

Heather's set herself a challenge



Heather McCormack from Edinburgh has set herself a real challenge this weekend when she will cycle 150km in Perthshire. .

After the massive success of our British athletes in cycling across the world, more and more people up and down the country are getting on their bikes and using the time to get some fresh air on their face while livening up their daily commute to work.

What kind of person signs up to take part in a 150km distance event? Heather McCormack has a landmark birthday on the horizon, but isn't letting that become a barrier to enjoying herself and seizing the day, while getting a rather large spot of exercise, of course.

Heather is the first person to ever sign up for the brand new distance at Macmillan Cycletta, the UK's leading series of women only bike rides and is tackling the 150km this weekend on Sunday 19th July at Scone Palace, Perth.

To mark this landmark distance for the event which takes place up and down the country through the year, the team at Human Race, Macmillan Cycletta event organisers, decided to track Heather to find out her story.

No stranger to a physical challenge, Heather has been looking for an event that suits her personally in this extra special year.

"I decided to take part in Macmillan Cycletta for various reasons, but the main one is that 2015 is a significant year

for me as I will be turning 60.

“Over the years I’ve done running and half marathons. I even completed the London Marathon in 2012, which was a lifelong ambition of mine. I was the tortoise rather than the hare, but loved every minute of it. I’ve been looking for new inspiration since and found it in an event like Macmillan Cycletta”



Heather re-discovered cycling after her work relocated and the commute was a bit too far to walk.

“I’ve cycled all my life, but stopped when I had my family. I started again more recently when my work moved further away. It ended up being my incentive to get back in the saddle. My partner and I went to Yorkshire to see the Tour De France last year too which was really inspiring. There was such a fantastic atmosphere and it was really sociable, so it got me thinking about finding a cycling event that suited me.

“I considered cycling groups locally but they seemed a bit more family orientated which didn’t suit me as well since my son is all grown up. I felt I needed something to build my confidence.”

Heather’s search for an event was over last December when she received an email from Human Race about Macmillan Cycletta and saw that they ran events all over the country. She then signed up for the Scottish event, taking place at Scone Palace, Perth this year.

“I had signed up for these emails when my partner and I took part in a Human Race event, combining it with a visit to my son in Kingston Upon Thames. When I read about Cycletta, I knew it was right for me and just went for it. It was very spur of the moment.

"I was attracted to Cycletta because it is a women only event. The idea of a Sportive felt a bit too intimidating – especially as this will be my first cycling event. I wanted something less pressured and more fun and sociable. Even the name, Cycletta, has a more friendly feel."

Now, as well as birthday celebrations to look forward to, Heather is starting to think about fitting in some all-important training.

"I haven't really started training yet, but I will find a training schedule online. I never follow training programmes religiously though. I usually wiggle it a bit to suit my circumstances. I'm not really that competitive. It's not about that for me, it's more about the personal challenge. I know it sounds crazy, but training doesn't phase me – I'm quite happy doing it."

In the year of her 60th birthday, Heather has some very wise advice for any ladies out there looking for a challenge.

"Just give it a go. It doesn't have to be competitive and you meet like-minded people. Unless you experience it, you don't know how friendly, fun, relaxed and social these sorts of events are.

"I know it seems like a huge distance to cycle, but people often underestimate themselves. Believe me, I've thought I was going to be at the very back whenever I've taken part in events, but I've never been last yet. Also you always gets just as much of a cheer if you're at the tail end as you would if you were at the front. I'm hoping that Cycletta will be the same and not have that competitive edge – winning isn't the be all and end all."

Heather is participating in Macmillan Cycletta at Scone Palace this Sunday. The event has three distances with 150km being the longest. There are also race distances of 100km and 50km. To find out more and sign up

visit <http://humanrace.co.uk/events/cycletta>