

BRITAIN'S BEST BIKE RIDE

THE ULTIMATE THOUSAND-MILE CYCLING
ADVENTURE FROM LAND'S END TO JOHN O' GROATS



JOHN WALSH AND
HANNAH REYNOLDS

30 BESPOKE STAGES DOWNLOADABLE GPX FILES CUSTOM MAPS
ESSENTIAL INFORMATION INSPIRATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY

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Britain's Best Bike Ride
GPX files from
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Land's End **S**

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F

NORTHERN IRELAND

Belfast

IRELAND

Dublin

Irish Sea

WALES

ENGLAND

SCOTLAND

Southern Uplands

Firth of Forth

North Sea

Atlantic Ocean

English Channel

FRANCE

Dieppe

Calais

Dover

Brighton

Southampton

London

Reading

Oxford

Norwich

Leicester

Birmingham

Ludlow

Ross-on-Wye

Chew Stoke

Glastonbury

Exmoor

Launceston

Wadebridge

Perranporth

Plymouth

Exeter

Chulmeigh

Dulverton

Taunton

Bristol

Market Drayton

Telford

Knutsford

Blackrod

Blackburn

Mellon

Cambridge

Sheffield

Manchester

Leeds

Yorkshire Dales

Sedburgh

Langwathby

Brampton

Carlisle

Langholm

Peebles

Edinburgh

Glasgow

Queensferry

Perth

Dundee

Braemar

Cairngorms

Grantown-on-Spey

Inverness

Bonar Bridge

Altnaharra

Thurso

Bettyhill

Wick

John o' Groats

Aberdeen

Fort William



THE STAGES

Stage	From	To	Miles	Km	Metres ascent	Rating	Page
CORNWALL & DEVON							
1	Land's End	Perranporth	44	71	900	Moderate	3
2	Perranporth	Wadebridge	23	37	570	Moderate	9
3	Wadebridge	Launceston	32	52	600	Moderate	15
4	Launceston	Chulmleigh	34	55	800	Moderate	21
5	Chulmleigh	Dulverton	24	38	690	Challenging	27
SOMERSET							
6	Dulverton	Glastonbury	51	81	750	Moderate	35
7	Glastonbury	Chew Stoke	27	44	510	Moderate	41
WALES							
8	Chew Stoke	Tintern Abbey	33	54	550	Moderate	49
9	Tintern Abbey	Ross-on-Wye	21	34	500	Moderate	57
HEREFORDSHIRE & SHROPSHIRE							
10	Ross-on-Wye	Ludlow	37	60	570	Moderate	65
11	Ludlow	Ironbridge	27	43	430	Moderate	71
12	Ironbridge	Market Drayton	25	39	350	Moderate	77
CHESHIRE & LANCASHIRE							
13	Market Drayton	Knutsford	34	55	200	Gentle	85
14	Knutsford	Blackrod	28	45	250	Gentle	91
15	Blackrod	Mellor	20	32	490	Moderate	97
16	Mellor	High Bentham	31	50	910	Challenging	103
CUMBRIA							
17	High Bentham	Sedbergh	22	36	380	Moderate	111
18	Sedbergh	Langwathby	31	50	520	Moderate	119
19	Langwathby	Brampton	21	33	320	Moderate	125
SCOTTISH BORDERS & LOWLANDS							
20	Brampton	Langholm	25	41	540	Moderate	133
21	Langholm	Peebles	50	80	950	Moderate	139
22	Peebles	Queensferry	36	58	440	Moderate	145
23	Queensferry	Perth	42	68	680	Moderate	153
SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS							
24	Perth	Braemar	50	80	970	Challenging	161
25	Braemar	Grantown-on-Spey	46	73	1,110	Challenging	167
26	Grantown-on-Spey	Inverness	36	59	440	Moderate	173
27	Inverness	Bonar Bridge	45	73	570	Moderate	179
28	Bonar Bridge	Altnaharra	31	51	360	Moderate	185
29	Altnaharra	Bettyhill	24	39	170	Gentle	191
30	Bettyhill	John o' Groats	50	80	710	Moderate	197



THE ROUTE

From great historical landmarks to quirky, hidden local gems, grand vistas to intimate secluded valleys, rocky cliffs and sandy beaches, tranquil riverside routes to epic Scottish climbs, LEJOG1000 is the ultimate thousand-mile route, the greatest British bike ride. It is designed to create balance, offering the progress needed to make your way there combined with the intrigue and discovery offered by the meandering little lanes and byways in which the British landscape is rich.

There are numerous routes between Land's End and John o' Groats – you can make it as direct or meandering as you wish, depending on why you are doing it. The route used by most record-breaking attempts is the shortest and most direct; this frequently means busy roads and bypassing the places of most interest.

LEJOG1000 is not necessarily for those with a constant eye on the time – although to be the fastest rider on LEJOG1000 is a worthy accolade. It has been designed to be the most enjoyable ride and the ultimate thousand miles across Britain: to go through the places of interest, not bypass them, to offer up the best scenery and provide the opportunities to sample the local food, drink the local brews and immerse yourself in the culture and heritage which makes each place special. Equally, 1,000 miles on carefully hand-picked roads presents the ultimate challenge for any cyclist, and those completing LEJOG1000 can take pride in having accomplished a distinctive cycling goal.

From the start we want to show the best of each region. In Cornwall this means hugging the rocky cliffs of the north coast and discovering its stunning sandy beaches. We opt for crossing Exmoor, one of the smallest national parks in Britain, which adds extra climbing, but also wide-open space and free-roaming animals to contrast with the high enclosed hedgerows that can dominate the lanes of Cornwall and Devon. The Severn Bridge delivers you to Wales, without which you cannot call this a truly British ride. Following the meandering

River Wye, with its dramatic limestone gorges edged with deep native woodlands, immerses you in this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Entering Herefordshire and Shropshire, where food and landscape are inextricably linked, the market towns are rich with local produce and Ludlow is a source of foodie delight. Ironbridge, the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, marks the shift from sparsely populated agricultural land into a more urban landscape as the route makes its way into the North West.

Carefully picking its way through the former industrial heartlands of North West England, LEJOG1000 seeks out the most peaceful experience possible in this most densely populated portion of the journey. Old mill buildings, remnants of coal mining and occasional smoking chimneys remind you that dark satanic mills are as much part of the fabric and landscape of Britain as the wild, remote Scottish Highlands and picture-postcard views of South West England.

A distinct shift occurs upon climbing Waddington Fell: the urban landscape is left behind in favour of the open spaces of North Lancashire and a dip into the Yorkshire Dales. The journey continues through the fells of Cumbria to the picturesque LEJOG1000 halfway staging town of Sedbergh. The Anglo-Scottish border is crossed near to one of the best-preserved observation towers on Hadrian's Wall.

The rolling hills and dense forests of the Borders lead to the grand city of Edinburgh, passing directly under the shadow of the castle itself and onwards towards Perth and Scone Palace, where Scottish kings were crowned, before joining the 'snow roads' over Glenshee and The Lecht. This takes you through the heart of the Cairngorms, avoiding the busier alternative routes, to reach Inverness. From Inverness, LEJOG1000 heads into the interior and some of the most isolated and wild places of the Highlands, emerging on the north coast for the final stretch from Bettyhill to John o' Groats.

THE REGIONS

The LEJOG1000 route is the longest possible diagonal cross-section of mainland Britain from the furthest south-west point to the north-east. Following its narrow line takes you through an ever-changing landscape. In some places the changes are slow and subtle. Other changes happen more dramatically, crossing a bridge into a different country, or sweeping down from an escarpment into a flat lowland area.

British people can be fiercely protective of local identity, whether that is in the food, the accent or the history. It is not unusual to see the emblem of the white rose in Yorkshire or the red rose in Lancashire. However, boundaries are seldom as neat as local government offices would like them to be. County names and borders shift and change but the identity of how an individual feels may not. We have divided the route into eight regions based on where the majority of riding time is spent in each region. In the Somerset region you are briefly in Avon, you dabble with Yorkshire between Lancashire and Cumbria, but the name encapsulates where you will spend the majority of your riding time.



CORNWALL & DEVON

One of the most visited parts of the UK, Cornwall and Devon's rugged coastline and seductive sandy beaches are the vision of summer holidays, but it is much more than that. Steep-banked hedgerows topped with an explosion of wild flowers, delicious food and drink, freshly caught sea fish, orchards and fertile agricultural land give a feeling of rich bounty, but the remnants of tin and copper mining and decaying chimneys of wheal houses silhouetted against the skyline speak of a very different and not-so-distant history.



SOMERSET

Hills rise as mystical islands from the sea of mist coating the Somerset Levels. Legends of King Arthur, the sacred springs of Glastonbury and the intricate honey-coloured spires of Wells all create stages that have elements of the spiritual, as well as dramatic riding in the shape of Cheddar Gorge.



WALES

Crossing the Severn Bridge into Wales marks a clear transition of entering a new country – from the moment your wheels arrive back on land the signposts are dual-lingual. The small nation of Wales was one of Celtic Europe's most prominent political and cultural centres and still proudly retains cultures that are markedly different from England's. Admire the castle at Chepstow/ Cas-Gwent and follow the River Wye past Tintern Abbey and Symonds Yat Rock before recrossing the border.



HEREFORDSHIRE & SHROPSHIRE

Continuing along the Wye and through the Marches, close to the frontier with Wales, this largely unspoilt, agricultural region is punctuated with ancient market towns. The heritage of these bustling trading posts can be seen in the still thriving farmers' markets and popular food festivals. A historical shift from agriculture to industry occurs as you cross the famous bridge at Ironbridge, a world first in engineering and known as the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution.



CHESHIRE & LANCASHIRE

With Roman remains, half-timbered buildings and the elaborate mansions of Premier League footballers – Cheshire has its fair share of history, affluence and industry. Impressive feats of Victorian architecture from the canal system to reservoirs and pumping stations, grand mansions and elaborate parkland occasionally punctuate rows of terraced housing and fill this more urban part of the route with interest.



CUMBRIA

With the Pennines to the east and Lake District mountains to the west, this is a region with space to breathe. Wide open skies, stone walls and trickling streams abound. The flat and lush Eden Valley contrasts with the steep slopes of the green open fellsides nibbled short by native-breed sheep, and the drama and the challenge of the riding is turned up a notch.



SCOTTISH BORDERS & LOWLANDS

Entering the wild and contested borderlands brings a completely new scale of panoramic scenery as well as distinctively different Scottish foods and culture. It is a place of turbulent history, the occasional genteel town and imposing grand castles. The Borders serve up perfect roads for cyclists with friendly climbs and little traffic. After vibrant Edinburgh, spectacular bridges span the Firth of Forth at Queensferry and transport you northwards to Tayside strawberry country.

SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS

Vast, wild and remote, the Highlands offer light, scenery and space like nowhere else in mainland Britain. With mountain passes and glens, roaring rivers and deep forests, the landscape is stimulating and challenging. Distant grand castles contrast with tiny crofts, villages are few and far between and a warm welcome awaits those who make the effort to visit the far north.



THE JOURNEY

John o' Groats is an aspiration, as much as a destination. No one wants to simply 'go' to John o' Groats; they want to run there, drive their classic car, walk, crawl on their hands and knees, push a hospital bed or, of course, cycle there. You don't just go to John o' Groats from home, you go there from Land's End. So, more than any other place on Earth, John o' Groats is really far more about the journey than the destination.

LEJOG, as Land's End to John o' Groats is popularly called, is often picked as a fundraising ride. It's easy to explain, has a clear start and end, and is hard enough to persuade people to part with their cash. It also doesn't sound too much like fun. For 'bucket list' types it fits alongside running a marathon, or an Ironman, in the tick-sheet of their sporting life, but is there anything to recommend it just for itself? For no other reason than it's a pleasant bike ride? Yes, we think there is.

Ernest Hemingway famously said of cycling: 'it is by riding a bicycle that you learn the contours of a country best, since you have to sweat up the hills and coast down them'. Riding from the most southwesterly point to the most northeasterly does not just give you geographical knowledge, invaluable though that is, it gives you an intimate and most importantly slow-

paced understanding of the differences and nuances of every area you pass through.

For those of us who live in Britain it is easy to overlook what is on our own doorstep, seeking out more far-flung destinations when we wish to travel. However, the landscapes of Britain, from the vast to the intimate, offer unique experiences all of their own. Celia Fiennes (1662–1741) was a pioneer of travel and wrote a memoir of her journeys, published posthumously. Her ethos of travel for its own sake still stands as she urged that others: 'spend some of their time in journeys to visit their native land, and to be curious to inform themselves and make observations of the pleasant prospects, good buildings, different produces and manufactures of each place'.

Wherever you call home, LEJOG1000 will offer change and difference. Despite being a small island, mainland Britain is far from homogenous. Each region has its own dish and dialect. The British Cheese Board states there are 700 different and unique cheeses made in the UK. From craft beers to gin distilleries to Highland whisky, there is plenty of *terroir* on our own soil.

Language changes from place to place – that narrow cut-through you take on your bike can be a ginnel, a snicket, an alley, a twitch or a passage, depending where you are and who you ask.

A pub, a school and a church – damnation, education



and salvation – are the foundation of the quintessential British village. While over 400 pubs closed as drinking establishments in 2021 alone and rural primary schools continue to be vulnerable to closure, many villages along LEJOG1000 are still lucky enough to feature all three. No ride through the British countryside would feel complete without spotting the pinnacle of a spire or a square tower punctuating the view.

For every closed pub there seems to be another community intent on reversing their village's fortunes. In several villages, such as St Mabyn in Cornwall, once the commercial shops were forced into closure the locals joined together to create their own.

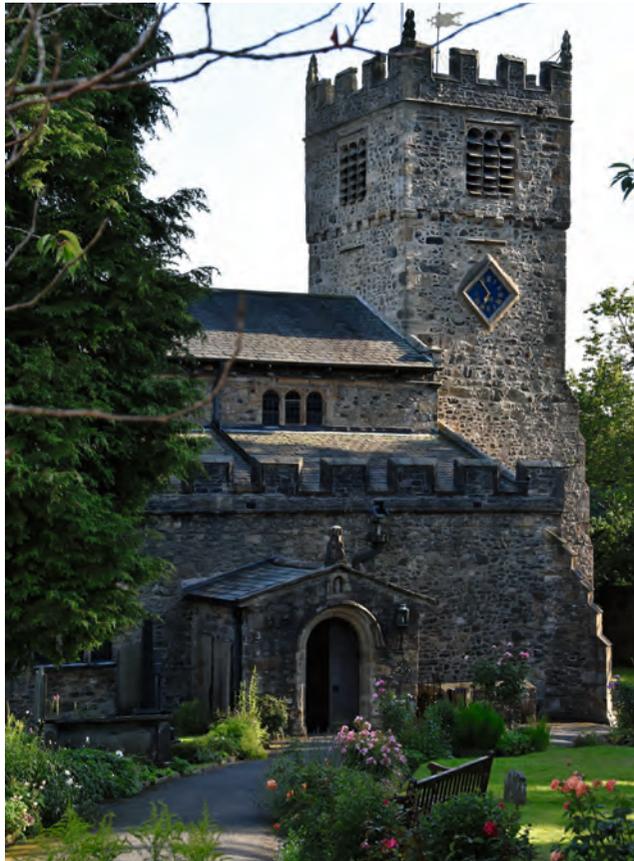
You may find this journey challenges your personal perception of 'Britishness'; the vision of Britain many of us carry in our minds is shaped by where we live, where we grew up and the very selective cultural representation of Britain. Not every part of the journey is scenic and beautiful, but it is complete and honest. Britain is full of contrast and this linear journey highlights that. The idea of something being 'quintessentially British' is a myth. In a country as diverse as Britain, no one image can encapsulate everything. Enjoy your LEJOG1000 journey.

Hannah and John

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#LEJOG1000

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BEST STAGES FOR ...

We've handpicked our favourite places along the route – we hope you enjoy them too. As you ride, you will discover many others that will form part of your unique memories of the trip, and become the story of your journey.

CHALLENGING CLIMBING

Land's End to Perranporth *p3*

The jagged Cornish coastline provides around 900 metres of climbing on the first stage of LEJOG1000.

Mellor to High Bentham *p103*

The highest point of the route in England topping out at 427 metres.

Perth to Braemar *p161*

At 665 metres above sea level, riding the Cairnwell Pass you are conquering the highest mountain pass in Britain with a dramatic descent down to Braemar.

Braemar to Grantown-on-Spey *p167*

The start of The Lecht climb at a gradient of 17 per cent is the toughest section of tarmac of the whole journey.



STUNNING VIEWS

Tintern Abbey to Ross-on-Wye *p57*

Symonds Yat is a classic viewpoint overlooking the meandering River Wye.

Peebles to Queensferry *p145*

Marvel at the grandeur of the series of three bridges crossing the Firth of Forth.

Inverness to Bonar Bridge *p179*

The Struie Viewpoint is worth interrupting a descent for – it offers a classic view over the Kyle of Sutherland.

Bonar Bridge to Altnaharra *p185*

The lonely yet welcoming Crask Inn sits in the shadows of towering Ben Kilbreck.



FOODIE HEAVEN

Land's End to Perranporth p3

Warrens Bakery in St Just was the first commercial bakery to sell traditional Cornish pasties in 1860.

Glastonbury to Chew Stoke p41

The Original Cheddar Cheese Company shop offers a great choice of cheese samples.

Ross-on-Wye to Ludlow p65

Ludlow Food Festival is one of the country's original foodie celebrations – it started long before such festivals became fashionable.

Perth to Braemar p161

The fertile banks of the River Tay mean great roadside stalls selling strawberries and raspberries near Blairgowrie.





WILD SWIMMING

Land's End to Perranporth *p3*

Three miles of golden sands stretch along the coastline from St Ives to Gwithian Beach.

Dulverton to Glastonbury *p35*

Wimbleball Lake hosts triathlons and is a good opportunity for a dip.

Tintern Abbey to Ross-on-Wye *p57*

Paddlers and painters head to the bucolic banks of the River Wye.

Altnaharra to Bettyhill *p191*

Farr Bay promises invigorating sea temperatures and golden sands.



GETTING OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

Chulmleigh to Dulverton *p27*

Exmoor is one of Britain's smallest national parks, but offers great ridgeline riding.

High Bentham to Sedbergh *p111*

Barbondale is a hidden valley perfect for cycling with a babbling brook and bracken-clad slopes.

Langwathby to Brampton *p125*

The Eden Valley abounds with quiet rural farming communities a world away from the nearby, tourist-heavy Lake District.

Langholm to Peebles *p139*

Four gentle climbs in the tranquil and often overlooked Scottish Borders.

CASTLES AND RUINS

Dulverton to Glastonbury *p35*

Sunrise and sunset are the best times to climb to Glastonbury Tor for great vistas over the Somerset Levels.

Chew Stoke to Tintern Abbey *p49*

While not as busy as it was in its heyday of tourism, Tintern Abbey has remained an iconic site for visitors.



Brampton to Langholm *p133*

Hadrian's Wall is the most well-known and the best-preserved frontier of the Roman Empire.

Peebles to Queensferry *p145*

Avoid the entrance fee and be enchanted by the view from the esplanade near Edinburgh Castle.

DRINKING BRITAIN

Perranporth to Wadebridge *p9*

Take a detour along the Camel Valley Trail for wine by the glass on the sun terrace overlooking the vineyards at Camel Valley.

Launceston to Chulmleigh *p21*

Sam's Cider offers one of a handful of opportunities to taste the fruits of English orchards.

High Bentham to Sedbergh *p111*

Kirkby Lonsdale Brewery, with its interior a nod to all things cycling and great ales, is worth a short detour.

Bettyhill to John o' Groats *p197*

Head to John o' Groats Brewery for a celebratory pint overlooking the Pentland Firth.





BRITISH HOSPITALITY

What makes good hospitality? British hospitality is not the same all over; for a start we are talking about three different countries. Hospitality varies between town and country, between areas busy with tourists and working towns, and how unusual it is to see a cyclist at the door. In our experience of travelling as cyclists, the most memorable stays are where we have been given a warm welcome and felt a genuine connection. One of the warmest welcomes we experienced anywhere was at the Crask Inn, which is in one of the most inaccessible and remote places on the route.

As cycling and cycle touring have grown in popularity it is becoming easier to find places that understand the little extra touches that make travelling cyclists feel well looked after. Places with good bike storage, basic tools and clothes-washing facilities make a difference to your experience of life on the road. Nothing is more dispiriting than the angry frown on the face of a landlady when you arrive freezing cold and dripping wet.

Bed and breakfasts in private family homes used to be much more commonplace, but increasingly self-catering options are taking over. One-night stays – an essential for anyone doing a route like this – can be hard to come by, which limits options in some of the busiest tourist areas. Inns are one of the few places left to reliably offer one-night stays.

Hospitality is not just where you stay, but where you eat and drink. While village pubs are being lost all the time, there are still enough really good ones around to keep the culture of the beer that defines a great pub but that difficult-to-manufacture asset: its atmosphere.

George Orwell in his essay *The Moon Under Water*, published in the *Evening Standard* in February 1946, described the pub that we all wish we lived near, where there is a good fire burning, it is always quiet enough to talk and 'the barmaids know most of their customers by name, and take a personal interest in everyone'.

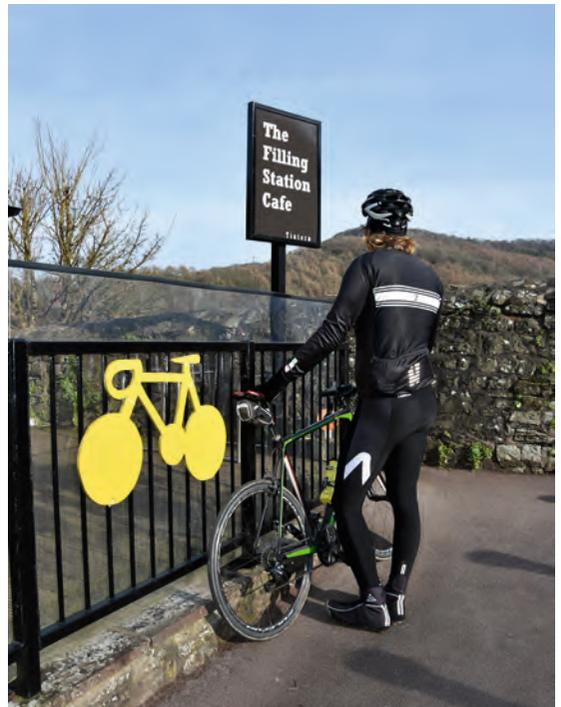


While *The Moon Under Water* turned out to be fantasy, his wish list hasn't dated: 'And if anyone knows of a pub that has draught stout, open fires, cheap meals, a garden, motherly barmaids and no radio, I should be glad to hear of it.' There are a few on this route that can satisfy that description.

While the number of traditional pubs is declining, craft beer bars, micro-pubs and independent breweries are increasing in number and are often the places where the culture of the pub is strongest.

Another British tradition is the desire to appreciate a view without doing too much exercise. In the eyes of many visitors, they are searching for the holy grail of a destination which offers 'a view, a brew and a loo'. This means that often where there is a scenic spot, you'll also find a cafe, car park and public toilet.

One of the joys of cycle touring is contrast: the warmth of the fire after being cold, a full belly after riding on empty, stretching out the legs after hours of pedalling. We want our journey to be wild, but we crave the comfort of civilisation at the end of the day and to savour the work of artisan cooks, brewers, bakers and chefs.





THE CLASSIC: 2-WEEK ITINERARY

Fourteen days adds up to just the right amount of time to cover the miles at a pace that doesn't feel like you are racing against the clock but still allows you to pack your LEJOG1000 journey into two weeks of holiday.

There will be some long days in the saddle, but all have been kept under 90 miles with three days at around the 50-mile mark to allow that little bit extra rest, recuperation and refreshment time.

DAY	FROM	TO	MILES	KM	METRES ASCENT	STAGES
1	Land's End	Wadebridge	67	108	1,470	1, 2
2	Wadebridge	Chulmleigh	66	107	1,400	3, 4
3	Chulmleigh	Glastonbury	75	119	1,440	5, 6
4	Glastonbury	Ross-on-Wye	81	132	1,560	7, 8, 9
5	Ross-on-Wye	Market Drayton	89	142	1,350	10, 11, 12
6	Market Drayton	Mellor	82	132	940	13, 14, 15
7	Mellor	Sedbergh	53	86	1,290	16, 17
8	Sedbergh	Langholm	77	124	1,380	18, 19, 20
9	Langholm	Peebles	50	80	950	21
10	Peebles	Perth	78	126	1,120	22, 23
11	Perth	Braemar	50	80	970	24
12	Braemar	Inverness	82	132	1,550	25, 26
13	Inverness	Altnaharra	76	124	930	27, 28
14	Altnaharra	John o' Groats	74	119	880	29, 30





THE EXPLORER: 3-WEEK ITINERARY

Designed to allow plenty of time for getting to know the places you pedal through, this itinerary allows you to look around, savour your environment, properly relax and absorb the experience.

Four days are over 70 miles which are scheduled close to the rest day and on the last two stages when the end is in sight. Shorter rides provide you with the freedom to stop whenever the fancy takes you, and fully embrace the carefree life of the open road.

DAY	FROM	TO	MILES	KM	METRES ASCENT	STAGES
1	Land's End	Perranporth	44	71	900	1
2	Perranporth	Launceston	55	89	1,170	2, 3
3	Launceston	Dulverton	58	93	1,490	4, 5
4	Dulverton	Glastonbury	51	81	750	6
5	Glastonbury	Tintern Abbey	60	98	1,060	7, 8
6	Tintern Abbey	Ludlow	58	94	1,070	9, 10
7	Ludlow	Market Drayton	52	82	780	11, 12
8	Market Drayton	Blackrod	62	100	450	13, 14
9	Blackrod	Sedbergh	73	118	1,780	15, 16, 17
10	Rest day	–	–	–	–	–
11	Sedbergh	Brampton	52	83	840	18, 19
12	Brampton	Peebles	75	121	1,490	20, 21
13	Peebles	Queensferry	36	58	440	22
14	Queensferry	Perth	42	68	680	23
15	Perth	Braemar	50	80	970	24
16	Braemar	Grantown-on-Spey	46	73	1,110	25
17	Grantown-on-Spey	Inverness	36	59	440	26
18	Inverness	Altnaharra	76	124	930	27, 28
19	Altnaharra	John o' Groats	74	119	880	29, 30





THE CHALLENGE: 10-DAY ITINERARY

Ten days to cover LEJOG1000 is a tough but achievable challenge. A high level of fitness and preparation is needed before taking it on. Long days in the saddle will see the landscape change rapidly as you pedal your way from one region to the next.

The three longest days which are the wrong side of 110 miles are generally balanced out by sub-100-mile days. Overnight stops which offer accommodation where you can eat, drink and sleep in the same establishment have been carefully chosen to help any tired legs.

DAY	FROM	TO	MILES	KM	METRES ASCENT	STAGES
1	Land's End	Launceston	99	160	2,070	1, 2, 3
2	Launceston	Glastonbury	109	174	2,240	4, 5, 6
3	Glastonbury	Ludlow	118	192	2,130	7, 8, 9, 10
4	Ludlow	Knutsford	86	137	980	11, 12, 13
5	Knutsford	Sedbergh	101	163	2,030	14, 15, 16, 17
6	Sedbergh	Peebles	127	204	2,330	18, 19, 20, 21
7	Peebles	Perth	78	126	1,120	22, 23
8	Perth	Grantown-on-Spey	96	153	2,080	24, 25
9	Grantown-on-Spey	Altnaharra	112	183	1,370	26, 27, 28
10	Altnaharra	John o' Groats	74	119	880	29, 30





THE BEGINNING | LAND'S END

Penwith, Land's End peninsula, is surrounded on three sides by the Atlantic Ocean. It is a place of abundance. Warm waters filled with fish and sea life, thick seams of tin and a mild climate have been drawing humans there for thousands of years. Here at the end of the land you can find beauty, myth and luminous ocean light.

More than 500,000 people visit Land's End every year, partly for the novelty of being at the end of the land, England's most south-western point, and partly because of the stunning natural beauty. While it is undeniably a tourist attraction, with a well-beaten track to its door, if you visit late in the evening, when the crowds have departed, you can appreciate a different side to the place. Turn your back on the gift shops and channel your gaze to the vast horizon ahead. On the very tip of the peninsula, gazing out across the Atlantic Ocean, there is a certain magic to Land's End, if you take the time to seek it.

Beyond the cliff's edge the ocean conceals the mythical lost kingdom of Lyonesse, its bells still ringing beneath the waves. Stone caves and hidden tongues of pure golden sand are dotted around the end of the peninsula. The water, warmed by the Gulf Stream, is home to a vast array of sea creatures – an occasional dolphin or porpoise might be seen breaking the surface, or the dark shadow of a harmless basking shark seen beneath the waves.

It is a place that artists and photographers have long sought out. Light abounds, glinting and reflecting from the water that borders you on three sides. Land's End's west-facing cliffs mean you can get spectacular, long-lasting sunsets. The setting sun hangs on the horizon, pools of golden light flood the cliffs and glint on the waves, as it takes an age to finally dip out of sight.

While most people arrive at Land's End eager to

get going on their journey, it does have plenty to offer the visitor willing to linger. Nearby beaches, such as Sennen Cove, the UK's most westerly surf spot, are delightful, and are lively without the artifice of Land's End itself. Just along the cliffs from Land's End is Nanjizal, a secluded beach with a distinctive arch, rock pools and sea caves, where the pounding waves reverberate in its vast echo chamber. Escape here for a more natural experience of this rocky peninsula.

Despite the natural beauty and rich history of Penwith, tourism puts a gloss on an area that faces problems with economic deprivation, an absence of year-round work and locals who are priced out of the housing market by holiday home ownership. It might not be visible to those who visit to relax and explore, but the crumbling mines which look evocative and romantic in holiday snaps speak of employment that has not been fully replaced.

A SINGLE PEDAL STROKE

Standing in Land's End with the full thousand-mile journey stretching out ahead of you, a mix of emotions might be felt: trepidation, an eagerness to get going, uncertainty, impatience and excitement. Don't rush this moment, it sets the scene for the days of riding to come. Get your picture with the sign, draw a breath, put your foot to the pedal and begin.



GETTING TO THE START

Many people choose to be dropped off by friends or relatives at the start, but Penzance railway station is just 10 miles from Land's End with direct trains arriving from a wide range of places. A taxi or a pedal from

Penzance are your options. If you are arriving from further afield you may choose to fly to Cornwall Airport Newquay or opt to courier your bike from home to your Land's End hotel.

TRAIN

Penzance is the end of the train line. Great Western Railway and CrossCountry serve the station. You can take your bike for free, but you may need to reserve a place in advance.

www.gwr.com

www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk

PLANE

Cornwall Airport Newquay is around 50 miles from Land's End. Served by a range of airlines, you can fly direct to Newquay from a number of destinations across the UK and Europe. Check with individual airlines for their rules on bike transportation and packaging.

www.cornwallairportnewquay.com

BIKE TRANSPORT

PENZANCE TAXI

They can help get you and your bike the short hop from Penzance to Land's End if you don't want to pedal and prefer to save your legs for the official start.

T 01736 366 366

www.penzancetaxis.co.uk

SHERPR BIKE BOXES

Order one of Sherpr's custom boxes to deliver your bike to your accommodation in Land's End, leaving you to travel with ease. Unpack your bike and they will arrange a collection of the box.

www.sherprbikebox.com



SLEEP

THE LAND'S END HOTEL & LUXURY STAYS

Great views out to the Isles of Scilly from atop towering granite cliffs. Only 100 metres from the start line of your epic journey.

Land's End, TR19 7AA

T 01736 871 844

www.landsendhotel.co.uk

LAND'S END HOSTEL

A combination of private rooms, bunk rooms and bed and breakfast options, a short distance from the start line.

Mill Barn, Trevescan, TR19 7AQ

T 07585 625 774

www.landsendholidays.co.uk

LAND'S END CAMPING & GLAMPING

This site is situated next to the Land's End Hostel and boasts a new shower and toilet block as well as a communal campfire.

Trevescan Farm, Trevescan, TR19 7AQ

T 07376 535 882

www.landsendcamp.co.uk

EAT

FIRST & LAST INN

A watering hole for smugglers since the seventeenth century, you are nowadays likely to find a mix of locals and tourists in the beer garden or huddling by the log fires depending on what weather the Atlantic winds are bringing ashore.

Sennen, TR19 7AD

T 01736 871 680

www.firstandlastinn.co.uk

SUPPLIES

Sennen and Land's End Post Office incorporates a small general store – this is situated a short distance into your LEJOG1000 journey for any last-minute supplies. If you can wait, you will find more choice in St Just, the first sizable settlement on route.

BIKE

CARN BIKES

Appointment-only mechanic near Land's End. They can also arrange for your bike to be couriered to the start of your journey using Sendbike.

T 07838 637 678

<http://carn.bike>





CORNWALL & DEVON

**LAND'S
END**

NEW YORK 3147

JOHN O'GROATS 874



1

STAGE

44 miles / 71km
900 metres ascent

LAND'S END TO PERRANPORTH

Cornwall – the county with the longest coastline. Stunning beaches and coves provide a scenic start to the journey, with ghostly remains of wheal houses silhouetted against the sky harking back to the times of tin mining. Instead of turning inland from Land's End like many routes, LEJOG1000 hugs the rugged coastline to fully appreciate the wild, exposed cliffs and stunning sandy beaches.

If you had some vague notion that the 'tough' riding wouldn't start until Scotland, stage 1 will quickly disabuse you of this naivety! The repeated short, sharp spikes of Cornish hills tot up to around 900 metres of climbing. The first stage is one of the toughest of the trip and can come as a bit of a shock, not least because your legs, while fresh, might not be accustomed to daily cycling just yet. The views are stunning and the joy of starting a cycle tour (and perhaps a Cornish pasty) will sustain you through the ride. Setting off from Land's End will be one of the most memorable moments of the trip. Ambitious record breakers and genteel cycle tourists alike all take a moment for a picture under the iconic signpost to gaze out to sea and ponder the journey ahead.

LAND'S END TO ST IVES

Beginning in the furthest corner of the South West of mainland Britain, the whole thousand-mile route is still ahead of you; you will be hoping that those southwesterly winds stay behind you, providing a helping hand up the country. Starting out along a quiet stretch of the A30 you pass the First & Last Inn; although it's most likely too early for a pint it is still worth a snap before you head on your way. Shortly after the inn you take a left turn towards St Just. Your first significant and steep climb finishes just as you arrive at the junction with the A road on the edge of St Just where you turn left. Only 6 miles past Land's End, St Just is the most westerly town in mainland Britain,

and your first opportunity to stock up on pasties is at the bakery in the Market Square.

Leaving St Just you are treated to a descent down to a small river. At a five-way junction after the river bridge our route opts for the wonderfully named No Go By Hill, the former main road. The new road (the B3306 that we rejoin later) was installed in the mid-1800s in response to the ever-expanding industrial importance of the valley. Milling was well established here in the eighteenth century when the valley was full of stamping and corn mills, leats, ponds and sluices, running all the way down to the shoreline. Riding the old road allows you to see some of the farming cottages that predate this industry.

Turn right at the T-junction to rejoin the B3306. It is a roller coaster of a road to St Ives with short and often sharp climbs interspersed with equally short descents; it continues like this until mile 17, when you reach the top of Rosewall Hill by the small National Trust car park. Should you fancy a stroll, walking up the hill will reward you with panoramic views of the North Cornwall coastline, across the Penwith Hills and St Ives. Nearby there are old Cornish tin mine workings and visible Neolithic and Iron Age groundworks remain. From the car park a glorious 2 miles of descent leads you into the narrow streets of St Ives. Follow the main road round to the right then the blue of St Ives Bay comes into view below on your left, the cliffside road lined with a sprinkling of palm trees.