

SHERPA: THE CYCLIST'S COAST TO COAST

8-days / 7-nights self-guided inn-to-inn cycling from Ulverstone to Sunderland (Revised Oct 09)

Wainwright's "Coast to Coast" walk has long been a classic, and it was perhaps inevitable that cyclists would also look at interesting ways of crossing beautiful, scenic northern England. The original cycling route was thus developed by a charitable organization aiming at the development of sustainable transport networks in the U.K. They took minor roads and rideable 'off road' bridleways that could be used to thread together small towns and country areas across Cumbria, the Pennines, through the River Wear watershed and onto the more urban parts of the North East. The route so created is called the "C2C," literally "Sea to Sea," to differentiate it from the "Coast to Coast" walk which covers an altogether different route and embraces different scenery.

The original 'C2C' stretches from the lighthouse at Whitehaven on the Irish Sea to the lighthouse at Sunderland on the shores of the North Sea. At Sherpa we have tried to compliment the original route, with what is arguably a better start; crossing the Lake District from South to North on what is another cycle route: "The Cumbrian Cycle Way Route" from the small Lakeland town of Ulverston. Both rides intersect in Keswick and you then roll along the "C2C" towards Sunderland. This hybrid route is 144 miles long. It is a great way to see northern England and how the landscape changes sometimes abruptly, sometimes more gently as you cycle along.

There is so much to see, the Lakes and fells, the bleak Pennines, beautiful dales and towns and villages of all sizes. Along the way you should find plenty of time to visit teashops, pubs and interesting sites and little museums such as the Laurel and Hardy Museum in Ulverston and Dove cottage in Grasmere. The Keswick pencil museum, the Neolithic Castlerigg Stone Circle, the Rookhope lead mine, and the excellent open-air museum at Beamish near Durham.

Grade: Moderate. Some long steep hills especially across the Pennines. Some "off road" options along the C2C you may find to be steep, or muddy. Most cyclists of average ability should be able to complete the route easily especially as the cycling days do not exceed 33 miles, giving stronger cyclists the opportunity to explore around enroute. Minimum 13 miles – Max 33 miles approx.

Departs: Daily from early April - Mid October.

Included in price of tour: Bed and breakfast accommodation with ensuite facilities where available. Luggage transfers from Inn to Inn. Route notes and map package.

Travel Information

Starting point: Ulverston, Cumbria (nearest airport Manchester).

End of tour: Sunderland (Newcastle is also nearby).



Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

Outward journey from London to starting point: 5 hours by train from London Euston or Kings Cross to Ulverston via Lancaster. Or 2 hours from Manchester Airport.

Inward journey to London at end of tour: Sunderland and Newcastle have good rail links with the rest of the country, including transpennine rail connections back to Manchester Airport. Can take up to 4 hours. London Kings Cross from Sunderland, generally an hourly service, 3 hrs 38 mins, changing at Newcastle.

The Bikes: These are modern hybrids suitable for road and mild off-road use (compatible with the off road variants of the Coast to Coast under normal conditions) with eighteen to twenty-one gears. They are provided with saddlebag, lock and tool kit, also a spare inner tube, tyre levers & basic kit. Cycle hire fee is £105 paid locally. You are of course welcome to bring your own bikes if you wish.

General Information

Breakfast: in UK will generally consist of sausage, bacon, eggs etc, cereals and fruit will also be available. It is important for you to tell us if you have any dietary requirements when you book your holiday so that we can inform everyone that you are staying with.

Baths: it is not normal for your room to have a bath, the main reason being that it takes up a lot of space, some hotels/guesthouses may have a separate room in the house where a bath is available to guests, but in the main it is showers.

Single Supplements: are payable on most of our tours. The single supplement guarantees the privacy of your own room, however, rooms can at times be small and in some places may not enjoy the same facilities as double/twin rooms.

Luggage: When staying in hotels, sometimes your luggage will have been taken to your room awaiting your arrival. However don't be surprised if your luggage is waiting for you to take it up to your room.

Accommodation: Features of our normal accommodation choices for the different locations are mentioned below, due to room availability, we may have to use other establishments.

Night 1: In Ulverston: Your first hotel is a friendly, family run hotel in the heart of this attractive market town, 5 mins walk from the railway station. Proprietors Ken & Brenda run this three crown rated hotel and have created a friendly atmosphere and always extend a warm welcome to their guests. All rooms have ensuite bathrooms and are equipped with TV, and tea and coffee making facilities, direct dial telephone.

Night 2: In Grasmere: Our small family run guesthouse is conveniently placed in the center of this delightful village. Grasmere is one of Lakeland's most celebrated villages, and there is time either this afternoon or tomorrow morning to look around and visit the poet Wordsworth's home at Dove Cottage.

Night 3: In Keswick: the town that nestles beneath giant Skiddaw by the shores of Derwentwater, we stay at a 2 star hotel set right on the old market square close to all the towns amenities.

Night 4: Near Langwathby: we stay at an independently run hotel in the idyllic village of Edenhall. The hotel has 25 en-suite bedrooms, a fine dining restaurant, recently awarded a rosette by the AA, a bar serving hearty meals and a comfortable residents' lounge and conservatory. Edenhall is located within the forest of Inglewood in Cumbria. The hotel stands on over an acre of well-tended garden - the perfect place for an afternoon drink.

Night 5: At Allenheads: You are at a rather eccentric old English pub. Built in the 18th century as the family home of Sir Thomas Wentworth, it overflows with nostalgia and memorabilia. Old fashioned, traditional, good ale and food, and a very quiet rural location with cosy rooms.

Night 6: At Chester le Street: A very popular, refurbished 14 bedroom family run hotel with one of the best restaurants in the area. Close to local amenities with a large car park and friendly staff.

Night 7: In Sunderland: Journey's end. You will stay at one of several possible guesthouses or hotels near to the seafront.

PLEASE NOTE: It is generally normal practice when staying in hotels that you check-in on or after 2pm and checkout by 10am the following morning. Guesthouses/bed & breakfast establishments are normally check-in on or after 4pm and checkout by 10am.

Itinerary Guide

DAY 1: Arrive Ulverston This is a very pleasant coastal market town, with Market Cross, some nice old shops, the tiny Laurel and Hardy Museum and the Barrow memorial, which is certainly worth a leg stretch if you have time. You need to collect your bikes on the morning of Day 2.

DAY 2: Ulverston to Grasmere (26 miles) An attractive ride takes you past several beauty spots including Lake Coniston, the place of inspiration for "Swallows and Amazons" and for Donald Campbell, who tragically died here whilst trying to break the World water speed record in 1967. The lake and valley are very beautiful; you'll be riding along the quiet road on the eastern side of the Lake.

You can, if you like, spend some time in the village of Coniston, you will have a panorama of Lakeland peaks in front of you including the Coniston Old Man (803m). Coniston is a good place for a lunch or at least coffee break before heading off towards Grasmere. The route gets quite hilly, and you could take a short diversion to visit the village of Hawkshead on Esthwaite Water. The hilly route towards Grasmere takes you past Skelwith Force, quite an impressive waterfall, before rolling around Grasmere (lake) to the town. This is quite a busy place especially in summer and one of the main attractions for the literary minded is Dove Cottage, which was the home of the Wordsworths.

DAY 3: Grasmere to Keswick (14 miles) Today the route takes you around Thirlmere, once again on quiet roads, but later there are some busier sections heading into Keswick. Today you hopefully will get good views of Helvellyn 950m from across the lake. Thirlmere is certainly a beauty spot and it is a great place to view birdlife, especially wild fowl, while you are picnicking in shady woods nearby. Thirlmere was amalgamated from two lakes into a reservoir in 1889 and is three miles long and over 150 feet deep in places. Swimming in it is not allowed because they say it is too cold!

DAY 4: Keswick to Langwathby (28 Miles) This stage of the route in the Vale of Eden is an easy ride of ever changing scenery. You will follow minor roads; out of the center of Keswick the road climbs steeply past the Castlerigg Stone Circle and then passes through the village of Threlkeld. You will need to go down some steps and cross the A66 to continue on your way to Troutbeck, where you will need to cross the A66 once more. Continue through Greystoke (Ancestral home of Tarzan?) and the market town of Penrith, after crossing the River Eden you will reach Langwathby. There is an alternative route along the Old Coach Road, which leaves the main route at Castlerigg Stone Circle and follows a steep rough track over Threlkeld Common to Matterdale End. This alternative rejoins the main route at Greystoke.

DAY 5: Langwathby to Allenheads (30 miles) The most mountainous section of the entire route, this stage contains four major hills within twenty miles. Climb steeply out of Langwathby to reach the Little Meg Stone Circle, continue on minor roads and then onto a stony track, join the A686, a tarmac road and follow it to the first and the steepest hill Hartside, which is also the watershed between the Irish and North seas. After Hartside, continue through the villages of Leadgate and Garrigill. From the center of Garrigill continue along the south side of the River South Tyne, before crossing it by a ford. A steep uphill track will take you to Priorsdale, from where the route descends steeply through old lead mines to Nenthead. After Nenthead you reach Black Hill, the highest point on the C2C. The stage ends by descending into the valley of the River East Allen and the village of Allenheads.

DAY 6: Allenheads to Chester le Street (33 miles) Marking the end of the rough, hilly terrain of the Northern Pennines, this stage marks the start of the industrial landscape of the North East. A steady climb out of Allenheads until you reach the summit at Currick, which is followed by the long, more gentle descent down the Rookhope Valley. Scars (or hushes) from centuries of lead mining are evident in the valley. The route leaves the road in Rookhope village and climbs steeply up the old railway incline; from here the route follows rough tracks and paths until it reaches Waskerley (this section of the route will be closed occasionally during the shooting season, when alternative roads must be used). Follow the Waskerley way, a reclaimed railway path, you will cross the Hownsgill viaduct, and then continue on the Consett and Sunderland Railway Path, passing through Consett, Leadgate, and Annfield Plain, continuing to Chester le Street you will pass several sculptures on the way.

DAY 7: Chester le Street to Sunderland (13 miles) This stage is perhaps the easiest on the C2C, with the exception of one small climb at Cox Green it is all downhill or flat, allowing plenty of time to enjoy the changing scenery, from the rolling hills of Beamish to the industry of Sunderland. From Stanley continue along the Consett and Sunderland Railway Path, past Beamish, Pelton and Washington. Along the route there are access points at most road crossings allowing the towns to be visited, to explore and use facilities. There are several sculptures, part of a sculpture trail stretching from Consett to Chester le Street. We would thoroughly recommend a diversion to the beautiful city of Durham, with its imposing cathedral and castle encrusted high upon a peninsular over the River Wear. From Washington continue through James Steel Park and cross the River Wear, there is then a steep climb on the way to Pallon. In the final section you will follow the path alongside the River Wear, past the marina to reach the North Sea at Roker.

DAY 8: Depart after breakfast. There are mainline rail services from Sunderland via Newcastle. We can also take you back to the beginning if you have requested this service in advance. (prices on application)

Extend your stay

At any overnight stop along the route. Please ask for details.

FRANCE – GUIDED, FULLY SUPPORTED SMALL GROUP CYCLING TOURS

Loire Valley, Provence, Dordogne, Bordeaux, Burgundy, Languedoc, Normandy or the Pyrenees Cols

For those interested in a group cycling holiday our 7-day **small group cycling** program ticks all the boxes; stunning scenery, quiet roads and a French culture that embraces the bicycle as a fundamental part of its character and therefore welcomes cyclists with respect and enthusiasm. Yes, there are hills to climb but your efforts will be well rewarded by spectacular views and exhilarating downhill section.

We offer carefully planned routes through some of the most beautiful parts of France, travelling on minor roads and, where available, on designated cycle paths. A guide is with you on the road and detailed route maps are provided. All baggage is carried from hotel to hotel, leaving you free to enjoy each day. Food is important to these tours and each evening the restaurants we choose will highlight the region's cuisine. Cycling each day, you will build-up a terrific appetite so you can indulge with a guarantee you've earned every morsel.

For those interested in emulating the greats in cycling we offer tours specifically to attack some of France's classic cols. All in all if it's cycling in France you are after we have something for everyone.

Departs: Selected Saturdays from April - October 2010

Tours Includes: 6-nights in carefully selected 3-star hotels & typical B&B's (all with private bathrooms), 6-breakfasts & dinners, route notes, sightseeing, luggage transfers, cycle tour guide, quality multi-geared bicycle hire, support vehicles

Distances: Moderate cycling - 40 to 55 kilometres on gently rolling to rolling terrain. Extra rides (extensions and loop rides) may be available each day.

These are just a few of the many small group guided or self-guided inn-to-inn cycling tours we offer in Europe - including river rides from Passau to Vienna along the Danube or from Vienna to Budapest.

Other cycling holiday destinations include several areas of Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Holland, Ireland, England and Scotland, Hungary, in the Czech Republic, New Zealand & Australia. Outdoor Travel also offer group guided Bike & Barge cruises in many destinations including France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Italy, the Dalmation Coast of Croatia, the islands of Greece, the Lycian coast of Turkey, Vietnam or Canada.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations

- Call toll free on 1800 331 582 or (03) 57551743 or Fax (03) 57501020
- Email: info@outdoortravel.com.au
- Web: <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au>
- Mail: Outdoor Travel Pty Ltd, PO Box 286, Bright, VIC 3741, Australia
- Travel Agent Licence No 31102