



1,000-mile trek by 2CV to fight MND

Description











Using B roads and just a compass, charity worker Matthew Hollis has driven his rusty but trusty Citroën 2CV from the east coast of England to the west coast of Ireland to boost the fight against Motor Neurone Disease.

Matthew, who works for [Motor Neurone Disease Association](#), made local and national headlines last month (April) with his 1,000-mile trek from Ness Point, Lowestoft, to Dunmore Head, Dingle. He gave us an interview just after his journey, which highlighted the needs of those who suffer from MND and those who care for them.

How did you come up with this idea?

For quite a while I've wondered what it would be like to drive without any particular place to go. So, several years ago I just tried it, and found it was possible to navigate without a map and on minor roads, but it would just take time.

The first proper B Road Challenge I did was Land's End to John O'Groats, which took two weeks. I followed that up with the B Road Challenge A to Z, where I tried to find somewhere beginning with every letter of the alphabet in order, again without the use of a map and only using minor roads.

The coast-to-coast version is the third challenge I've done and there will almost certainly be more to come. As for England and Ireland, it fitted the timescale of ten days well and I knew it would throw up some interesting experiences!

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What preparations did you have to make?

Cookie the 2CV is now nearly 40 years old so needs regular looking after basic stuff like changing the engine and gearbox oil, repairing bits and pieces and for this challenge I also touched up some of the paint. I carried a fair number of spares with me just in case, but you can't plan for every eventuality.

Prior to this challenge, Cookie underwent a serious overhaul as sadly, it had rusted badly during the pandemic lockdown. It has new floors, bulkhead, sills and various other patches. Other than the car, the only preparation I did was to pack the essentials and make sure I knew roughly where I would be starting and where I was heading for. Everything else the route, where to stay is not planned so I can never be sure where I will end up each day.

What was your initial aim?

Ultimately to have an adventure, that is me in a nutshell. But by doing so I also hoped to raise awareness of MND and raise a little bit of money while I'm doing it. I set the target at £500. This was smashed on the first day. It looks as though it will probably get to about £3000 by the time I declare the fundraising over.

You could feel the history of the place and there was something quite magical about it all

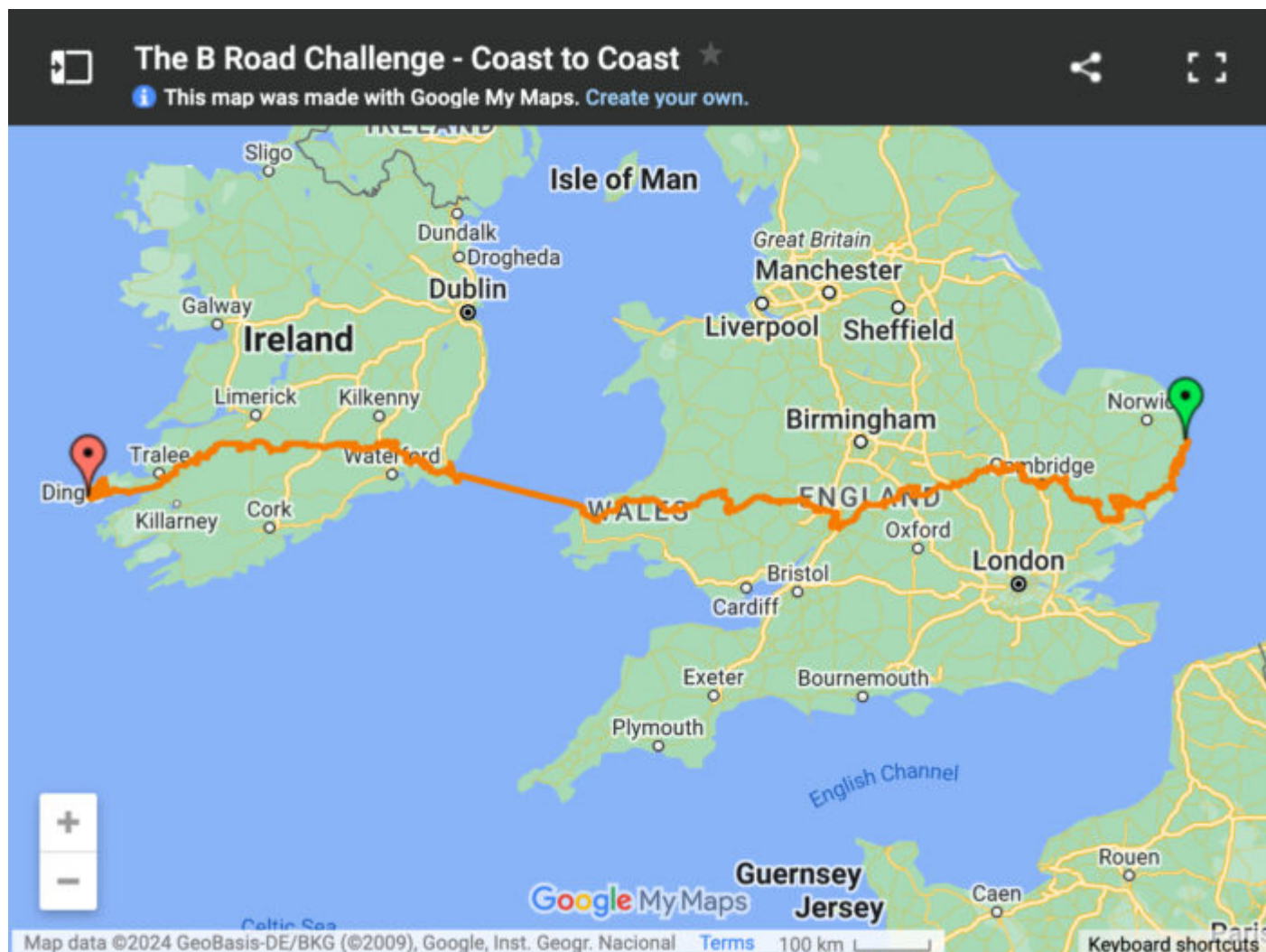
What were the highlights and lowlights of the trip?

Highlights were meeting the various people along the way, some would stop and chat for half an hour and it goes without saying that Irish people are so sociable; discovering a valley in Ireland that was well off the beaten track and so peaceful; and the very far west coast of Ireland on the Dingle peninsula when I was trying to find Dunmore Head, you could feel the history of the place and there was something quite magical about it all.

Lowlights were getting stuck in an orchard on day four and the ensuing damage caused and the rough night I had to spend in the car because of it; and the almost constant rain or flooding, which made everything very damp or muddy and navigating even harder!

Did you accomplish everything you set out to do?

Yes.



How will this help the charity?

The money raised from this challenge will go towards the work of the association. This includes research into treatments and a possible cure, supporting people with MND via grants, support groups, information and a co-ordinated care approach for what is an incredibly complex and varied condition. The association also campaigns for the rights of people with MND and their carers.

How do you help individuals and families cope with MND?

I am an Area Support Co-ordinator. I support people living with and affected by MND. I manage the volunteers who also support them directly through our branch and group network, and I link in with professionals. I have worked for the charity for over ten years, having joined because of my own family connection to the disease.

If any of our residents, or their friends or family, face an MND diagnosis, whatâ??s their next step?

MND can occur at any stage of an adultâ??s life â?? but the older you get, the higher the risk of developing it. There are many risk factors which the association are continuing to understand through

research including age, lifestyle and hereditary factors.

If you are facing an MND diagnosis or know someone who is, please visit the [MND Association website](#) for help and information. You can also call the support line, MND Connect on 0808 802 6262 Mon - Fri 10am-4pm (*Photos of Cookie on the 1,000-mile trek by Matthew Hollis*).

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1. News & reviews

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