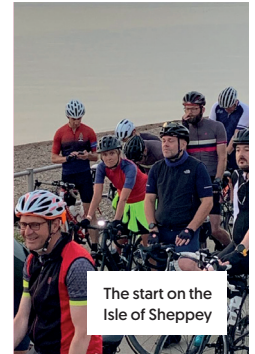
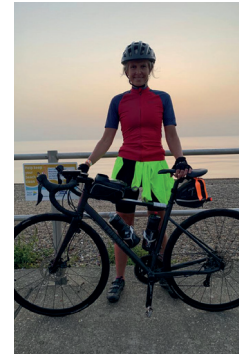




Camping near Findhorn



The start on the Isle of Sheppey

## Scotland

# The Moray Loop

This summer **Saartje Drijver** and her friend **Fiona** spent three days bikepacking through northern Scotland

While most of the UK was experiencing a heatwave in the middle of July, the weather in the north of Scotland provided excellent conditions for a summer cycling trip. My good friend Fiona and I had both read about the Moray Way and fancied a mini adventure.

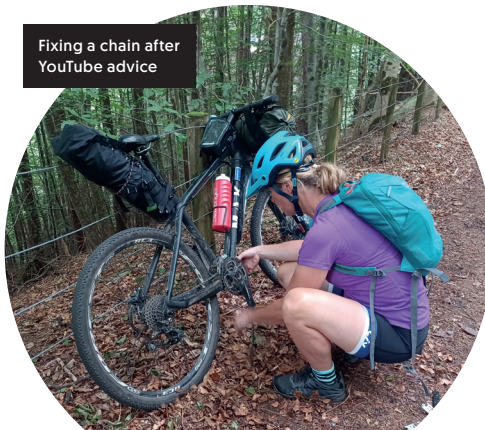
We planned the trip at short notice and were happy to wild camp for the two nights. Norman Thomson's guidebook was our bible to tell us about historical features en route. After a drive, and lunch in Granton-on-Spey, we followed the delightful Dava Way to Kinloss and on to Findhorn. Here we enjoyed a beer and found a quiet camping spot in the dunes.

The following day we had a swim in the Moray Forth and meandered along the Moray Coastal Trail past Burghead and Hopeman to Lossiemouth. We joined families enjoying the sunshine on the beach at Lossiemouth, then were guided by two local mountain bikers through the woods to get us on our way to Spey Bay. We think we saw dolphins but they could equally have been big birds.

From there we turned south along the Speyside Way. The route took us away from the river and up into the hills for a few miles. This is where we found our second camping spot. A snapped chain link took some time to mend the following morning. We had the right tools but no idea how to use them. Luckily we had internet connection and were able to follow the instructions on a YouTube video.

The rest of the route followed the River Spey, railway routes along the Speyside distilleries, and finally through the woods back to Granton-on-Spey. All in all, this is a great 100-mile trip which is comfortably done over three days if you want to appreciate the countryside and towns along the way.

Fixing a chain after YouTube advice



## England

# The longest day

Chase the Sun UK South is a 205-mile sportive from Kent to Somerset. **Louise Bell** rode it

**THREE WEEKS BEFORE** tackling Chase the Sun I tested my legs on the RideLondon. I left at 4.45am, rode the 30 miles there, and finished the 100-mile event feeling strong. I was just about ready for the east-to-west, coast-to-coast Chase the Sun. I planned to ride solo and self-supported, aiming not for sunset but simply to plod the distance with minimal stops.

The day's high point was locking eyes with another solo rider at the start in Minster. We instantly became a team. She fed me flapjack; I fed her cake. She waited as I sorted a mechanical; I navigated when her Garmin died. She was in a relay team so we cycled miles 1-60 and 100-150 together. Those miles tripped by and were an absolute joy.

My low point was before lunch, riding on my own for two hours after I had burned too many matches joining stronger riders. My legs were leaden and I couldn't keep from dwelling on the task still ahead. Not yet halfway, the urge to stop was fierce.

From Devizes, at 150 miles, I was solo again. This time, however, my mind was strong. Although the rain, wind and cold on that English summer day were brutal, I gained comfort from being part of a small wave of cycling humanity, inching forward, united in bearing terrible conditions.

My navigation failed in Cheddar Gorge and my hands were too frozen to right the problem. Instead, I followed a twinkle of red lights, pedalling fast for the last hour to keep them in sight and keep from freezing. We arrived in Burnham at 9pm, half an hour before sunset, to cheering supporters.