

North Coast 500 mile Cycle ride in support of FOJSS UK

I had pleasure of riding beautiful North coast of Scotland with beautiful people and with rest of group permission agreed to raise money as well for JSS. I am happy to report we manage to raise £1000+ beyond our target of £700.

I am grateful to all who helped in this arduous task especially Sunil Grover who is an inspiration behind this as well as my mentor during this trip. Not to miss his wife Seema and rest of group who have been extremely supportive.

Following is summary of events.



From May 4th to 11th 2018 a group of 7 (5 cyclists and 2 support group) have taken what I consider for myself, as one of the most exhausting, punishing, and demanding challenges in the UK by cycling the North Coast 500 trail and as well raise money for JSS.



This gruelling task was planned to minutest detail and to safely complete the full 500 miles of the route over 7 days while tackling a number of the toughest roads in the UK, including the stunning, dramatic but



*notorious Bealach na Bà towards Applecross which rises 2,053 feet in just 5.6 miles with gradients of 20% in places. The **total ascent is equivalent of cycling to Camp 3 on Mount Everest, twice** and add on top of that wind blowing on your face. Yet I could manage most of the task as did rest of the group only because **the thought***

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of excellent work which JSS has been doing, kept me going as well as for THE spectacular scenery that the route has offered, believe me! See pics for proof.

We arrived into Inverness, night before the task and made a plan for the next day – which included start times, brakes, lunch stops and plan B if things go wrong - which has become routine for next 7 days.



*Day 1 included cycling inland towards west coast through rising wooded hills passing Rogie Falls just before coffee break. This ride included Britain's steepest mountain pass, notorious Bealach na Bà. This steep and narrow ascent culminates in a series of hairpin bends but **once you conquered it, you end up with***

astonishing views of the Scottish highland mountains. Day ended with self-cooking packed food as it's the only available place to eat in this remote land.

*Day 2 was through the Applecross peninsula which showed for me best scenery I have seen in my lifetime. My belief that I managed day on, kept me going... but this day had like continuous peaks and troughs **reminding me of struggle which one goes through battling with poverty***



and on top of it disease striking through your livelihood, making impossible to live through.



*Following days included a deep sense of your purpose for life, looking through nature and **how much humans can endure through life if there is a will to do.** We rode across Gairloch, Lochinver, Unapool, Thurso and the famous post at John O'Groats and to furthest north*

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point of the British mainland at Dunnet Head. Each day gave us different challenge as was the landscape scenery.

The day of ride to Wick was particularly stay in my mind as the winds were so strong that I lost all the will I had to ride. Despite which Sunil and rest of team commended me for attempting it and withdrawing as it was safest option at that time for me so that to carry on with rest of task.



This sheer task has given me confidence that having a good team and right support anything is possible. As have been team at JSS carrying on with excellent work despite all the hardship, we all can learn from this, to support one another, and being together we can achieve impossible things in life.

This was a self-revelation trip for me and has sparked much more desire to do similar things in future. The memories and connections I made have been life-changing.

My heartfelt thanks to – Oscar and Lyta Boomers', Alistair and Malcolm Moyes', Sunil and Seema Grovers'.

Dr Shravan Tirunagari