

We are pleased to feature inspiring stories from talented Georgians. Please get in touch if you would like to feature in a future edition.



David Haywood (OG '13)

► World by Bike

On September 3 2018, I rode out of my front door in Surrey, and set off around the world.

I was following the official circumnavigation criteria of riding 18,000 miles, in one direction, passing through two points on opposite sides of the world (for me, Madrid and Wellington, New Zealand).

From London I rode down to Lisbon, through France and Spain before tackling a coast-to-coast across North America: from New York, along Route 66, to snowstorms in New Mexico, ultimately reaching Los Angeles, California. Escaping winter, I saw in Christmas and New Year in New Zealand, before a dash up the Australian coast, from 40°C summer in Sydney, to North Queensland as the monsoon descended.

10,000 miles of Asia beckoned, riding from Singapore to Bangkok, up through rural Vietnam, then west to Mandalay, Myanmar. Due to visa complications I flew into Xi'an, China, riding the Silk Road past the end of the Great Wall and the Gobi desert, before being escorted by the Chinese police across the secretive Xinjiang region. Kazakhstan seemed almost European comparatively! Kyrgyzstan challenged me with 3000m mountain passes, and Uzbekistan delivered a tough 1500km stretch of empty 44°C desert, eventually ending at the Caspian Sea. A Soviet-era cargo ship dropped me in Azerbaijan, where the Caucasus led me to Georgia. The Black Sea coastline guided me to Istanbul and back into Europe, where I cut across Greece, Albania and along the Adriatic. Reaching the Alps, I rode from Slovenia to Switzerland, completing the longest ride of the trip (317 miles / 510km) from Geneva to Paris, taking me back into familiar territory, having cycled from London to

Paris during my Lower Sixth year at St. George's Paris led to Calais, Dover and eventually to London, arriving home after 21,619mi / 34,793km, 33 countries and 349 days. As the overwhelming majority of circumnavigators head east due to prevailing winds, I believe I became the youngest person to circumnavigate the globe westbound by bike, but as it's not an official record, I can't be sure.

Being alone, battered by northern Chinese winds, or having an unidentified animal attack my tent in -12°C weather helped expose some of the deepest fears and frailties that adventures can push you to confront, and overcome. Such challenges force you to take personal responsibility for getting yourself from A to B, whilst teaching you when to seek help to reach the goal - I think they're good lessons to learn. The support I received and hospitality throughout was incredibly humbling, motivating and encouraging. The trip route, blog and social media can be found through www.david-haywood.com/around-the-world-by-bike, along with a link to my fundraising page for the anti-trafficking charity IJM.

I am looking forward to starting at Queen's University, Belfast to study Medicine.