



**The Spindle. DECEMBER 2021. [cycleclubsudbury.com](http://cycleclubsudbury.com)**



*Yet again, Christmas is upon us (well nearly!) and I always think this should go out a few days before the 25<sup>th</sup> but tight schedules need to be adhered to (or maybe I just want to get it out and relax!)*

*There's plenty to inspire you inside and hope you take the time to digest it.*

*No page jumping for this Christmas edition – that's the law!*

*Now that our normal summer season events are a distant memory, we have reports on the wintery events of Cyclo Cross and Enduro's which looks an exciting alternative for young and not so young riders. Some Sportives in faraway lands, a report on the recent AGM with a completed list of prize winners and topped off by an eclectic selection of what to buy for pressies this Christmas. (By far the best bit of this Spindle!)*

*Enjoy the ride...*

Rog



## CCS A.G.M. & Prize Giving Mutterings!

A good gathering of members came together for the combined AGM and Prize Giving evening



at the Stevenson Centre last week. The AGM highlights included the statutory reports from the various officers with the re-election/election issues resolved favourably. With David Fenn, David Miller and Leon West stepping down, Angela Lesslie opted to join the committee with hopefully (*According to my spies*) more coming along to join her in the not too distant future. They will be badly needed to plug the gaps.

Tony Howard will replace Martin North's excellent stint as Club Run co-ordinator and Rob Davies will take over as organiser of the Mad March Hilly Open TT. We now (finally) have a Time Trial secretary with Nick Webber taking on the role. (Post AGM appointment!) David Fenn will relinquish his organiser role of the Reliability Trial in 2023 and has offered to anyone who fancies taking over from him, the chance to 'shadow' him at next year's Reliability Ride on 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 2022. He has, much to my delight agreed to continue as Audax & SPOCO statistician ad infinitum. David M has also agreed to continue to supply the Thursday Evening TT statistics. More delight from me! The two David's have put in a long shift on the committee in various positions and deserve the clubs thanks for jobs well done!

Robin Weaver announced that the club membership was at an all time high of 146 members for which we can bizarrely thank the COVID situation..!

Club treasurer Gareth Evans reported that the club's financial position is in rude health with sales of club clothing via Peter and Pat Harvey also on a high

It was also announced that this year's format for the signing on via email and payment arrangements will be continued for next year's Thursday evening TT series will continue.

The only change will be increasing the number of riders allowed in each race to 40 which will include guest riders as in previous pre Covid years. As always, preference will be given to CCS 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> claim members if entries are high.

### Prize Giving

The cups, trophies and medals were handed out after an excellent buffet supplied by the club, to all the season's winners. With a few winners unable to be present (mainly the male variety) it gave the winner's photo a female bias as they were all present and correct! Well done ladies!

The final winners which were announced on the night were as follows....

*Clubman of the Year..... James Newton*

*Rider of the Year.....David Fenn*

*(Voted for by the club members)*

*Junior Rider of the Year.....Will Lowden*

*Ladies Trophy.....Caroline Wyke*

*Golden SpindleNut award.....Terry Law*

### Winners shown in photo alongside – left to right

*Lindsey Hobden – (2<sup>nd</sup> Claim Member) Evening Points Series.*

*Raymond Cheung – Audax Trophy.*

*Kirsty Fenner – Evening Points Series – CCS Trophy*

*Caroline Wyke – Ladies Trophy, Club Spoco Trophy*

*Angela Lesslie – Ladies Hill Climb Trophy, Club 10 mile TT Ladies Trophy, 10 mile TT on H/cap Trophy*

*David Fenn – Rider of the Year.*

*Sue Triplow – Ladies Open 25 mile TT Bowl.*





# Audax Update November 2021

Date	Event	Riders
6 <sup>th</sup> November	Essex 3R's 107k	Raymond Cheung +100k, Andy Rogers, Robin Weaver, Mick Bates.
20 <sup>th</sup> November	DIY 200k	Raymond Cheung.
21 <sup>st</sup> November	Waveney Wander 100k	Raymond Cheung, Robin Weaver, Ian Lovelock, Brian Mann, Andrew Hoppit

Name	Points	Total Distance kms	Club Trophy	100 km	150 km	200 km	300 km	400 km	600 km	1000 km	Climbing Metres
Raymond Cheung	4	507		3	-	1	-	-	-	-	1,300
Robin Weaver	-	207		2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,300
Andy Rogers	-	107		1	-	-	-	-	-	-	750
Mick Bates	-	107		1	-	-	-	-	-	-	750
Ian Lovelock	-	100		1	-	-	-	-	-	-	550
Brian Mann	-	100		1	-	-	-	-	-	-	550
Andrew Hoppit	-	100		1	-	-	-	-	-	-	550

## Forthcoming Local Audaxes.

*4<sup>th</sup> December, The Stanstead Airport Express, Witham 100k*

*19<sup>th</sup> December, Santa Special, Great Bromley 204k.*

*15<sup>th</sup> January, The Kelvedon Oyster 104k.*

*12<sup>th</sup> February, Witham, Knights Templar*

The new 2021/2022 Audax season started in November with seven hardy club members completing events in Essex and Norfolk.

It's a pleasant surprise to see Brian Mann returning to Audaxing following an absence due to illness.

Long time Audaxer and organiser Robin never misses an opportunity to ride the local events, completing both the Essex and Norfolk 100k events.

Not to be outdone our current Mr Audax, Raymond, managed a couple of 200k's and one 100k event to get his new season underway and already heads the leader board.

For those members unfamiliar with Audax they are great fun to ride, they are non competitive and massively cheaper than riding Sportives, give it a try, their website is [www.audax.uk](http://www.audax.uk) and provides loads of useful information about the organisation, entering and riding their events.

Cheers David Fenn

# Eastern Cyclo Cross Series 2021-2022



Jose Vicente Garcia



Simon



Nick



Leon



## Eastern Cyclo Cross Series – *Thought's by Leon West*

*I, Simon Norton, Alex Purcell and Nick Webber were all there in separate races.*

*Nick was in 50+*

*I've opted to do 40+ races (as they're only 40 mins long and I'm lazy). Simon and Alex enter the main 1 hr event with the top riders.*

*Simon has taken to it like a duck to water with his wealth of off road experience on gravel and MTB's.*

*Alex seems to be holding his own with the mid pack, rear gunner bunch each week.*

*I thought (as I'd just treated myself to a new steed) I would dip my feet in some of the mucky stuff, as I often struggle to stay motivated this time of year. Being new I get a grid start from right at the back which suits me as I can avoid getting in the way as the 1st corner carnage commences!*

*After several years of TT's and road races I've only ever had 2 DNF's, both down to punctures, and never had an off (touch wood).*

*So far, I'm 3 races into the world of cross. My saddle fell off half way through my 1st, I've fell off several times (normally where the most spectators are gathered) and managed to finish about mid pack.*

*Just ordered some 'proper' tyres to see if they help and need to practice the dismounting / remounting trick then see how I go. It might well be that I'm just rubbish lol!*

*I watched a bit of the pros last night and reckon I've got a way to go yet!*

Eastern Cyclo Cross League - Winter 2021/22				
Date	Event	Rider	Category	Result
Sept 26th	Springfield Cross - Chelmer CC Chelmsford (R1)	A.Purcell	Senior	50th
Oct 10th	VC Revolution Cross - Colchester (R3)	A.Purcell	Senior	39th
Oct 10th	VC Revolution Cross - Colchester	L.West	Vets 40+	DNF
Oct 24th	Welwyn Cross - Welwyn Wheelers (R4)	A.Purcell	Senior	37th
Nov 6th	West Suffolk Cross - WSW - West Stow (R5)	S.Norton	Senior	45th
Nov 6th	West Suffolk Cross - WSW - West Stow	A.Purcell	Senior	47th
Nov 6th	West Suffolk Cross - WSW - West Stow	J.Vincente-Garcia	Vets 40+	18th
Nov 6th	West Suffolk Cross - WSW - West Stow	L.West	Vets 40+	28th
Nov 14th	Neil Pears Memorial Cross - Colchester RCC (R6)	S.Norton	Senior	39th
Nov 14th	Neil Pears Memorial Cross - Colchester RCC	A.Purcell	Senior	43rd
Nov 14th	Neil Pears Memorial Cross - Colchester RCC	L.West	Vets 40+	33rd
Nov 14th	Neil Pears Memorial Cross - Colchester RCC	N.Webber	Vets 50+	30th
Nov 21st	Diss CC - Suffolk Supercross - Redgrave (R7)	J.Vincente-Garcia	Vets 40+	14th
Nov 21st	Diss CC - Suffolk Supercross - Redgrave	S.Norton	Vets 50+	34th
Nov 28th	Regional Champs' - Trinity Park, Ipswich (R8)	J.Vincente-Garcia	Vets 40+	14th
Nov 28th	Regional Champs' - Trinity Park, Ipswich	N.Webber	Vets 50+	44th
Nov 28th	Regional Champs' - Trinity Park, Ipswich	S.Norton	Vets 50+	54th
Dec 19th	CC Ashwell at SouthillPark - Beds' (R9)			
Jan 2nd	Iceni Velo Cross - Snetterton Norfolk (R10)			
Jan 23rd	Milton Cross - Milton, Beds' (R11)			
Jan 30th	Stow Scramble - Haughley Park (R12)			

*This looks like a brilliant way of keeping bike fit during the winter. I'm surprised we don't have more CCS riders taking it up. Perhaps it's just a well kept secret. There's still time to enter the last four events!*



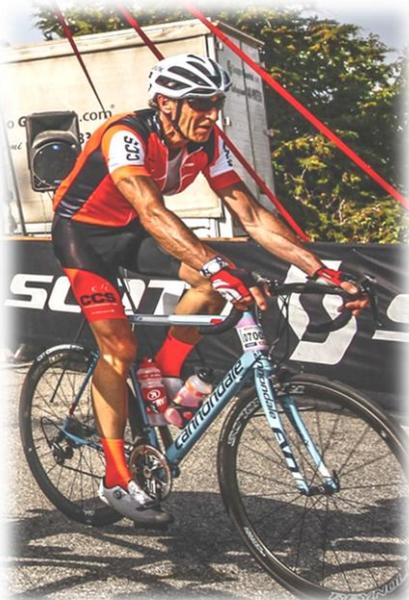
## Nove Colli Sportive, Italy.

by Nick Webber

Having spent much of the past 3 years riding around East Anglia and Lincolnshire, my inner chain ring has become much like a Yorkshireman's wallet – very little used except in extreme circumstances.

However, all that changed during my trip to Italy to ride the 50<sup>th</sup> edition of Nove Colli. For those readers not familiar with this event, it is one of the most beautiful Sportives in Europe (not just my opinion) starting and finishing in Cesenatico in the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy and covering – as the name implies – 9 cols and 205km of riding. Three of those climbs have significant sections above 16%, with the Barbotto & Gorolo climbs peaking at 18%, so even with very low gears these are massive, out-of-the-saddle grinds.

Normally run in late May but postponed twice because of Covid-19, the 50<sup>th</sup> edition was run on 26<sup>th</sup> September this year. Fortunately Ryanair's wonderfully, considerate customer service team were kind enough to allow me to reschedule my flights twice and so it was that I arrived at Bologna airport with my bike securely in my bike box a few days before the event. It was then just a 90 minute train ride to Cesenatico to a delightful family hotel I have used for a number of years. Amusingly, I always seem return home heavier after staying at the Hotel Capinera because of three substantial meals a day – and that's in spite of all of the hours I spend on my bike. While I love the challenge of racing Nove Colli (this is my 7<sup>th</sup> visit) I gain almost as much pleasure from the relatively easy days that precede it by riding in the hills and stopping at some delightful cafés for coffee. The weekend of the event also brings the "circus" to Cesenatico. This is a huge expo of bike sellers, component manufacturers, clothing dealers, bike holiday organisers, etc and several streets are closed to accommodate what appears to be the world's biggest bike shop. Saturday is a relatively easy day, with as much time spent sitting in cafes and outside ice cream shops as on my bike. I spend an hour or so cleaning it, checking bolts and generally making sure it is mechanically ready for the next day and then doing a similar thing with my body (that is by stretching and resting but not necessarily checking my bolts). On the day of the event, I now have a routine that seems to work for me – one that really annoys anyone I may be sharing a room with. The alarm goes off at 4:15am. After showering, I go through a yoga routine to warm up my muscles and joints then go down for breakfast. The supportive hosts already have a massive cauldron boiling so huge plates of pasta appear around 5am, followed by various meats and cheeses. The restaurant is crowded by 5:15am and the sense of building nervous energy is apparent. By 5:45am I am dressed and ready to leave the hotel to get a good place in the start grid. Even though it is over an hour before the first riders (the elites, semi-pros and celebrities) will be starting, the streets are already filling with thousands of cyclists being disgorged from the many hotels around the town.



With the support of the many helpful marshals around the town I find my way easily to my specific starting grid. Then, for the next hour, I wait... As the grid fills quickly behind me I am surrounded by the rapid banter of Italian spoken around me; friends meeting up, jokes being shared and general chatter to avoid thinking too much about the effort to come. I just focus on breathing deeply to calm my nerves. Shortly before 7am a local priest comes onto the distant podium to bless the race. It is delightful to see how this receives huge applause. Then, a few minutes later, there is the sound of a countdown, "tre, due, uno...", and the first grid of riders takes flight.

Several minutes pass before my own grid of around 1,500 riders are set free but then we too are off. All around is the sound of cleats clicking into pedals, accompanied by cheers from supporters, family members, friends and locals lining the route.

Movement is slow at first as I force my cold muscles to turn my pedals. With no warm-up, my brain is asking for maximum power from my legs.

Within a minute of the start we are riding at nearly 50 kph and my heart feels as if it wants to break out of my chest. My awareness expands to everything that is happening around me in an effort to remain both

fast and safe. Like the start of a cross race, I flare my elbows out and fight to hold my place on the road. On these fully closed roads, riders are spread from curb to curb, dependent up each other for a safe passage, whilst also competing to get to the narrow mountain roads as quickly as possible.

The sound of squealing brakes from riders ahead leads to warning shouts from others as we skirt a tight roundabout. The faster riders are now congregating to the left side of the road to pass the slower groups and I find myself hugging the left curb as I fight for the best wheels to follow. This is actually very exciting but it is taking a huge physical effort to maintain the speed.

Sprinting out of a sharp bend I wonder if I have started too fast. My lungs are already heaving and my legs are burning and we haven't even hit the first climb yet. Can I really maintain this intensity for the whole day?

Fifty minutes into the race we turn left off the wide, main highway onto the narrow road leading to the first climb and the pace begins to feel a little more manageable. I am even saying to myself, "I am really enjoying this!".

As we head up to the lovely village of Bertinoro the gradient hits 13% and rider congestion slows the pace. Staying in the left gutter, I squeeze past wherever I can. There is a lot of shouting and words I don't fully understand as riders fight for gaps that aren't really there. It is only near the very top of this long, 8km climb to Polenta that the riding becomes more ordered. When I first rode Nove Colli (when 23mm tyres were the norm) my descending skills on these narrow roads were appalling and many slower riders I had passed on the way up would fly past me on the way down. Not any more! On the smooth, dry, swooping descents I felt at ease. Such effortless speed was a sheer joy. Along the valley floor the race now became more stretched out as gaps appeared between riders and smaller groups formed. The riding was again intense in order to get to the next climb quickly so there was no real rest here and, once more, I felt I was going into the red just to maintain my position on the road. The ascent of Pieve di Rivoschio is not a super-steep one with its maximum gradient of 9%. However, it is long and has many false summits where precious height is lost so it was with some relief that I finally crested the top after over 30 minutes of climbing. The day was becoming warm already and sweat was dripping down into my eyes, so the relative chill of the descent was welcome. By the time I reached the Ciola climb the 10,000+ riders completing in this year's event seemed to be spread widely over various points of the course – something which is quite remarkable really – and I was able to climb at my own pace. Groupettes of riders of similar ability naturally formed and I was able to work well with a young Belgian rider (someone I would ultimately ride with until the final km). Almost too quickly, after dropping off the top of Ciola, comes the feared ascent of Barbotto. This starts hard and tops off with a long section of sweeping, hairpin bends at 18%. This is where many spectators congregate and I could already hear the sound of cowbells and cheering from the tree-lined roads far above me. As the road reared up I dropped into my 28 tooth sprocket and got out of the saddle, aiming to keep the effort as manageable as possible. This was getting hard and I began to feel as if I was just hanging on, completely unable to ride any faster. Still over halfway to go! It never ceases to amaze me how much power can come from people cheering encouragement. My fatiguing legs seemed to find new strength as the summit of Barbotto neared and I did my best to smile at the event photographers as I came over the top. Later evidence would prove that my facial expression bore absolutely no resemblance to a smile. I was eating and drinking well (supplemented by the excellent Nove Colli refreshment stops) but my body was in uncharted territory as this was already my longest ride for over two years. As fatigue built up in my body and in my mind I really can't remember much about the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> climbs



(Monte Tiffi was a short but brutal 16% gradient while Perticarra seemed to go on forever as it wound its way upwards over several km). I just recall I spent a lot of time looking at the wheel in front of me and forcing myself to stay close to it. On the long climbs I regularly alternated between sitting down and standing on the pedals just to give partial relief to the various muscle fibres in my legs.

By the time I came to the base of the ascent of Monte Pugliano it was an effort to keep my head lifted. Fortunately, my legs seemed to be turning automatically so I didn't have to think much about them. While the maximum gradient of this col is "only" 12% it is a 9km climb and gains over half a km in height over that time.

In anticipation of the effort to come, I stopped with a few other riders at a freshwater spring in a village to fill my bottles with ice cold water. After drinking a whole pint, I drained one bottle over my head. The transformative, recharging effect was almost immediate (one day I must go back to check what was in that water!).

Once again I began to feel like I had some power in my legs. It is amazing how much physical stress our bodies can handle sometimes. I soon found myself passing several groups of riders with vigour I hadn't felt for a couple of hours. From being a follower, I was now sitting on the front of a group of riders. Again, I was reminding myself what a huge pleasure it was to be taking part in this event. In spite of all that, a little fogginess returned after the super-fast descent off Monte Pugliano when I couldn't recall whether the next climb was the penultimate or final one. At the time, I took the optimistic decision that it must be the last one so I hit the lower slopes with as much power as I could muster (believing that I only had 4km more or climbing left). I knew that the final climb should be hard but assumed at the time that I was just feeling awesome (ha ha). I only realised that this was Passo delle Siepi, and that I actually had one more climb to go, when I saw the sign at the top. Oops!

Gorolo is the climb I like least. It may be the final col but the way the road rises and falls – teasing the rider that the summit is near – is so very cruel. Then, just when you think it is over, there is a "wall" at 18%. Fortunately, I was still feeling good and gave my all to a strong ascent. The group of riders I was with now seemed huge but several powerful riders were helping to make this challenging climb manageable. After what seemed an unreasonably long time we finally went under the banner marking the top of the Gorolo climb. Many km away I could see dark clouds billowing up over the coast and I made a silent wish that the rain would not fall while I was still riding. With a very long, technical descent to come wet roads would be a nightmare.

Thankfully, our large and growing group all descended safely and so begun the fast 20km run-in to Cesenatico. On the flatter roads I was in my element – in team trial mode. I was determined to keep the pace high and – for some absolutely crazy reason – prove to my fellow riders how much energy I had. What's that about pride preceding a fall?



Whatever power and team ability I believed I had seemed to dissipate rather quickly. With around 7km to go it was as if the plug had been pulled out. With some embarrassment, I could no longer take a turn on the front and it was as much as I could do to hold the wheels in front of me. As we swept through tight turns and roundabouts I had to get out of the saddle to sprint flat out just to stay with this group. In spite of that, the endorphins flooding my tired body gave an almost masochistic thrill to these final moments of the race.

Into the final 2km, with the Adriatic now clearly in view, five riders pulled off the front of the group and a big gap opened. From somewhere I found the will to launch a lone chase and then we were six.

A few more twists and turns followed before the long finish straight came into view. More from a reflex than a conscious action, I dropped into my 11 tooth sprocket and found some energy I really didn't know I had to sprint the final 250 metres.

I shot past my breakaway companions and could see the finishing line coming fast towards me. My thrill was only tempered by the sight of one of those riders flashing by on my left hand side but I crossed the line with a roar of sheer pleasure.

With a dramatic sense of meteorological timing, the threatening storm soon followed. Within seconds of collecting my finisher's medal, lightning cracked, thunder rolled and then torrential rain fell!

## The Wednesday's group ride to the Orwell/Stour Rivers.



*By Robin Weaver*

Our Wednesday ride on 14 November coincided with a day of brilliant sunny weather. After assembling at Ian's in Dedham, we followed a route through Brantham, Bentley and Holbrook, then along the back road to Shotley through Erwarnton, with superb sunny views over the Stour at high tide.

We had a brief lecture from a bike-riding Erwarnton lady resident on Anne Boleyn's connection to Erwarnton Hall, as we stopped alongside the Tudor gatehouse, then on to the 'Shipwreck' for a mass order, just outside their normal 'breakfast menu' hours, of bacon butties - top service. High tide,

almost like the Med! On the return journey via Chelmondiston, Copdock, Higham and back to Dedham we detoured to Pin Mill, as one or two riders had not been there before - hence the photo.

## Enduro and Cross Country Racing

*By Oscar Keep*

Over the past year I have started racing both Cross Country racing and Enduro. These are different to each other but do have some similarities.

Mud Sweat and Gears is a popular Cross Country series in East Anglia and is mostly composed of cycling around a 6km off-road course as many times as you can in an hour. Races this season have included Haughley Park and Thickthorn on the outskirts of Norwich. These races are good fun and very tough on the legs as well as challenging your cardio. You also get sore hands at the end of the race from the uneven terrain.

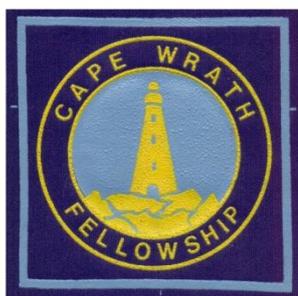
Enduro races normally have around five stages but it depends on where you're racing. You start the 1st stage and are timed downhill. Stages are about 1-4km; finishing the stage you have to then cycle up to the next section of the race. Each stage is full of a mixture of turns (berms), technical, steep descents and jumps. Sometimes you will be riding on loose, Sandy dirt or grippy dirt. The enduro race at Twisted Oaks Bike Park was a very friendly and relaxed race and could even have a break when ever wanted. This race started at any time from 10am and finished at 3pm. The aim



is to race as many of the five stages as possible and the fastest time on each stage would count to the total overall time. I managed to come 7th in my category for my first enduro race and I was very pleased. For the first three hours I was actually in 1st place. It's called an enduro race because it's the combination of XC racing and downhill. You have to bomb down the race track as fast as you can, then cycle up to the top for the next stage so requires very good skill, endurance and fitness.



Oscar



## Scottish Adventure *by Andrew Hoppit*

I was 16 in 1980 when I read a review in the Cycle Touring Club (now Cycling UK) magazine of the

Claud Butler Cape Wrath Special touring bike. Only 1000 of the original model were released, a top of the range machine well out of my budget. The article led me down a long journey of wanting to find out about where and what Cape Wrath is.

Cape Wrath, the most north westerly part of Scotland, only realistically accessible on bike via a ferry crossing and then a road of 11 miles that was built in 1828 with little maintenance since then. The road is there so the lighthouse could be built, being completed in 1829. The road is now in the middle of a live MOD firing range. Fast forward to 1949 when a cycling journalist, Rex Coley, founded one of Britain's oldest ongoing cycling challenges. The Cape Wrath Fellowship. The idea is beautifully simple: cycle to the lighthouse, get the signature of the lighthouse keeper, send it in to Rex and he would enter you to the Cape Wrath fellowship. Rex died in 1985 and nowadays a selfie of you and the lighthouse sent to Cycling UK is proof enough, along with a fiver you get a cloth badge and certificate of achievement.

### *Inverness to the Crask Inn 4th Sept Saturday 2021*

41 years it took to get to the start of my Cape Wrath adventure with my friend Stewart at Inverness train station. After a quick mid-day caffeine fix the first task was to get out of Inverness using the bike path on the Kessock Bridge, this carries the A9 trunk road all the way to Thurso. Life can be complicated, there was repair work being carried out on the bike path in the middle of the bridge, which meant carrying our bikes over the crash barrier and riding on the A9 with very large wagons going at speed. Thankfully we were soon back on the bike path and on our way along kinder roads. Our target was about 65 miles away to a pub called The Crask Inn. We had one more section of A9 riding, which was hard to avoid, using the Cromarty Bridge, but with plenty of space for the bikes.

### *Cromarty Bridge*

We rolled into the Crask Inn at 6.30pm with plenty of time to pitch tents in the daylight. About six hours on the road and not too challenging, but it's so remote with beautiful scenery. The Crask Inn is on an 'A' road, but this 'A' road is little more than a tarmac goat track with regular passing places, it really



does feel like the middle of nowhere. The nearest place of any size is Lairg 13 miles south, which we'd just cycled from. I'd phoned the pub a week earlier to explain what we were doing and had pre-ordered our evening meal. It was a fixed menu, no choices. So far so good.

### *Crask Inn to Cape Wrath via Durness 5th Sept Sunday*

The original plan had been to just cycle to Durness then on Monday tackle Cape Wrath. I'd checked to make sure nothing was planned by the MOD but thought it wise to double check, the new information from the MOD said live firing all week from Monday so plans had to be quickly changed. It was Cape Wrath in one go or it wasn't going to happen for me. It's just over 50 miles to the ferry from the Crask Inn and then 22 miles to Cape Wrath and back. We figured this was doable even though we were fully laden with touring kit. At the crack of dawn we packed our camping gear with the joy of midges to make things interesting, I got totally bitten even with anti-midge spray. How can something so small make for such misery? We had a very light breakfast as there was place called Hope some 30 miles away, would it have a

café or shop to fuel us up? We were in a part of Scotland known as the Flow Country, one big peat bog with not even many sheep in the landscape. The road headed north and got wilder, we turned off the 'A' road and were making good progress to Hope when we came across a rather impressive Iron Age Brock. I'd never even heard of them but there are a number dotted across Scotland mostly in the north.

*Dun Dornaigil Brock*

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dun\\_Dornaigil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dun_Dornaigil)



We rolled into what was marked on the map as Hope. This was nothing more than a junction to join a main road that follows the northern coast with more stunning scenery to Durness going round sea lochs. The coast road was lumpy and had quite a bit of traffic, mostly motor homes doing the North Coast 500. Arriving in Durness early afternoon in need of food, what better than a mobile coffee van doing toasted sandwiches. We pushed on the last few miles to the ferry.

From the jetty we could see the ferry on the other side of the Kyle of Durness heading back towards us. The ferry man was incredibly helpful saying he'd look after our bags whilst we cycled to the lighthouse, such a relief to have a lighter bike. Oh...and he also said that there was no bombing planned for Monday by the MOD so we needn't have pushed ourselves.

From the ferry you can see the journey to Cape Wrath and how desolate and beautiful it is at the same time. We

checked with the ferryman when we had to be back for the last crossing, he said not to worry he finishes around 5pm but call his mobile if we were running late and he'd come and get us, that's my kind of ferry. And yes there is mobile signal, in fact good 4g in the middle of nowhere.

### *The ferry across Kyle of Durness*



I was so pleased we didn't have our bags because you are straight into a brutal climb to start the 11 miles to the lighthouse, it's an up and down ride that has to be done very carefully, really more suited to a mountain bike. The whole journey is a ribbon of small rocks, water and into a landscape called the Parph. There are old milestone posts to tick off, but it seemed to take forever for each mile to be done. After an hour and a half the lighthouse came into

view with about a mile to go, and I knew we'd get there. Unbelievably there's a café that claims to be open 365 days a year in a building adjacent to the lighthouse. Coffee and cake was had, all rather surreal. I got



my proof of having been to the lighthouse and now had the small matter of 11 miles back At this point the heavens opened and I had left my waterproof jacket with the ferryman, schoolboy error. Having got to Cape Wrath and knowing what the road was like it we knew if were took things steady we'd get back for around 5pm to get the ferry back. It got all rather dark and gloomy with no real opportunities for photos but totally soaked we made it and had to wait 15 minutes for the ferry to take us back across the sea loch. We'd done it and with modern technology were able to instantly send my proof of achievement to Cycling UK along with £5 when I got off the ferry. I was cold, wet and not wanting another night in a tent, I wondered if there was any chance we'd be able to find somewhere warm and dry for the night....?

**Cape Wrath fellowship – Andrew Hoppit – 29/10/2021**  
*Cape Wrath lighthouse*

## **Christmas Present ideas! Some wacky - some sensible!**

*(All of the below can be found on the Interweb – somewhere!)*



An excellent stylised biker in cast iron, very classy! \*



Cheap and cheerful set of lights that you can fit & forget & you'll never get caught out in the dark. 3 levels of brightness! \*



In the style of Mondrian design used by the La Vie Claire team in the 80's



A good solution for checking behind for those pesky wayward vehicles!



No room for a shed for your bikes...this lockable mini version takes up very little space..



Wives and girlfriends note, bikers can never have enough cans of this! \*



The ultimate drinks holder for those social rides!



Yes it's a Rapha top (expensive!) and in orange but you get what you pay for and will last for years.



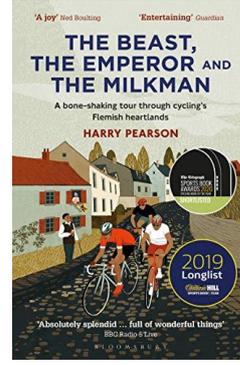
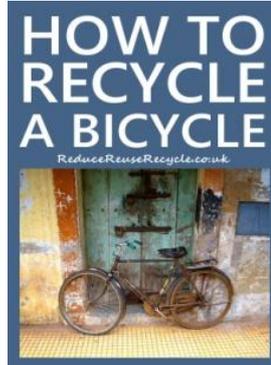
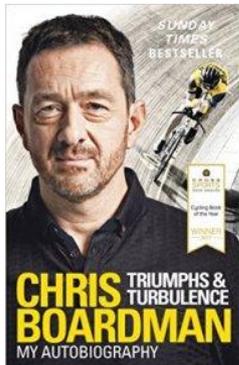
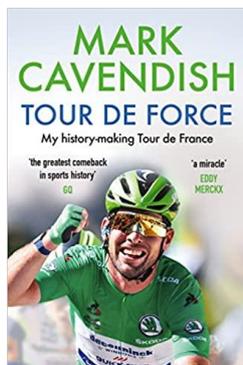
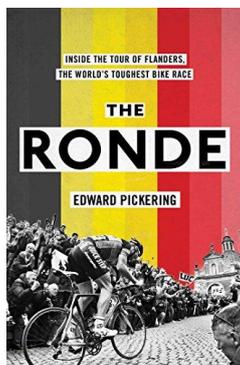
A cheerfully coloured multi tool with the added bonus of a torch included! \*



A bit left field but a competent DIY'er should be able to knock one up in a day! Exercise and grass cutting all in one go! What's not to like?



A subscription to the best bike magazine out there would be a winner! \*



\*

Cycling books always hits the spot! Some new ones just published and some classics!

\*

All items with an asterisk \* have been personally road tested !!

## Diary Dates

### A Guess the Distance Ride.

Tuesday 28th December 11am Cock Inn Car Park.

A short ride of about an hour, ridden at a comfortable pace, see picture alongside, *without distance measuring computers, Garmin's, balls of string and rulers etc.*

Nearest estimate to the actual distance wins a handsome trophy *All are invited, plus family members.*

*A visit afterwards to the Cock Horse Public House!!*



28<sup>th</sup> December 2021 Guess the Distance Ride  
 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022 Subs Night  
 30<sup>th</sup> January 2022 Reliability Ride  
 06<sup>th</sup> March 2022 Mad March Hilly Open TT,

From Cock Inn Car Park, Lavenham  
 From The Stevenson Centre, Gt. Cornard  
 From The Stevenson Centre, Gt. Cornard  
 From Lavenham Community Centre.



*And so another strange year ends. It seems a bit déjà vu from this time last year. Hopefully not, and that medical technology will triumph over adversity! Will we have a coming trouble free year ahead of us, will Ipswich Town get promotion or will I win the club 10 mile TT trophy; all highly unlikely, we can but dream! There probably won't be a January edition of Spindle as incoming content is always at its lowest come the start of a New Year, so you can all have a break from my input! Stop cheering! Have a great time over Christmas to you all..*  
 Rog.