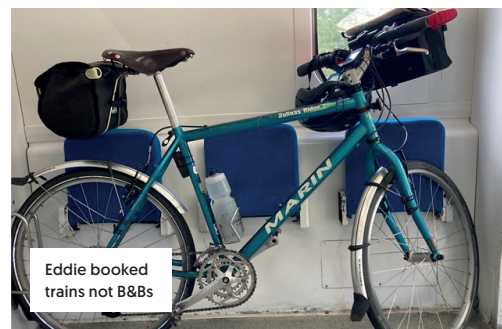




The outer London start



Eddie booked trains not B&Bs

England

Rails and trails

Eddie Miles cycled the 360km Trans Pennine Trail in rail-assisted stages



LIVING IN SHEFFIELD

I've often seen signs for the Trans Pennine Trail. Curiosity got the better of me and I committed to ride

it. Rather than book accommodation, I chose to return home by train each day, picking up the trail again the next morning. This meant breaking my journey at stations with a good connection to Sheffield. I finished day one at Stockport, day two at Goole, and returned from Hull at the end of the ride. Returning home each night meant I could travel light.

The start from Southport was easygoing, although I rode through a short summer downpour. Signage became harder to spot in urban areas and I got lost a couple of times, taking an unofficial route through Sale via the Bridgewater Canal towpath. The train home from Stockport was cancelled so I had to travel on services I didn't have reservations for. Luckily the train crews were sympathetic.

Day two was the toughest part of the trip: 176km, including the Pennine crossing. An early start meant I enjoyed breakfast in Hadfield before climbing to the highest point of the trail, with the Woodhead Tunnel deep below. I was then in familiar territory as I sped towards East Yorkshire with the wind on my back.

The long day before gifted me a relaxed finale. I enjoyed pleasant backroads along the Ouse and the Humber before the last stretch on the Hull-to-Hornsea Rail Trail.

England & Scotland

Oiling LEL's wheels

London Edinburgh London meant a different journey for **Rev Graeme Holdsworth**, who combined cycling with helping out on the 1,500km audax

Having ridden London Edinburgh London (LEL) in 2017, I was keen to support the 2022 edition alongside 750 other volunteers. Nearly 2,000 cyclists had entered, all planning to ride the 930-mile route in under 128 hours. I was part of the team at the start, and later at another control point near the North York Moors. I combined cycle-camping with the East Coast mainline train.

As the start of LEL is on the edge of London, I cycled out from King's Cross Station. It was a nice ride past bustling cafés and pubs in warm sunshine. Low Traffic Neighbourhoods have created a corridor free from heavy traffic.

There was so much to do preparing the start site to process rider registration, but the organiser looked after us with food and drink. I worked the helpdesk as part of a small team. We handled all sorts of questions, including "Can I store my boat at the start?" and "I've bought this bike computer, can you show me how it works?"

Sunday 7 August was the Grand Depart. We cheered audaxers off in groups of 50 and, as a start-gate marshal, I had the chance to speak to almost everyone. There was a lot of nervous excitement. This is probably the UK's

hardest mass-participation endurance event, yet the women and men taking part seemed to be so normal. After waving off the last riders, I cycled back into London to catch the train north, dot-watching tracker signals while I travelled.

I cycled with my camping gear to the Northallerton control, arriving just before those I had waved off at 5am in London. These riders had transformed from the fresh faces I'd seen 250 miles ago. Apart from the physical effort, many were emotionally tired. I took the opportunity to offer advice from my own experience and encourage them through dark times.

I had to return to work by the middle of the week but was glued to the social media reports on LEL2022 progress. I've made new friends volunteering and it has been a wonderful journey among generous people.



Graeme cycle-camped

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