



The start in London Fields, Hackney
Right: Essex lanes



Fact file
The Dunwich Dynamo

- **Distance:** 182km (113 miles).
- **Route:** London, Great Dunmow, Sudbury, Needham Market, Framlingham, Peasenhall, Dunwich.
- **Entry fee:** Free.
- **Conditions:** 100% tarmac. Hot.
- **Bike used:** Ritchey SwissCross with 34mm slicks – ideal.
- **Navigation:** Printed route sheet is available, but I used a GPS. Many people just follow the rider in front.
- **I'm glad I had:** A chain breaker. Bumped into a chap who had just snapped his chain – had I not fixed it, he'd have been stuck 15km shy of the finish.
- **Next time I would:** Set off slower and stop more often.
- **Further info:** southwarkcyclists.org.uk

LIGHTLY FRIED

This year, just 60-odd kilometres into the route, I could feel a repeat performance in the post. After we blasted past two pubs without even pausing for breath, let alone a swift half, I decided enough was enough. Together with Grace, I channelled my inner Mick Lynch and went on strike. They disappeared off, we slowed down. Relief.

We cruised out through Essex, stopping at the delightful village of Finchingfield for a brief refuel. As the evening gave way to the night, we decided it was an appropriate time to produce the single most important item for a joyous Dynamo: a Bluetooth speaker. I know, I know – some people might think this annoying, but singing badly along to Gimme Gimme Gimme, Love Shack and It's Raining Men gave us vital motivation. For hours we rode, sang, danced and laughed our way through Essex. When the sign for Suffolk appeared we thought it high time I produced the pizza I'd prepared earlier.

We spied the end of an open driveway littered with cyclists, some of whom clearly needed to be locked away as they were riding 182km on

Bromptons, and took a few minutes to enjoy our Blue Peter moment. Grace spoke for the first time in nearly an hour: "I'm so damp."

It was the weekend before the crushing 40-degree heatwave, and even in the depth of night we were sweating through our short-sleeved summer kit. Our small-wheeled friends left and we realised we should probably do the same, so we saddled up and rode on. The hours after are a bit of a blur. What I think I remember, I don't wish to repeat. Partly because some of it may not have happened – we were at times undoubtedly delirious – but also because we had agreed a form of *omerta* in advance: what happens on the Dynamo, stays on the Dynamo.

Arriving at Needham Lake around 2:30am it became apparent my riding partner wasn't in great shape: "I need to just lie down for 15 minutes and not speak."

Sensing a sense of humour failure, I abandoned her in a patch of grass that was sheltered from the nearby activity by a small tree and a couple of bins. A few steps away it was a hive of activity. Throngs of hungry cyclists queued in front of a

Battery packs require **waiting hours** to recharge

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VS

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