

Andrew Dickson completes journey across Canada



Edinburgh cyclist Andrew Dickson has completed the last leg of his unsupported cycle journey across Canada to raise money for three worthwhile charities, FACE Fighting Against Cancer in Edinburgh, The Craig Gowan Memorial Trust and Friends of the Sick kids Foundation.

His story has been covered in depth by the Edinburgh Reporter over the past three months.

Here is Andrew's story in his own words: "First impression of Newfoundland is it's very similar to the Hebrides & N/W Highlands.

"There's only one option for getting to St John's from Port Aux Basques and that's to use the Trans Canada Highway and I was expecting a very challenging time. That's not been the case however and Thursday started with 40 miles of flat Hwy followed by 65 miles of very gradual climbs and descents. It appears along this section they have threaded the Highway along a relatively flat route resulting in two consecutive days of 100+ cycling miles.

"Had some difficulty finding a camping spot on Thursday evening due to the moose fencing both sides of the roadway and had to make do with some grass beside a road sign. One sign indicated there had been 660 moose collisions last year. Friday evening's camp wasn't so challenging with a nice sunset seen through the trees. No trouble with mosquitoes these last few nights, which has been nice.

"While in Corner Brook I received a donation from Graham Hicks. "Thanks Graham, it's appreciated by us all".

“Saturday morning spent cycling in heavy rain to junction with Hwy 390 near Springdale and the tourist office to dry off.



“At Springdale VIC I had the pleasure of spending a couple of hours with retired teacher John Southcott watching him delicately carve what he calls ‘Fairy Houses’ from almost rock hard cottonwood bark. What he produces is wonderful. To John, “Thanks for letting me watch and for the lovely carved pencil”.

“Shortly after I met Jeanette a French/Canadian lady from Montreal who I think it’s fair to say has done a lot of world travelling. At 57 she about to embark on a 5 year cycle tour of the Americas.

“Saturday afternoon, Sunday and Monday has been spent getting to Clarendville. The Trans Canada Highway has had far more challenging hill climbs these few days, especially this morning going through Terra Nova National Park. This is where a great granny gear is required. Also reached the 5000 miles point just before passing Gambo this morning.

“A few truckers, bikers and car drivers have been giving a dunt on the horn and thumbs up, which is nice.

“Tuesday spent cycling the 100 miles into St John’s. Just before Whitbourne the Trans Canada Highway is like a long switchback and I sat opposite one mini monster contemplating the climb while spooning straight peanut butter in preparation.



“In St John’s I had the good fortune of asking cyclists Julie & Jeff directions to Cape Spear which is the most easterly point in the North Americas. They suggested I tackle Cape Spear on Wednesday and very kindly invited me to stay at their

house with its spectacular views over the city and frequent wonderful sunsets. During the evening a neighbour called to say there was a bull moose in the back gardens but before we looked out it was gone. He did get a photo though.

“Following Julie & Jeff’s suggestion, on Wednesday morning I went by way of the lovely little coastal communities of Petty Harbour and Maddax Cove before tackling the few stiff climbs to Cape Spear. It’s the furthest east I could cycle in the whole of North America, so presumably the closest I could get to home. It was nice to see the oldest surviving lighthouse in Newfoundland still beaming out.

“As it wasn’t possible to dip the bike’s wheels in the Atlantic at Cape Spear, I headed down into St John’s. Signal Hill is where Marconi sent the first wireless message transmission across the Atlantic to Ireland.

“Due to FACE (Fighting Against Cancer Edinburgh) being one of the charities involved in Cycling Across Canada, I had to visit the Terry Fox memorial/statue. In the early 1980s, following a cancer related leg amputation, this young man attempted to run across Canada. The plaque gives more information. He is considered a Canadian national hero and an icon worldwide in cancer research circles. The quote reads ‘I JUST WISH PEOPLE WOULD REALISE THAT ANYTHING’S POSSIBLE IF YOU TRY, DREAMS ARE MADE IF PEOPLE TRY’. Oh so true.

“Due to the dock height and security measures, I still couldn’t get down to the water. This turned out to be a piece of good luck.

“Strange to think it’s difficult finding a place as big as the Atlantic Ocean. Couldn’t reach it from Cape Spear or the pier as St John’s. What good fortune that turned out to be as I came across what turned out to be just the most perfect location.

“Just outside the city is the little coastal village with the

super name of Quidi Vidi (pronounced Kidi Vidi) which consists of a lovely harbour contained within a beautiful, cliff surrounded cove. I couldn't have planned a more fitting place to dip the wheels in the Atlantic and end the crossing of Canada. It was ideal.

"Dave Kimel, as well as taking the photos, gave me a donation. "Dave, thank you so much". Thanks also to his companions Karyn (mum) and Fred (with Irish ancestry) for the carbohydrates (chips) and juice.

"The crossing was over about 2pm on Wednesday (10th August) with the distance covered from Vancouver showing 5217 miles.

"Left St John's on Wednesday afternoon and headed back along the Trans Canada Hwy, camping at Hwy 90. Continued on TCH on Thursday to Whitbourne before taking Hwy 100 to Argentia for the 5pm overnight ferry 'Atlantic Vision' to North Sydney. The Hwy 100 section was probably against the strongest headwind I've experienced so far this trip.

"Just out of North Sydney I noticed the little garden arrangement of the kettle above what I think are flame red salvia and orange marigolds. Simple but very clever.

"Picked up Hwy 223 beside St Andrews Channel, Iona and Bras d'Or Lake to Little Narrows where I camped on Friday evening.

"Woke to a clear sky and some grass frost so a bit chilly on Saturday. Caught the Gaelic named 'Caolas Silis' ferry at Little Narrows. Then had a brief time on the Trans Canada Hwy before taking Hwy 252 to just before Mabou where I picked up the Celtic Shore path which took me 60+ km to Port Hastings."

To donate, click [here](#).