**AUDAX RIDES**

The idea of Audax was first formulated in Italy. Participants had to swim, run, walk, or cycle a set distance in 14 hours which was approximately the time between sunrise and sunset. The distance to be covered by cycling was 200 kilometres.

During the ‘60s and ‘70s, a number of British riders took part in continental audax rides. AudaxUK was formed in 1976, and since then has co-ordinated audax rides in the UK. Anyone can ride in an audax event, not only AudaxUK members.

Audax rides are NOT races. Typical distances are 100, 200 or 300 kilometres, (a hangover from audax Italian origins). People ride them more in the spirit of an event like the London Marathon, everyone riding to their own limitations with the primary objective to just 'get round' unaided – self sufficiency is important, although audax riders are renowned for ‘helping each other out’. Any type of bike can be ridden. Contrary to rumour, mudguards are not mandatory, although might be appreciated by other riders in wet weather. You can ride with other riders, or on your own, as you choose. Riders are usually sent off in groups of about 20 to 25, to avoid congestion.

The routes typically feature a lot of quiet, scenic lanes, with short lengths of main roads to link them. There are maximum and minimum time limits, based on average speeds over the ride, including stops, of 15 and 30 kilometres an hour; these suit everyone from the fittest of recreational riders to more occasional riders who have plenty of determination. A 100k ride will typically have a time limit of about 7 hours.

Each rider is issued at the start with a 'brevet card' which is filled in by the rider at ‘information controls’, where a simple question is answered (eg – Distance on signpost to . . . ), or stamped by a helper at a ‘stamp control’, and also at the finish. The card is later returned to the rider as a certificate of their achievement. You need to ride with a pen or pencil!

Riders are also issued with a turn-by-turn route sheet; a means of having this accessible to read is advisable – bar bag top, Perspex carrier, etc. A computer recording in kilometres also helps you keep track of where you are on the route sheet. An increasing number of audax rides also have the route available as a down-loadable GPS track.

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| **START: Bildeston Sportsfield Pavilion: turn L** | **k** |
|  L @ T no SP | 0.6 |
|  R @ T no SP; Bildeston High Street | 1.0 |
|  L, no SP ( sign, Unsuitable for HGVs) | 2.3 |
|  R @ T SP Ringshall B1078 | 5.5 |
|  R SP Naughton | 5.6 |
|  L on RH bend SP Elmsett (becomes Manor Rd) | 8.2 |

Part of a typical route sheet

On any weekend there are up to 15 rides available across the country – about 25 in East Anglia over the year. To find out about rides, visit the AudaxUK website at [www.aukweb.net](http://www.aukweb.net), and use the Calendar page, clicking on the event you’re interested in. This gives access to an entry form (on-line entry available on most rides), information on the start venue, and access to the route sheet and GPS track if available. Payment is usually in the £6-10 range, and for non AudaxUK members includes 3rd party insurance cover during the event.

Most audax rides have food and drink available at the start and finish, and any well-run audax will also include cafes on route, often as a control point. You’ll need to take any extra food and drink you think you may need, as well as clothing to suit any expected weather changes. On longer rides, lights might be needed.