



Wednesday 28 December 05

British Bobbies Challenge :: Spo



News

News Bulletins

28th October 2004

They have done it!

"The British Bobbies cycled into Port Chester, NY on Sunday, having finally completed their gruelling ride across the USA. They were greeted by a crowd of well wishers, local dignitaries, a marching band, majorettes, 15 fire engines with sirens blazing, representatives from their sponsors and of course their families. It was an emotionally charged event and all involved were immensely grateful to the people of Port Chester for making the welcome so memorable. Never had the attendees met such warm hospitality. The riders are now enjoying some well deserved time off in New York City with their families, before going back on the beat and will be updating the website on their return."

20th October - From Atlantic City , New Jersey

I last updated from Charlottesville Virginia on Tuesday 12th October.

Charlottesville is a University town and quite up market. The town centre has coffee shops and interesting shops in a attractive and well maintained precinct area. We visit some friends who live locally. Thanks to Pam Tim and Hannah for your hospitality. Also to the children of the street who had the chance to wear a British Bobbies Hat and be photographed. The photos will appear in due course, when we can get them over the internet.

We stayed at a campsite in the next town beside a railway line. Goods trains only seem to run at night and when they reach a road crossing they blow their horn for 30 seconds to wake the neighbourhood up.

Wednesday 13th October - Charlottesville to Washington DC

The plan to day was to take the scenic skyway across the top of the ridge.

But it rained heavily overnight and the cloud was low. The skyway was very badly fog bound. Instead we went over the ridge to the valley beyond and followed the valley crossing the ridge again to the plains leading to Washington DC . It was a long day and Washington Traffic was too busy to ride through so we had to stop at the ring road. The camp site north of Washington was very busy and expensive by RV site standards.

Thursday 14th October Washington DC.

Visit the Capitol today by bus and Metro. Visit the many monuments in the city.

Friday 15th October Washington DC.

To complete the cycle ride today cycled from the site along a less busy route into the city and around the Capitol's major landmarks and back to the site.

Saturday 16th October - Washington DC to Ocean City , Maryland.

Exciting day today. We will see the sea again. We sea faring folk need to return to the sea or we dry up. It has been a long time of mountains plains and deserts. The road from Washington to Annalapolis is littered with debris at the side of the road. Simon has a back tyre puncture, easily fixed with the spare inner tube carried at all times. However the puncture in the front tyre 150 yards later means the damaged inner tube has to be fixed before it can be used again. It is a roadside repair but costs time and fingers. We cross the Chesapeake Bay at a narrow point over a bridge. The bay is as wide as the Solent brown and choppy. Really like the Solent actually. We then ride down through Maryland to Ocean City . Paul misses the van waiting for him and the van doesn't see him pass. After a grid search he rings in 25 miles further up the road and almost as far as Ocean City itself. In the mean time a thunderstorm has blown up and when we get to Barney he is sheltering under a narrow roof, cold miserable and wondering where we are.

The site we intend to stay at is deserted so we explore. Outside of Ocean City we find a very busy site where a pre Halloween party is being held.

Halloween is a family time in the US . There is a competition for the best dressed graveyard. The exhibits are fantastic with smoke machines and lasers. The winner spent 250 dollars to win a 25 dollar prize.

Sunday 17th October.

A day of rest, Mostly today we are doing laundry, cleaning the van and bike maintenance.

Monday 18th October - Ocean City to Atlantic City

The road out of Ocean City along the coast is built up with food outlets, bars, funfairs, and all manner of sea side resort entertainment. It continues without a break for 10 miles out of Maryland and into Delaware .

The coast road is littered with broken sea shells which are a danger to delicate bike tyres. The seagulls catch sea creatures in their shells and drop them onto the road to break them and get the creatures out. the smarter ones wait there for a vehicles to run them over and then swoop down to get the meal. We cross on a ferry from Lewes to Cape May in New Jersey and ride up the coastal ocean drive. The road crosses the main inlets by toll bridges. We reach Atlantic City while it is bathed in sunlight but there are thunder storms forecast. They roll in at night and there is a tremendous down pour.

Tuesday 19th October - Atlantic City.

This place is a Casino Town like Vegas. Atlantic City has no pretence at show business. The casinos make money and the town seems poor. It is rather depressing to observe in the rain.

This is my last update until I get back from New York .

Wednesday 20th October - Atlantic City to Tom's River New Jersey.

Thursday 21st October - Tom's River to Jersey City .

Friday 22nd October

Planning meeting for the Arrival Event in Port Chester . Ride from New York to a position to make the final ride into Port Chester .

Saturday 23rd October

Families arrive in New York .

Looking forward to being reunited again.

Sunday 24th October

Arrival in Port Chester High School planned for 11 AM.

Thanks to all in the UK and the USA who have encouraged us, assisted us, donated to the Rainbow Centre and in any way supported our efforts.

We cannot express our gratitude enough.

Photos will appear so please keep visiting this site.

12th October. Updating from Charlottesville Virginia.**Sat 9th October**

Marion. to Christianberg.

Christianberg is a medium sized looking town on the map. It seems like a good place to spend a Rest day tomorrow, which is Sunday.

We ride in pairs. Nick and Barney first. 25 miles along the agreed route which again on the map looks like a substantial road. The first clue that things were not as easy as expected was the route we wanted was only able to be reached by using roads where bicycles are not permitted. Nick and Barney got around this. Paul and Simon ride the second leg leaving the van for Nick and Barney to pick up. The road, the 610, starts well enough but after seven miles it becomes an unmade road. Then it winds up a mountain side. The unmade part of the road continued for 6 - 7 miles through wooded hillsides. Then steeply down hill back towards civilisation. Braking all the way down to stay in control, Paul's front tyre exploded through overheating. The bang went off like a pistol shot making the few local residents come out wanting to know who was shooting? The van arrived down the track a few minutes later and we repaired the wheel and were back on the road.

Arriving at Christianberg the town is deserted. We find some people hanging around cars in a car park and ask where to go on a Saturday night here. No where we are told. There is nothing to do here.

Sunday 10th October

Rest Day

As predicted. There was nothing to do in Christianberg either on a Saturday or a Sunday.

We cleaned the Van, the Bikes and made our diaries. Looking for adventure Nick and Barney found the volunteer Ambulance corps and had a ride around with them. The Ambulance service is staffed by volunteers who pay their own training fees and operate a volunteer call out service.

Monday 11th October

Christianberg to Buena Vista

We want to ride the Blue Ridge Parkway. A road which follows the ridge of the Blue Ridge range for 400 miles. It was started in 1936 and finished in 1987. It is a broad scenic highway with frequent breathtaking overlooks of the countryside, wooded mountaintops which are now yellow, red, gold and green. I can firmly recommend anyone to visit this route and enjoy the views. I also recommend you take a car. The road goes up to the peaks and descends to the valleys. The hills can go on for miles but in compensation, so can the down hills.

Tuesday 12th October

Buena Vista to Charlottesville.

To be updated later.

Updating from Berea Kentucky. 6th October

I last updated to 24th September when we were in Dodge City, Kansas.

The plains are not flat. They are rolling and when the wind is not behind you they can be exhausting. We left Dodge this morning bound for Wichita. Today was a long day of cycling through cattle range and cattle feed crops. Simon had a puncture where a glass shard went through the tyre leaving a half inch gash which meant a new tyre. The van was within sight only half a mile away but the crew were too busy to notice until a highway patrolman came up and asked. Are you with him? Pointing to the bloke with the upside down bike in the distance. Back on the road we arrive in Wichita in the early evening.

Saturday 25th September.

Rest day.

Attend the Wichita air show. Evening in Wichita old town which is a lively attractive area.

Sunday 26th September.

Take another day off.

Every Sunday so far has been marked by bad luck. Today we take no chances. The distance is now wearing us down a bit and time to recover is essential.

Monday 27th September.

Wichita to Girard Kansas.

The countryside is becoming greener. The grass was non existent in California and Nevada. It was thin in Utah, became patchy in Colorado. Now in eastern Kansas the mat of grass is stronger. There are fields and trees. English looking oaks stand in meadows. Nick rides 100 miles today. Towards the end of the day the hills become more pronounced and Nick finds the last 10 miles a struggle. He got to bed with packs of frozen sausages on his leg muscles. We stay at a state park beside a lake. Rural and very attractive. Lots of insects. Scorpion in the toilet block.

Tuesday 28th September.

Girard to Springfield Missouri.

Sausage and mash for tea tonight. We are wanting to ride as many miles as we can now. Where we can we ride two or three riders at a time. Today the wind is blowing from the North. as the road weaves around we sometimes have a following wind but often it does not assist us at all. The hills are rolling and sometimes very pronounced. We are covering about 150 miles each day.

Wednesday 29th September

Springfield.

We decided to take a RD today in order to catch up on this update, collect messages telephone Port Chester during working hours on a working day. There is no time on a ride day to do anything except ride and rest at the end of the day. I sent the last batch of updates from here. We were kept waiting to use the computers at the library while others played games with their allotted time and once the e mails have been collected responded to and the computers sorted out by the staff there isn't much time left. Very frustrating. Springfield is a large sprawling town. The most visited tourist attraction is apparently Bass Pro Sports Shop. Obviously we visited it. It has a sports boat department with 40 or more speed boats inside the building, restaurants and departments for every sport. Not cycling though.

Thursday 30th September

Springfield to Houston, Texas County, Missouri.

Springfield being so sprawling it takes some navigation to get across the city. Paul and Simon start and

the intersection where we join the important road is in fact just a bridge over. We walk the bikes down the bank to the road which is a dual carriageway affair with a hard shoulder so it is reasonable to ride on but littered with debris. It is also busy with traffic and boring. Nick and Barney do the second leg on more attractive roads with a following wind. The RV was left at a strategic spot. Paul and Simon used a spare key to drive on to Houston and meet the others. We have arrived at our destination, but in an example of bad planning we discover there is no RV park to stay at. We have to ride on another 30 miles. We find an un-advertised park near Montauk State park run by the generous Bob Wind and his wife. Thanks to you Bob for your support.

Friday 1st October

Montauk to St Louis

A day of hills with short ups and downs and winding roads as we experienced the Ozark mountains. There are woods to either side so there is no view. The experience is tiring. The homes are closer together the further east we travel. In Nevada it may be tens of miles between farms but here there is one every quarter of a mile or so. We are more often chased by dogs now. This is disconcerting but rarely dangerous. You ride very fast when being chased.

Saw a huge snake today. It was already a road casualty so was not a threat.

It must have been 5 foot long, black with a silver underside. I kept looking for any mates it might have had. Arrived in St Louis. A major city with major city roads and traffic. We avoid any likely catastrophe by driving to the RV park in Cahokia.

Saturday 2nd October.

We visit the St Louis Arch, Ride to the top in the tram car inside the stainless steel structure. Visit a Baseball game of the season Champions the Cardinals. The weather is poor for tonight Cold and rain perhaps storms. It is a cold night.

Sunday 3rd October.

We cycle back through the city now that the roads are quiet. Actually the day is warm and sunny. Formally crossing the Mississippi River on Eades Bridge and riding through the city centre. We meet a team who are crossing the USA on a Segway gyro cycle thing. A two wheeled trolley which balances upright and travels at 10 mph. They are making a documentary about the US countryside and the journey. We do a brief interview with them on camera and later visit the Budweiser Brewery.

Monday 4th October

Back on the road. St Louis to Evansville. Indiana Actually we didn't intend to stay in Evansville. The days are getting shorter and the available riding time is reduced. We covered 150 miles of an intended 175 and had to stop due to lack of light. we found the site in Evansville and as we park we see a trailer motor home with smoke billowing from an open window. Barney says we have to get the Propane bottles out. we get a torch and in a hair raising moment though the bottle has been switched off gas escapes while smoke seeps through the seams of the compartment. We remove the bottle that side while Paul does the same the other side. The Fire service arrive. The van is gutted but no one is hurt.

We visit Gracies Chinese Restaurant nearby. We meet Gracie who is a wonderful host. The meal is excellent. Thank you Gracie for your generous donation to the Rainbow Centre.

Tuesday 5th October

Evansville Indiana to Berea Kentucky.

A very very long day today. Start at 8am and do not get into Berea until 8 30 PM. 220 miles covered today. The terrain has been varied but short steep hills are dominant. The final 30 miles is ridden by Barney and Nick (doing another 100 mile day). The light has gone but the road is quiet. Looking forward to a RD tomorrow.

6th October

Cyclists to central control:

Just spoke to Simon - the team are in Berea, Kentucky - 2 days ahead of schedule - all are well. They are planning to meet someone from the Lions Clubs today.

Their next big hurdle is the Appalachian Mountains and they hope to be in Charlottesville on Sunday or

Monday, and so in Washington DC on Wednesday.

They have been helping the local community out by extinguishing a fire in an RV, that story will be in the News tonight.

4th October

Cyclists to central control:

Simon has just called - they are now in St Louis, Missouri.

They have passed through the Osarks, and will be making their way to Evensborough today. They will be heading for Berea on Tuesday, and on Wednesday will be meeting up with some Lions Club Members.

29th September

Hello there - Updating you from Springfield Missouri.

Here is the continued update of our progress.

16th September. Delores, to Montrose Colorado.

Delores was Cold in the morning. The height and the close proximity of the river made for a chilly start to the day. We began an uphill climb which went on until early afternoon followed by a long down hill into Ridgway Colorado apparently where True Grit was filmed. The road to Montrose was relatively flat but the wind was against us. Three of us made the run together taking it in turns to lead while the others followed in the slip stream.

17th September Rest Day Friday.

18th September. Saturday. Montrose to Salida.

Today we cross Monach Pass, the highest point of the journey. 11,500ish feet, we begin by taking it one at a time out of Montrose. the road winds and gradually gets steeper. at the foot of the pass route three of us set out together for the top. It is 11 miles of grinding up hill with stunning views and often no guard rail. it takes us two and a half hours to reach the top. This is the Great Divide. The watershed between the Atlantic and the Pacific. We pause for photos and roll the long down hill to Salida, 20 miles away. no one had to pedal once. The key to the equipment locker was broken so as a priority we had to find a key cutting service before finding somewhere to sleep. Wal Mart obliged and there was no crisis to speak of.

Sunday 19th September.

Salida to Pueblo. We have broken the back of the Rockies. We ride in pairs today. The first pair, Simon and Barbey start a 33 mile run to the RV point which ends up a 45 mile run as we miss the junction and had to cross a range of hills to get to where we want to go. Once there, Simon lost the key locking up the bikes after they were locked up and no one noticed for 30 miles. We press on with the second pair having to ride on and we end up in a Fire Station in Pueblo who kindly agree to cut the lock with a disk cutter. To end the day on a high note. Simon then pulls a muscle in his back.

Monday 20th September Rest Day. Simon visits a massage therapist regarding his back and afterwards is confined to bed with pain. The others visit a generous new friend, Hud Griffith and family who met us on the route to Pueblo. Invited back for home cooking the team enjoyed an excellent evening of hospitality.

Tuesday 21st September Rest Day Simon is getting better. The weather is taking a turn. The mountains we crossed two days earlier are now covered in snow and the threat is for snow down to 7000 feet. That means us.

Wednesday 22nd September. Moving on Pueblo to Larmar. We vary the route a little to go

somewhere with an RV park. The plains begin here but are rarely flat. More undulating. The scrubby grassland gives over to fields of corn. Small towns are marked with huge grain silos. We find out what this is all about in a day or two.

Thursday 23rd September Larmar to Dodge City.

This is the Dodge City of cowboy legend. The town is sprawling and the centre is the cattle industry. The grain we saw is all destined to feed cattle. thousands of cows are to be seen in pens at feeding stations fattening up. everything in Dodge is geared towards producing feeding or slaughtering cattle for meat. An eye opener. we have steak at dinner and it is about enough to last the whole journey.

Friday 24th September. I have to continue this later. The computer time is now over and I have to leave.

20th September

Contacting you from Delores Colorado.

Arrived here today one overnight before tackling the Rocky Mountains.

Summarising what we have done so far:

Sat 4th September

San Francisco. Ferry from Vallejo to the City. Cycled to the Golden Gate Bridge were we had some photos taken and then back to the waterfront to get back to Vallejo. We were short of time as the vehicle pick up was later than expected and we could not get this stage done yesterday. Nick came off with a wheel caught in a old tram line and then he came off again when a pedestrian jumped in front of him. Back to Vallejo on the ferry and then begin the ride to Sacramento, our first stop. Very, very hot and dusty. 25 Mile each was the limit of endurance in the conditions.

Sun 5th September

Sacramento to Placerville. We cycled partway up the Sierra Nevada mountains beyond Placerville and then backtracked in the vehicle to Placerville to sleep. The terrain was more wooded and as the mountain steepened the woodland became thicker. We kept a watch out for bears but never saw one.

Monday 6th September

Labor Day in the USA. We started where we left off part way up the mountains and reached the summit of Carson Pass. Then it was down hill to the Nevada state line. It was here that Nick first encountered the wobble at speed which made him reconsider down hill riding as fun. We cycled to Carson City and then drove to Lake Tahoe to take a day off. Climbing to such an altitude is exhausting. The effect of altitude makes your breath harder to catch and simple exertion leaves you gasping. Steady exertion and gentle increased exercise is >easier to handle.

Tuesday 7th September

Rest day at Lake Tahoe. Cycled into town, which turned out to be 8 miles away. Not so much of a Rest Day after all.

Weds 8th Sept

Carson City to Fallon. Nevada Desert hills then plains then hills. High desert. Long distances and fierce heat. The terrain is scrub desert with mountain ranges followed by another expanse of desert. The deserts are 20 miles or more across.

Thursday 9th Sept

Fallon to Austin. Another day of similar terrain. One desert plain looks like another and there are dozens of plains and mountain ranges to cross. Reached Austin on the edge of a mountain range. It is a small community with some very old typical western feature. Like the saloon where we met Curly the barkeeper. A character and a half who administered discipline to the customers with a fly swat.

Friday 10th Sept

Austin to Ely. Another day of Desert and mountain. The distance and the terrain is getting to us now and we want a Rest day. By pushing the distance we decide to go to Beaver tomorrow.

Saturday 11th September

Ely to Beaver. More of the same mountain - desert views. Reaching the end of the day dark rain clouds form on the horizon. Lighting can be seen in the distance. Nick has the last leg to ride and he is caught in a rainstorm with lightning flashing around the mountain tops. Beaver turns out to be smaller than expected so we decide to go off the planned route and cross Elk Mountain to the other side and then take a rest day in Loa. This will reduce our total ride by 100 miles and cut out some mountains.

Sunday 12th September

Bever to LOA. (TORREY) We climbed the Elk Mountain to the highest point yet achieved on the ride 9950 feet. At the top the road stopped. The map said it continued but it was a gravel track closed to vehicles. Really fed up now. Today is named silly Sunday. We drive back the way we came and have to drive around the mountain over 100 miles. We stopped at TORREY beyond LOA and take a Rest day there.

Monday 13th Sept

Rest Day at TORREY. Met some really friendly people at the site who donated some cash to the charity.

Tuesday 14th Sept

Torrey to Blanding through Glen Canyon. Met some people from Fareham who are on a fly drive holiday and later met another traveler from Fareham. What are the chances of that? Glen Canyon is beyond description. Like the Grand Canyon it is nature at it's unpredictable best. Sheer rock faces, honeycombed formations and pictures in the rock strata. We crossed the Colorado river and began the ascent back out of the canyon. 50 miles of steady up hill.

Wednesday 15th Sept

Blanding to Delores. Terrain is now less scrub and slightly more grassland. There are fewer regular mountain ranges but many good slopes to cover. Prairie dogs by the side of the road and long distances between towns, which are a collection of huts and farm buildings. Delores is at the foot of the Rockies. A river winds through the town and we camp beside it. It is really cold at night.

The next update will take us on from here.

9th September

Central Control

"Central control at Uniworld has spoken to the Bobbies who were in excellent spirits, they sound like they've got lots of energy! Lots of "woohooing" in the background!!

They're at Fallon at the moment which was supposed to be their position as of Monday but things have proved quite hard going on all the hills. However they're making the time up by using one of their rest days.

They came down the Carson path yesterday and said it was amazing and they took some great pictures which they will be emailing...Nick got up to 52 mph on the way down which he said scared him to death!

They tried logging on to the website last night but said that the connection was very slow so they're going to be using internet cafes from now on.

They've all spoken to their families and are happy! They'll be in touch soon with lots of photos"

1st September

Portsmouth News

HAMPSHIRE Chief Constable Paul Kernaghan joined a band of policemen to say farewell to friends and colleagues today as they set off on the adventure of a lifetime. Well-wishers and sponsors poured into Portchester Castle to back the Rainbow Riders. Inspector Simon Wrigglesworth, from Fareham police, Gosport's Inspector Paul Rowsell, PC Alan Hockley, who cycles the Milton beat in Portsmouth, and Portchester beat bobby PC Nick Morgan pedaled off towards Heathrow Airport.

After sleeping overnight in Windsor, they will board a flight to San Francisco, California, to begin their grueling 3,700-mile slog. The team hope to raise £25,000 for the Rainbow Centre - which teaches everyday skills to disabled children - by the time they arrive at Port Chester, New York State, on October 24.

The centre is in temporary premises at Cams Hill School, Fareham, and needs £750,000 for a new base at Cams Alders sports ground, off Newgate Lane.

31st August

Portsmouth News

They have given up every holiday and day off for months, spent more than £1,000 of their own money and cycled hundreds of miles up and down hills. They hardly know each other and have never even met the special children they want to help. But four police officers are putting their lives on hold for a grueling seven-week cycle ride across America to raise money for youngsters who cannot do things for themselves.

The ride's driving force, Inspector Simon Wrigglesworth of Fareham police, first considered the epic trip after a holiday to America four years ago, but it really took hold as he cycled to work one day in 2002. 'It was just one of those mad thoughts that come into your head. I spoke to a couple of friends and it grew from there.' And two years and a complete line-up change later, he is being joined by Gosport Inspector Paul Rowsell, Portchester PC Nick Morgan and Portsmouth PC Alan 'Barney' Hockley on the 3,600-mile Rainbow Ride - or British Bobbies Challenge.

Tomorrow, they will pedal from Portchester Castle to Heathrow Airport, fly to San Francisco and then ride to Port Chester, New York in a bid to raise £25,000 for Fareham's Rainbow Centre for Conductive Education - which uses a combination of therapies to teach youngsters with learning difficulties the basic skills that come naturally to their peers.

The colleagues have already raised £6,000 and will start earning the rest as they head into the Sierra Nevada mountains for the adventure's toughest challenge on their way to the two-mile high Monarch Pass over the Rockies. 'The second day will be a real eye-opener - it's not like Portsdown Hill, it's straight up for mile after mile after mile,' says Inspector Wrigglesworth, a 46-year-old father-of-two. 'Then it's across the mountains, into the Nevada desert, which will be another extreme environment to get used to and before we know it we'll be in the Rocky Mountains and hitting a lot of the most daunting and dramatic terrain very, very quickly.

'You just can't prepare for 10,000ft mountains and searing deserts in south Hampshire. You can only mentally prepare for it and decide you're going to make it one way or the other. 'It's being prepared to be mentally hard. The question of giving up isn't there and you just keep battling on.' The riders will not have a support team and will instead alternate turns behind the wheel of a rented four-berth motor home - covered by backers at Uniworld in Gosport, who have lent support and donated hundreds of pounds. The camper van will carry spare wheels and tyres, first aid kits and tools.

The cyclists, who are using holiday and rest days to complete the challenge, will pick up food along the

way, but have a special menu to ensure that they eat lots of carbohydrates, glucose and protein with pasta, potatoes, fruit and high-energy bars. Water will also be a top priority, with specially-fitted water packs on the cyclists' backs to ensure they replace lost fluids.

Terrain aside, tempers are a top concern, with normally insignificant personal habits potentially causing full-blown bust-ups - the good, the bad and the ugly all to be caught in a video diary. Inspector Wrigglesworth says: 'Seven weeks in the same vehicle putting maximum effort in is surely going to strain our relationships. 'We have some basic rules such as: "Don't vent your feelings at each other" and will set some standards of how to behave in each other's presence. People will have to say what it is that upsets them or it could become unbearable. 'It's the little things that could cause the biggest problems, like standards of cleanliness, washing up and even personal hygiene. 'But the team we have now is really good, everybody gets on well together. We're all quite different characters, so it will be interesting to see how it works out.'

The quartet have spent more than £1,000 each on flights, specialist clothing, hotels and matching Dawes Sardar touring bikes with fat tyres to handle crumbling mountain roads and desert heat. They also expect to cover camping and food costs and accept liability for any financial shortfall. University of Portsmouth nutritionists and accounts of previous cycle expeditions have helped the officers prepare for the stresses and strains the monumental task they have set themselves. And they've put in about 100 miles a week up and down every hill for miles around.

Extreme sport-mad, self-confessed adrenaline-junkie PC Hockley was last to join the team and makes no bones about his motivation in leaving behind his wife Nicola, who is due to give birth to their first child in February - with her permission. He and PC Morgan already cruise their beats on specialist mountain bikes and he jumped at the chance when Inspector Steve Baxter dropped out for personal reasons. PC Hockley, who has had three days off in the past three months, hopes the gang can make up time to see a bit more of America. 'We're going to see parts of America that not everybody sees and seeing the heart of the country rather than just the touristy bits. 'I want to see if we can get ahead a bit and see some of the country not just from the seat of a bike and talk to the people, police officers and maybe raise some funds.'

12th August

Portsmouth News

Children helped by the Rainbow Centre have inspired four policemen to cycle across America to raise money for them. Fareham Inspector Simon Wrigglesworth, Gosport Inspector Paul Rowsell, Portchester beat officer PC Nick Morgan and Milton beat bobby PC Alan Hockley hope to bring in £25,000 for the self-funded centre in Fareham. They will ride from Portchester Castle on September 1 to Heathrow Airport, fly to California and cycle from San Francisco to Port Chester, New York.

August 2004

The Lions Club in Fareham, Hampshire are backing the British Bobbies Challenge. Region 3 Chairman, Lion Pat Nixon has contacted the International Association of Lions Clubs across the expedition's route and has asked for encouragement and local support.

July 2004

Staff from Barclays Bank in West Street Fareham staged an all day exercise cycle ride outside the bank on Wednesday 28th July. taking it in half hour turns the exercisers cycled an estimated 60 miles and raised £205 the Rainbow Centre. Barclays Bank will match this amount so the Rainbow Centre will receive £410.

July 2004.

Staff at Barclays Bank in Fareham put their support behind the British Bobbies Challenge. Barclays staff propose to ride an exercise cycle outside the branch to raise funds.

As of 19 July, any one can now go to Barclays Bank in Fareham and make a donation direct to the Rainbow

Ride account.

July 2004.

We attend the Queen Elizabeth Country Park show and the Portsmouth Motor show. At our summer shows we collect £1050. All of it will go to the Rainbow Centre.

Thank you to everyone we met.

Our total saved for the Rainbow Centre now exceeds £4,000. All the money raised for the charity will go to the charity. The expenses are met by the riders themselves or expedition supporters. The police officers time is their annual leave and saved rest days. There is no cost to Hampshire Police.

The Expedition is named the British Bobbies Challenge. We now commit ourselves to the expedition. The flights are booked and the support vehicle arranged.

June 2004.

A series of public summer shows begin. At Portchester Gala, local people are very generous. A big thank you for £97 donated today.

We also attend HMS Collingwood Field Gun Day, HMS Sultan Show,

May 2004.

Uniworld Communications boss, Colin Potter visits the Rainbow Centre and is impressed by the centre and it's work. He encourages Uniworld staff to donate a small portion of their monthly wage to the charity. Uniworld staff also agree to support the British Bobbies Challenge with planning and logistical assistance. Colin Potter sponsors the expedition's U.S. support vehicle by donating £5000.

April 2004.

Fundraising for the Rainbow Centre now exceeds £1,000.

Novatech Direct computer sales of Portchester generously offer the first tangible financial support towards the expedition.

January 2004.

The team has to re form as key members have to reluctantly withdraw. A rider and the support driver have to be replaced. A rider is quickly substituted but the support driver is harder to find. The riding team is now Simon Wigglesworth, Paul Rowsell, Nick Morgan and Alan Hockley also known as BARNEY.

The cycle team decide to support each other sharing the driving and welfare responsibilities.

Training starts.

Fund raising starts with social events at Fareham and Gosport Police stations.

November 2003.

Portswood Cycles of Broadlaw Walk, Fareham arrange with Dawes cycle manufacturers to sell the SARDAR Touring bike to the team. The bike is robust and sturdy to endure the 3500 mile event.

June 2003.

The outline plan is agreed. The Chief Constable of Hampshire, Paul Kernaghan approves the officer's community involvement in this off duty challenge.

February 2003.

The team begin to form their plans.

September 2002.

The idea is re kindled . A small group of police officers agree to work on a plan.

The Rainbow Centre in Fareham faces having to move to a temporary home and build new premises at their own expense. £1,000,000 is needed. The team decide to dedicate their ride to the Rainbow Centre. The expedition is initially called the "Rainbow Ride".

April 2001.

Simon Wrigglesworth the Expedition organiser meets experienced charity cyclist, Jim Bettley (Lands End - John o Groats, Artic Circle Expedition through Norway and others.) Simon Suggests a cross America challenge.

Jim replies "That is a good idea. Why don't you do it?"

The idea is dropped.

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