

## **GREAT BEAR – 8 DAY LANDS END TO JOHN O’GROATS CYCLE**

The 8 day price for 2025 is £1050 per person or £765 sharing

This tour will be running 19<sup>th</sup>– 27<sup>th</sup> April 2025

### **WHAT THE PRICE INCLUDES**

- \* Transfers from accommodation in Cornwall to Lands End/ Transfers from Thurso to Inverness - Transport South for your bike and bag.
- \* 8 nights accommodation in twin/single rooms in hotels/hostels
- \* Baggage transfers for the duration of the trip
- \* Vehicular support for the entire cycle including back up vehicle carrying spares, mechanical support and use of spare bike should you need it
- \* Overnight bike storage

### **WHAT THE PRICE EXCLUDES**

- \* Bike and helmet hire
- \* Personal clothing and equipment
- \* Insurance
- \* Lunches and evening meals

### **PAYMENT**

I take a £200 deposit per person to secure your place on a tour – this is non-refundable unless I can find a rider to take your place then the deposit can be refunded should you need to cancel. The balance of payment is due 12 weeks prior to the trip departure date.

**DAILY** - 890 miles total (approx.) –

**18th -Pre ride – Meet in Cornwall**

**19th -Day 1** - Land’s End to Okehampton – 102 miles

**20th - Day 2** – Okehampton to Alveston – 111 miles

**21st - Day 3** – Alveston to Nantwich – 129 miles

**22nd - Day 4** – Nantwich to Kendal – 105 miles

**23rd -Day 5** – Kendal to Biggar – 119 miles

**24th- Day 6** – Biggar to Blairgowrie – 86 miles

**25th- Day 7** – Blairgowrie to Inverness - 116 miles

**26th - Day 8** – Inverness to John O’Groats – 122 miles

**27th - Day 9** – End of tour – transport to Inverness

\*Daily mileages can sometimes vary due to road closures, route deviations etc and also due to slight changes in accommodation

## **TRANSPORT**

Meet up on the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup> at the accommodation in Cornwall. If you need me to take your bike and bag down to the start you can drop them at MK44 1AH before the ride.

**HOME** – After reaching John O’Groats we head to Thurso for the night. Transport down to Inverness is either by train or minibus depending on group size.

## **WHAT HAPPENS DAY TO DAY?**

This is your ride and we want you to make of it what you had in your head when you first googled ‘Lands end to John O’Groats cycle’. There are no set times to leave in the morning, you don’t have to ride in a group if you don’t want to, there are no set dinner times. Usually on the ride people make great friends and all end up riding together, eating together and setting a time for next day’s riding and sometimes people do their own thing. For those of you with your own Garmin’s I will send out the routes in the weeks prior to the ride – If you wish to hire one they need to be pre booked with me at £60 per unit. If you want to go on a different route entirely then it is up to you providing that you turn up at the same accommodation as us! Please be advised that support in case of a severe breakdown off of the main route may be limited.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

The accommodation provided on the trip is a variety of independent and chain hotels, and hostels. They vary due to nature of our locations each night and are based on 2 people sharing a twin room. Most accommodation has food and a bar available on site or nearby as well as Wi-Fi. Single supplements are charged for those not wanting to share – please contact for availability.

## **NAVIGATION**

I have recommended routes available in GPS format and these will be sent out to you in the weeks before the ride. If you would like to hire a Garmin for the event you must let me know when booking and these are charged at an additional £60 per unit.

## **BIKES AND EQUIPMENT**

I strongly recommend that you ride a road or touring bike for the cycle and have put in sufficient training on this same bike. Whatever you choose make sure the bike has a suitable range of gears as you will be climbing steep hills in places and if you are not familiar with the mechanics of your bike it would pay to take it to a cycle shop for a service prior to the trip. If you intend on completing the ride on anything other than a road bike then please let me know prior to the ride as the vehicles are set up to carry road bikes.

Bike choice – most riders have a couple of bikes to choose from and more frequently are now deciding to bring their ‘shiny’ bike. Great if you have £9k weekend run around that gets tweaked and washed after every 60 mile ride but this is not the bike you should bring on a tour. The LEJOG is about riding from one end of the UK to the other and enjoying it, not nursing an overpriced piece of carbon fibre over 900 miles and taking up mine and other riders time with the concern of ‘we need to find a new part’ or ‘is there a bike shop on the way’. Carbon rim brakes, Di2, Hydraulic brakes and tubeless tyres have become the absolute bane of the tour – if it cannot be fixed at the side of the road please do not bring it. 4/5 years ago the spare bikes went seasons without being used – now days they go out on almost every trip to people not heeding my advice. Leaking brakes and Di2 that wont charge are the reasons that people have used a £300 spare bike to complete over a 7 days of a LEJOG attempt – not being able to ride your own bike because you cannot charge your gears?!? Absolutely absurd.

One bike only please. You really won’t need panniers; now and then people turn up with them and end up leaving them in the van halfway through day one. If you don’t already own a pair prior to the ride you may want to get hold of some waterproof overshoes. These are often overlooked when planning the trip as most riders don’t choose to go out in the rain but in completing the LEJOG it is inevitable that you will have to set out in the rain at some point.

Lights, you may think well ‘I won’t be riding at night’, but in heavy rain, fog and under tree cover you need to give that vehicle approaching you from behind at 60mph every chance they can to see you. Some people turn up with lights that can barely be seen halfway down a lay-by and I would only recommend a high output LED pulsating rear light as there is a good chance you will have dense sea fog on the final push up to John O’Groats. Knog, Moon, Lezyne and Exposure all make good powerful rear lights.

Same goes for clothing, that all black Castelli gear looks great but when you have a logging truck bearing down on you in the rain in the Scottish Highlands you want to make sure he knows you are there.

Gloves - you can never have too many pairs. (you may even find that skiing gloves will end up being your best friend...)

Water bottles – If you have 1 x 500ml bottle then you may want to invest in a couple of nice big bottles.

It is recommended that you bring a few spares for your bike (chain links, spokes, inner tubes) I have a certain amount for sale on board the support vehicle, please understand however that it is not possible to stock for every single bicycle. I have tyres, tubes, bar tape, cleats, brake pads, gear and brake cables, chains, chamois cream and more.

You are responsible for your own routine maintenance throughout the trip (it is your bike after all) but I will help out in any way that I can. I have track pumps and you do not need to bring your own.

## **BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE**

Your baggage allowance for this trip is just the one piece of main luggage in the form of a sports/expedition bag or suitcase (not 4 small bags please). It is also a good idea to bring a small rucksack for you to keep all of your items in that you may need during the day (sun cream, tablets, chamois cream etc) to save you dragging your suitcase out and rummaging through it in a wet lay-by. I can only accommodate a small number of bike bags and these spaces will be reserved for people flying in to complete the ride so please enquire if you intend to bring one.

## **PREPARATION**

There is no sugar coating it, the Lands End to John O'Groats cycle ride is tough, you can however make it easier on yourself by preparing for the trip as much as possible. It is generally noted that preparing physically for the ride is only 50% of the battle; the other 50% is managing those sores, pains, getting into a routine and summoning the drive to get back on that saddle each morning no matter what your situation. You ideally need to make time to get in 3 good rides consecutively in training and set off one day in the rain and replicate the sort of mileage you will be doing on your chosen ride to see what gear you need to buy to make yourself more comfortable.

Avoid doing all of your training on a turbo trainer or you may as well book your train home from Bristol now. If you plan to be stopping off taking pictures and frequenting pubs and tea rooms (why wouldn't you be?!) you may want to consider not riding SPD-SL pedals, as good as they are on the Sunday morning club run they are rubbish for walking in and are the cause of quite a few injuries every year (almost no one heads this advice but I thought I'd mention it!).

Treat yourself to some new gear cables, or while the bike is in for a service ask your bike shop to do this, after punctures a snapped gear cable is the most common breakdown on these trips, they can be brought for as little as £2 each and replacing them pre ride can save you a whole world of hassle! (Cables replaced by me on a trip are now charged at £35)

Bottom brackets – a good day in the wet will bring out all of the gremlins so pop a new one in now instead of scratting around trying to find one in Scotland (many before you have had bottom brackets and headset bearings disintegrate after days of rain and had to reach John O'Groats on the spare bike).

## **SUPPORT**

The support vehicle will always be on hand should you need assistance at any time during the trip. In the van is a tool kit, spare wheels and spare bikes. I will always be close to the riding group and will get ahead of you now and again for you to fill up water bottles and have a sit down. Whether you need a break, have bike trouble or just need emotional support getting up a big hill, I will do what I can to keep you going.

## **FOOD**

Breakfast is not provided on the 8 day – this trip is much more of a challenge and sees riders breaking away from the normal daily routine to ‘get the job done’. Breakfast is available at or near most accommodations and you can keep as much food as you require on the support vehicle. Fridge and freezer on the van.

Lunches – from 2015 onwards I regret that I will no longer be able to offer lunches as I used to due to unpredictable weather, unpredictable locations and unpredictable breakdowns. Feel free to leave any food you require in the van or sample all of the great local produce as you wind your way North.

Evening meals and drinks are not included in the price. Evening meals are available at most accommodations or we are close to pubs/towns with selections of eating places. If you have any dietary requirements i.e. vegan, vegetarian etc please let us know so we can advise accommodations in advance.

### **LAUNDRY**

For the 8 day there are options to wash kit at most hostels and due to the amount of card operated launderettes popping up I should be able to wash your gear for you.

### **GUIDES**

I do not use guides on the Lands End to John O’Groats trips for a couple of simple reasons: \* No guide enables us to keep the costs as low as possible and pass that on to you as a customer. \* Mainly though we feel that for the majority of you, as riders, this is a huge personal challenge, which with the odd exception will only be completed once ever in your lifetime and to add a guide/babysitter selling you to slow down or where to have lunch would massively take away from the personal achievement of riding the length of mainland Britain! We are not providing you with a ‘tour’ we are providing you with support for your expedition! You will be provided with relevant information on a suggested route by way of Garmin GPS with the route planned into it. Feel free to undertake whichever route you wish, I am just there to help out in any way I can!

Any further queries or questions please contact me on –

Carl –07869714319

[carlshearman@live.co.uk](mailto:carlshearman@live.co.uk)

Or through the website at [www.great-bear-tours.co.uk](http://www.great-bear-tours.co.uk)