Cambridge University Lindås Expedition (or Roge’s solo cycle to Scandinavia)

The Cambridge University Lindås Expedition most definitely did not go to plan. The final destination ended up being Oslo rather than the Lindås peninsula. Even before the start of the trip, the original team of three members had been whittled down to just me, and so we lost university approval. I hope that this report, if nothing else, helps trigger a small debate regarding the policy of only considering expeditions composed of two or more members.

I’m very glad I went solo, to the point that I think I’d find it hard to go back to travelling as part of a team. I learnt a great deal, and I am fairly confident that I would not have learnt nearly as much if I had taken other people with me.

Cycling through the Swedish countryside

If the purpose of travel is to learn about the places one visits, then travelling alone allowed me to immerse myself more fully in those places, natures and cultures. For instance, the thing that struck me most about my time in Denmark was how willing people were to take me into their homes upon asking if I could camp on their grounds. I feel that it would have been much less likely that these people had been willing to take a whole team into their homes; a lone, happy traveller, in contrast, tends to be more approachable. Even if as a team we would have had equal chances of being hosted, we would inevitably have not got as much out of spending time with these families with each other also there.
If, on the other hand, the purpose of travel is to learn about ourselves, then I cannot imagine a better way of achieving this than travelling alone. During the first three weeks of my trip, I grew so fond of the virtually infinite thinking space provided by solo travel, that by the time my friend arrived to complete the last two weeks with me, I often found myself stressed by having someone else there. It was fun to cycle with my friend, but I did not quite have the same freedom and time to sort my thoughts out as during the solo part of the trip.

Logistically, everything went extremely smoothly. No mechanical problems at all, and I consistently made my preliminary deadlines along the way.

In terms of fundraising, I managed to raise £2,000 for the Against Malaria Foundation (which buys around 1,000 mosquito nets). I was very pleased about this, especially considering it was a one-person effort.

I also hugely enjoyed keeping a blog: https://cyclescandinavia.wordpress.com/.

The highlight of Netherlands was how bike friendly it is; of Germany, the way in which its forests took me back to my teenage summers there; of Denmark, the kindness and hospitality of its people. My most special memory of Sweden is its endless woods and lakes, and Norway stood out for the beauty of its countryside, where the gold of pre-harvest fields was the perfect contrast to the darkness of its woods.

At the end of today’s CUEX talk I told a friend about how much I missed this summer’s trip and being on the road. It has changed the way I think about travel in many ways, and I do hope that CUEX considers approving solo expeditions as long as they tick the boxes of originality, safety and feasibility.