

My challenge by Charlie Griffiths

As you may or may not know I was born with an eye condition called Nystagmus. This means my eye muscles are weak and I have to work harder to see things as I have little or no control over my eyes and results in double vision or as I call it 4D. This makes everyday life a challenge for me effecting my balance and when tired gives me double vision

This rapid eye movement gives the impression to the outside world of a person with “wobbly eyes”. After the success and blisters from last year's London 10km run where I ran the streets of London with my father as a guide I decided once again to push myself with a new wacky challenge to raise money for charity. When I was younger the doctors said I properly wouldn't be able to cycle but I wasn't going to take no for an answer. I have always enjoyed cycling around our village but have always found it difficult with judging distances and spotting pot holes. So when we were thinking of my next challenge, I couldn't help but think how cycling to Paris could push me a bit further. With the help of several guides / supporters including my father I decided to cycle on a specially designed route from Hampshire to Paris. Sounds a bit crazy but I guess I am.

So we set off on 11th July full of fear and trepidation! We needed to complete the first stage of 34 miles on the French side in four hours as the ferry had only docked at 2pm and we had taken a whole hour to get out of Dieppe. We joined the green route which fortunately is made up of disused railway tracks and cycle paths so we arrived at our goal in Forges Les Eaux on target. It was absolutely knackered but I am very proud of what we had done. Stage 3 & 4 was very tough with 38 and 41 miles through glorious French countryside respectively but this time with some massive climbs included. I never gave up and did not walk one hill unlike some of the older members of the support team!! I had some scary close shaves with a French bus, a quad bike and a French dual carriage way we finally crossed the finish line at the Eiffel Tower at 4pm on Bastille Day after 160 miles! What a crazy, wild final day including staying in the home of Louis XIV (the Sun King) before setting off for Paris via lunch in the grounds of Versailles before hitting Paris mid-July 14th parade and the add fun of a President Trump state visit!

After a celebratory drink at the Eiffel Tower we navigated across Paris and delivered the bikes to the Gard du Nord Eurostar then we went off to see the Fireworks and a well-earned rest. I did not once given up on any of the hills, managed to negotiate Paris traffic, gained a sore backside and devoured many a croissant!

So far I have raised over £2000 for a charity that is so close to me and has benefitted me and others massively, Sailing for the blind. A couple of years ago I was so lucky to be introduced to this charity, that allows visually impaired and blind people to sail, without being told they can't, which so many take for granted. There are many wonderful individuals that give up their precious time in their busy lives to help people like myself enjoy sports and even compete at national and international levels. Many of the sailors had been born blind or impaired yet some developed a disease that has turned their whole world upside down. Thanks to this charity myself and others like me can do what we love, with some of the most inspiring people and it allow me to feel like I'm not alone. It would mean the world to me if you were to sponsor me for a charity that has changed my life and hopeful many more.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/charlie-griffiths14>

Thank you for your support and encouragement







