

Day one, we did it.

Wow, that was an emotional roller coaster of a day. I finally started to get excited in a can't sleep kind of way at 2:30am and that's when I put the last blog post together in my head. After a few hours more sleep I woke just after six and the anticipation kicked in big time. By the time we left the house I was buzzing. A small gathering of friends turned up in the rain to see us off and after lots of hugs and cries of 'bon voyage' we were off with three cycling buddies to escort us

for the first twenty miles.



Up to this point I had only felt excited and maybe a little emotional at saying goodbye for six months to such good friends. We settled into an easy pace along

the front through Lytham with a lovely tail wind to push us along. I then found myself riding alone for a short spell and that's when something really strange happened. I just thought about the whole journey ahead of us in terms of distance and time and I found myself welling up with tears. Of course I put the watery eyes down to the cold wind and shook off the feeling but five minutes later I tentatively tried the same thoughts with the same powerful result. It really was like nothing I have ever felt before and suddenly the enormity of the whole

venture hit me like a sledge hammer. Not in a bad way I must stress. It was just like standing at the bottom of an enormous mountain and knowing that you are going to be climbing it. Daunting, but thrilling and irresistible all at once.

Later when I was riding alone with Gill I told her how I had felt and she said it had been exactly the same for her. The same moving emotions and the same teary outcome. It felt like we had tapped into something deep inside us with the final realisation of what the next six months of our

lives would involve.

We left our three friends, Les, Peter and Pete after a short cafe stop at Fleetwood and hopped on the ferry for the five minute crossing of the river Wyre. Once alone the mood changed and it just felt like any first day of any tour, all that raw emotion subsided as did the rain and grey clouds to leave us with a lovely sunny first day. As we crossed the first bridge into Lancaster a young lad amongst a small group shouted at Gill as she passed, trying to scare her but he looked a bit surprised when she just told

him he was pathetic and before she could be upset by the incident we were engaged by a chap called Steve who was keen to know what we were up to. I had been waiting all morning for the chance to remark casually that we were on the first day of a round Britain ride and I wasn't dissapointed by the effect it had. We gave Steve a contact card and left him with big silly grins on our faces. It happened again in Morecambe when we met Carol as she locked up her bike next to ours. She was bubbling over with enthusiam for our adventure and I think we may have

another follower of the blog there. By contrast, I chatted briefly with a couple as I queued in the supermarket and my suspicions that they hadn't really grasped what I had told them were confirmed when they left me with the words, "well I hope you have a nice weekend". Can't win 'em all I guess.

We are now all cosy in the tent listening to the wind thrashing about outside and the rain is starting to rattle on the flysheet.

For anybody interested dinner was herby mackerel in tomato sauce

with pasta followed by a
strawberry fool and very nice it
was too. Sorry for such a long
post, I'm sure I'll calm down
eventually