



Cycling to The Ashes

A SOLO CYCLE EXPEDITION WITH A DIFFERENCE!

14 MONTHS, 25,000KM....

LONDON TO BRISBANE...ON A BIKE, WITH A CRICKET BAT!

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"I've known Oli since our school days and can vouch for his sanity! Cycling To The Ashes is an ambitious and exciting expedition for two very worthwhile charities. I wish Oli the very best of luck and look forward to seeing him on his bike in Brisbane in November 2010!"

Andrew Strauss – (England Cricket Captain)

"England, and cricketers across the world, need this man to succeed. His mission, and its valiant causes, are an inspiration. Let's just hope he carries the urn back on his return leg."

Angus Bell (Author of *Batting on the Bosphorous, Slogging The Slavs & Down And Out Down Under*)

"I've known Oli for many years now and can back him unreservedly. Well not quite unreservedly for, unlike Andrew Strauss, I can't vouch for his sanity – cycling to Brisbane!? It's such a stupid, brave thing to do that he deserves all the funding he can get. As a Lord's Taverner I'm naturally delighted that he is raising funds for us. I'm equally pleased he is supporting the fantastic work of the British Neurological Research Trust. Thank heavens there's no such thing as a three seater bike, otherwise I might be tempted to go too"

Tim Brooke-Taylor (The Goodies and a Lord's Taverner)





1. EXPEDITION AIMS

1. To cycle approximately 25,000km solo and unsupported from **LORD'S CRICKET GROUND, LONDON** to **BRISBANE CRICKET GROUND ("THE GABBA")** in time to see England play Australia in the first Ashes Test Match of the 2010/11 series, in November 2010.
2. **TO PLAY, PROMOTE AND TEACH CRICKET IN SCHOOLS AND CLUBS** in up to 28 countries that I cycle through on my route.
3. To raise £4 (£100,000) for every kilometre that I cycle, for the two chosen charities – the **BRITISH NEUROLOGICAL RESEARCH TRUST (BNRT)** and **THE LORD'S TAVERNERS**.



An illustration at the top of the page features two cricket grounds: the Lord's Cricket Ground in London on the left and the Brisbane Cricket Ground on the right. Between them is a line-art skyline of London, including the Big Ben clock tower and the Gherkin. A cyclist is shown on the right, carrying a bicycle and a cricket bat. The title "Cycling to The Ashes" is written in a large, bold, black font across the middle, with a red cricket ball icon replacing the letter 'o' in "to".

Cycling to The Ashes

2. THE CYCLIST



Hello! My name is Oli Broom, I am a 29 year old Englishman, and I am about to set off on the journey of a lifetime. "Cycling To The Ashes" is my attempt to raise plenty of money for two exceptional charities, to **test myself to the limits** and to see parts of the world I have always wanted to see. What better way to see the world, and to meet its people, than on a bike?

I grew up in Cookham, Berkshire and went to school in Buckinghamshire and then Oxford. In 2003, I graduated from Durham University, where I studied French and Spanish. During the preceding year I had spent 8 months as a student in Grenoble, France and 4 months as a gardener in Spain. While my time in France allowed me to get into the mountains to do plenty of skiing, the beautiful Andalucian hills inspired me to **jump on my old mountain bike** and get exploring. I began planning an extended tour of North Africa after university, but the bright lights of London and a good career were too alluring, so I went to Cass Business School to do a masters degree in Property Valuation and Law in 2003/4 and got a place on the graduate scheme of an international property consultancy, where I qualified as a Chartered Surveyor in 2006. I recently resigned to allow more time to plan "Cycling To The Ashes", an expedition that will provide me with a change of direction, and a chance to realise my dream of undertaking a long-distance cycle expedition.

I am relaxed but very ambitious and driven. I am very excited about making this expedition a success. Sport has dominated my life, and from my experience captaining county cricket sides in my youth, to being a member of successful university sports teams and running the London Marathon, I appreciate the **drive and effort** needed to succeed. This trip will be very tough, both physically and mentally, but I will rely on the same life skills that have served me well up until now! I can't wait to tackle everything that is thrown at me on my way to Australia (literally as well as metaphorically, if reports of violent stone throwing children in Asia are anything to go by!).

I am looking forward to **blogging** on my laptop, and creating an exciting interactive environment on the **expedition website** where "Cycling To The Ashes" will thrive. When I am not in the saddle, I am looking forward to meeting the people (and cricketers!) of Europe, Asia and Australasia, and teaching school children of all ages about a sport which they may not have heard a great deal about. I have chosen to tackle the expedition alone as I want to meet as many **local people** as I can on my route - an important and fascinating aspect of any long distance journey. I recently spent ten days cycling through northern France, as a training exercise and a holiday to see friends; if the people of northern France are anything to go by, I expect the locals to be one of the highlights of the trip.



The illustration shows a route from London to Brisbane. On the left, a sign reads 'LONDON LORDS CRICKET GROUND NWS' above a drawing of the stadium. A line of icons representing various landmarks (pyramids, a cathedral, a person) connects the two cities. On the right, a sign reads 'BRISBANE CRICKET GROUND' above a drawing of the stadium. A cyclist is shown riding a bicycle towards the Brisbane ground.

Cycling to The Ashes

3. MY INSPIRATION FOR “CYCLING TO THE ASHES”

Plenty of people, writers and journeys have inspired me to undertake this cricketing and cycling expedition. But two things in particular link the expedition, and have made it become “Cycling To The Ashes.”

A FRIEND

In October 2005, an old school and university friend who I used to play a lot of cricket and golf with, James Taylor, was on holiday in Portugal and while taking a morning swim, he ducked over a wave and hit his head on a sand bank. He was immediately unable to move. James had broken the C5 bone in his neck, and he is now completely paralysed from the middle of his chest down, with limited movement in his upper body and hands. Four years later, and James still needs 24 hour care. His determination and courage in such difficult circumstances has been truly inspirational. The BNRT undertake essential research into injuries like James’.



CRICKET

I’ve got used to the fact that I’ll never win The Ashes for England, but I figured the very least I can do is support the team in their quest! Flights to Australia are expensive so I thought I’d cycle there, and on the way find out about, and teach cricket in up to 28 countries around the world. Did you know that Budapest has a thriving cricket scene, or that bitterly cold winters can’t dampen enthusiasm for the game in Kazakhstan? I can’t wait to find out more about the weird and wonderful world of cricket, the game that means so much, to so many people all over the world. I have games organised already in some fantastic places....read more on Pages 5/6!





4. “YOU’RE PLAYING CRICKET *WHERE?*”

10	The number of Full ICC Member countries (ICC – International Cricket Council, cricket’s world governing body)
34	The number of Associate ICC Member countries
60	The number of Affiliate ICC Member countries
49%	Percentage of countries worldwide that are members of the ICC
4,000,000,000	The approximate cumulative TV audience of the 2007 ICC World Cup, making it the second most watched single sporting event in the world.

Cricket is a sport in transition. There is huge debate about which direction the sport will go in the next 5, 20, 100 years due to the birth of Twenty20. Whatever your view, there is no doubt that cricket has reached huge new audiences in the past 5 years. This is only set to grow, I want “Cycling To The Ashes” to play its own part in the development of the game worldwide.

On the map below, the countries in red are ICC members – you may be surprised to see how many countries on my route are members: Belgium, Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Turkey, Iran, China, Thailand and Indonesia amongst them. But only 10 countries in the world play cricket at the highest level. That fact suggests there is **huge potential for the development of cricket**. It will surely eventually become a truly global sport.



The 94 other ICC Member countries all have aspirations to play cricket at a higher level, even if not Test level. And it’s not just the ICC member nations who hold this ambition. There are a host of countries that have not yet obtained membership, that have thriving cricket leagues, and are doing all they can to improve.



Cycling to The Ashes

One of the aims of “Cycling To The Ashes” is to **play, promote and teach cricket in the countries I cycle through**. I envisage playing competitive cricket, street cricket, beach cricket, indoor cricket. I imagine I’ll do some umpiring. I will play cricket with adults and children. I will promote “Cycling To The Ashes” as a learning device in schools in the 28 or so countries I cycle through, as it is of course the **next generation** that are the sport’s future.

My route will be tailored to take in schools who are interested in hearing about the project. I want to visit as many schools as I can to tell them about a great sport, and perhaps inspire them to take it up if they don’t already play. In cricket-mad countries like India, Bangladesh and Australia I am looking forward to seeing the way that the sport is played and taught in schools.

I have been lucky enough to be able to use some excellent contacts to approach a number of Cricket Boards overseas. The reaction from clubs in many countries has been fantastic and I am really excited about visiting and playing in the unexpected cricket corners of the world, and also of course some of its most famous homes (India, Bangladesh and Australia).

5. THE CHARITIES

“Cycling To The Ashes” provides me with the ideal opportunity **to raise a huge amount of money** for my two chosen charities, the BNRT and The Lord’s Taverners.

BNRT - British Neurological Research Trust (Charity No. 298098)

The BNRT at the Institute of Neurology at University College London was established in 1987 to support the research needed to find a method of repairing damage to the brain and spinal cord in patients suffering from the crippling effects of spinal cord injury, birth injuries, strokes, head injuries, multiple sclerosis and degenerative conditions such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases.

The project, supported by the BNRT is under the direction of Professor Geoffrey Raisman, who has dedicated his entire career to finding a cure for spinal cord injuries:

“Medical and surgical advances have seen an endless stream of treatments that previously seemed inconceivable – antibiotics, immunisation, heart, lung, liver, kidney transplants, blood transfusion, skin grafting, artificial hips and knees. We need support to sustain current work. This will open the door to the repair of spinal cord injury and, following that, to stroke, blindness and deafness caused by injuries to nerve fibre connections.”

(Professor Geoffrey Raisman, July 2009)

Since the early 1990’s Raisman has been working with a team of scientists to develop a process to use olfactory ensheathing cells to bridge the gaps left by spinal cord injury; the results have been beyond his wildest dreams. In clinical trials, not only did the cells survive the





transplant, but critically they also bridged the gap allowing new nerves to grow and movement to return.

In December 2006 trials on human patients began with the aim of restoring movement in injuries known as “brachial plexus avulsions”, essentially spinal injuries that paralyse the arm causing acute pain and commonly caused by traffic accidents. If this proves successful, it could provide cures for a variety of spinal nerve damage including those sustained by James.

Tragically, the BNRT is currently suffering from a severe lack of funds, so any donation will be received with immense gratitude, and will help Professor Raisman and his team continue with their ground-breaking research, and give hope to the thousands of people, all over the world, who find themselves in the same position as James.

Visit www.ion.ucl.ac.uk/research/hbir/spinal_repair_unit.htm for more information about the BNRT.

The Lord’s Taverners (Charity No. 306054)

The Lord’s Taverners was founded in and based upon cricket, and helps young people, particularly those with social, environmental, physical or learning disadvantages, to enjoy cricket and other sporting and leisure activities.

It was founded in 1950 by a group of actors in the Tavern at Lord's Cricket Ground. They wished to give something back to the game they loved, their aim being to help and encourage young people to participate in the game of cricket, especially those who perhaps would not otherwise have the opportunity.

Over the years, their charitable mission has developed and broadened and they have raised money through the tireless work of members and volunteers across the country, often capitalising on the celebrity network that has been a key strength since its foundation.

Fifty per cent of funds go to cricket projects - equipment and competitions for those young people playing the game at grass roots level in schools and clubs. The other half is awarded to special needs schools or organisations, supporting their work to encourage youngsters to participate in recreational activities and a wide range of disabled sports. They are passionate about providing mobility and they supply specially adapted minibuses at a rate of almost one a week. They are also one of the leading funders of sports wheelchairs.



THE LORD’S TAVERNERS



6. PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

The ball is rolling! "Cycling To The Ashes" was featured on **Cricinfo.com**'s "The Corridor" blog on 1st August. The Publicity Campaign will run for the life of the expedition and beyond - I am keen to create a legacy, so that the journey does not end when I pedal into Brisbane.

MAKING SPONSORSHIP WORTHWHILE – media exposure is of paramount importance in making sponsorship worthwhile. It is also of great importance to the expedition as a fundraising tool. I have already secured the publicity listed at the bottom of this page, and am in contact with a number of other members of the local, national and international media. Reaction to date tells me that "Cycling To The Ashes" will reach an enthusiastic worldwide audience:

LAUNCH – Further details on the launch will follow on the expedition website in due course. Radio, TV and the printed media will be invited to attend the moment that I begin the expedition outside Lord's Cricket Ground in London.

FILM DOCUMENTARY – "Cycling To The Ashes" is currently in negotiations to film the entire trip professionally, with a view to producing a feature length documentary to be distributed.

EXPEDITION WEBSITE - The expedition website goes live in mid-August, and will be the focal point of the expedition. It has been designed as an interesting, informative and interactive way for people to follow the expedition's progress, and will provide a platform for the "Cycling To The Ashes" to reach a worldwide audience. I will be updating the website / blog regularly from my laptop while on the road. It will be an interesting and evolving media tool.

- **Telegraph Media Group** – I will be interviewed prior to departure by a sports journalist for this leading media group. (*"The Daily Telegraph is read by 2,075,000 adults every day. In March 2009 the Telegraph website received 27 million hits"*).
- **Cricinfo.com** – Will Luke is to write a feature article on the expedition for Cricinfo.com. The expedition has already featured on "The Corridor" blog, and will feature more times throughout the journey on this and "The Buzz," which *"brings slices of cricket life ranging from the curious to the obscure; from off-beat to bizarre."* (*"Cricinfo is the world's leading cricket website and among the top five single-sport websites in the world. Now a wholly owned subsidiary of ESPN Inc, Cricinfo reaches over 10 million users every month"*).
- **WideWorld Magazine** - this online and printed adventure travel magazine will run 3 news stories, one feature article, provide embedded video and picture content on their website, and promote the expedition in their weekly newsletter. (*Launched as an antidote to uninspiring web and print travel magazines, "WideWorld aims to inform and most of all inspire you to get out and about. You'll find tales of adventure and exploration, tips on finding the best camping spots, videos of adventure sports and advice on how to take up sea kayaking."*)
- **Sport.co.uk** – I will have my own blog, listed on the home page of this independent sport website. (*"Launched in January 2008, Sport.co.uk plans to be the largest internet sports portal for the United Kingdom. We aim to cover sports results and up to the minute news and features covering a whole range of sports"*)



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7. SPONSORSHIP

This is a journey that will unite, educate and inspire. It will encourage people to strive to achieve their dreams. Due to the media interest that is due to surround the expedition, this is a great opportunity for companies to gain exposure for themselves and their products.

Sponsorship opportunities are varied, as are the benefits to your company.

15 BENEFITS OF SPONSORSHIP

- **Title Sponsorship** - Cycling To The Ashes with "YOUR COMPANY" and your own page on the expedition website (Available with financial support).
- **Significant branding** on bike, panniers, clothing designed to optimise TV and printed media exposure.
- Significant branding on all **expedition literature** including material for presentations during the expedition.
- Significant branding and product placement in the **documentary of the expedition**.
- Significant exposure at the **Expedition Launch** outside **Lord's Cricket Ground, London**.
- For companies associated with cricket there is the benefit of direct exposure for your brand in **4 of cricket's "big 10"** - England, Australia, Bangladesh and of course India, as well as in up to 20 countries where the sport is growing.
- **Photography of your corporate brand / banner** in up to 28 countries with a total population of more than 4.75 billion across Europe, Asia and Australasia.
- Photography of your products and merchandise in **extreme environments** in up to 28 countries across Europe, Asia and Australasia.
- Acknowledgement of personal and corporate support in the **planned book of the journey**.
- Association with **significant celebrity endorsements**.
- **Your product field-tested** in some of the harshest environments on the planet (deserts, mountains, high plateaus, rainforests)
- Valuable reviews and **product feedback**.
- Regular and interesting updates from the road.
- Offer of speaking at a corporate event.
- **Flexibility** with regards marketing. I will work with you to tailor a package to **suit your needs**.

Sponsorship of this cricketing and cycling journey gives your company the opportunity to link itself to a hugely ambitious, but also very different kind of expedition; one that will unite, inspire and educate, that will encourage others to strive to reach their dreams. I have the energy and determination to work with you to make our relationship one of exceptional value.



8. THE ROUTE



England (5 October) – I am lucky enough to have some very supportive friends, a few of whom are joining me on the ride from Lord’s Cricket Ground to Dover. This is a beautiful ride that I have done before, so it will be a nice leisurely introduction before they head home and I jump on a ferry to Northern France.

Europe (6 October – 16 November) - I’ll pedal through the farmland of Northern France and Belgium to Strasbourg where I’ll nip across Southern Germany to the Danube. I’ll follow the river (and the flat Danube cycle path!) as far as Belgrade where I’ll head south to Skopje and Thessaloniki in Northern Greece. From here, in a bid to miss the Central Asian winter, when snow makes most mountain passes impossible, I’ll jump on a boat from Thessaloniki to Alexandria in Egypt.

Africa / Middle East (20 November – 15 April) - Upon arrival in Alexandria, I’ll turn east and head through northern Egypt to the border with Jordan at Aqaba. From there I’ll carry on up through Jordan and Syria to Damascus, somewhere I’m particularly excited about seeing. After Syria it’ll be the south-eastern corner or Turkey, before I begin to head east again across the southern edge of the Black Sea in Iran. The political volatility in this part of the world may see me take a more northern route through Armenia and Azerbaijan, but I will leave a decision until the last possible moment as I’m keen to cycle through Iran. I will keep a close eye on the country’s political stability over the coming months. Nevertheless, it is in eastern Iran that I plan to cross into Turkmenistan to begin the Central Asian leg.



The illustration shows a route from London to Brisbane. On the left, a sign reads 'LONDON LORDS CRICKET GROUND NWS' above a green field. In the center, a line drawing depicts a landscape with mountains and a pyramid. On the right, a sign reads 'BRISBANE CRICKET GROUND' above a green field. A person is shown with a bicycle and a cricket bat.

Cycling to The Ashes

Asia (16 April – 30 September) - By now, the worst of the Central Asian winter will have passed. But before I hit the mountains I'll have the Karakum desert of Turkmenistan. Pedalling north into Uzbekistan, I'm excited to be joining the ancient silk roads, always a source of fascination for me.

At this stage I will head towards Almaty in Kazakhstan, before turning south through the Tien Shan mountains of Kyrgyzstan and towards Kashgar in Northern China. I will cycle south through Tibet** and skirt to the east of the disputed Jammu and Kashmir region, before heading to New Delhi, capital of cricket-mad India. Across Northern India I'll pedal, and into Bangladesh, where I'll contemplate the crossing of Myanmar, a difficult route, but possible. From Laos I will cycle south, through Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, from where I'll catch a boat to Darwin In Australia.

***NOTE: The Chinese authorities do not currently allow lone cyclists through Tibet. This situation may change any month. However, if it does not change then my route will take me across Northern China, from where I will drop down into Laos and on into Thailand. I have planned this route as a back-up to the more complicated route through Tibet, India, Bangladesh and Myanmar.*

Australia (1 October – 20 November) – from Darwin I'll pedal towards the “red centre” on the Stuart Highway. I will turn off at Tennant Creek where I'll cycle east towards Mount Isa and Longreach. Brisbane will be within my grasp now, as I pedal my hardest to reach the city for the beginning of the Ashes at the end of November!

It is a route fraught with difficulties, from the meteorological to the bureaucratic. I have planned my route on a day-to-day basis to allow planning for visas and playing cricket. However, there are bound to be changes to the route. I am keeping a close eye on the political situations in Iran, Tibet, China and Myanmar among others and will, if need be, tailor my route to minimize risk.

