

Dear []

The training miles are clocking up. The sponsorship is growing ([£] so far from all the riders) and my 4" of saddle is no more comfortable to sit on for four hours than it was a month ago.

I'm not sure I told you this, but Michael's efforts (more about him later) have inspired two previous groups of riders to raise over £150,000. The Guts in Motion bike ride (if you pause and think about the name of the ride for a minute it brings a smile and a wince to your face at about the same time!!) raised £50,000 in the first year and over £100,000 in the second year. This provided enough money to fund the whole two year research programme that I mentioned in my last email. Thinking about it, I guess the two things that strike me about this ride that I haven't really seen in relation to a charitable event like this before are:

- the effort that Michael and his ride team put into making us aware of the disease we are trying to beat, the research that is happening and planned and the difference I can make; and
- the direct and immediate link between the money and the research it funds.

I've met [had the chance to meet] the guy who is conducting the current research project and heard about the programme and the results. Equally, I get to hear first-hand what it's like to suffer from Crohn's through Michael and just how much difference I can make to people's ability to live a normal life. Speaking of Michael, time for a quick update. As you know he had his bowel transplant last year. Since then, he's been fighting infection (he's added Penicillin to his name!) and he's been trying to persuade his stomach to work. Having not had to digest any food for two years, it's being a bit stubborn.

[•TO BE COMPLETED NEARER THE TIME]

I accept that any discomfort I suffer on the bike is very minor in comparison, but, trust me, being on the bike is nothing like sitting in the armchair at home. And while we are on the subject of discomfort, I've been going on these training rides and the stories of the Downs are beginning to bother me. Apparently, the Downs are anything but. Those battle hardened riders of last year tell me that the Sunday section +is pretty much 40 miles up hill from Newhaven! Surely not? Well, apparently so. The last 20 miles are downhill but before lunch all the gradients are up. Anyway, I'm committed now so it is what it is.

If you do want to support me on the ride and help the next research programme get off the side, please follow the link. Remember, everything I raise goes to the research pot. All the costs are covered.