

Reading

Carnival Safety Success

This year's Notting Hill Carnival, Europe's biggest street festival, was the best ever. Despite the cloudy skies, the carnival brought the streets to life in its own unique way with record numbers and little reported crime. After the two murders in 2009, there had been major safety worries concerning this year's carnival. To deal with these fears several changes were made. Firstly, the route for the carnival was changed to avoid the narrowest streets in Notting Hill, a residential area with many small roads. Secondly, the carnival organisers provided more stewards and they received better training. Finally, the organisers ensured that the ending time, 9 p.m., was closely observed.

Following these changes, Carnival 2010 saw more than a million people party in the streets of Notting Hill. More than 3,000 people dressed in spectacular colourful costumes and paraded and danced through the streets, crowds of four and five people deep lined the route to try and see the event. Residents partied on apartment balconies and even the police took part. Apart from the carnival parade, the local area was filled with sound systems pumping out music of all different kinds – Samba, Reggae and Rap music being the most common.

Police yesterday said that 56 arrests were made over the weekend, which included 30 arrests for pick-pocketing and three for robbery. The chairman of the Notting Hill Carnival Trust, Chris Mullard, yesterday said, "The criticism of the event has been ill-founded and I hope people will now see the carnival for what it is; a wonderful opportunity to project the multiculturalism that is metropolitan London."

Task 1. Decide whether the statements 1-9 are TRUE (T) or FALSE (F) according to the text you have just read. Mark sentences as true or false.

1. In Europe, there is a bigger festival than Notting Hill Carnival.
2. The weather was very good at this year's Carnival.
3. The carnival parade went a different way this year.
4. Many activities continued till midnight.
5. Over a million people wore special costumes.
6. For some people, it was difficult to see the parade.
7. There were many kinds of music.
8. More than half the arrests were for theft.
9. The carnival represents only one group or community in London.

Cycling to India

When I was 11, during a junior school leavers' assembly in front of all the mums and dads, my headmistress asked my class what they wanted to do when they left school. Footballer, doctor, film star, politician, came the replies. My answer? "I want to cycle around the world and raise money for charity." A big cheer resounded around the school hall. "So cool."

Little did they know that 20 years later, I would be setting off on a 9,000-mile journey to India. On my own. Carrying everything I needed on my steel-framed bicycle, affectionately known as "Shirley". I would like to say it was planned to the nth degree and that everything ran like clockwork. In reality, I was arrested twice, chased by wild dogs, beaten and wined and dined by the mafia and attacked by bandits.

On my last day, I was cycling through the Bandipur wildlife park in southern India. My

flowery bike wasn't great camouflage and startled a number of elephants as I passed. They decided to charge. The advice is "if an elephant charges you, stand your ground, and bow your head to show respect."

What tosh! With 30 tonnes of muscle and bone crashing towards me, destroying small trees and making the ground vibrate under my feet, there was no way I was standing firm. I dropped my bike into third gear and floored it.

Another time I ran out of food and water in the desert and was woken one morning to find maggots in my hair and beard. Yet the greatest memories are of so many wonderful people I met in every country, who invited me into their homes to celebrate local festivals, play music, dance, sing, eat, and share each other's cultures, beliefs, history and ways of life.

After six months' cycling, I rolled into Chembakolli, a tiny village, my final destination. It was my 31st birthday – 20 years since I had first dreamed up the idea. I was greeted by a carnival of people playing the drums, singing, cheering, and waving banners saying "Happy birthday". All I could do was crouch down and cry tears of joy. I'd cycled 9,000 miles from England to India. I'd lived my dream.

Task 2. Choose ONE answer for each question according to the text.

10. When did the writer tell everyone what he wanted to do?

- A. After he left school
- B. During a class talk
- C. During school assembly
- D. Before he went to school

11. What does the phrase 'ran like clockwork' mean?

- A. It went with only a few mistakes.
- B. It went on time.
- C. It went very badly.
- D. It went without any problems.

12. Why did the elephants run after the bike?

- A. They don't like bikes.
- B. The bike surprised them.
- C. They didn't recognize it.
- D. The elephants liked the flowers.

13. How did he get to safety?

- A. He ran away.
- B. He went faster on his bike.
- C. He stood his ground.
- D. He dropped the bike.

14. What does he remember most about his journey?

- A. Running out of food and water in the desert
- B. Learning about what life is about.
- C. Being attacked by bandits
- D. Spending time with locals in the country

15. How did he feel when he finished his journey?

- A. It was a sad experience.
- B. It was the end of all his dreams.
- C. It was a lifetime achievement.
- D. It was so tiring to do.

Writing

Your school magazine is running a competition. You are invited to describe a journey that you really enjoyed. On a separate sheet of paper write an account (100-120 words) of the journey entitled 'The Journey of My Life.'

Include the following points:

- where you went;
- who you went with;
- how you travelled;
- what happened during the journey;
- why you liked it so much.