

Dear []

I have been inspired to take part in a sponsored bike ride from Paris to London to raise money for research into Crohn's disease. If you have not come across this disease before, which many people haven't, it is an inflammation of the gut. It can affect any part of the gut, all the way from the mouth, through the large intestine to the far end, if you know what I mean! This horrible disease affects between 1 in 1,000 to 1,500 people, commonly in Europe and North America.

I say I have been inspired to take part because the more I have heard about this condition and the more I have learnt about its cruel legacy, the more committed I have become to helping to find a cure for it or to find a way to prevent it occurring at all. Why do I say cruel legacy? The man who is the inspiration behind the ride itself is a guy in his mid-forties. He has suffered from Crohn's since he was 12. Since that age, he has endured over twenty operations to remove successively inflamed parts of his bowel. His most recent operation was to become the eleventh patient in the UK to have a complete bowel transplant. I will tell more about Michael in the coming weeks but for now, please take a moment to pause and think about the sort of person he must be to ignore his huge discomfort, the series of post-operative infections he has endured and the difficulty of learning to eat again for the first time in nearly two years to arrange a sponsored ride from Paris to London to raise money for research into a disease that has massively affected his life. Of course, the most compelling part of this for me is that it is too late for Michael to benefit from the research! All his energy is going into raising money for research that he hopes will help everyone else who is suffering as he has done for over 30 years. He has none of his own gut left to become inflamed!

In the weeks to come I will give you a bit more information about Michael and about Crohn's disease. For now, and with the knowledge of what Michael is prepared to do for this cause, let me tell you what I'm planning to do.

On the 20th July I will meet up with about 30 other riders at St Pancras International at some outrageously early time in the morning to “Eurostar it” to Paris to be reunited with my little push bike to ride all the way home again. We will ride about 120 miles over the next two days to arrive in Dieppe on the Saturday afternoon to take a late afternoon ferry to Newhaven. On the Sunday, we ride the best part of 65 miles over the very poorly named “Downs” to arrive in South London. And I’m doing all this to raise money for research into finding some answers to this horrible disease. If you would like to sponsor me please follow the attached link. If you just want to learn a bit more about Michael, Crohn’s or the bike ride, look out for my next email.

[INSERT LINK]

Thanks for reading my email

[SIGNATURE]