



No one knows great rides like CTC groups. Organiser **Graham Brodie** of Devon CTC describes his annual off-road event in April

The Devon Dirt



Devon is a beautiful county, with thousands of miles of roads and lanes weaving between hills, river valleys, forests and unspoilt villages. Linking many of these roads and lanes are tracks carved out of red earth, which when wet will cover your bike in Devon Dirt...

And so was born an event that is becoming a classic ride around the lanes and tracks of south Dartmoor. To be honest we weren't unique or original. After the demise of our own annual rough-stuff event, we decided to copy the neighbouring Dorset Dirt ride that many of our members had enjoyed riding.

The choice of terrain in our area is huge, with the slightly limiting factor of access to some parts of Dartmoor, erosion/environmental concerns, and some sensitivity (even hostility) to cyclists and mountain bikes in some 'picture postcard' areas.

So in the end we came up with a ride with a bit of everything. Forest Enterprise grant us access the Great Plantation at Bovey Tracey, where the ride follows a fairly level forest before some steep and hard climbs up onto the moors.

The ride is basically on lanes and side roads, linked up with off-road

(Main) Someone always loses it in the ford at North Bovey

(Below) Don't worry: there are bikewashes available after the event – and showers

sections that vary from steep and rocky climbs and descents, to a fast wide forest track descent, and some twisty and technical bits. The highlight is probably the big wide and deep but rideable ford at North Bovey. Every year we expect at least one rider to get it wrong and go head first for the cameras.

If you don't like wet toes, there are some very slippery stepping stones (which may get you even wetter) or a nearby footbridge. At this location we also have a control checkpoint, to make sure everyone is still on course, and also there's a mechanic available who's often busy sorting out broken rear mechs, snapped chains and the odd broken wheel.

Free drinks and bananas and

cereal bars are also provided to give riders sustenance for the next big climb up to Langstone Cross. It's a 'foot drier' climb! At the top you are rewarded with a gradual descent into Manaton, with fine views of Bowermans



Nose and other moorland features before the rapid drop through Houndtor Woods and then Pullabrook Woods to an old railway track, which is then level into Bovey Tracey, a town full of cafes, pubs and a couple of bike shops. You probably won't need a stop here as the finish is only five miles away, but maybe the lure of a Sunday roast is too much to bear!

Don't panic – the Devon Dirt is whatever you want it to be. If you want to ride flat out you can try it, but most take it steady, keep the bike in one piece and enjoy the scenery and terrain on offer. It's do-able on a robust touring bike but fatter tyres make it more comfortable. There are some bits you'll probably have to walk even on a mountain bike

Our HQ is based at Newton Abbot. Facilities include ample parking (free), showers for people and muddy bikes, and a coffee/tea bar with sandwiches and cakes at the finish. We usually have a local bike shop with a stand so you can buy innertubes etc. In 2008 the entries doubled to 150.

The cost is £8 for 2009 (£4 under-18s). That includes the route sheet, a route card to get stamped, and a certificate at the finish, plus food and drinks. The route is also made available as a GPS track on the website (www.devondirt.co.uk).

Who we are

Devon CTC brings together 1,100 CTC members across the county. We have six active sections if you include our popular coffee pot rides. All the sections have regular Sunday runs, and we organise a range of touring and audax rides as part of our own 'Devon Touring Competition' similar and in conjunction with the national CTC Tourist Competition, and our trips to France are very popular. Our classic audax event is the Dartmoor Devil in October. See it all on the website: www.ctcdevon.co.uk.



FACT FILE Devon Dirt

DISTANCE: 55km **AVERAGE TIME:** 4 - 6hrs (no limit). **TERRAIN:** On and off-road - some of it steep and rocky, some fast forest tracks and some sticky muddy sections. Deep ford.

WHEN: Sunday 19th April 2009, £8 entry fee (£4 under 18), which includes refreshments. **MAPS:** OS Explorers 31 (Torbay) 28 (Dartmoor) maps.

START/FINISH: Newton Abbot Recreational Trust, Marsh Road, Newton Abbot.

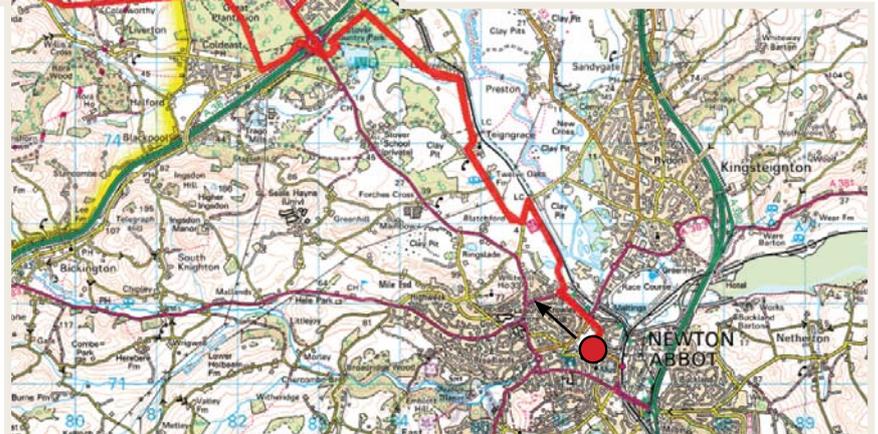
CYCLE SHOPS: BikeUs at Bovey Tracey is almost on the route.

ESSENTIALS: Take spare tubes and repair kit, multi-tool, waterproof jacket.

MORE INFORMATION: www.devondirt.co.uk or contact Devon CTC

Submit a route

If you want to submit one of your local group's favourite rides, write or email the editor - details on page 80 - for advice on how to go about it. Each one printed wins a boxed set of three Cassini historical maps of the area of your choice. To see the whole range, visit www.cassinimaps.com. To order by phone, call 0845 458 9910.



Route directions

- **START:** Newton Abbot Recreational Trust
- L from Trust. L at T to O. SO past B&Q to O where 3rd exit to cyclistroute (gate).
- Go to T where L & in 400m R (SP: Teigngrace).
- SO via village. After 4K, L into cycletrack before A38. Follow 'cycle' SP to T with A382.
- R & cross O. 2nd exit (SP: Liverton).
- Follow 800m. R at X (SP: Liverton, Rora) and into woods via gap in fence.
- Take wooded track SO over 2 X to earth bank. L & follow bank to main road.
- R then L into bridleway by hedge. Follow to T (road) where R, then L (sign on gate: Coleworthy).
- Uphill past farm. L at T on bend, cont. to top, then LH fork (steel gate on L) down between trees. Cross stream to T.
- R and in 400m R again uphill to Brimley. On descent, L into bridlepath by 'The Old Stables'.
- Downhill. L by small tree, on to T where R (sign 'PATH') to T. L to X (Lowerdown), SO

past hotel.

- At Gipsy Corner L & next R (SP: Manton). Up and downhill. L by 13' 3" sign (SP: Rudge).
- Along valley, then long climb. At 'Logan Stones', L into bridleway (SP: Lustleigh Cleave). Up to gate. Take L track by wall (SP: Clam Bridge/Heavens Gate). Woods. Hill.
- Descend. R (SP: Foxworthy Bridge). Track to river is faint.
- Gate. Thatched cottage. At T turn R. L by another cottage. Keep R through gate. Uphill to gate & concrete road.
- L and on to T where R. Take next L (SP: no through road) and on to North Bovey. Go left through deep ford or use stepping stones.
- Cont. on track through gate. L on road & uphill to Langston X.
- T on corner. L to Manaton. In village take L fork by 'The Forge' to T where R and next L. Take track downhill.
- Through gate (Houndtor Wood), descend to X, SO (SP Byway to Trendlebeare). Stay on track. Through gate and over bridge to T, where L. Follow track.

- Halfway uphill, turn L. Clearing. Go into Pullabrook Woods. Descend to road (gate) where L. Cross river under viaduct (13' 3") and turn R (another 13' 3" sign).
- Descend to T. Turn L then R onto old railway track. Follow to Hole Bridge (A382)
- Turn R on A382 back to O where L
- Turn R by Brookside tea rooms. Exit town. Before O, L into dirt road. Through gate to T where R to next T (Heathfield Road) where L
- In 100m, R into Battle Rd. On to TL where L (A382) to Drumbridges. CARE! Cross O. Take A382 towards Newton Abbot.
- In 200m, L down to cycletrack. Through Stover Park to T.
- R and through Teigngrace to T where L
- Turn R before rly. Take track to gate by O. L at O to next O - SO. Cont. down 'The Avenue'.
- In 300m turn R (CARE!) into Marsh Rd. On to Recreational Trust.

ABBREVIATIONS: T = T junction, R = right, L = left, SO = straight on, O = roundabout, X = cross roads, sp = signpost.