

**We need you!**

Cycle wants your Travellers' Tales. Write or email the editor – details on page 80 – to find out what's required

# TRAVELLERS' TALES



## AN UNFINISHED END TO END

Bad weather curtailed but didn't spoil the tour of Canadian brothers Ken and Bob Preston

**OUR PLAN** was to ride from John o'Groats to Land's End, covering about 80-90km a day. The May weather had other plans. We arrived in Thurso on 2 May, and the next day we went to John o'Groats for the required photo op. So far, so good.

The next day we had hoped to get to Crask Inn, but from the start we were battling a tough headwind and constant rain. It did let up for an hour – when it snowed! By the 48km mark, Bob and I had had enough, so we checked out the Farr Bay Inn just outside of Bettyhill. Yes, they had a room, did food, and had a bar. It turned out to be a great evening.

The next few days saw us in Lairg, riding through Bonar Bridge, then into Dingwall and Carrbridge. By this time it was clear that we would not be able to complete our trip to Land's End in the allotted time. We decided to carry on and see as much as possible. When we ran out of time, that would be our end point.

We continued through Glenmore Forest, Perth, Edinburgh, Berwick upon Tweed, Seaham and Middlesbrough, ending up at Castleton in the North York Moors National Park. The weather never did get much better. The rain, snow and hail made us really appreciate our one dry day in 22 days of riding.

Yet we still had a great time. We used Sustrans routes and enjoyed good accommodation, food, and beer. We met nice people too. So don't let the weather ruin your trip: modify it and enjoy the unexpected. Cheers!

## Constable country

Simon Bird describes Reading CTC's summer hostelling weekend in Suffolk and Essex

**Y**ou don't have to go far from home for great rides. Reading CTC's hostel weekend was a chance for me to re-visit the lanes I rode with Essex CTC in my youth. Sixteen of us took over Brantham hostel, near Manningtree, in July.

The first day's ride was a trip to Snape Maltings, taking in the Butley ferry. It's a vital link on NCN1 and is run by volunteers. It's just a rowing boat so the crossing was leisurely and multiple trips were needed.

Orford, with its delightful castle and pretty quay, gave us choices for the lunch stop before we headed on to Snape Maltings. A BBQ back at the hostel rounded off a good day's ride.

We were joined by four members of Colchester CTC for Sunday's ride. Their local knowledge proved useful for both elevenses and lunch. The route was loosely based on the Painters' Trail, highlighting the locations made famous by John Constable and Thomas

Gainsborough. Lunch was at the Granary, by the river in Sudbury.

There was some resistance to continuing after a few had discovered some local beers in the nearby Quay Theatre. I think water bottles may have been topped up!

Over the two days, we rode through pretty villages and great countryside. And compared to our usual routes in Berkshire and Oxfordshire, the roads were virtually free of potholes.



Ken and Bob celebrate the journey, not the destination, on their End-to-Halfway trip

### DROPPING THROUGH YOUR LETTERBOX IN TWO MONTHS:

#### BIKE FITTING

What do you get for your money?

#### CARBON ROAD BIKES

Long-distance lightweights tested

#### BRUSSELS TO THE BLACK SEA

Touring down the Danube with a small child

#### LEADING RIDES ON ROAD

Essential skills for safe and happy cycling groups

**NEXT ISSUE**