

Land's End To John O'Groats

via the Scottish Islands of Arran, Mull and Skye

Contributed by Graham Hill with Irene North (2005)



Approximate Line Of Route

YHAs + B&Bs; minor & B roads; few A roads; as flat as possible (not very) through West Country; lumpy up the Welsh Marches, west coast of Scotland route to Skye, then across to east just north of Inverness.

This description assumes that the reader has access to the CTC End-To-End pack.

The route in Scotland uses 5 ferries. Calmac normally ask, but be sure to buy "Island Hopper" tickets (2 are needed). If you're using a back-up vehicle, this may preclude this route since 'vehicle island hopping' is a very expensive business.

General comments by the author on the route

We did the 1170+ miles in 18 days; not bad for a combined age of 131 IMHO, the "Islands" (Arran, Mull, Skye) route is far superior to the A82/A9 routes but hillier!

As a YHA / SYHA warden, I designed a route around hostels but frankly Chester-Slaidburn and Dufton-anywhere was just too far; however we always finished before 1800 hours. I do wonder if a hostels-only route is now feasible for the average rider.

The Philip's Navigator Atlas at 1 1/2 miles to 1 inch was used for planning and meant we rarely strayed onto A-roads (naturally we got lost on occasions). I was rather pleased with the industrial Lancashire leg (which took in a rideable farm track and avoided the A6).

The route coincides with several NCN cycle routes, cycleways, etc. Generally these were not followed for long as they take quiet but roundabout routes. But the Strawberry Line (Axbridge - Winscombe) is especially good as it avoids riding the A38. They were most useful in urban areas though easily lost. Anyone contemplating a similar route should consult www.sustrans.org.uk for details.

We started with Treyarnon Bay / Okehampton YHs, which offers an easier start than the usual Golant / Steps Bridge route. Getting from Okehampton to Street or Cheddar would be 80+ miles, but flat after Bridgwater (where we B&B'd).

Leave on A30. R onto B3315. R onto minor roads via LAMORNA, MOUSEHOLE & NEWLYN into PENZANCE and onto A30. R towards MARAZION. SO A394 on B3280 and minor roads to CAMBORNE (NCN3 weaves its way through here – hard to follow). Cont via REDRUTH, ST DAY, CHACEWATER to THREEMILESTONE. L and SO A390 to join B3284 at SHORTLANDSEND. L to join NCN 32 and cont via St ALLEN to A30. SO (L and immediately R) to St NEWLYN EAST, ST COLUMB MAJOR & RUMFORD. Minor roads to TREYARNON BAY via PORTHCOTHAN or SHOP.

Treyarnon Bay YH Tel 0870 770 6076 Fax 0870 770 6077
treayarnon@yha.org.uk

Return inland to B3276 and L into PADSTOW.

Cross to ROCK on passenger ferry. Join B3314 and cont to DELABOLE. One mile further on L to join B3266. At next junction, R and cross A39 into DAVIDSTOW. Follow minor roads near Tremail, St Clether and Laneast to A395. R and cont for 1.8 miles before L into Under Lane. Follow to A388 where L (away from Launceston) and 1st R (Ridgegrove Lane). When met again, L onto A388 ("old" A30) and cont on minor roads to BRIDESTOWE. Follow Granite Way (NCN 27) signs to OKEHAMPTON (which can also be reached via A386 and B3260).

Okehampton YH Tel: 0870 770 5978 Fax: 0870 770 5979
okehampton@yha.org.uk

Leave on B3260 ("old" A30) and minor roads via SOUTH ZEAL to WHIDDOW DOWN where SO on A382 to A30. SO on minor roads via HITTISLEIGH & YEOFORD where R to CREDITON. Leave on A3072. After 1 mile R and follow minor roads through SHOBROOKE, THORVERTON, SILVERTON & BRADNINCH to CULLOMPTON. Join B3181 to xrds with A38. Cross and continue on minor roads to Westleigh. Pick up NCN route 3 which takes you through TAUNTON, BRIDGWATER (almost) to run past STREET: turn off soon after village of ASHCOTT to reach STREET. (YH is south of town.)

For CHEDDAR, leave Bridgwater on A39. After 3.4 miles, L on B3141 which becomes B3139. At WEDMORE L onto B3151 to CHEDDAR

In CHEDDAR L onto A371 and cont to AXBRIDGE. At end of town fork R and just before A38, bear L onto NCN 26 which leads via long unlit tunnel to WINSCOMBE. Alternatively NCN 26 can be joined (unsigned) where B3151 meets A371. Cont to SANDFORD (A368) where SO, 1st R (Sandmead

Road), and 1st L into Church Lane. L on B3133 and follow this via CONGRESBURY and YATTON. Just after crossing railway, R (Kennmoor Road). At end, L and R into Court Lane. L onto B3130 (Avon Cycleway NCN 41) and R into All Saints Lane. R on B3124 and 2nd R into Nortons Wood Lane The cycleway is followed via CLAPTON IN GORDANO and Pill and across the M5 Avon Bridge. From here there are at least 2 NCN routes (10 and 41) to the "old" Severn bridge (neither is direct and minor roads(B4057/B4055) are fairly quiet).

Whichever route you take, you end up on M48 east side near Chepstow. The A466 could be taken to Monmouth but it's a busy road. R at A466 junction(J2) and L into Thornwell/Bulwark Road. When this meets A48, R into CHEPSTOW. Cross river Wye and cont B4228 and A4136 to MONMOUTH (hilly!). Cross A40 and L into Monnow Street. R onto B4233. After 1.8 miles bear R onto B4347 and cont to B4348 junction. L and cont to DORSTONE where R (25% hill). L onto B4352 to BREDWARDINE where R and L to A438. Shortly after LETTON, R and follow minor roads via ALMELEY, STAUNTON, LINGEN to BUCKNELL (B4367, enjoy "Tea In The Sticks"). In BEDSTONE L and follow minor road to HOPTON CASTLE and B4385. L and cont to its junction with B4368. SO and rejoin B4385 in KEMPTON where L. After 1.8 miles (on sharp LH bend), SO into EYTON. R to PLOWDON and A489. In under 400 yards L sharply and continue via ASTERTON to BRIDGES (scenic! you may prefer to continue along the river via Eaton and Wentnor).

Cont N via PULVERBATCH and L between LONGDEN and ANNSCROFT to CRUCKMEOLE (A488). SO across B4386. Just before FORD, R onto A458 and 1st L (B4473). When this meets B4380, L and follow minor roads from FORTON to BASCHURCH. R onto B4397 and cont to BURLTON (A528). R and 1st L to NONELEY and TILLEY where B5476 is followed into WEM. Cont on B5476 to WHITCHURCH. At N edge of town, take B5395 towards Chester (briefly it becomes A41). In MALPAS bear R on B5069 to HAMPTON HEATH. SO A41 to A534 (Gallantry Bank) and L to pass near Peckforton Castle. L onto A49 and when it bears L after 1 mile, SO towards EATON, LITTLE BUDWORTH (Oulton Park) to WHITEGATE where L to cross A556 and R onto A559 into NORTHWICH (TIC).

Bear L onto B5075 to A559. Cont SO via GREAT BUDWORTH & BATE HEATH to HIGH LEGH. SO across A50 onto B5159 which is followed to its junction with A57. Here L, R (Chapel Lane) and R again (School Lane). L by war memorial into Dam Lane. After 0.7 miles (unsigned) R to B5212. L and

continue to A574 junction. L to CULCHETH. In middle of town bear R onto B5207. Follow this for 3.6 miles across East Lancs Road (A580) into LOWTON. R into Slag Lane. Immediately after crossing Leeds/Liverpool Canal L into Crankwood Road. Eventually this becomes a rideable farm track leading to A573. R via ABRAM and bear R onto A58 into HINDLEY. After centre of town (when A58 bears R) L past railway station to B5239 junction. L and just beyond ASPULL follow minor roads towards A6(N and W of Blackrod). Cross A6 and M61 into GRIMEFORD VILLAGE. Follow minor roads parallel to motorway into CHORLEY. R (Eaves Lane) at first major RO.

Follow route to BRAMPTON described in CTC Youth Hostels/B&B routes. When in APPLEBY do not follow NCN 68 signs unless you want to double miles(4) to DUFTON!

Leave BRAMPTON on A6071 and follow this to GRETNA. Join B721 (NCN 7) and after ANNAN, L onto B724 and later L onto B725 past Caerlaverock Castle into DUMFRIES . In middle of Dumfries NCN 7 runs along E bank of River Nith. Cont N and when it divides follow "KM Trail" signs. These should lead to cycle path on E side of A76. After 1 mile L into NEW BRIDGE and follow B729 and A702 (or minor roads to S) to MONIAVE (enjoy "Green Tea House"). SO to rejoin B729 to its junction with A713 in CARSPHAIRN.

R and follow for 16 miles. R onto B730 which is used for over 20 miles to DREGHORN. L onto B7081(quicker than parallel cycle path). NCN7 can be picked where A737 crosses River Irvine and is followed to ARDROSSAN for Arran ferry.

R off ferry and follow A841 to LOCHRANZA and ferry to CLAONAIG. Take B8001 and R onto A83 at KENNACRAIG. Follow this for 18.5 miles to LOCHGILPHEAD. As A83 bends R, SO onto A816 for 37 miles to OBAN ferry terminal. Ferry to CRAIGNURE on Mull. R off ferry and follow A848/A849 to TOBERMORY. Ferry to KILCHOAN on Ardnamurchan Peninsula. From ferry R onto B8007 and follow to SALEN. L onto A861 and cont to A830 junction at LOCHAILORT. L and use A830 to MALLAIG (some 2004 maps do not show new road from Arisaig). Ferry to ARMADALE on Skye.

From Armadale follow A851 to A87 junction near Broadford. R and cont to Skye bridge (now toll-free). L at Xrds in KYLE OF LOCHALSH and follow minor roads to ERBUSAIG & DUIRNISH. L and R at top of village (not

towards Plockton) and follow minor roads to ACHMORE and A890. L and cont for 27 miles to ACHNASHEEN. R onto A832 and A835 for 23 miles to CONTIN. L on A834 via STRATHPEFFER and just before level crossing in DINGWALL, L into Bridgend Avenue which turns into Old Evanton Road.

Continue on Youth Hostels/B&B routes to JOHN O’GROATS. Roughly the same route is used by NCN 1 which has quieter alternatives to A836 between Reay and JOG. True cyclists should finish outside the lighthouse at Duncansby Head!

Accommodation used

Day 0	YH	Penzance	Day 10	YH	Kendoon
Day 1	YH	Treyarnon Bay	Day 11	YH	Lochranza
Day 2	YH	Okehampton	Day 12	B&B	Craignure
Day 3	B&B	Bridgwater	Day 13	Hotel	Acharacle
Day 4	YH	St Briavels	Day 14	YH	Kyleakin
Day 5	YH	Bridges	Day 15	B&B	Contin
Day 6	B&B	Northwich	Day 16	Ind H	Rogart
Day 7	YH	Slaidburn	Day 17	Hotel	Bettyhill
Day 8	B&B	Dufton	Day 18	YH	John O’Groats
Day 9	B&B	Annan			

A sheet of **GPS co-ordinates** for this route is available. Email mark.waters@ctc.org.uk and request a copy.



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