nscrrecumbent@chello.nl

Map:



Remark: the nice thing is that you always can make a boat trip and do every year a part of it.
(click on the map)

Milestones

<u>Denmark</u>	: June the 5 th Rømø
<u>Sweden</u>	: June the 12 th Frederikshaven to Göteborg
<u>Norway</u>	: June the 15 th : Strömstad to Sandefjord.
<u>Shetland</u>	: June the 28 th Bergen to Lerwick
<u>Orkneys</u>	: June the 29 th Lerwick to Kirk wall
<u>Scotland</u>	: June the 30 th Stromness to Thurso
<u>England</u>	: July the 7 th at Berwick upon Tweed
<u>Holland</u>	: July the 17 th Harwich to Hook van Holland, took 10 days rest with my girl-friend at Haarlem
<u>Home</u>	: July 29 th
Total distance	: 5.000 km

Suggestion:

Look also for interesting information also on the websites:

<http://www.rondjenoordzee.nl/>

and

http://home.hccnet.nl/dirk.sparreboom/2004_Noordzeefietsroute/noordzeefietsroute.html

(both only in Dutch) Dirk has added a lot of tips, which has of great value

Thank you Dirk!!!!!!!

Equipment:

Bike:  **FUJIN**, weight 15 kg

Tires: Front: [Schwalbe Big Apple](#) 20"

Rear: [Continental City Contact](#) 26"

Luggage weight: 25 kg, for free camping on beaches.....for a solo trip!!!!!!

Crank set



excellent for climbing

Tent



[NALLO 4GT](#)

Cooking equipment:



Everything about recumbents:

[USA-European site:](#)



and

[Dutch Recumbent Site:](#)



Experience the [North Sea Cycle Route](#):

Leaving home early in the Sunday
Morning at 7 O'clock



Denmark



To Sweden Göteborg

The North Sea cycle route in Denmark follows National Cycle Route No. 1 from the German border in the south to the Skagen in the north, a total of 550 km. From the Skagen to Frederikshavn, the route follows National Cycle Route No. 5. The route commences through low-lying marshlands, where fields are surrounded by dykes for protection against the sea, and where the sky is high above. The route passes idyllic villages with well-preserved farms and houses and runs close to the Wadden Sea, allowing the cyclist to experience the special natural environment offered by the area's flora and fauna.

After passing through Esbjerg, one of Denmark's youngest large towns, the route continues along the coast until a new landscape in the form of heath and dune plantations opens up. The route passes through Værnenge, with a view to the famous bird reserve Tipperne, and then winds through a 40 km isthmus with particularly beautiful 20 m high dunes.

Germany to Denmark:



June 5th arrival in Westerland on Sylt.

Taking the boat from



Sylt to Rømø
(1st isle of
Denmark)



Over the dike from Rømø to the mainland of Denmark
June 5th

First morning awakening on a farmers field
with a view on a beautiful white church, with strong wind aside and Danish clouds
and sun.
June 6th





First sign of the NSCR going to Esbjerg

And the second.....



With a view of the pilot
On the road ahead:



The centre of Esbjerg



Outside the city
the sea watchers:



The second morning with
the North Sea, on a little
June 7th



at the horizon
peace of dry land

and sunset:



The Danish sandy beach



On the ferry at Thyborøn



Picture taken by Gerard from Goor 70 years old, I called him Jaap...because he remembered me.....to someone....

We cycled together to the camping



And took a breakfast together....and cycled further.....



With changing conditions:



Where we arrived at Skagen and said goodbye



After we visited Skagerrak

The same day I took the fast ferry, I just missed the slow one (lucky me: I arrived earlier), from Frederikshavn to Göteborg:

This is the boat in opposite direction leaving Göteborg



SWEDEN

the city
proximity to
for a holiday.
Kungälv,
the inland with
Further north it
as well as
most exciting



Göteborg – Sweden's friendliest city! In Göteborg you feel the beat of the city
In Göteborg nothing is more than a stone's throw away. Its the sea and salt water bathing makes Göteborg the ideal place
After Göteborg the route continues through the small town well known for its fortress. From here the route goes through wilderness, forests land lakes..
passes fishing villages like Fiskebäckskil and Fjällbacka charming towns like Lysekil and Strömstad –some of the tourists resorts in the whole of Sweden.

After two hours arriving in the capital Sweden....
I didn't take the time to visit it extensively.....



Crossing the main bridge:

Statue of King Karl Gustav, leaving the city with wind in the back



I went to Kungälv where I took a camping annex youth hostel:



Underway a lunch at McDonalds in Stenungsund. Of course a healthy salad:



Crossing the bridge at Stenungsund

Bus station gives shelter again a heavy rain shower, the only one I have had



Going to Lysekil.....



The camping.....close to a supermarket.....with a dining room.....



the harbor:



The next night free camp.....
In the neighborhood of Römne,
close to Strömstad



Waiting for the boat in Strömstad to go
to Sandefjord



Site seeing Strömstad:



Leaving Strömstad with splendid weather,
temperature 27°C !!!!!!!!!



Real summertime.....

The ferry to Sandefjord in Norway on the sundeck



How beautiful the trip was.....



.....goodbye Sweden

Norway



After Larvik the scenery changes noticeably, becoming more rugged and thickly wooded. Apart from a fairly flat section from Egersund to Haugesund, the rest of the route is quite hilly, though never rising more than three hundred meters above sea level.

On a number of coastal sections the track shares with walkers in order to get as close as possible to the sea. Between Grimstad and Stavanger you will find several wild and beautiful sections of abandoned road whilst there are two lovely sections of abandoned railway to enjoy, near Egersund and Bergen.

Although many main roads in Norway do have separated cycle tracks and underpasses for cyclists, the route naturally tries, to keep away from traffic as far as possible. Take enough safety measurements to protect yourself (wear luminous clothes and / or cover your bags with luminous covers), The most challenging section is between the exposed Lista peninsular and Egersund, where the dramatic scenery of narrow fjords and wild mountains is quite stupendous.

Arriving in Sandefjord in summer conditions



on terrace preparing for the next phase.....

Spending the first night in Norway on camping Stetere with view on the beach.....



After a long and heavy climbing travel I took a nice colored ferry at Helgeroa



to Langesund



From Kragerø



to the island
Jumfruland



With a very fast taxi boat
(26 knots/hour)



Where cows look astonished



and nice holiday
houses



This ferry took me from Jumfruland to Stabbestad



Waiting for a taxi boat at



Oysang



to Risør



That day I was longing for a place at lake and found the ultimate spot in Norway where I spend the night: at lake, part of private owned property land of 1.000ha. I used their rowing boat.....





Next day Tvedestrand:



Evening in



Lillesand

Approaching Kristiansand



Meeting wonderful people. By whom I was invited to participate a concert “a cappella”
 Held on the top of former military mountain outside Kristiansand (Odderøya) with
 magnificent view on the North Sea and the city.....it was a gift.....



One of the most impressive climbing's



The bridge.....if you dare to cross it
 near Obrestad



Proud to have achieved it.....

On the camping MOSS in Stavanger where the wife of the
 owner gave a concert



The city was visited



And a trip was made



into the Lysefjorden was made: magnificent

and view people live rather isolated....



And where Para gliders where jumping from the mountains.....risking their lives....



We took the bus back to Stavanger: underway we made a stop at the eagle's nest-restaurant:



Where houses as



grass is growing on isolation

and snow

that melt and transformed into electricity.....



At Mekjarvik the ferry brings me to island Kvitsøy





From Kvitsøy

to

Skudeneshavn



And then entering Haugesund over the very dangerous bridge



Arriving on the camping



Next day arrived at Fårres (very little camping hardly to be seen)

Where the camping owner took me, and a German father & son, for boat trip in the evening, there is light till midnight on the sea, into the fjord and on the Northsea



One of many salmon breeders:



Next day approaching Leirvik : still four bridges



to cross over



Some view of the impressive fjordswith a glitzier.....



Staying a couple of days in Bergen.....

The famous old wooden city “Bryggen where it all started



The nice harbor sun and dark clouds are typical, caused by the mountains.....where the clouds have to climb, cool down and let their water fall.....



The bibliotheca where you can free internet and send your photos to your family and friends



Where the famous composer Edvard Grieg was born....

the center of Bergen



From one of five mountains



The elevator to the top The famous trolls.....



The very old city:



The fabulous fish market



Where people marry...



The old fashioned

A day trip to the fjord by train,



back by bus



boat in to the fjord:



Back home in Bergen
Where the nights were spent:



and shopping was done



Fish market to come back



Preparing to sail to Shetland Orkneys islands
The main office of Smyril Line



waiting for the boat.....picture taken by another Dutch
cycling couple



Leaving Bergen
smiling with a crying hart



the night was spend with Bert
and his wife Ineke from
Amsterdam



Scotland



The route through Scotland starts in the Shetlands, with their dramatic landscape of cliffs and rocky inlets.

Orkney with its quiet and very scenic route taking in the low-lying land with many standing stones and burial chambers. A short ferry trip across the turbulent Pentland Firth, where the Atlantic Ocean and North Sea meet, brings you to the mainland. The route leads past the seacliffs of Caithness on into Sutherland, famous for its peat bogland and its rich cultural and historic heritage where the Gaelic language is still in use. The stretch of the route before Lairg on the edge of Loch Shin is one of the most remote in Scotland. From the Heart of the Highlands the route follows the Dornoch Firth through wooded glens,

by rivers and waterfalls to Tain.

From Tain the summer route takes the historic ferry crossing from Nigg to Cromarty, part of the ancient highway to the North of Scotland. The winter route is equally attractive, travelling around the Cromarty Firth and through Dingwall. At Munlochy the route merges and continues across the Moray Firth, home to wild dolphins and in to Inverness. Then on to the open vistas, rural villages and historic castles of Aberdeenshire before reaching the city of Aberdeen, the oil capital of the North.

From Aberdeen the route heads past the ruins of Dunnottar Castle at Stonehaven towards Montrose and then along the coast to Arbroath and Dundee, home of the Dandy and Beano comics. Crossing the Firth of Tay by bridge, the route enters the Kingdom of Fife where you follow the Kingdom Route through Tentsmuir Forest and on to the historic City of St Andrews - home of golf.

After Falkland with its early sixteenth century Palace the route proceeds to Kinross, Loch Leven and Dunfermline. From North Queensferry the Forth Road Bridge brings you across to Lothian and Scotland's capital, Edinburgh. Built on a series of volcanoes, Edinburgh is host to the largest arts festival in the world - the Edinburgh Festival in August. A disused railway path leads the way out of the medieval town of Dalkeith over the Moorfoot Hills, then through the Scottish Borders following the Tweed Valley along quiet lanes to Coldstream and Berwick-upon-Tweed.

Shetland

Arrived at Lerwick at midnight....



Next day we took tea and cake



Touring on the Shetland Island where Dutch fishermen have let their traces behind.....



The youth hostel where the night was spend. It reserved for me by Smyril line:!



quality of an hotel

Near.....



With Shetland pony's



Viking ship at Lerwick



Splendid coastline



The boat to the Orkney's



The Orkney's:



Where nature is impressive

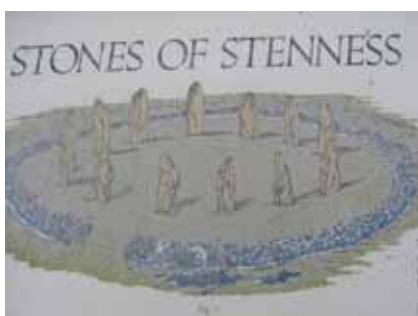


And people live.....



The meaning of the standing

stones.....



At Stromness meeting with Steef.... Waiting for the boat to
Passed Steef early in the morning with “double” speed saying “good morning”.....



Arrived at Thurso and a last glimpse to the silent Orkney's, bird's island



After a long climb Steef arrives on the top and we go together to Betty Hill where we stay in the hotel.....



View from the hotel at breakfast



Steef preparing studying the info I gave him



We said "goodbye"

After a long through a wide green intensive nature



we meet again at the Crask-INN, famous for their tea and other delicious home made bakery



This castle is a youth hostel: a must experience which I not recommend. Accidentally Steef also arrived.....

At Carbisdale

And I am thinking of being a landlord.....



And where old times live in a new way

Breakfast



Not so far from Inverness.....

Aberdeen in the evening, stayed in a youth Hostel. A shock after so long time being in direct contact with nature



The sky is the limit.....



Next day going back to the north or going home?????
South!!!!



Last view on Aberdeen, never to come back



Going to Dundee



But first Stonehaven



Going to Abroath to spend the night, trees salute you



On a dune, meeting people....



The cycle path in the middle at Dundee



The bay at Dundee



Just for the picture.....sky, water, boats & bike.....



St Andrews, the centre of golf



Arrived on the camping in Musselburgh. One day

off to visit Edinburgh, going by bus



Visited the National Scottish Museum and



taken a break on the grass....

The capital is divided in two parts by the railway



Taking an introduction tour.....



The castle and its entrance



The mill where the Scottish clothes are made.



Eyemouth, the most beautiful spot on the cliff all alone, or not????



Sunset....in the north!



The harbor of Eyemouth next morning



SUNRISE IN THE EAST.....view on the North Sea, a strange awareness while she is normally in the west.....at 5 O'clock am



Scottish border



Entering England



market English style



Camping the first night on a dune.....with view on the lighthouse – island near Amble



Next morning.....



A curious visitor on the bike



A remarkable bridge..... at Middles bough



The kind operator



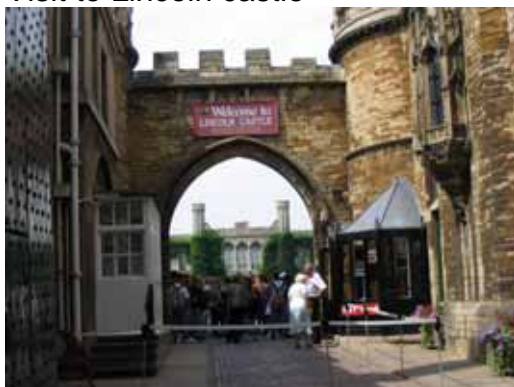
Taking a lunch brake after shopping



Direction to.....



Visit to Lincoln castle cathedral



Camping Woodhall Spa took a swim



and went for a diner with the neighbors Phil and his daughter Alice from Cambridge



Just after Hull a chat with Loes and her friend from Herkingen....



And went to Cambridge a worthwhile visit....here



some impressions.....



The camping near Cambridge



On the boat from Harwich to
Hook van Holland



with high speed
at sunset

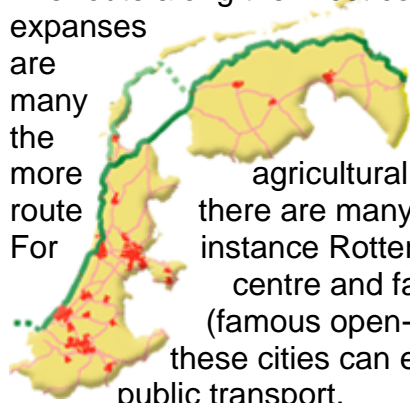


enjoying diner
with a beard....



NETHERLANDS

The route along the West coast consists typically of traffic-free cycle tracks through expanses of sand dunes – many of them protected areas. These are interrupted by pleasant seaside villages and offer many opportunities for varying the cycle trip with a visit to the lovely sandy beaches or a trip further inland to the agricultural areas (grazing-land, polders, bulb fields). Close to the route there are many interesting cities, which are more than worth a side-trip. For instance Rotterdam, Den Haag and Amsterdam. But also Delft (nice old centre and famous blue pottery), Leiden, Haarlem and Alkmaar (famous open-air cheese-market every Friday) are very interesting. All these cities can easily be reached from the route by bike, but also by public transport.



The northern part of the North Sea Cycle Route in the Netherlands displays quite a different landscape. It crosses a sparsely populated part of the country with empty polders, sheep, enormous farms and charming little villages. The Wadden Sea is not separated from the land by beaches and dunes – as is the North Sea – but by dikes. Dunes are still to be found, however, on the islands that are strung out along the coast: Texel, Vlieland, Terschelling, Ameland and Schiermonnikoog. These islands can be reached by ferries directly from the route, which is mainly on roads with very light traffic, often beside the dikes. The Wadden Area between the islands and the dikes is a natural environment of internationally recognised importance.

Between the West coast and the North coast there is a choice of routes. The shortest one leads through interesting farming country, then across the former island of Wieringen and finally over the Afsluitdijk, the 30 km long dike that divides the IJsselmeer (the former Zuiderzee) from the Wadden Sea. The longer, summer only, route follows the coast north to Den Helder and then crosses the islands of Texel and Vlieland, joining the all-year route at Harlingen

Make a cycling tour
feeding a black goose and her
children

At midnight my partner welcomes me
takes me to Haarlem



Crossing the “Afsluitdijk”



Along the “waddenzee”



Passing the night on....



Underway to Nieuweschans....



Passing the night: free camping on the other side of the dike.....



taking breakfast in Delfzijl....



On the train from Nieuweschans to Zwolle..... finally safe home....in Epe soak wet because of the only thunderstorm I have had.....

