

52 JET Jaunters on one mission: Get to the astronomical clock on time!

The second JET Jaunt, sponsored by CSC, saw 52 people racing across Europe from St Malo to Prague over one weekend in September. It was won by the winners of the inaugural 2024 Jaunt, friends Lucy Gomes and Sarah Parker.

With all challenges complete, they arrived at the old astronomical clock in the old town of Prague in 1d 13h 35m – only 17 minutes ahead of the runners-up, Jeremy Johnson and Mary Surcouf. Husband and wife Jeremy and Mary had set themselves their own challenge of not using their phones to navigate or book their transport. They relied on asking directions from local people and good old-fashioned map-reading, for which they won the Judges' Choice award.

Teams had to use public transport to take them from St Malo, and they had a choice of two routes – north to Antwerp and Leipzig or south to Freiburg im Breisgau and Salzburg. There was added fun with JET Ambassador Kiley Henley wearing an inflatable squirrel costume, the mascot of Acorn (JET's social enterprise). The squirrel was seen running to the finish line at the astronomical clock in Prague. Kiley was travelling with her brother Alex Henley-Good, who was dressed as a tree.

Of their strategy for winning again, Lucy said: 'We can't give too much away in case we decide to come back for a third year! As there was twice the amount of competition this year, we had to act quickly and just keep moving. There was a lot of thinking on the spot and taking a few risks with timings.'

'The JET Jaunt is an experience like no other, an exciting and thrilling adventure which really gets the heart racing at times. We are so grateful to have had the opportunity to race across Europe again visiting places we would never even think of. Most importantly it's an amazing opportunity to raise money for a great charity and we are overwhelmed by the money raised so far.'

Fundraising manager Caroline Spencer said: 'The second JET Jaunt has been a resounding success, raising more than £25,000 to support Islanders who have a disability or long-term health condition in the workplace.'

'It's one shared experience but 26 different journeys, including getting on the wrong train, getting off at the wrong stop, and broken bike chains. Jaunters have had a lot of fun and camaraderie, seeing places they might not otherwise, and enjoying the kindness of strangers, all while pushing themselves out of their comfort zone.'

'We are incredibly grateful to sponsors CSC, All Island Media and Ports of Jersey, without whom this event just wouldn't happen.'

Read on for Jaunters' journeys...

**Second-time winners Lucy Gomes and Sarah Parker
1 boat, 6 trains, 2 coaches (1 overnight), 2 e-bikes, 2 scooters**

What was your biggest challenge?

On our final leg from Austria to Prague, we were neck and neck with another team who were taking the same journey by train whilst we were on a coach. Our coach was an hour delayed, which led to an intense finish. Adrenaline took over and for the last hour of the journey the pair of us barely said a word to each other, both anticipating the dash to the final challenge and then the finish line. After the final challenge we jumped on the e-scooters to race through the busy, cobbled and narrow streets of the old town to the finish line.

How do you think you will use your prize of a voucher with Lupine Travel?

We were excited to hear the winning prize was entry tickets to a Lupine race of our choice. After some careful consideration, we have registered our interest for the Japan race in 2026.

How would you describe the overall weekend?

An experience like no other, an exciting and thrilling adventure which really gets the heart racing at times. We are so grateful to have had the opportunity to race across Europe again visiting places we would never even think of (or have heard of in some cases). We just about had enough time to make an Instagram reel at each checkpoint for us to look back on.

What would you say to anyone thinking about joining in next year?

Have fun as the stories and experiences you come home with are unforgettable. The team of Jaunters this year were brilliant, the group chat kept us entertained throughout the journey and the atmosphere as people reached the finish line was fantastic. A big thank you to everyone who was involved this year, another amazing experience!

Kiley Henley and her brother Alex Henley-Good

Team name: Nothing Beats a JET Jaunt Holiday

What was your favourite bit?

Kiley: Following everyone else on the app and the support that was offered, alongside some friendly competitiveness! Meeting for the awards at the end was like meeting a group of really good friends. We all had a shared experience, but also very different stories and routes.

Alex: Favourite bit was arriving in Salzburg at 1am to some very friendly and welcoming Oktoberfest participants – certainly an experience! Closely followed by meeting all the participants at the finish line and getting to know all the challengers.

What was the biggest challenge?

Kiley: Alex booked everything other than one ticket that I got online. At 4am on 21 September, our tickets were checked on the train from Salzburg to Vienna and I had booked them for the 27th! I think it was the only time Alex huffed in the whole challenge. I couldn't stop giggling! I also forgot to pack any underwear so we were held up by waiting for shops in Luxembourg to open on day 2. Basically, anything that went wrong was because of me so I think I was the biggest challenge!

Alex: A hotel on the first night wasted precious hours that proved vital.

Why did you sign up to the Jaunt?

JET is an organisation that does extremely important work and I like to support that for personal reasons (living in a neuro-different house, we understand some of the challenges that can be faced in the recruitment and selection journey) and for community reasons (we should be inclusive because it is the right thing to do for people and the best thing to do for businesses). I couldn't make the 2024 Jaunt and was hoping there would be a second one. I couldn't miss a second opportunity!

What would you say to anyone thinking about joining in next year?

Kiley: I will see you there! If the thought even crosses your mind, you really must book it or you will regret it. Every single person said they enjoyed it and most want to do it again. It really is fab!

Alex: You'll have to beat us! We didn't cut the mustard this year but have our eyes firmly on top spot in 2026.

Husband and wife Andy and Jane Burns

Team name: Burns Baby Burns (Euro Inferno)

What was your best bit?

Our best bit was when our bus from Leipzig stopped at Dresden station. We saw three other teams attempting to get on our bus which would have made it a proper foot race to the finish line. The bus driver didn't let them on as they had the wrong tickets. The feeling when our bus left them behind was a proper mixture of excitement and happiness mixed with guilt and sadness for them. It felt like a scene from Race Across the World on TV!

What was your most memorable bit?

This was 100% our taxi around Luxembourg to the checkpoints. Jane made the terrible mistake of telling the driver we were in a race. He thought he was in the Grands Prix taking us down pedestrian only cobbled streets at 70mph. All four wheels were off the ground when we hit the speed bumps. Sketchiest moment was him deciding to reverse across the road at full speed despite oncoming traffic.

What was your biggest challenge?

The worst bit was finding out an hour and a half into a train journey that we were on the wrong train and were heading back to Brussels. The train we were on left from the right platform at the right time but the railway chaos of delays meant the actual train was a delayed one and not ours. Even the ticket inspector didn't notice! That meant we messed up our onwards travel. And the continued delays on all the later trains meant we had to have a night in Leipzig rather than going through the night to Prague. It cost us a podium finish. Gutted beyond belief!

The other big challenge for us was when Andy's bike chain on his hire bike snapped in the middle of Notre Dame in the height of rush-hour. He had to use the bike as a scooter to get us to the nearest bike hub before we could carry on negotiating the very busy Paris streets on two wheels. It was the best way to get around and see the city at the same time. The bikes in Antwerp did not let us down!

Why did you sign up to the Jaunt?

Jane saw the event advertised at a bike clinic that JET were holding at Jardins de la Mer. A leaflet literally blew into her hands so we decided to just go for it! It looked a bit different and fun. We had no intention of actually racing. We were more in it for the experience and to support JET and their fantastic work.

What would you say to anyone thinking about joining in next year?

Absolutely do it! We want to enter again next year as it was such a brilliant experience.

Former JET trustee Lorna Pestana and her husband Jamie**On their second Jaunt, this year they roped in their two children and their partners****What was your best bit?**

The route was fantastic, with the opportunity to pass through five countries over one weekend. Our highlight was doing it with the family as we now have those memories forever.

What was your worst bit?

Lack of decent sleep and a shower. We didn't sleep in a bed from Thursday night to Sunday night but did manage to have a shower after booking a hotel room in Freiburg for a few hours. Standing at a freezing cold bus stop at 3.30am waiting for our bus at 5.50am was not pleasant but we passed the time chatting to other Jaunters and following the other teams on the tracker.

How was your family rivalry?

Our son Dillon and his fiancée Francesca were pretty much on the same route as us and they managed to beat us to the finish line by 21 minutes. Our daughter Robyn and her boyfriend Bradley decided to do a different route, spending the night in Paris and making some travel errors along the way but somehow managed to get to the finish line just over 20 minutes behind us.

The rivalry was friendly but competitive with each team balancing time versus budget. Dillon and Francesca also spent the least amount, whereas Robyn and Bradley spent the most, mainly in bars!

How would you describe the overall weekend?

It's an experience you will never forget. It was fantastic, it takes you out of your comfort zone and gives you a new view of travel and just how easy it is to move through Europe quickly. We are now all hooked and if timings align next year there will be a rematch.

**Husband and wife team Jeremy Johnson and Mary Surcouf
Runners-up, despite choosing to navigate and book without use of their phone****How was it navigating/booking without your phone?**

Booking and navigation was tricky at times. Generally people were really helpful, in booking tickets for us. When you explained what we were doing they got excited and want to help as best they could. We were lucky that as most of the transport we chose wasn't fully booked and we even managed to get moved onto an earlier train as the conductor told us there were spare seats and because we had asked he was happy for us to jump on the earlier train with no extra cost.

What was your best bit?

It was nice going to places we have never travelled before and completing the challenges in areas less travelled. Best part was speaking with the locals who gave us some inside tips and tricks to getting around quicker.

What was your biggest challenge?

Arriving at checkpoints in the earlier hours as there were very few people to ask for directions. The worst bit was right at the end when the taxi driver decided he wanted more money than what we had agreed before getting to the final checkpoints. We got dropped off at the side of a motorway and unfortunately this cost us about 15 crucial minutes.

How would you describe the overall weekend?

It was so much fun but also very tiring. The emotions you go through and places you see in just a short space of time. Also, the group stories and conversations at the end of the race talking to everyone was great as everyone had a different experience and story to tell.