

## The C2C - 2 Penguins waddle from Coast to Coast

On 14 April 2023 a Penguin Peloton Breakaway of Simon Catnach and Charlie Beardmore gathered at the untroubled harbour of Whitehaven, Cumbria, once the second busiest port by tonnage in England, in an attempt to haul 200 kg of antique muscle, bone and blubber across England's land mass by bicycle. The next 2 days offered a variety of gradients, road surfaces, weather, wildlife, ribald comment, food and drink.

The escape from Whitehaven saw an almost immediate steep ascent, giving scenic views of the Sellafield complex, then a perambulation through Harras Park to Weddicar Rigg. Pleasant gradients followed through Rowrah and Lamplugh before a steep descent into Loweswater and the delights of the Kirkstile Inn.



**Whitehaven – Irish Sea**



**Loweswater**

A somewhat languid refreshment stop was followed by the joys of the Whinlatter Pass and its Buzzards. Both bikes began protesting at the load they had to bear, but by High Swinside Farm the worst of it was over. We skirted Brown How and Whinlatter peaks before another steep descent into Braithwaite. A smooth journey through Portinscale and Keswick led to an excellent cycle path all the way to the Horse and Farrier pub in Threlkeld for a superb lunch of Coronation Chicken (thankfully not Coronation Quiche) and Loweswater Gold ale.

The next leg witnessed some user error-associated Komoot rage and some backtracking. We transited through Greystoke, of Tarzan fame (where is Cheetah when you need him?), Little Blencow, thankfully missing Unthank, crossing the M6 and reaching Plumpton. Lazonby and Kirkoswald followed, before reaching Renwick. Renwick (at least the parts we saw) seems to be an unremarkable village which does not appear to have a pub. 61 miles of the allotted days 72 miles done. Easy last leg to come.



**Threlkeld – Top pub**



**Renwick – No pub**

Au contraire Blackadder! Hartside Height is only 620m high but seemed to go on forever. Simon discovered his mountain goat and powered steadily on. Charlie laboured behind. It was all downhill from the pass to Alston, the overnight stop, and a delightful pub, the Cumberland Inn. Dinner was fantastic: homemade soup, roast beef, tiramisu and some Malbec.



**The Grind up Hartside**



**Alston - The Cumberland Arms**

The next morning saw an immediate move onto an uphill cobbled road which was not the most welcome start to the day. However, Black Hill, Allenheads, Rookhope and Edmund Byers Common all passed before a very welcome stop at Blanchland, with the Lord Crewe Arms and the wonderful White Monk tea room.

We skirted Derwent Water reservoir and a very superior looking Heron, on the way to Whittonstall, Ebchester and High Westwood. We eventually reached Burnopfield safely, which was surprising, as a woman we met walking her dog at the top of a particularly unpleasant steep hill had told us the following:

- We were way off track for the Coast to Coast
- She had never heard of a place called Burnopfield (*join the gang*)
- If we continued on the road we were on we would encounter an unspeakably steep ravine where we were likely to suffer serious injury

We wished her all the best for the rest of the day. We both survived to reach the Flaming Grill Packhorse Inn at Burnopfield, which offered 'flaming good food', some of the most filling you can imagine. Thereafter we were on the final leg.



**Blanchland**



**Burnopfield (luckily)**

Unfortunately, user associated-komoot rage kicked in again and amidst all the profanities the back up navigation device was successfully deployed. We meandered through Whickham, Lobley Hill, Bensham, Deckham, Felling and Hebburn, before reaching Jarrow, a place both of us had heard of before. Shortly thereafter we reached South Shields, the North Sea and journeys end. A quick photo and then repairing to the superbly appointed Alum Ale House and its selection of at least 12 different real ales. Thereafter an overnight stay in Jesmond with fantastic meal at the Rio Steakhouse, and some music and refreshment at the Bar Blanc.



**Journey's End – South Shields**



**Coast to Coast (or, bizarrely, Sea to Sea)**

The route consisted of 127 miles cycled with 3300m of ascent (ideal preparation for the B2B cycle tour of the Low Countries), with no injuries and no significant mechanical issues (surprising considering the pounding the bikes underwent). We received excellent assistance throughout from the support team of Charlotte, and her car. Many Thanks.