

Peak Audax CTC - Wednesday Series

A report by an Audax novice.

Beautiful sunny weather in July and a quiet week at work: So I decided to take a cheeky Wednesday off to enjoy a leisurely day-ride with the AZ Broken Cross roadies. During this ride there was a lot of chat about the 'Peak Audax CTC Wednesday Audax series' which, apparently, runs over five consecutive Wednesdays in August. I'd never heard of this series before, and never ridden Audax, but for some reason it appealed, so that evening, on a whim, I entered the whole lot...

At that time I didn't exactly know what an Audax ride was, but the following week saw me driving over to Marple to start the first of the series, called 'The Dark Peak 100'. The whole series starts in Marple, and each ride takes a different and picturesque route through the beautiful Peak District, finishing back in Marple at the 'Ring O' Bells' pub, where you 'check in' with the event organisers and get a chance to order refreshments, grab a (supplied) sandwich, chat to others who finished in a similar time, and rest those weary legs!

Each ride covers approx. 100kilometres with around 2000m elevation, so they're not easy! But there's plenty of opportunity for cafe stops if you wish (most do). Entry is restricted to 60 riders, but there were often more than that out. At several events there were twelve Macclesfield Wheelers tops out.

I really enjoyed every one of these events. They are all first class tours of the Peak District in their own right. But the combination of good organisation, excellent companionship, and the joy of riding mid-week in August on quite roads (and quieter cafes) made this series something very special for me. And for sure, I got noticeably fitter over the month.

The last of the series, The Staffs Peak Super Grimpeur, is the hardest (109K + 2840m ascent), and each week it was discussed in revered tones! Bouncing off the incredibly tough annual Wild Wales event the Sunday before I wasn't really too sure how well I'd manage this final event. However, it was one of those rare days when everything feels right, you feel fit and strong and every hill feels half its usual size. I blasted round the course, and was pleased to find I was first back, just. But do note: 'It's NOT a race'. I'll definitely be back again next year to do it all again, but in the mean-time I think I'll take a closer look at this Audax scene...

Peak Audax CTC Weds Series details:

<http://www.highergrangefarm.fsnet.co.uk/PeakAudax/marple.htm>

General info on Audax UK events:

<http://www.aukweb.net/home/>

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