

ANOTHER

100

GREATEST CYCLING CLIMBS

A ROAD CYCLIST'S GUIDE TO BRITAIN'S HILLS

SIMON WARREN

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Vertebrate Publishing, Sheffield
www.adventurebooks.com

Another 100 Greatest Cycling Climbs
Simon Warren



First published in 2012 by Frances Lincoln.
This edition first published in 2024 by Vertebrate Publishing.

VERTEBRATE PUBLISHING
Omega Court, 352 Cemetery Road, Sheffield S11 8FT, United Kingdom.
www.adventurebooks.com

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Front cover: Mam Nick in the Peak District.
Photography by Simon Warren unless otherwise credited.

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A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978-1-83981-233-0 (Paperback)
ISBN: 978-1-83981-234-7 (Ebook)

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Printed and bound in Czechia by Latitude Press.



FOR MUM AND DAD



**Hill steepens
lowest gear
now**

**Cyclists
advised
to walk**

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ORIGIN OF THE TTs

Mention the V718 or the L812 to any time trialist and they will instantly understand what you're talking about. Why? Because they are course codes, an essential part of the tradition and quirkiness of the sport. They may seem to the outsider an archaic way of describing a certain stretch of tarmac, and they appear to defy all logic, but without them the sport of time trialling would not exist today. Turn the clock back to the late 1890s and British cycling was in turmoil, the National Cyclists' Union had been forced to take the bold step to ban all racing on public roads. This was to pre-empt the enforcement of a ban by motorists' groups on all cycling full stop. Cyclists were a menace, said to terrorise motorists, bunch races were sabotaged and on occasion halted by police on horseback charging at the peloton, thrusting sticks into riders' wheels. Not to be undone though, and led by men such as Frederick Thomas Bidlake, an ingenious system was devised to allow racing without attracting the attention of either motorists or the law. The time trial was born. Riders would start

at minute intervals, at the crack of dawn, dressed head to toe in black, leaving from a pre-arranged, but, most importantly, unpublished location. It was this need to keep the locations secret that created the most unusual of all the time trial peculiarities, the course codes.

They appear utterly random if you scan through the back of the CTT handbook, and for the most part they are. The nation was split up into divisions, and each division developed its own system, and conveniently no two are the same. This helps to keep them hidden alright, but makes them all but impossible to decipher. In the case of hill climbs, the majority of courses are named after the

roads they run up so the need for a code was even more relevant.

In some regions you will often find an H in the moniker, and in a couple even an HC! In Yorkshire, however, where all courses begin with a V, the denotation of a hill climb comes in the next two numbers, which are either 89 or 99. Complicated? Yes. 100% British idiosyncrasy? Yes. And may they forever be a part of the fabric of our sport.

HILL CLIMB CODES

KH27	.....	Dovers Hill
S49/HC	.....	Peak Hill
GH/31	.....	White Lane
GH/32	.....	Yorks Hill
BHC/1	.....	Semer Hill
AHC/1	.....	Riber Bank
OHC3	.....	Monsal Head
OHC6	.....	Rowsley Bank
V9920	.....	Halifax Lane
V9916	.....	Cragg Vale
OHC9	.....	Pea Royd Lane
V9912	.....	Jackson Bridge
V897	.....	Norwood Edge
THC4	.....	Carlton Bank
L806	.....	Nick O'Pendle
L812	.....	The Rake
L820	.....	Jubilee Tower
J9/14	.....	Mow Cop
J9/7	.....	Cat & Fiddle
DO/1	.....	Horseshoe Pass

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

I'LL SAY ALL THIS AGAIN JUST IN CASE



**CHECK
YOUR BIKE,
CHECK
YOUR BODY,
AND ALWAYS
WEAR A
HELMET.**

Many of the roads in this book cross the wildest and most inhospitable parts of the nation. You'll often find yourself in open and exposed country so have a good look at the weather forecast before you head out. Although far from impossible, most of the climbs require a good level of fitness so only attempt the really tough ones if you are confident of your ability. Remember that what goes up at 1-in-4 is also likely to come down at 1-in-4, so check your brakes, and most of all have fun.



SOUTH-WEST





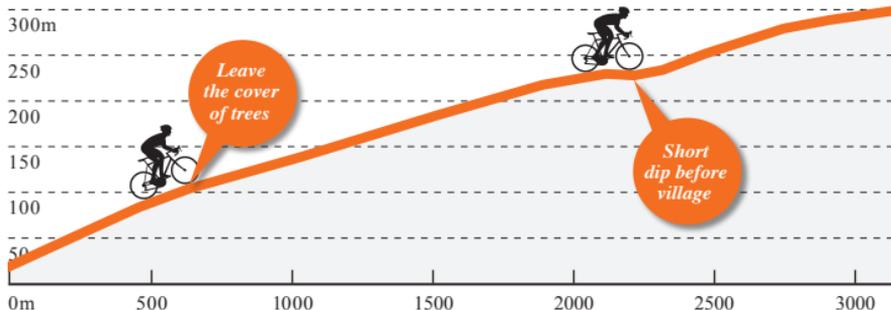
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110 COUNTISBURY HILL

LYNMOUTH, DEVON

One of three great climbs that leave Lynmouth, Countisbury Hill takes you east offering fantastic views out over the Bristol Channel. Begin the climb immediately as you leave town and it's straight up. The sign says 25% as you head into darkness under the trees, but this seems a bit of an exaggeration, it feels more like 20%. As you exit the trees into daylight overlooking Lynmouth Bay, you're through the toughest stretch and, legs burning, you see your next task ahead of you. The long, steady climb, coarsely surfaced, makes it heavy going, but once your legs have recovered from the abrupt start the even gradient will allow you to find a good rhythm. The route snakes left and right as it follows the coastline, climbing all the time as you approach Countisbury, then levels, dips, then rears once more. This time up to 16% delivering you into the final long push to the top at the apex of a sweeping left-hand bend.



FACTFILE

WHERE Leave the centre of Lynmouth and head up and out of town on the A39.

GRID REF SS 753 494 (OS180)

LENGTH 3115m

HEIGHT GAIN 284m

APPROX CLIMB TIME 15mins





MIDLANDS

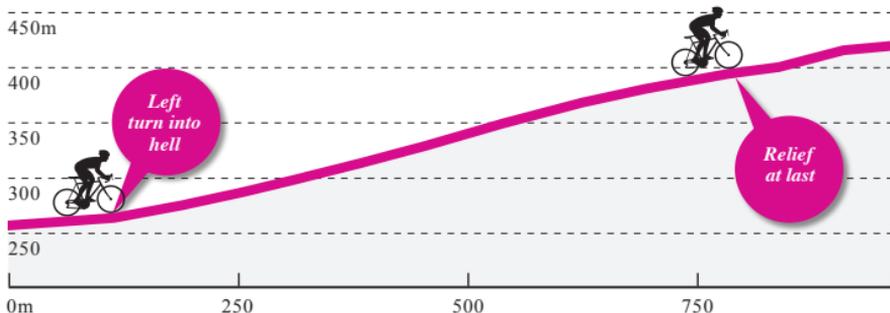




134 ASTERTON BANK

ASTERTON, SHROPSHIRE

On the western edge of the Long Mynd lies the infamous Asterton Bank; although it is also known by many other names, there are none that I can print here. Without being too hysterical, this climb is nothing more than a joyless straight line of pain. Start opposite the old red telephone box, pass the numerous warning signs, across the cattle grid then bend slightly left. You're now face to face with the vicious 25% corner, which delivers you on to the cruel slopes that cling to the side of the sheer bank. The surface, just wide enough for a single car, is smooth at the edges but little more than gravel and moss in the centre. It never relents, never lets up until you reach the bend in the shadow of a rocky outcrop; you've still a fair bit of climbing to reach the top, but not as hard now. You will, however, be able to reacquaint your backside with the saddle for the final push to the summit on the approach to the gliding club.



FACTFILE

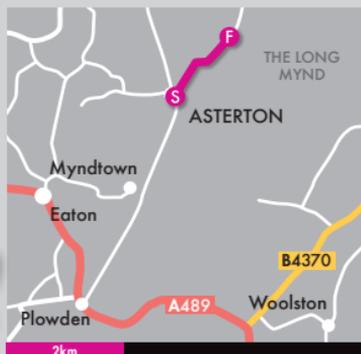
WHERE To reach the base turn north away from the A489 at Plowden. Follow the base of the ridge until you reach Asterton then turn right past the post box and head up.

GRID REF SO 403 918 [OS137]

LENGTH 960m

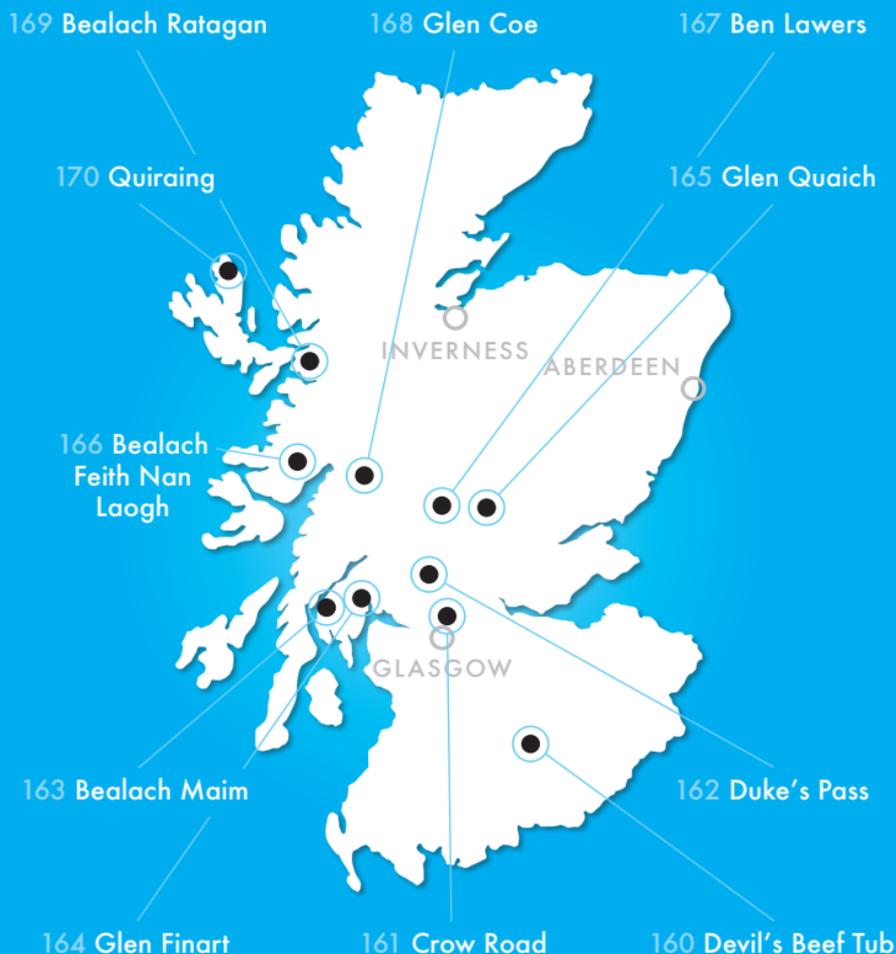
HEIGHT GAIN 163m

APPROX CLIMB TIME 7mins





SCOTLAND

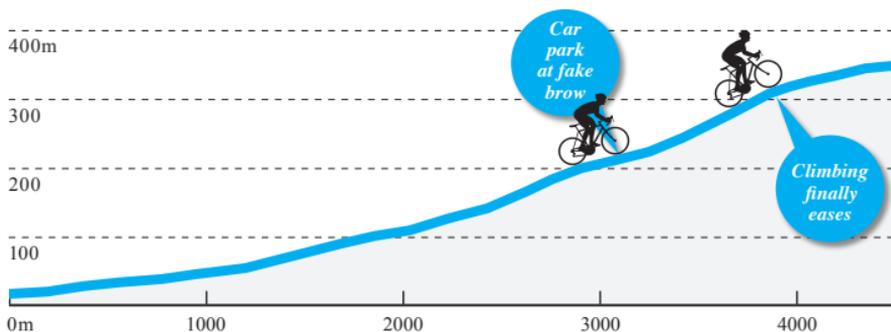




169 BEALACH RATAGAN

RATAGAN, HIGHLAND

Without doubt this is as close to an Alpine pass that I have found in Britain. It's the spitting image of the Col du Télégraphe – shorter, but easily as steep, if not steeper. Begin from the cattle grid on the flat plain at the base of Loch Duich and head up the rugged surface past the turning to Ratagan village. After the turn, the surface worsens, but soon clears up as the narrow road heads inland and away from the shores of the Loch. The climb sweeps its way between the tall dark conifers, and you'll soon have to start clicking down the gears as the slope approaches 15%. Through a sharp hairpin right, things ease back for a while before you're forced into a huge, steep, left-hand bend. After this it's right, then hard going, out of the saddle all the way until the road turns left to a viewpoint. Pause to take in the majestic views of the mountains reflected in the loch then click up the gears and head right to roll to the finish at a passing place.



FACTFILE

WHERE To find the base leave the A87 at Shiel Bridge. Head south-west, round to the right then start the climb as you cross the cattle grid.

GRID REF NG 901 197 (OS33)

LENGTH 4460m

HEIGHT GAIN 334m

APPROX CLIMB TIME 19mins

