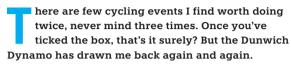


JORDAN GIBBONS Journalist & photographer

Jordan used to be a motorcycle journalist but switched to writing about bicycles for pannier.cc, Cycling UK and others



The Dun Run is a 182km ride through the night from East London to the Suffolk coast. This year was the pearl anniversary of the event, which started with just a handful of riders making the night-time voyage in 1992. Now riders are believed to number in their thousands but no one really counts, which says everything you need to know

So it was that I found myself with my friend Grace, a group of riding buddies, and a few hundred other cyclists, rolling out of London Fields at 7pm for a very long night indeed.

DYNAMO DRAG

Pulling onto the main road out of Epping, it was immediately clear that I had made a mistake: the people we were with were riding much too fast. Within 30 minutes my legs were already beginning to tingle, and on a long drag I was having to push to maintain pace with the group.

As luck would have it, the group pulled alongside another bunch and I spotted a photographer friend, Simon, spinning within. Taking the opportunity for a six-month friendship reunion, and a convenient break as they were chipping along at a more modest pace, I stopped for a chat. After little more than "hellos" and "how are yous", I could already see the Team Time Trial World Championships disappearing into the distance, and I shot off to catch up. Not again, I thought...

This was my third Dunwich Dynamo. I first rode it in 2013 when an audaxing co-worker convinced me it was a great idea. It was billed as a social ride with pub stops but one bloke turned up with a power meter (a big deal back then) and all my doors were blown off in short order. My overriding memory of the event is the temptation I felt to bail out when I saw the soothing glow of a Premier Inn sign at the side of a dual carriageway. The second time was, on reflection, worse,

At the time I was as fit as a broken fiddle. I'd barely been riding and, with a long tour on the horizon, thought it might be a crafty way to shape up a bit. It was not. Through a cruel twist of fate, my friend's frame had broken, a replacement shipped and, with nowhere else to turn, he'd asked me to swap over all the parts at 1am on the day of the Dun Run. I agreed. Later, after zero hours sleep, I got my own bike and set off from London Fields. I was soon in a state of abject ruination. I crawled into Dunwich a broken man.

