

# SLEAFORD WHEELERS' NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2021



## CLUB NEWS & REVIEWS

### Easter Egg Hunt for Charity

For the second year running the pandemic forced the club to cancel the Charity 10, which is one of the best events on the calendar! Fortunately all was not lost, thanks in no small part to the efforts of Richard Hamblin who worked tirelessly to organise an alternative (socially distanced) event, which included a 'cycling' Easter egg hunt and a fundraiser for St Barnabas Lincolnshire Hospice. Sleaford Wheelers had to complete a series of challenges including: works of Strava-art, riding challenging distances, demonstrating mechanical prowess, mountain climbing (Lincolnshire, it's not flat you know!) and a virtual time trial on our local course!

In total the Sleaford Wheelers raised £410 for St Barnabas Lincolnshire Hospice! Special mention must go to Tom Howes who created a gigantic piece of Strava-art which involved riding over 100 miles! In total 19 Easter eggs were won, 16 punctures were mended, 13 people rode every day and 9 people completed a 100 mile ride (you must be crazy)! Fun was had by all club members including the club's youngest member who is aged two years old! Well done Wheelers!

### Other News

#### Group Rides

After a long hiatus club rides have now resumed, with regular Sunday Club Rides for both Intermediate and Fast groups leaving from the Market Place (Sleaford) at 09:15 AM every Sunday! With many new members, now is the perfect opportunity to check out or refresh our club's group rides policy and etiquette. More information can be found on the club [website](#).

#### Members News

Peter Thompson who has been a club member since 2018 has moved north to Skinningrove! Peter has been an active club member over the past several years including volunteering as a marshal for our time trials and writing an interesting article about Audax riding which you can find in this edition of the newsletter! We wish Peter the very best of luck in his new hilly home!

The club welcomes a number of new members including: Keely McNiffe, Ian Bailey, John & Jekaterina Hutton.

# TIME TRIALS

## 10 League & Club Championship

Report by [Dominic Righini-Brand](#)

PHOTO: RICHARD HOWES PHOTOGRAPHY

### ON THURSDAY 29TH JULY THE SLEAFORD WHEELERS HELD THEIR CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS AND FINAL ROUND OF THE 10 LEAGUE!

The event included both season regulars and returning riders from previous years, notably, **Sam Trotter** who put in a personal best of 24:19 on a road bike without aero bars and a wonky number affixed to his side (not his back which is the generally accepted regular position).

Befitting the final 10 mile time trial of the season many riders set personal bests including **Dominic Righini-Brand** (21:28) who wins the club championship and scratch league. **Sam Howes** put in another fantastic effort to secure First Junior with 393 points and Fastest Junior with a time of 21:54. **Shaun Balfe** was the Fastest Vet and overall winner of the Vets with a time of 22:30. **Felix Earth** achieved First Juvenile in the 10 League having completed the final round with a time of 23:08 and was Fastest Juvenile on the night.

An interesting sub-plot this year has been the development of the Sleaford Wheelers women who have put in some stellar performances and shown steady improvement throughout the season. Now riding a borrowed TT bike **Georgia Lancaster** put in an amazing time of 24:56 which secured Fastest Woman, Fastest Junior Woman, First on Handicap for the Club Championship and a new junior club record! Georgia also secured First Junior Woman with 317 points! Georgia also secured First Junior Woman with 317 points! **Jo Howes**, the First

Woman in the 10 League with 342 points, completed the course in 25:23 during the final round. It should also be noted that Jo has been involved in several intense season long battles for the Handicap and Vets! In only her second season time trialling **Evgeniya Righini-Brand** won the Handicap league, this shows all the hard work and continual improvement she has made throughout the season. At the beginning of the season Evgeniya was completing the course in roughly 29 minutes. In the final round she set an all time personal best of 25:54! Also showing great improvement and continued hard work is **Isla Earth**, who was the Fastest Juvenile Woman with a time of 32:56. Isla was also First Juvenile Woman with 251 points.

Unlike last year, this year we have had a full 10 League. As you would expect there has been many highs and low, trials and tribulations so far this season! This year we have been entertained by Sam Howes success in breaking George Thompson's old Juvenile 10 mile record (with unshaven legs!) and Junior club records for 15, 25 and 50 mile time trials. The second round had to be cancelled due to unscheduled emergency 'pop-up' road works by Anglian Water. And the following week's round was marred by a freezing rain storm! This season also saw Georgia Lancaster break the Junior Woman 25 mile TT club record.

Now as we head into the later part of the season with the 7 League and Women's 7, it'll be interesting to see how these sporting rivalries develop.

#### 10 LEAGUE

WINNER	Dominic Righini-Brand
FIRST WOMAN	Jo Howes
FIRST JUNIOR	Samuel Howes
FIRST JUNIOR WOMAN	Georgia Lancaster
FIRST JUVENILE	Felix Earth
FIRST JUVENILE WOMAN	Isla Earth
FIRST VET ON STANDARD	Shaun Balfe
FIRST ON HANDICAP	Evgeniya Righini-Brand

#### CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP 10

WINNER	Dominic Righini-Brand
FASTEST WOMAN	Georgia Lancaster
FASTEST JUNIOR	Samuel Howes
FASTEST JUNIOR WOMAN	Georgia Lancaster
FASTEST JUVENILE	Felix Earth
FASTEST JUVENILE WOMAN	Isla Earth
FASTEST VET ON STANDARD	Shaun Balfe
FIRST ON HANDICAP	Georgia Lancaster



PHOTO: RICHARD HOWES PHOTOGRAPHY

## Road Bike Championship

ON THE 13TH MAY SLEAFORD WHEELERS HELD THEIR INAUGURAL ROAD BIKE CHAMPIONSHIPS WHICH SAW WHEELERS COMPETE ON OUR LOCAL 10 MILE TIME TRIAL COURSE WITH ROAD BIKES.

Time trial bikes, clip-on aero bars, aero helmets (and helmets which cover ears), disc wheels and deep section wheels over 80mm were all banned. The club's de-facto UCI representative Richard Hamblin helped educate and enforce sock length and legal positions to be used on road bikes; with several aero-tucked positions having been recently banned!

However the lack of tt bikes and a strict regulatory framework failed to slow down club members who put in some astonishing times including: **Dominic Righini-Brand** (23:08), **Samuel Howes** (24:12) and **Paul Aubrey** (25:15). Representing Sleaford Wheelers women **Jo Howes** completed the course in 27:46 and was followed by **Georgia Lancaster** (28:53) and **Evgeniya Righini-Brand** (29:04).

**Gaz Poulson** (RAFCA) completed the course in an amazing 21:59 and once-upon-a-time Sleaford Wheeler (now Rose Race Team) **George Thompson** in 23:33!

## Interclubs

THIS YEAR WE HAVE ALSO HAD SEVERAL INTERCLUB 25 MILE TIME TRIALS, WITH THE JACK O'CONNOR ON THE 17TH JUNE AND THE SOUTH LINCS INTERCLUB THE FOLLOWING WEEK ON THE 24TH JUNE.

Witham Wheelers won the **JACK O'CONNOR SHIELD** having seen off strong competition from **Jim Boyle** (55:36), **Dominic Righini-Brand** (55:58), **Samuel Howes** (56:42) and **Thomas Howes** (01:00:48). Sleaford Wheelers women however managed to wrestle away the **CHRIS O'CONNOR SHIELD** with a collective team performance by **Jo Howes**, **Evgeniya Righini-Brand** and **Verity Miles** of 3:29:50.

The following week we had the **SOUTH LINCS INTERCLUB SHIELD** which was won by Spalding CC despite strong performances by **Dominic Righini-Brand** (54:38), **Shaun Balfe** (57:06) and **Samuel Howes** (57:11). Unfortunately the South Lincs Interclub does not have a women's award: perhaps this is something we need to discuss with the other South Lincs clubs?

# REPORTS

## LRRR Events & Nev Crane Cup

THIS YEAR ALSO MARKED THE RETURN OF LRRR EVENTS — HAVING BEEN CANCELLED LAST YEAR DUE TO THE PANDEMIC — WHICH SAW WHEELERS REPRESENTING THE CLUB IN SEVERAL EVENTS INCLUDING THE 10 MILE TIME TRIAL HOSTED BY LINCOLN WHEELERS AND A 25 MILE TIME TRIAL HOSTED BY SLEAFORD WHEELERS ON OUR LOCAL COURSE OUT TO DONINGTON.

A number of Sleaford Wheelers ventured north to compete on in the **LRRR 10 IN INGHAM** (north of Lincoln) and put in some exceptional performances for their club including: **Dominic Righini-Brand** (21:57), **Samuel Howes** (22:21), **Philip Williams** (23:20), **Felix Earth** (23:23), **Thomas Howes** (23:48), **David Smith** (24:44), **Jo Howes** (25:55), **Stuart McKellar** (26:56), **Georgia Lancaster** (26:56), **Dave Ashley** (26:59), **Chris Close** (27:47) and **John Scott** (33:22).



PHOTO: RICHARD HOWES PHOTOGRAPHY



PHOTO: RICHARD HOWES PHOTOGRAPHY

The second LRRR event was the **SWCC NEV CRANE CHAMPIONSHIP 25 (LRRR 25)** which also doubled as the Nev Crane Cup, which memorialises the late Nev Crane who was a founding member of the reformed Sleaford Wheelers and a highly accomplished cycle racer. The weather that afternoon was extremely hot, with many entrants either failing to start or retiring halfway through the event.

However a number of Wheelers persevered (and perspired) to complete the events in very tricky conditions including: **Iain Bailey** (01:00:11), **Gavin Culshaw** (01:01:31), **Devon Morgan** (01:03:15), **Thomas Howes** (01:04:49), **Stuart McKellar** (01:06:20), **Jim Jeffries** (01:07:14), **Dave Ashley** (01:09:45), **Evgeniya Righini-Brand** (01:09:53), **Noah Starbuck** (01:10:23), **Nigel Johnson** (01:11:10) and **John Scott** (01:25:30). **Jo Howes** was the overall fastest woman for the event, completing the course in 1:03:26 and fastest Juniors going to **Sam Howes** (58:52) and **Georgia Lancaster** (01:08:15). It was **Dominic Righini-Brand** who finished 4th overall with a time of 57:03 who scooped the Silver Wheel Trophy for fastest Wheeler. Congratulations to all who participated or who volunteered their time to make this event happen!

*An interesting side story from the event was **Loz Staples** (Velo One, and also a Sleaford Wheeler second-claim) who got a puncture when returning through Osbournby and had to walk to the finish line, completing the course in 1:33:12. Due to the rules Loz was unable to receive outside help and thus grasped this opportunity to demonstrate his dedication to his team and the sport (his cleats, however, are not so thankful!)*

# UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

## SL7-1



7 LEAGUE & WOMEN'S 7 LEAGUE:  
**5 – 26 August 2021**

LINCOLNSHIRE CYCLO-CROSS CHAMPIONSHIP RD1:  
**26 September 2021**

## 7 League & Women's 7 League

SEVEN MILE (11 KILOMETRE) TIME TRIAL ON A SHORTENED VERSION OF OUR LOCAL COURSE. BEST 3 RESULTS FROM 4 ROUNDS COUNT TOWARDS THE CLUB LEAGUE TABLE. ALL 7 LEAGUE & WOMEN'S 7 LEAGUE EVENTS ARE ORGANISED BY OUR RACE SECRETARY CHRIS CLOSE

All abilities welcome, booking via the club website.

**Entry fee:** adult 1st and 2nd claim members £4.00; under 18 1st and 2nd claim members £3.00; all guest riders £5.00

**Course:** SL7-1

**Distance:** 7.8 miles (12.5 km)

**Block bookings are available for 1st and 2nd claim members:**

- Whole 7 League (4 events) £16.00 for adult 1st & 2nd claim members.
- Whole 7 League (4 events) £12.00 for U18 1st & 2nd claim members.

**ROUND 1**  
05 August 2021  
**Start time:** 19:00

**ROUND 2**  
12 August 2021  
**Start time:** 19:00

**ROUND 3**  
19 August 2021  
**Start time:** 18:45

**ROUND 4**  
26 August 2021  
**Start time:** 18:45

*All events are combined for the 7 League & Women's 7 League*

## Lincolnshire Cyclo-cross Championship Round 1

AFTER A LONG HIATUS CYCLO-CROSS IS BACK! TIME TO DUST OFF YOUR CYCLO-CROSS BIKE (OR MOUNTAIN BIKE IF THAT'S YOUR THING) AND HAVE SOME FUN IN THE MUD!

To enter the league you will need to register with the Lincs Cyclo-Cross Association in their [Rider HQ!](#)

**Date:** 26 September 2021    **Course:** Ancaster Leisure

Leadenham

## SWCC LEADENHAM HILL CLIMB 2021

Stonepit Plantation

104 m

**11 September 2021**

## Hill Climb

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND, LAST YEARS 'BATTLE OF THE CANDLESTICKS' WAS ONE OF THE CLOSEST IN YEARS, WITH ONLY 5 SECONDS SEPARATING THE TOP FIVE FINISHERS! HELD ON THE SLOPES ON LEADENHAM HILL THIS UNIQUE EVENT ON THE SLEAFORD WHEELERS' CALENDAR WILL TEST YOUR ABILITIES AT ONE OF CYCLING'S TEMPLE ARTS — HILL CLIMBING!

All abilities welcome, booking via the club website.

**Entry fee:** adult 1st and 2nd claim members £4.00; under 18 1st and 2nd claim members £3.00; all guest riders £5.00

**Date:** 11 September 2021

**Start time:** 10:00

**Course:** CHC-1

**Distance:** 0.7 miles

# UPCOMING LRRRA EVENTS

## CS/18 + C30/3



LRRRA 18 INC LINCOLNSHIRE INTERCLUB (OPEN EVENT)  
**21 August 2021**

LRRRA 30 INC LINCOLNSHIRE INTERCLUB (OPEN EVENT)  
**05 September 2021**

### LRRRA 18 mile TT (open event)

LRRRA EVENT HOSTED BY SWCC AND ORGANISED BY CHRIS CLOSE. TRADITIONALLY A 2-UP TIME TRIAL, THIS YEAR THE CLOSEST PAIRS (FROM THE SAME CLUB) WILL COUNT!

Bookings must be made in advance.

**Entry fee:** £14.00 for everyone, book via [CTT website](#) or with an official CTT entry form.

**Date:** 21 August 2021      **Course:** CS/18  
**Start time:** 14:00      **Distance:** 18 miles (29 km)

### LRRRA 30 mile TT (open event)

LRRRA EVENT HOSTED BY WITHAM WHEELERS AND ORGANISED BY SIMON COCKER.

Bookings must be made in advance.

**Entry fee:** £14.00 for everyone, book via [CTT website](#) or with an official CTT entry form.

**Date:** 05 September 2021      **Course:** C30/3  
**Start time:** 08:00      **Distance:** 30 miles (48 km)



## 2021 LRRRA HILL CLIMB CHAMPIONSHIP

**19 September 2021**

### 2021 LRRRA Hill Climb Championship (open event)

OPEN HILL CLIMB EVENT HOSTED BY VELO-ONE CYCLING AND ORGANISED BY DAN CARR.

Bookings must be made in advance.

**Entry fee:** £10.00 for everyone, book via [CTT website](#) or with an official CTT entry form.

**Date:** 19 September 2021      **Course:** CHC-1  
**Start time:** 09:00      **Distance:** 0.7 miles

## PARTICIPATING IN EVENTS

### Rear light

All competitors, please be aware of CTT Regulation 14(i):

*'No competitor shall be permitted to start the event unless such competitor has affixed to the rear of their machine a working rear red light, either flashing or constant, that is illuminated and in a position that is clearly visible to other road users.'*

To participate in any Sleaford Wheelers' event you must have a red light, either flashing or constant. Riders who do not have a light affixed to their bicycle will not be allowed to start the event.

In short — no light, no ride!

### Young riders

To enter any of our club's time trials, riders between the ages of 12 and 17 will need to complete a [parental permission form](#) for the season.

### Event cancellation

In the event of cancellation there will be no refunds except if the series has to be abandoned for covid reasons.

# GROUP RIDING GUIDE

## Advice & General Etiquette

By [Dan Simpson](#)



SLEAFORD WHEELERS HAS RECENTLY RE-INTRODUCED GROUPS RIDES AFTER A LONG HIATUS DUE TO THE PANDEMIC. THE FOLLOWING GUIDE IS INTENDED FOR NEW CLUB MEMBERS WHO MAY NOT HAVE RIDDEN IN GROUP RIDES BEFORE AND TO REFRESH THE MEMORIES OF MORE EXPERIENCED CLUB MEMBERS WHO HAVE BEEN RIDING ALONE OR IN SMALL GROUPS THROUGHOUT THE LOCKDOWNS.



### Advantages of riding in groups

There are many advantages of riding in groups, chiefly cyclists can shelter each other from the wind and can ride faster together.

Also if you are riding in a group, you can support one another, for example, if somebody has a puncture or mechanical problem.

Grouped cyclists are also safer on busier roads as drivers are less likely to close-pass a bunch of cyclists.

When done properly, a group ride should be a safe and enjoyable experience, where group members support each other and riders of different ability levels.

### Different ability levels

Throughout the season Sleaford Wheelers typically runs several groups for its Sunday Club Rides to cater for different ability riders. It is important you select the right group for your ability level. If you are new to group riding or have not been cycling for a while, it is better to select a group which can comfortably accommodate your current ability. For example consider riding with the Intermediate group, if you think you might struggle in the faster group.

#### The club offers the following groups:

- **Club Ride, Fast** group: 60+ miles, 18–20 mph
- **Intermediate** group: 50–65 miles, 17–18 mph
- **Social Plus** group: subject to numbers, 30–35 miles, 14–16 mph
- **Social Ride**: subject to numbers, 20–25 miles, 11–12 mph

# GROUP RIDING GUIDE

## Advice & General Etiquette

By [Dan Simpson](#)



### Some general rules and things to keep in mind when riding in groups:

- Always **come prepared**, dress for the weather conditions expected on route and always bring tyre levers, pump and several spare inner tubes. If you are running tubeless, you should still bring a spare inner tube because you might get a puncture which the sealant cannot fix. You should also bring a mobile phone, some form of identification, money and drinks for hydration.
- A **cycle helmet must be worn at all times** and bikes should be equipped with mudguards during the winter months (October–March). You should also consider wearing high visibility clothing so that you are easily seen and have a flashing red light attached to the rear of your bicycle. During winter months when visibility is poor it is also a good idea to have a clear bright light mounted on the front of your bike or handlebars.
- Please **follow the Highway Code** at all times, remember as a cyclist you are a vehicle on the roads and therefore responsible for your own safety and the safety of other road users.
- Please **respect all other road users**, including drivers, pedestrians, runners, dog-walkers and horse-riders. Where appropriate and safe to do so, allow drivers to get past you on narrow roads.
- Unfortunately, as cyclists we frequently see many examples of dangerous driving, in these situations try to **remain calm** and **do not antagonise motorists** and/or fellow road users. An angry cyclist is also a distracted cyclist.
- When riding in a group, **ride steady**. Keep a constant speed and avoid any unnecessary changes in speed and/or direction, as these become magnified further down the line and can cause unnecessary accidents.
- Group riding two abreast is both safe and legal, a bunch of cyclists is easier to overtake versus a long strung-out line. However you should **never ride more than two abreast and be prepared to single out on narrower roads** (only) when it is safe to do so (e.g. the car can overtake the line without becoming unnecessarily close), so that you do not impede the flow of traffic.
- **Point out road hazards** to your fellow cyclists, this can include potholes, tramlines, rough road surfaces, large puddles (which potentially contain potholes), carcasses and/or rubbish on the road, cars parked in the road, deer crossing the road, junctions and road furniture (e.g. traffic islands) which might necessitate a change of direction and/or speed. Where possible give a verbal and visual warning (by pointing at the hazard).
- If there is a car waiting to overtake behind the group, communicate with the riders in front and make them aware of the car's presence by shouting '**car back**'. Likewise, if you are near the front and see a car approaching which might necessitate thinning out the bunch, make your fellow riders behind aware of the car by shouting '**car up**'
- When **passing horse riders** it is important to pass 'slow and wide'. Slow down as much as possible and give as much space as it is safe to do so. If you are approaching from behind make the horse rider is aware of your presence in advance, for example by saying 'good morning'. If you have a particularly loud free hub, it is advisable to keep peddling so that you do not spook the horse. Be prepared to stop and wait if asked by the rider.
- Communication is the key to good group riding. **Pass on any instructions from your groups lead rider** and communicate within the group if anyone has a puncture, mechanical problem or is off the back.
- Let others know if you are unable to keep up, have a problem or have decided to leave the group. Always pass the instructions along; **if a rider cannot keep up, the leader needs to know**.
- If a rider has a puncture or mechanical problem, the group will wait nearby in a safe location, unless the leader advises otherwise. **All riders should be accounted for**, particularly younger and/or less-experienced riders.
- **Riders should not race ahead of the group and leader** unless instructed to do so — it is a group ride, not a breakaway stage at the Tour de France. In a group you have riders of different abilities, and if you are a strong rider you need to consider the abilities of weaker riders within the group. A well drilled group is a faster group, remember the aim of group riding is to get the entire group to the destination faster and in a safe fashion.
- When **descending steep hills** (yes I know, it's Lincolnshire) please avoid riding unnecessarily close to the wheel in front or conducting unnecessarily passes on slower riders. Descending hills at speed can be hazardous and if you are riding too close you will not have time to react if the rider in front of you makes a mistake or you might force them into a mistake if they are of a lower ability. A smart move when descending is to **drop back a little and allow an extra metre or two between your wheel and the wheel in front** (you can see the pro's doing this in Tour de France).
- When approaching a hill, anticipate the gradient and **change gear in good time**. The leader may suggest that riders take a hill at their own pace and meet at the top and allow the slower riders to rest.

# AUDAX RIDING

## Cycling's Endurance Discipline

By [Peter Thompson](#)



**THE WORD 'AUDAX' (PRONOUNCED OR-DACKS) IS LATIN FOR 'BOLD' OR 'AUDACIOUS'. IT WAS FIRST APPLIED TO ENDURANCE SPORTS TOWARDS THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY, SO IT'S BEEN AROUND FOR A WHILE, WITH THE FIRST RECORDED AUDAX CYCLING EVENT TAKING PLACE ON JUNE 12TH 1897!**

In cycling terms, an Audax event — known internationally as a *Randonnée* — is a cycle ride over a long distance that has to be completed within a set time limit, including any stops to eat or rest. In most cases, riders have to maintain a minimum speed of 15km/h (some particularly long or hilly rides have a slightly lower minimum speed) and importantly a maximum speed of 30km/h. That's a little under 10mph and 20mph in Imperial measures!

It's not a race and individual riders' times are not published; if you finish within the time limit, you've succeeded. It's quite different from a Sportive — there's an old adage that 'Sportive riders are pretending that they are racing, Audax riders are pretending they are not'.

### What's classed as 'long distance'?

Organised Audaxes can be as short as 50 or 100 kilometres, but generally, long distance rides are regarded as those starting at 200 kilometres and above. Typical Audax distances for the keen rider are 200, 300, 400 and 600 kilometres.

Longer events are also in the calendar, such as the *Mille Cymru* (1,000 km), Paris–Brest–Paris (1,200 km), London–Edinburgh–London (1,500 km) and the recently launched Bristol–Glasgow–Bristol (1,632 km with 25,500 metres of climbing — yes, really, 25,500 metres of climbing!). However, do not be intimidated by these numbers — Audax riders vary in age from teenagers to veterans in their eighties, and most start off with the shorter 50–60 km rides then gradually build up from there. Whilst you obviously have to have a reasonable level of fitness, Audax rides tend to be more of a challenge with regard to your determination and mental fortitude than just purely physical ability.

### What sort of bike do I need?

Any mechanically sound bike that you are comfortable riding for extended periods. Some riders turn up on the latest carbon super-bikes, others on vintage tourers. Comfort and reliability are the key words, in that order. Of course for the much longer distances, it is helpful to be able to carry some food and spares. One well known Audax rider by the name of Drew Buck rode the Paris–Brest–Paris Audax (1,200 km) on a 100 year old bike, whilst dressed as a French onion seller! He didn't make it inside the time limit, but he did complete the ride!

### What about costs and facilities?

Entry costs are much lower than those for sportives — see the link to the events page via the Audax UK website at the end.

Riders are expected to be self-sufficient. That doesn't mean that you have to ride alone or that you can't call on the services of a village blacksmith to help weld your frame back together, should the worst happen, but you navigate for yourself (organisers supply a route sheet, and nowadays most supply a .gpx track too).

If you have any mechanical problems along the way, it's down to you to sort them or get yourself home. Having said that, Audaxers are a friendly and helpful bunch and there's usually someone who can lend a hand or get you back on course if you get lost.

Some rides offer food/coffee at the start, finish and along the way; on other rides, you'll be finding your own sources of fuel, from cafés and pubs to village shops and service stations.

Throw in the hills, the British weather and distances ranging from 50 km to 1600 km and what might have sounded like a simple bike ride becomes more of a challenge — one that is appealing to increasing numbers of cyclists year on year.

### Are you up for it?

One of the benefits of Audax is that you get to cycle challenging routes that have been lovingly planned and tested by experienced cyclists who generally want to show off the best that their region has to offer. They also tend to know the best places to stop off for food and drink along the way.

There is a wide variety of different routes, some which cram in as many tough hills as possible within a relatively short distance and others are more rolling or almost pancake flat. You can find yourself riding through chocolate-box villages, deep forests or bleak, exposed moorland — sometimes all in the same day!

Most routes are mainly on quiet roads, perhaps with the occasional stretch on a busier road linking the smaller lanes. On longer rides, many organisers also try to make navigation as simple as possible for the parts of the ride that are likely to be ridden in the dark by the majority of entrants, or to ensure that there are other places to get provisions between the official checkpoints (also called 'controls').

Almost all routes return to — or very close to — the start, making it easier to plan your journey.

# AUDAX RIDING

## Cycling's Endurance Discipline

By [Peter Thompson](#)



### How does the organiser know you've ridden the whole route though?

Before almost every ride you'll be given a Brevet Card. The name comes from the French word for 'certificate' and is used to prove that you have completed each part of the route within the time limit.

The card will show the various points along the way at which you must 'control', and the target times for your arrival — in other words, proof that you have been there. In some cases, there will be someone at the control who will stamp or sign your card. Especially on longer rides, you will need to obtain a receipt, from a cafe, shop or cash machine, which shows both the location and the time that you were there.

Some rides also have 'information controls' which require you to answer a simple question about something (for example, a road sign) at the relevant location. You write the answer on your Brevet Card. At the end of the ride, hand (or post) your card, together with any receipts, back to the organiser, who will check it.

As previously stated a 'control' is a checkpoint along the route to also ensure that the rider completes the distance in the relevant time allotted. Typically, they are at intervals of 50–80km, along the route. Here, you will obtain your proof of passage, as explained above, needed to validate your ride.

### What does a 'Control' look like?

There is a wide variety of different types of control including: village halls, with drinks and snacks laid on or to buy; cafés or pubs, often offering a special menu for cyclists; a marquee in someone's garden; a "free" control in a town, where you can obtain a receipt from a place of your choosing; a garden centre or service station; or even a couple of trestle tables set up in a roadside lay-by.

On longer rides, controls may also offer you the opportunity to get some sleep before you set off again. However, you should always remember that the clock continues ticking even when you are off the bike, so don't stay too long.

Of one thing you can be sure, though. On most U.K. events you're never more than about 40km from a mug of tea!

### Who rides Audax and is it possible to get awards, certificates etc. for your efforts?

As previously stated riders vary in age from teens to eighties. Many 'characters' can be found in Audax events too, and you will find them all a friendly and welcoming bunch — they tend not to be the testosterone-filled events like some sportives and other challenges. Audax is particularly attracting a good number of female riders, whose physiology is particularly well suited to this type of endurance event.

It is possible to gain many different awards, certificates etc. and organisers will make you aware of any for a particular event. The governing body, Audax UK, also has its own awards and achievements structure (see link below). If you plan to ride events regularly, then it is worth joining Audax UK; the membership sits alongside that of SWCC rather than replacing it. As well as being able to enter for awards etc., your entrance fee for events is reduced by a couple of pounds for each event and a glossy magazine is supplied to each member every quarter, with write ups of rides, lists of forthcoming events and so forth.

---

### Want to know more?

[www.audax.uk/](http://www.audax.uk/) — which allows you to find out much more and look for events in your local area.

<https://www.cyclinguk.org/> — which also often organises Audax rides. YouTube has a number of Audax related videos covering various events.

YouTube also has a number of interesting videos and Audax related content, which is well worth a watch!

# JOINING THE CLUB



**JOINING THE WHEELERS IS EASY, SIMPLY COMPLETE AN APPLICATION FORM AND RETURN WITH YOUR PAYMENT.**

- [Paperless version](#)
- [Word version](#) (can be sent in by email to the address)

Membership is half price for new members at the moment as we are over halfway through the year. For more information please contact our club secretary Julie Close at [julie@chris-close.com](mailto:julie@chris-close.com) who will be able to give you further information and advice.

Guests are welcome to join us for two rides before they would be expected to join the club.

---

## Benefits of Joining the Club:

1. Free or heavily **discounted British Cycling membership** for your 1st year ([new British Cycling members only](#)).
2. Heavily **discounted membership to Cycling UK**. Go to [www.cyclinguk.org/join](http://www.cyclinguk.org/join), select 'affiliated membership' and enter the code: 90063505 when prompted. We highly recommend joining either British Cycling or Cycling UK, if only for the 3rd party liability insurance. There's lots of other benefits as well, including discounts at bike shops like Chain Reaction Cycles and Halfords.
3. We're affiliated to **Cycling Time Trials**. You'll be able to compete in time trials around the country, from club events to national championships. We run time trials almost every Thursday evening from the end of March to the end of August, and a few bigger Sunday events including the famous 'Charity 10' and 'Nev Crane 25'. For more info, see our CTT page: [www.cyclingtimetrials.org.uk/clubs/view/340](http://www.cyclingtimetrials.org.uk/clubs/view/340)
4. **Kids!** HSBC UK Go-Ride (aimed at Under 16s) coaching most Tuesday evenings at Sleaford Rugby Club. For more info: [www.sleafordwheelers.co.uk/GoRide.html](http://www.sleafordwheelers.co.uk/GoRide.html)
5. **Our HQ is a pub!** Monthly committee meetings and evening time trials are based at [The Horseshoes Pub](#) in Silk Willoughby. Ace!
6. **Kit!** You get to buy our awesome kit as well as (very reasonably priced) club hoodies & t-shirts. You can buy discounted kit when bulk order windows are open (usually 2 or 3 times per year) from [Impsport](#). Club kit is also available through Ellmore.
7. **Women!** We've got loads of women in our club these days, thanks to the amazing efforts of our hard-working ladies committee. We have a women-only time trial series, women's on and off-road social rides throughout the year, and even a few off-road coaching sessions! For more details: [www.sleafordwheelers.co.uk/Women.html](http://www.sleafordwheelers.co.uk/Women.html)
8. **Club rides!** Our group ride policy is currently changing inline with government policy and social distancing restriction due to the pandemic. In normal times we usually have weekly club rides almost every Sunday; often splitting into 3 groups at various distances and speeds. Please check the club website and/or Facebook page for the latest group rides policy.
9. **We're very sociable!** In the past we have visited the Tour de Yorkshire, The Tour of Britain, the Lincoln Grand Prix, and had off-road rides at Rutland Water, Sherwood Pines, and Dalby Forest. Sometimes we even do non-cycling stuff, like quiz nights at the Solo Bar or having our own dog race at Peterborough Greyhounds (that really happened!). Who knows what we'll get up to this year?
10. **Events!** As well as putting on lots of time trials, we also organise a round of the Lincolnshire Cyclo-Cross Association league, a round of the Go Green Grass Track series, and a round of the Lincs Road Race League. If you don't race, we always need volunteers to help out, or you can just be a spectator and cheer on The Mighty Wheelers!