

The Penguins waddle around Les Iles Anglo-Normandes

On the evening of 5th October 2024, a Penguin Peloton breakaway consisting of Trevor Kelly, Loz Lawrence and Charlie Beardmore accompanied by their support crew (Margot, Nicky and Charlotte) assembled at the Hotel de France in St Helier, Jersey. They were intending to cycle around Jersey and Guernsey to raise money for Penguins Against Cancer (PAC), in support of Jersey Hospice Care. A long evening of planning and carbloading (including visiting a fantastic fish restaurant run by a Bajan family) was followed next morning by an excellent full Channel Islands breakfast.

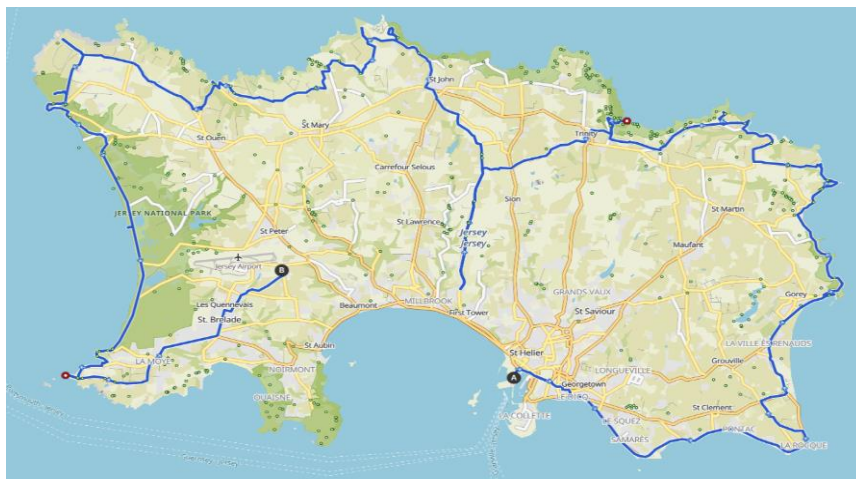


Countdown to departure



A sun drenched Mont Orgueil Castle

The ride was into a strong headwind for the first 5 miles. Many cyclists (obviously locals and clearly aware of the prevailing wind), were travelling in the opposite direction, waving and smiling/laughing at us. A brief stop at the picturesque Mont Orgueil Castle was followed by a brisk tailwind pushing us downhill into Bouley Bay. There we renewed our acquaintance with Mad Mary who serves excellent tea and cakes.



The route around Jersey (anticlockwise just to be contrary)



Mad Mary's Tea Stop – Bouley Bay - Unforgettable

Temporarily refreshed we ascended slowly and steeply en route to Jersey Hospice Care (JHC) where we were met by the wonderful Marina. She showed us around their excellent facility, and told us much of the history of JHC and indeed of Jersey, including that Jersey folk are known as 'Beans' or 'Crapauds' and Guernsey folk as 'Donkeys'. None of these terms is disparaging apparently (Crapaud is French for Toad, probably derived from the Frankish word *krappa* meaning hook, in reference to the toad's hooked feet).



Jersey Hospice Care – Charlie, Marina, Trevor

We continued along the North coast of Jersey in blazing sunshine seeing numerous seabirds, pheasants, a perched falcon, an aggressive duck and a heron. Eventually we reached our support party, who had spent the morning supporting us from a spa. We enjoyed an outstanding crab sandwich and a pint of Liberation Ale, and set off again whilst the support party continued with an extended lunch, prior to some retail therapy, which included procuring large quantities of Jersey Black Butter (a mix of apple pulp, cider, molasses, liquorice and spices apparently – very palatable with bread, fish, pork, quorn, meat substitute, in fact anything).

The ride concluded at Jersey RFC where we encountered tremendously generous hospitality and watched the final of their rugby Veterans tournament. The Chair of Jersey RFC still remembers numerous visits by Guys Hospital RFC going back to the 1970s.



Jersey RFC – great hospitality

That evening we caught the ferry to Guernsey and experienced the *ambiance fantastique* of the Best Western Moore's hotel. I had previously stayed there on a Guy's rugby tour some 30 years ago, and had enjoyed Eggs Benedict (*invented by Charles Ranhofer in 1894, 51 years after the founding of Guys Hospital RFC, for Mrs Legrand Benedict who wished to experience something new*) for the first time. The following morning we were away early after breakfast (Eggs Benedict obviously) and soon hit Le Val des Terres, the steepest climb in Guernsey (only 800m but at 8.9%). Trevor the mountain goat managed seemingly effortlessly as usual but Loz and I, carrying a bit more timber, went more slowly. As I was creaking along in granny gear, a passing motorist yelled at me to 'get on the pavement' (there were more words used, but they don't add hugely to the basic tenet of his message). I was disinclined to reply, being cardiovascularly challenged at the time. As it turns out, cyclists are expected to cycle up the hill on the single pavement on the right hand side of the road, but to descend the hill using the roadway (and definitely not the pavement). Easy, except there are no signs indicating this. Perhaps he thought we were being contrary.



The route around Guernsey (clockwise attempting to conform)

We arrived at one of Guernsey's most scenic viewpoints shortly afterwards, in drizzle, and could see about 50 metres. Shortly thereafter the weather turned and we had a fantastic run along Vazon coast road before stopping at one of Guernsey's famous kiosks for tea and Guernsey biscuits (unique and delicious – somewhere between a cake and a bun). A quick pause at the Occupation Museum (a fascinating insight into life under the Jackboot in WW2 and the opportunity to view the iconic 88mm flak/anti tank gun at close quarters) and then onwards to St Peter Port. Loz, man of iron, then decided to cool off with a dip in the open air seawater swimming pools, whilst the rest of us had another cup of tea.



Example of 1940s brutalist concrete architecture



Journey's End in St Peter Port

Our final meal was a delicious roast dinner in a local pub before catching the Condor catamaran back to Poole. A very enjoyable and informative 2 days. The Penguin Peloton has been invited back next year.

Our cycle ride raised £2285 which the Penguins Against Cancer (PAC) Trustees generously agreed to increase to £5,000 which has been sent as a Grant to Jersey Hospice Care.

It is important to acknowledge all those who provided support and made generous donations to PAC for this venture (all associated costs were borne by the riders and support crew):

The Guys Hospital Class of 84¹, Guys Hospital Penguins, Jersey RFC, Dan McAlister, Griff (both from Jersey RFC), Ossett RFC (who won the Veterans rugby tournament this year), Freda Crampton, Pat Jones, Barry Robinson, Graham Rich, Richard Etok and many others. We would also like to acknowledge the outstanding generosity and hospitality of: Kate Innes (Jersey RFC), Ian Le Moigne (Condor Ferries) and Geraldine Cunningham (Best Western Moores Hotel, St Peter Port), without whom Trevor, Loz and I would not have been able to undertake this fundraiser.

Charlie Beardmore
President
The Penguin Peloton
20 Oct 24

¹ In this case those who commenced at Guys in 1984 rather than graduating then

