



Wheels and Wheelchairs

In collaboration with :



LONDON-BRUSSELS

On Skates and in Wheelchairs
27 August – 1 September 2018

- *Together in Sport-*

Information Document



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LONDON-BRUSSELS 2018

In a few words ...

From 27 August to 1 September 2018,
from London to Brussels,
sixty passionate skaters
and wheelchair users,
covering 60 to 90 km a day for 6 consecutive days,
the skaters will be pushing the wheelchair users.



Aims

The aim of London-Brussels 2018 is to :

- demonstrate that sport can bring together the able-bodied and the disabled to achieve a common goal,
- overcome difficulties through cooperation, sharing and helping each other,
- promote wheelchair access,
- reinforce European cooperation in matters relating to wheelchair accessibility, disability rights and participation in sport,
- sharing these values with the towns we go through.

Effort – Solidarity – Visibility – Pleasure – Sharing – Achieving – «Handicapped but Able» – Together

THE ORGANISERS

Wheels and Wheelchairs (London, UK)

Wheels and Wheelchairs is made up of a group of UK skaters and wheelchair users who go out together in parks and on the streets of London. The wheelchair users are pushed by the skaters, enabling them to enjoy the thrill of speed against the background of Britain's beautiful capital. Wheels and Wheelchairs also tackled the Berlin Inline Marathon last year, and a 6 hour endurance race in Paris.



Wheels and Wheelchairs was set up in 2012, inspired by **Paris to London** (2012) when five wheelchair users were pushed from Paris to London to attend the Paralympics. Since then, Wheels and Wheelchairs have taken part in similar events including **Paris to Brussels** (2014).

This summer, Wheels and Wheelchairs will be taking the lead by overseeing its most ambitious project yet : to complete the triangle by doing London-Brussels 2018 !

Wheels and Wheelchairs Chairman, Janet Richards, said:

"London to Brussels is a wildly exciting adventure for our charity. It will be fantastic to show solidarity with our sister groups in France and Belgium by completing the triangle they started. As a wheelchair user myself I can testify that these unique trips are life-enhancing and enabling. We are most grateful to everyone who has donated their time, energy and cash to making this happen."

For further information : <http://www.wheelsandwheelchairs.co.uk/>

RouliRoula pour Tous (Brussels, Belgium)

RouliRoula promotes all aspects of skating – for recreation, in competitions and as a means of transport.

They are involved in setting up introductory sessions, coaching, races and they have participated in various worthy projects.

Since 2012, the «**RouliRoula pour Tous** » (RouliRoula for all) section participated in European events involving skaters and wheelchair users including Paris-London, Paris-Brussels and Paris-Strasbourg, in addition to several races where able bodied skaters and wheelchair users competed together.



During London-Brussels 2018, they will take full responsibility for the entire route in Belgium.

For further information : <http://www.RouliRoula.com>



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Mobile en Ville (Paris, France)

This non-profit organisation (officially recognized of « public interest ») focuses on equal-access of cities to everyone on wheels. That includes wheelchair users, skaters as well as babies in prams and pushchairs. Mobile en Ville has been working on these issues for the past 20 years.



The association brings together disabled and able-bodied persons (mainly rollerbladers) who have made accessibility their priority, to work together on these three themes :

Awareness, Advice, Living Together.

It is to reinforce their motto 'Living Together' that Mobile en Ville initiated the first of these long distance challenges : Paris-London 2012, Paris-Brussels 2014 and Paris-Strasbourg 2016.

It was through these activities that they created strong and lasting friendships with skaters and wheelchair users from neighbouring countries, thus providing inspiration for the creation of their two sister organisations *Wheels and Wheelchairs* in the United Kingdom and *RouliRoula pour Tous* in Belgium.

On the London-Brussels 2018 challenge, the members of Mobile en Ville will contribute their experience from organising similar trips and their expertise in matters involving wheelchair accessibility. In addition to that, they have also taken on the responsibility of choosing and checking out the short segment of the route that passes through France – from Dunkirk to the Belgian border.

For more information : <http://www.mobileenville.org>

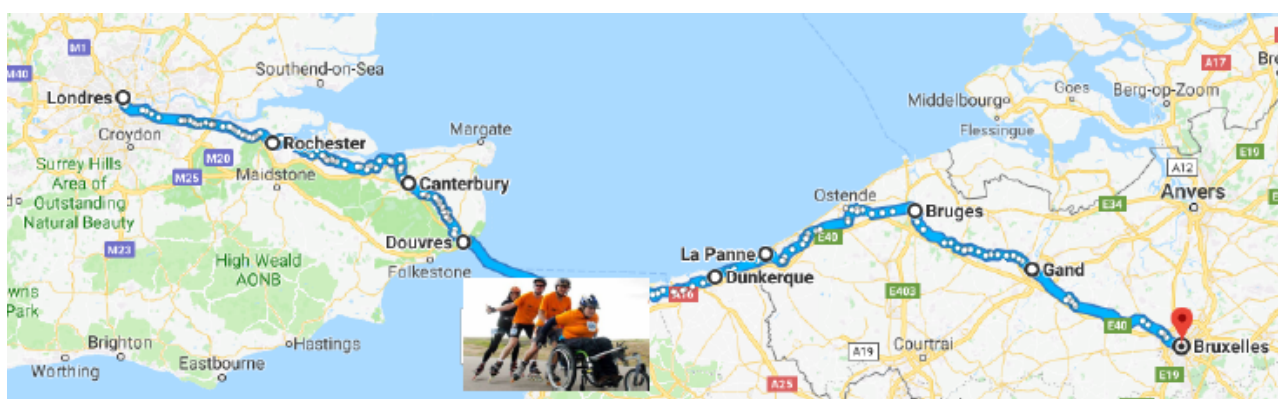


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THE ROUTE

Our route for London-Brussels 2018 has some similarities to the routes of previous events :

- approximately 400 kilometres in 6 days, the distances covered each day are between 60 and 90km,
- using traffic-free cycle paths whenever possible, and quiet country lanes, avoiding busy main roads, in the interests of safety,
- choosing routes that are more suitable for skaters and wheelchair users, avoiding steep uphill climbs, sharp descents and poor quality road surfaces.



We will be setting off from London's Southbank, crossing Westminster Bridge then heading east towards Woolwich via Parliament Square and Tower Bridge. We will be leaving London, on Bank Holiday Monday 27 August and arriving in Brussels on Saturday 1 September.

We will be passing through a large number of towns and cities during those 6 days. That will give us the chance to meet local people, officials and the media... especially in the towns where we will be staying overnight :

Stages*	From	To
Monday 27 August	London	Rochester
Tuesday 28 August	Rochester	Canterbury
Wednesday 29 August	Canterbury	(via ferry from Dover) Dunkirk
Thursday 30 August	Dunkirk	Ostend
Friday 31 August	Ostend	Ghent
Saturday 1 September	Ghent	Brussels

*

Exact route and stage towns to be confirmed



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THE PLAN

The teams

The challenge involves a total of around 60 people (approximately 20 individuals from each of the three countries we will be passing through).

*All the participants, **both the able-bodied and the wheelchair users**, have been chosen on the basis of their enthusiasm for this project, which requires both endurance and determination in addition to constant vigilance and a cheerful disposition in the face of adversity.*

*The **wheelchair users** have a wide variety of conditions (paraplegia, amputations, degenerative illnesses, congenital conditions...). The group also includes participants with 'invisible disabilities' (severe head injury, deafness, organ transplants ...) who will be participating in different roles.*



The Skaters and the Wheelchair Users

The main group are a core of **about 40 skaters pushing the 6 wheelchair users** :

En route, each team will be made up of one wheelchair user being pushed by 3 to 4 skaters, working together and in rhythm. The lead skater will be pushing the wheelchair user, and behind him or her, each skater pushes the skater in front of them.

Changing the position of the skaters within the group allows individuals to take a short break. They would then be ready to step in again when needed, and other skaters may need to help in some more difficult sections (uphill climbs, bad surfaces ...)

In order to keep moving safely at relatively high speeds, we tend to use light weight 'sport' wheelchairs whenever possible, or we attach a third wheel to the front of the wheelchair, thus converting it into a 'racing style' wheelchair that is more stable at higher speeds and when going round corners. They are also equipped with disc brakes.

A small group of elite skaters accompanies the teams to keep the group moving safely forward on the correct route. This group includes a **Lead Marshall, Route Marshalls who will stop the traffic at junctions and a Rear Marshall**.

Behind the skaters is the **back up cyclist**, and when we are travelling on quiet country roads, inaccessible to the coach, we would also have one of our **back up vehicles** with a flashing light following the cortege.



The Back-up Team

About a dozen enthusiastic volunteers (both able-bodied and wheelchair users) will :

- drive the back-up vehicles (the rear-support vehicle, the luggage van ...),
- feed the skaters and the wheelchair users,
- provide snacks whenever the teams are flagging,
- set up the overnight accommodation ...

The Organising Committee

For the past several months, a devoted group of individuals from all three countries have been working hard to lay down the groundwork for this project, including :

- the general concept,
- choosing the route and checking it to make sure it is suitable both for skaters and wheelchair users,
- contacting the local authorities (the Town Halls, the sports clubs, ...),
- choosing appropriate venues for the overnight stops,
- arranging transport requirements (a wheelchair-accessible coach, back-up vehicles),
- the budget and financial matters,
- communication and publicity,
- recruitment and registration of participants...

Transport

To accompany the group, we will be hiring an especially **adapted coach** that is wheelchair-accessible. It will be available for unforeseen situations e.g adverse weather conditions. It will have a platform that can elevate the wheelchair users into the coach, and allocated space in the interior of the coach where the wheelchairs can be fixed securely. These will be used by the wheelchair users who are unable to transfer into one of the standard seats on the coach.

We will use the **ferry** to cross the Channel from Dover to Dunkirk.

We will also have back-up vehicles : a **rear vehicle** (a minibus or a van) and a large van that will be used for **luggage transport** (food, bicycles, personal luggage, wheelchairs, spare wheels, tools, bedding ...)

This vehicle will also be used to transport **certain equipment** that might be needed by our wheelchair users **to facilitate accessibility** (ramps, shower seats ...). This will also provide us with the opportunity to bring these issues up in the places that we visit.



Overnight Accommodation

The final location of our overnight stays are currently being reviewed.

The ideal solution, on the basis of past experience, is making use of **a sports hall or gym** where we lay down our camp beds or air mattresses and sleeping bags. This arrangement (rather than small individual rooms) enables us to all share the same sleeping area. This allows the able-bodied to assist the wheelchair users in the night, when needed. These facilities usually have wheelchair accessible toilets and showers.

Having access to such locations also helps minimise the cost of the trip.

The Budget

The total budget for the entire trip is likely to be around £40,000.

This amount will be sourced in the following way :

- participation fees (£200 for the skaters, £100 for the volunteers and £50 for the wheelchair users),
- fundraising and charitable donations
- gifts
- sponsorship,
- contributions in kind (offers of free accommodation, free meals ...)

Communication, Media

This event is not just a sporting challenge based on friendship. It brings together the able-bodied and the disabled in a spirit of collaboration and highlights the difficulties disabled people encounter on a daily basis, while presenting these individuals in a favourable light.

We will make use of various means to publicise this event (**press releases, social media ...**) before and during the challenge. We aim to provide a positive image of the athletic achievement of the participants in addition to the all-important accessibility issues

During the entire journey, our team (and our local partners) will be contacting **local and national news outlets** to :

- **engage the public** and make them aware of this event,
- make use of this opportunity to promote **wheelchair accessibility**
- highlight and promote **existing local initiatives** in this field.

CONTACTS



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