

Kernow – Searching all Points of the Compass for Rick Stein Tour..

This account was inspired by; 48 pints of ale, 12 bottles of wine, 28 pasties, 24 cooked breakfasts, 1 frozen chicken, 8 cream teas (5 non industrial), 140 miles of riding, 3,500m of climbing and 6 intrepid explorers.

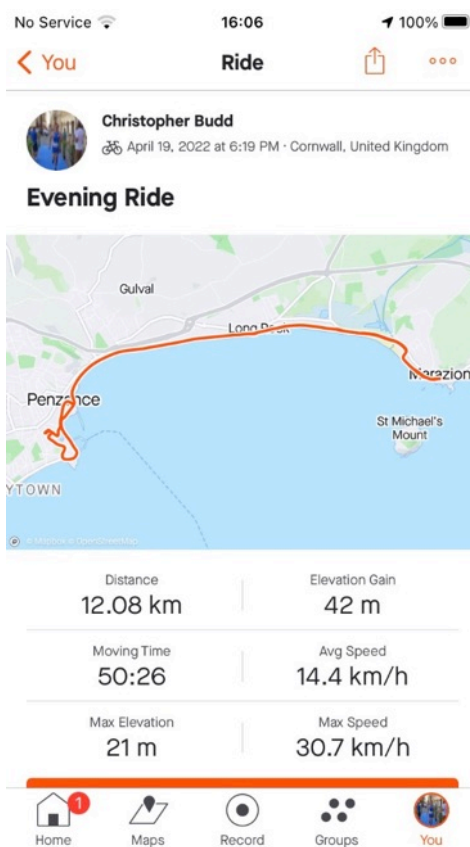
Day 1. Travel to Kernow..

Our heroes overlooked the threat of Covid, and despite the very high 'Arrr' rating, selected Cornwall as this years destination for the long ride. A peleton of 6 set gathered at Cherry Cottage, led by Paul Topley (PM & Routeplanner) Zach Allen (LSV1), Roy Kruger (LSV2), Chris Budd (Whipadvisor), Andy Mead and Tim Kersley. The first barcle of the day was Roy arriving without keys to one of the roof rack bike racks and having to return to Lancing before we could leave for Cornwall.

On route we enjoyed a couple of trips down memory lane, initially as first pasty of the tour was taken in Wincanton (homage to Long Ride 2021) and secondly as we doffed our caps to the ladies of Bridestowe as we passed by on the A30 (homage to Long Ride 2013)..we also briefly paused to test facilities at Victoria Roche services.

Through great LSVing from ZA (assisted by PT) and RC, we arrived at the delightfully appointed union hotel in Penzance early enough to take advantage of an early evening ride along the promenade from Penzance to Marazion, we enjoyed the evening sun and view over mounts bay, comfort was taken as Roy broke a mudguard (a tradition of long rides) and at the Kings Head for a first pint of St Austell Tribute... marvellous... some might say we had landed on our feet..





As well as a historic connection to the battle of Trafalgar,



the union was superbly located for local hostelries, with many featuring a 5*Whipadvisor rating.. our first choice for an evening meal the Admiral Benbow (which featured in Treasure Island and a Rick Stein TV programme, although we didn't see him), whilst serving great ales didn't offer food on a Tuesday so we hastily downed drinks and made for the Bakehouse Restaurant , some 20 yards from the union, where extremely good food, environment and great service ensued, including a mighty fine cheese board..a fantastic first evening was had..

Day 2 Go West , Bird of the day; Peregrine falcon. Rick Steins spotted - Nil

Having well rested, and rising early we gathered in the brek room where Mrs Overall laid on a generous fried brek albeit short of marmite Tim arrived a breakfast greeting all other guests with a good morning Chris. Service was generally good, but with shades of the Two Soups sketch.

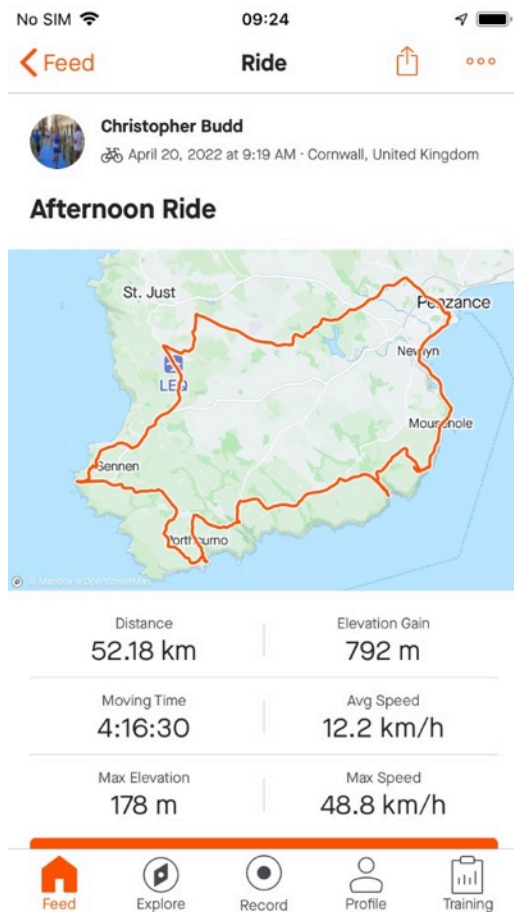
Steeds prepared we set out on the first full day ride heading to the sea front and followed the coastal road through Newlyn (home of the ordnance datum and active fishing quay) past the monument for the Penlee lifeboat tragedy and on through the backstreets of Mousehole, emerging at a 1 in 4 climb for 500m out of the small harbour.. this led to the first opportunity for a moving barcle.. ZA with a roadbike taking the Danish tarmac route, whereas the peleton set off on a cornish bridle'deadend'way of which there are many (* see Friday). The correctly mapped end of the bridleway, some 2 km in, led to a change of plan. We initially tried to follow the footpath that the bridleway had become but finding that it continued to narrow and descend with dangerous drop-offs we decided to return back to the bench at the end of the bridleway. A second footpath headed upwards and an immediate need to scale a short section of cliff presented itself, an occasion not made easier by ebike... this did lead to the view of the **peregrine falcon** and led to a forlorn attempt

crossing several fields and traversing a morass in seerach of the footpath (some might say 'theres one in their somewhere') before finding our way to a farmyard and track. An understanding if bemused farmer noted 'there's no bridleway round here 'as we made our way back towards local roads 2 hours of riding , 5 miles travelled, one team vicar lost.. nothing unusual about this...

Having recovered our way to tarmac we promptly made up time ultimately descending a steep road and arrive at Lamorna.. inexplicably despite only being 45 minutes to an hour late, there was no sign of the team vicar, we paused to contact ZA and arranged a rendezvous for lunch in Porth Cornwall, home of telecommunications, but alas not finest crockery, so disposable cups and bagged pasties were taken despite there being china cups available but the Cornish rules forbid their use (or so it seemed), before the ascent to the Minack Theatre..

The views from Minack carpark were stunning. Our route then led on past St Levan church to cross fields taking a footpath which continued for several hundred metres on top of a wall with clear drop offs to one side and barb wire to the other, and subsequently by road to Lands End... what a shame .. Peter De Savaray's 1980s vision which now comprises a tacky theme park and basic catering, with an opportunity to pay £15 for a photo next to the famous signpost.. we elected a different signpost photo and paused to regather ourselves.

The return to Penzance commenced with a brilliant ride along coastal tracks taking us to Sennen Cove , Overlooking Whitesand bay. A minor mechanical (loss of crank) was quickly addressed by PT, as we progressed past lands End airport and diverted on minor backroads to climb to a vantage point with great views across Mounts bay. The decent descent to drift and on passing Trengwaintyon gardens took us back in Penzance early enough for pre dinner drinks in the Turks Head



Route : approx. 35 miles and 895 m climbed.

A second attempt was made to dine at Admiral Benbow, this time with greater success, (although we still didn't see Rick Stein) ultimately we took part in and won the monthly pub quiz including the prize of a frozen chicken (which was odd, not only as we were still many days from home, but also the chicken dish was not being sold on the menu..) we therefore offered the prize to the second team and were rewarded with a free round of drinks from the pub's owner.. a small local group then played sea shanties to add to a full nights entertainment.. The quiz was made all the more interesting by having a Netflix round which focused on one episode of one programme which none of us had ever heard of and despite that we still scored 4 points in this round and went on to win.

Day 3 Go North , Bird of the day; Heron. Rick Steins spotted - Nil

Rising , somewhat jaded from day 2, we gathered at brek, once more able served in the tradition of acorn antiques. As usual at meal times talk turned to toilet habits of AM and the need to clear the drains. Later as we were fettling our steeds and reinflating tyres we were passed by a second group of residents of the hotel who enquired of our days intentions, upon reciprocating we were told that they were returning home today and would be 'cooking the prize chicken', a nice coincidence..

We were told that PT's SatMap was bust and that because the thingy had come off it couldn't be repaired and so we had to move to a plan B for the day's navigating. This involved CB trying to replicate Paul's map in his planning App to at least get the right shape for the ride.

The second full day started with a refollowing of the route back up towards Drift, diverting to promptly make our way to St Just (7 miles in the first 70 minutes), where a mid morning coffee break and first cream tea was taken.. ZA entered into a long conversation with a couple riding ebikes and we thought that he was well on the way to a full conversion to ebikes before we managed to prise him away. Back in the saddle we took a picturesque route to Cape Cornwall, stopping for a team shot at Carn Gloose.

CB (some might say a man very much at the top of his game) having undertaken a planning visit to Kernow in 2021 then led a trip along coastal byways including steep footpath descents to Kenidjack and continuing through historical mining lands to Lellant and to a pasty lunch at Geevor Tin Mine (one of the last Tin mines in Cornwall to close and now a museum). A slowly deflating tyre for AM led to a post lunch fix, before we took the 12 mile coastal road, into headwind all the way to St Ives.. Some tremendous vistas and climbs on Route, but we were all glad as we descended into St Ives for the second cream tea of the day (or pasty lunch for TK) as we sat by the quay in bustling St Ives.. the Route back to Penzance was potentially benign, so in order to prevent this some revised route mastering by CB led to a fantastic inland route, ultimately taking in a riverside route (including sighting of a heron) and affording us the chance to one more benefit from manhandling the e-bike through styles and across a footbridge. It also offered the opportunity for a wet lay down as CB started to lead the peloton towards a ford only to back off allowing the Croc to take the lead and to find that the stones on the bottom of the ford were very slippery. But after some controlled splashing the Croc managed to stay upright and the rest of the peloton took advantage of the footbridge.

On return everyone acknowledged that the ride had aken us to the limits of our energy reserves.



37 Miles and 1000m climbing.

The evening's entertainment took in The Crown real ale pub and the marvellous Cork and Fork restaurant where we drank the rioja bar dry and once more enjoyed a full cheese board....

Day 3 – Go East. Bird of the Day; Goose . Rick Steins spotted - Nil

A much less challenging ride today. It was the day to leave behind the unusual and rather tired, though incredibly interesting, Union Hotel, and move our base to Helston. The LSV directorate agreed among themselves that they would take both cars to the new digs in Helston and return to Penzance with one of the cars. During this most important of operations the other 4 riders decided to visit the Penzance bike store, just a few meters from the rear of the Union.

All were very pleased with what they found and most took the opportunity to buy a few spares. We were also to witness the story of a young lad who had bought a rather basic bike from a 'friend' on facebook only to find that almost everything was broken. The bike store owner was very kind in his description of the state of the bike and whether it was worth spending some £150 repairing. In the end the lad left with the bike with a view to save for something better and clearly determined not to rely on facebook for his next purchase.

We returned to the hotel where fettling commenced and the team mechanic helped CB to change his rather worn brake pads.

A little before 11 the Croc and the Vicar returned and after a little more faffing we made our escape at a little after 11am.

The route took us on the now familiar route along the coast towards Marazion but turning left before the village and riding on mainly quiet lanes across to Hayle. The last couple of miles were on good bridleways and we were following the sustrans route 3. One small ebike style diversion was included in the route at St Erth where PT took us to the top of a hill (the highest point in the village) only to tell us that we should have turned left at the bottom of the hill.

At Hayle down by the harbour we found a tea room where much better than industrial cream teas were partaken by some. We were again treated to Cornish hospitality when we were told that the garden was out of bounds for us. However, this worked to our advantage as we secured the attalier to the front of the tea rooms which had been carefully designed to face the bins rather than the harbour but which kept us warm while we enjoyed our refreshments. Back on the road we followed lanes through to Pranzee where the lunch stop treated us to the best pasties of the tour. AM acquired the large Steak which must have weighed a kilo. Unsurprisingly the toilets were also needed before we could head off.

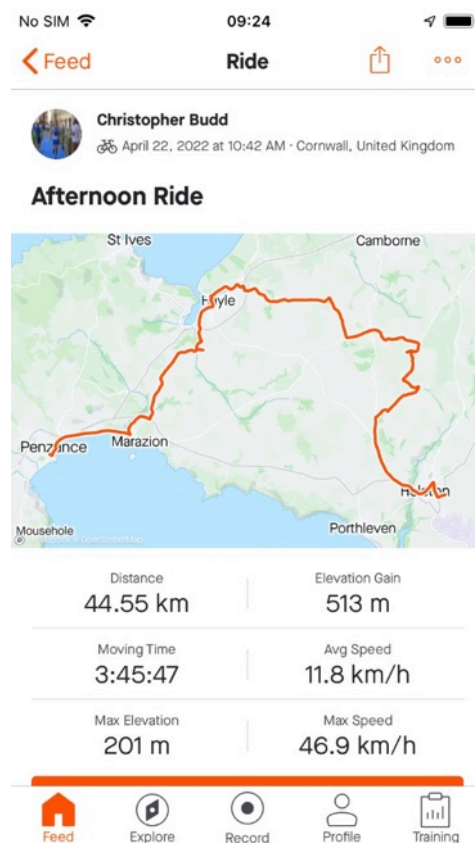
Shortly after lunch things became interesting. We climbed a bit of a mother in law, although not too steep, just long, at which point there was a difference of opinion between the two would be navigators. We decided to follow the original plan ie that established by PT (TM and PM). We flew down a lane, finally realising that we had gone past a bridleway turning that we should have taken. PT, RK and TK took the correct turning on the return while the others continued past it again while climbing back up the hill and following a local on a cycle to his house thinking he was Tim. Realising that he wasn't Tim, he then explained where the others had gone, but suggested that perhaps it wasn't the best cycling route or the driest path in the area. Not to be dissuaded we followed back down hill again and onto the bridleway that then became a stream. On rejoining with the break away peloton we all continued on the lovely although wet and uneven (especially for ZA on his road bike) path. A little later after many left and right turns and a bit of road we passed by a sign saying private keep out (although only two of us saw the sign) only to meet guard geese on patrol. PT was certain of the route having conferred with the paper and electronic Ordnance Survey maps and we continued though only then to be confronted by a farmer telling us to 'get off my land'. He was not for turning and would not enter into gentlemanly discussion and he then refused to allow us to pass through the gate that surely arrived at the public bridleway. PT, TK and CB decided that we were in the right and continued through the gate and ZA, RK and AM headed back down the lane to avoid the anger of the farmer.

Through the gate and possibly on the official bridleway, PT decided to head to the right to see whether he could trace the official entrance to the path and meet with ZA, AM and RK. CB and TK decided that they needed to get some distance between them and the farmer and turned left onto the bridle track and moved off at pace before the farmer returned with dogs or a gun. At the end of the bridleway CB and TK stopped to wait for PT and sent details of their location to the group. Having continued on the path it had been ambiguous how official the route was – there were notes

on gates politely asking that gates were closed and dogs held on leads but at the end of the path where the bridleway fingerpost should be their was just the post with no fingers.

TK and CB waited 15 minutes and then started to move off as no one else had arrived. Two failed attempts at finding other paths also show on the map before PT arrived. PT confirmed that the far end of the track was unpassable and had been made so by said farmer. At this point we decided to take the main road to the digs. This involved a nice 3 mile stretch downhill towards the town and because the route had been planned by an e-biker it included a nice climb through the town only then to descend to the digs. At the digs we found that RK, ZA and AM had already arrived and that ZA and RK had headed off to collect the other car from Penzance. We checked in and took bags and bikes into the rooms.

No restaurants were nearby except the pub linked to the hotel and we decided to dine there. Huge plates of meat were consumed washed down with beer and wine. At the end we had a long conversation with the waiting staff about the final bill which could not be viewed until paid and then once paid could not be viewed! It was a bit more than we thought it should be but still good value for the volume we had got through.



Day 4 - Go South. Bird of the day; Chough. Rick Steins spotted – Nil (although he could have been in Porthleven).

There was much debate over breakfast about the route to take given the lack of PT's planning kit and the thought that this could be the longest and most gruelling ride of the tour. This continued planning that had been in play in the pub the night before and we settled for a route that would allow us to see key sights as suggested TK who is familiar with those parts.

Breakfast was a largely efficient affair at the pub in which we had dined the night before, although AM arrived looking rather dishevelled about 15 minutes after the planned meeting time announcing that he and PT had overslept having failed to set an alarm. Subsequently PT arrived.

We headed off from the digs on a lovely route which avoided the climb into the town centre and the bypass and had us feeling good in short order. We continued on roads until we arrived at Goonhilly Earth station where we had planned to opt for bridleway. ZA on his road bike took the tarmac and the rest of us continued off road. The bridleway was interesting passing over marshy ground (thankfully things were pretty dry) and with paths that seemed to end when they shouldn't. AM took a little lie down on one of the softer sections of the route and decided it was so comfortable that he would stay there until someone came to take his photo and help him up. PT had turned back to find AM having to manoeuvre his ebike through deep water again on the way back and then again on the way forward.

Finally after more than an hour to cover perhaps 2 or 3 miles we rejoined the road and suggested to ZA that we rendezvous at Ruan Minor Café and shop for tea. AM spotted more witches in the village. After tea we continued down to Cadgwith Harbour to view the fishing fleet on the beach. From here another Cornish climb up the other side of the harbour with great views back to harbour.



At the top we took bridleway and then footpath to cut across to Lizard Village and then down the the Lizard itself. We found the lizard to be much nicer than Lands end and with a charming lighthouse open to the public.

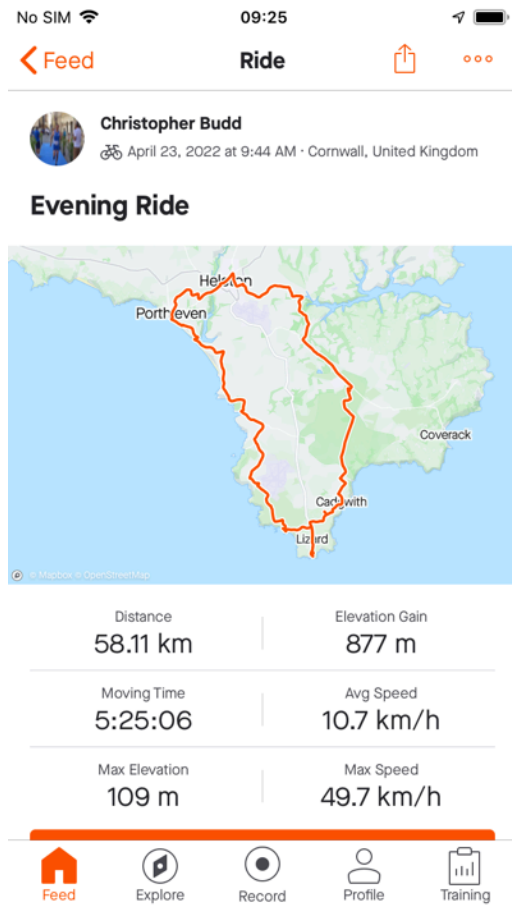
We headed back to the village where we went to a charming tea rooms with lovely staff just outside the Witchball pub. Lunch was taken and for some it involved a change from Cornish Pasties although some gentlemen who were looking to the full house took advantage of the usual Cornish fare. AM made a detour to use the villages facilities and on his return reported on knee pain whereby the staff of the tea rooms provided Ibuprofen relief.

From Lizard we took the road to Kynance Cove (so as not to lose ZA again) where we enjoyed some spectacular views and some cycling on bridleways. ZA showed his adventurous side climbing on cliffs that seemed to be Suspended in mid air and captured some great photos as a result. The bridleways through this area were great and we continued for miles including ZA on his Giant road bike which had performed amazingly well throughout the tour. The bridlepaths continued up past Predannack Airfield and we continued up to Mullion.

Prior to Mullion CB suggested that as the route had not been as taxing as feared and given the lack of food options near the digs that we extend the afternoon route to take in Porthleven and have fish and chips in this quite village before returning to the digs. After much debate this plan was approved and we disappeared on a fantastic bridle route through Mullion golf club and down to Loe Bar – a thin area of beach that divides the beach from the Loe (river/ lagoon). Arriving a Low bar we found that we had the beach to ourselves with great views and coastline. After crossing the Bar we climbed on bridleways to Penrose hill and then descended into Porthleven using a contra traffic route that TK recommended. We found Porthleven heaving. A food festival was in full flow and the village was overrun. We joined the queue for the nearest fish and chip shop and managed to get a really good meal that we sadly had to eat at the side of the road because everything more enticing was already taken.

From Portleven we climbed back to Helston and the digs taking quite country roads.

Arriving back we decided to get ourselves clean and packed and then to meet for a few beers. Beer was good but we were all shattered after too much of a good time for several days and after perhaps 3 beers narcolepsy was setting in and we retired to our rooms and to sleep.



Total Miles : 140, total climb 3,300m

Bird of the tour ; frozen chicken.

Total Rick Stein spots ; Zero.