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GBDURO21

Land's End, UK

It's often referred to as the "scrappy rolling picnic through Britain's ever changing landscapes", in more detail it's a four-stage mixed terrain race from the South West of Great Britain right up to Scotland's John O'Groats.

08:00, 14 August, 2021

Total Racers

45

Terrain

Off-road

Website

Distance — Elevation

1,963km — 29,750m

Winner

Mark Beaumont

www.theracingcollective.com/gbduro.html



● GBDURO21



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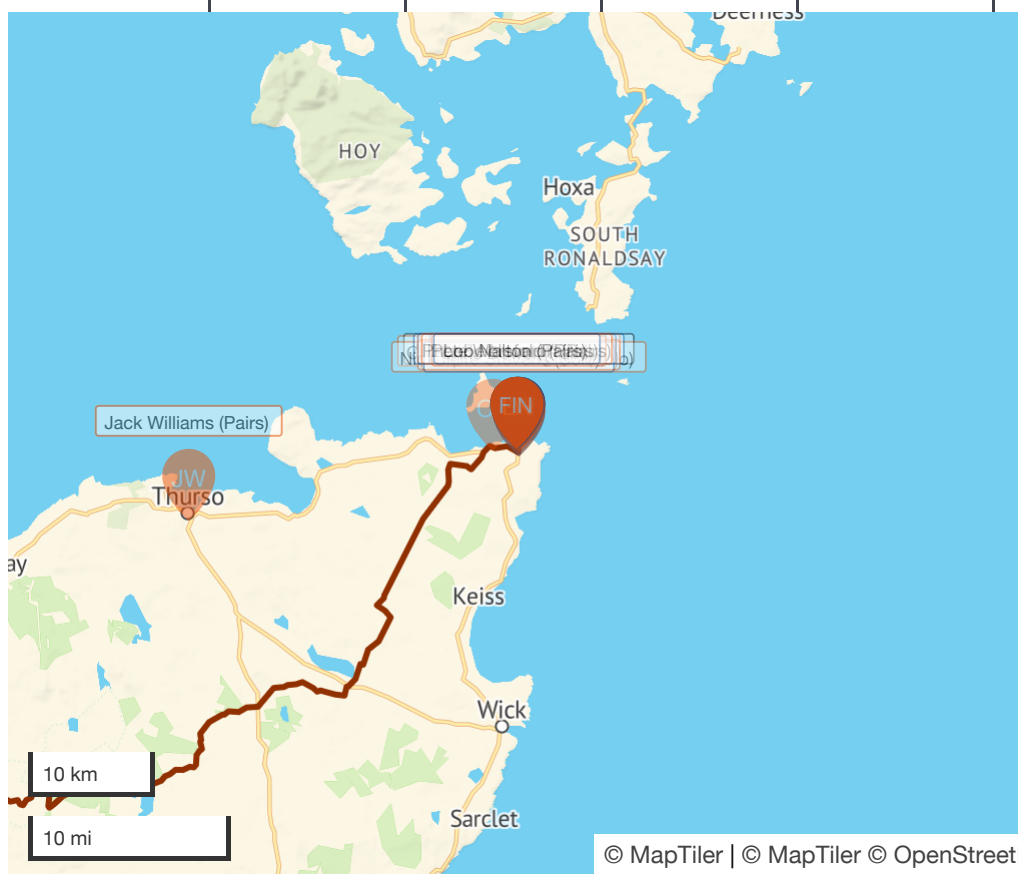


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Angus Wins Stage 1 of GBDURO21

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Stage 2: Ysbyty Cynfyn to Garrigill

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Angus Breaks Lachlan Morton's Stage 2 Record

[4 months ago](#)

Stage 2: Garrigill to Fort Augustus
Events Feed



Order: Oldest First

GBDURO21 Race Preview

Start: Land's End, England @ 08:00 BST (UTC+1), Saturday 14th August **Stage 2**
Start: Ysbyty Cynfyn, Wales @ 08:00, Tuesday 17th August **Stage 3** **Start:** Garrigill, England @ 08:00, Friday 20th August **Stage 4** **Start:** Fort Augustus, Scotland @ 08:00, Monday 23rd August **Finish:** John O'Groats, Scotland (Finishers party @ 20:00 BST, Tuesday 24th August)

Distance: 2000km **Elevation Gain:** 27,000m **Surface:** Gravel (4% singletrack, 30% doubletrack, 66% paved)

This weekend sees the start of the 2021 GBDURO, the self supported gravel race from the south-west tip of Great Britain up to it's north-eastern extreme, following a far less direct path than your regular LEJOG.



The third edition returns to the event's original four stage unsupported format after a Covid induced foray into full self-sufficiency for 2020. Riders are back to being allowed to purchase food and amenities as normal, and the break between stages (if you are fast enough!) should avoid the race becoming a battle of sleep deprivation.





The course remains unchanged, following the mixed surface GB Divide route pioneered previously. This nominally follows the watershed up the spine of the country, and riders can generally be sure that if they can see a hill, they are going to have to cycle up it! Much of the route is on good gravel trails (and ~50% of time is on paved surfaces), but there are sections which will force even the strongest riders to walk. The GB Divide also passes through some of the most remote parts of mainland Britain, and resupply needs careful consideration.





The organisers of the race and founders of the GB Divide route, The Racing Collective (TRC), have made GBDURO into a no-fly event in order to avoid significant direct CO2 emissions from riders travelling to take part in what is an otherwise fairly green sport. Last year ex-pro Svein Tuft rode from Andorra to the start line in this spirit, and whilst there may not be anyone repeating such a feat this year the organisers hope it will make people contemplate whether they really need to get on a plane to have an adventure.





The 62 strong field features a number of familiar faces, with some intent on the win, some back for redemption, and some to experience a bikepacking race for the first time. 38% of the starters identify as female, with the youngest rider aged 19 and the oldest 60. We'll cover a few of the names to watch out for later in the week but no doubt all will be eager to get riding through some of the most beautiful scenery the UK has to offer.





Race Reporter: James Illman, GBDURO20 finisher

Photo credits: Philippa Battye, James Illman, [Breakaway Digital](#), [Gruber Images](#)

[Aug 11th 2021, 01:32](#)

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GBDURO21 - Riders to Watch

Bikepacking races always deliver surprises so the eventual winner may well not be on this list, but here are some riders to watch out for during this year's GBDURO:

Angus Young





Undoubted favourite for this year's GBDURO, Angus will be seeking to capitalise on his incredible form this year to finally claim victory in the race which he plays a large role in organising. Second to World Tour Pro Lachlan Morton in 2019, then retiring from the lead after succumbing to hypothermia in 2020, Angus has already managed to win the inaugural Panceltic race and claim the 3 peaks record in 2021 - can he go one better than his 2019 GBDURO performance?

Lee Craigie





Director of [The Adventure Syndicate](#) and Active Nation Commissioner for Scotland, Lee Craigie is a hugely experienced rider, having raced MTB professionally in her past and excelled in some of the world's toughest ultra races, coming a close second in the 2018 HT550. Lee will be bringing all her strength and knowledge to bear, and could be a contender for the overall win - plus, she'll have home advantage for the final 1/3 of the race.

Mark Beaumont





The round the world record holder is no stranger to staggering feats of endurance, but amazingly this will be his first bikepacking race. No doubt his huge experience of long distance riding and intimate knowledge of his own limits will serve him well - certainly one to watch.

Philippa Battye





First female and 6th overall on the 2019 edition, Philippa Battye returns for another crack at the GBDuro. If all goes to plan expect another strong performance from the Silk Road Mountain Race (SRMR) and Italy Divide veteran.

Jason Black





All round adventure athlete Jason Black returns for a second crack at GBDURO, after a routing error cost him a podium position in the fully self-sufficient 2020 edition, despite making it all the way to John-O-Groats. The elevation gain of the GBDivide route won't phase a man used climbing Himalayan mountains - Jason will be pushing for a top position.

Adam Colvin





The self-sufficient 2020 edition saw late race heartbreak for Adam Colvin, as disintegrating shoes first stymied his charge then contributed to a race ending crash a mere 380km from the finish. Last time out the Army representative was famous for his series of perfectly posed selfies, looking totally unrattled at whatever the race threw at him. This year he'll be aiming to finish what he started.



Naomi Freireich



Endurance mountain biking specialist Naomi Freireich is a previous winner of the famous Strathpuffer 24hr race and a 3x British 24hr MTB champion, and should be towards the top of the standings.

Rose Osborne





Former professional Rose Osborne is no stranger to bikepacking, having previously ridden from Canada to Mexico and across Bosnia - this will be her first race in the discipline however.

Liam Yates





The former professional road cyclist and fixed gear crit racer continues his journey into bikepack racing after taking part in the 2019 SRMR.

Victoria Peel





Riding for Paria Magic Rock Racing on the road/cyclocross/MTB scene, Victoria Peel was inspired to enter GBDuro when the team sponsor Magic Rock Brewing became a sponsor of the race. GBduro will be her first bikepacking race but she is no stranger to LEJOG, just not by the convoluted (but excellent) GBdivide route!

[Aug 14th 2021, 24:23](#)

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Stage 1: Lands End to Ysbyty Cynfyn (Part 1/2)

GBDURO21 kicks off at 08:00 this morning, so lets look ahead at the first stage of this 4 stage race from Land's End to Jon o'Groats.

- **Stage 1:** Lands End, England to Ysbyty Cynfyn, Wales
- **Distance:** 631km
- **Elevation Gain:** 8654m
- **Fastest Known Time:** 32hr 10min (Lachlan Morton, 2019)
- **Time Cut Pace:** _ 210km/day

Stage 1 is the longest of the race but still has a 3 day time limit, and this makes it probably the hardest test to pass. Legs will be fresh, but 210km/day is a lot of ground to cover on hilly terrain with loaded bikes and often on unsealed surfaces, particularly if any equipment problems develop. On the plus side, there are numerous towns close to the route along much of this stage should supplies or repairs be required.

Riders can expect clear blue skies, 20-23°C, and a 20kph tailwind all day - perfect riding conditions to ease them into the race.

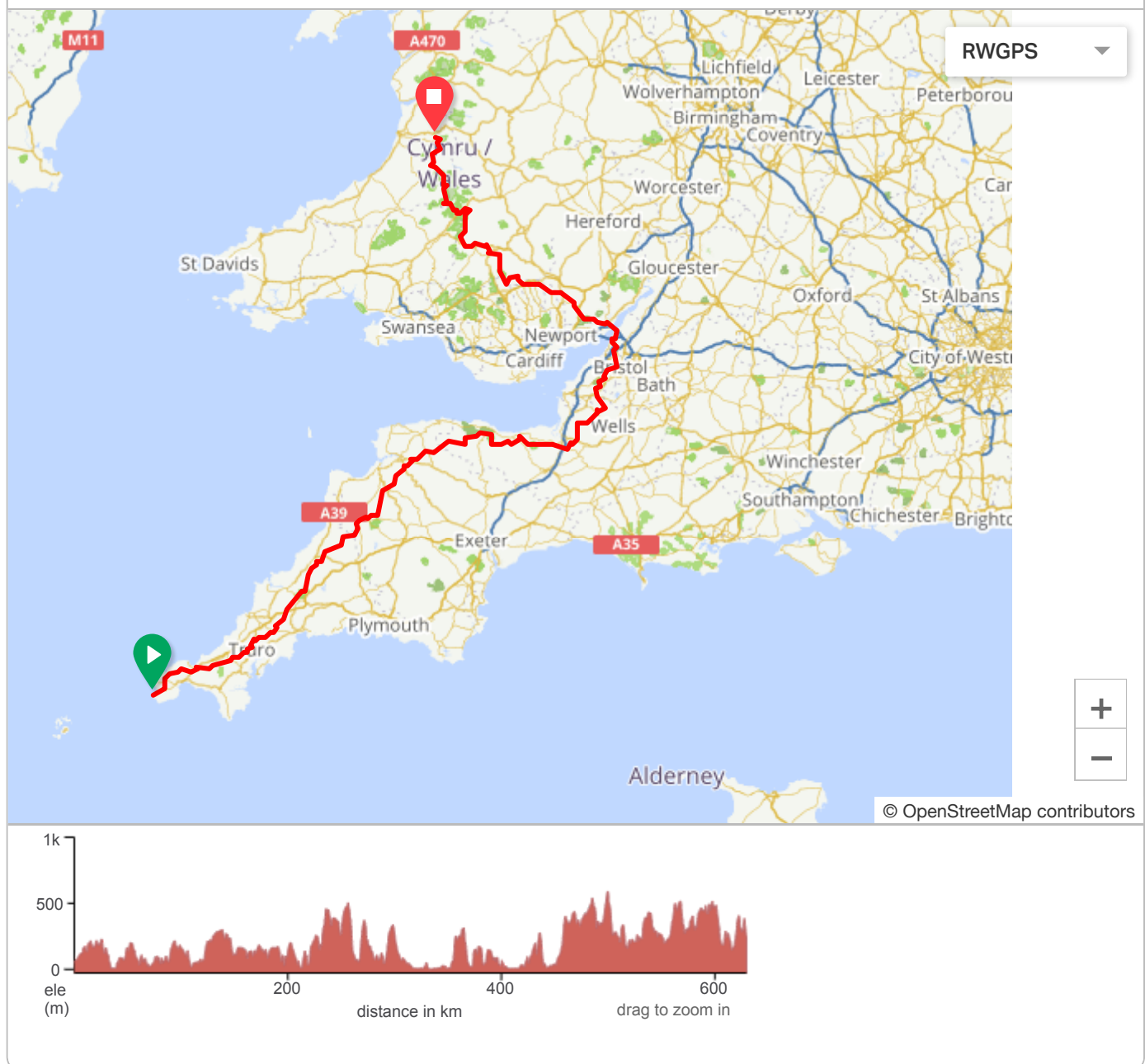


GBDURO Stage 1

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629.6 km

+8,654 m / -8,453 m



km0-km30 It takes all of about 10min for the GB Divide route to throw a curveball at the riders - singletrack and overgrown gorse, and about 15km of it. The scenery is stunning - classic Cornish vistas of heathland giving way to aquamarine blue seas beyond. Our 60-odd riders won't care though, as they'll be trying to collect themselves out of the heather without too many injuries, or getting stuck behind people in the process of this. I distinctly remember considering scratching just 9.7km into to last year's race...

km30-210 The unluckier riders will emerge blooded and bruised from the surprisingly treacherous start to find themselves in the land of short steep climbs that the West Country is notorious for. There's some respite at around 100km in the form of the Camel Trail, a disused railway which follows a river and is thus gloriously flat.



km210-km300 The crossing of Exmoor sees the first lengthy climbs in the race, and will come in the first evening/night for our riders. Those riding MTBs will recover some time on the rocky descent from Dunkery Beacon, probably the first time in the race they will be glad of their choice after a day largely spent on tarmac.



km300-km370 50km of pan flat Somerset Levels will bring smiles back to those on more road biased setups, but not for long because its soon back to some ludicrously steep climbs interspersed with singletrack as the course crosses the Mendips. I seem to remember some more gorse here too...

km370-km400 The final approach to Bristol involves quite a bit of off-road riding, which last year was pretty muddy in places. I think the south of England has been wetter this year so there might be quite a few riders keen on a warm shower once they emerge into Bristol. If it's as I suspect, then anyone on skinny tyres is going to lose a lot of time here.

km400-km420 The course stays pan flat as it tries to dodge around some big roads on its way up the Severn estuary. Last year there were quite a few road closures here which ended up diverting riders onto a busy dual carriageway - hopefully that's a



been fixed now. It also features one of the most bizarrely indirect (for cyclists) junction/flyover combos I have ever seen. I think this is probably the low point of the GB Divide, which is good, because there isn't much of it. Then its over the Severn bridge and into Wales!

I'll save the Welsh portion of this stage preview for Saturday evening because even Lachlan wasn't that fast...











[Aug 14th 2021, 07:55](#)

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GBDURO21 Underway!

Leaderboard:

1st	AY		Angus Young	81.07 KM	20 m ago
2nd	LB		Leslie Brown	78.68 KM	3 m ago
3rd	CS		Chris Simpson	76.54 KM	22 m ago
4th	JH		Jim Higgins	76.50 KM	16 m ago
5th	IH		Isaac Hudson	76.08 KM	8 m ago
6th	MB		Mark Beaumont	75.83 KM	17 m ago
7th	LC		Lee Craigie	75.69 KM	8 m ago
8th	PB		Philippa Battye	70.16 KM	21 m ago
9th	CH		Charlie Holden	68.48 KM	19 m ago
10th	OH		Ollie Hayward	68.39 KM	22 m ago



GBDURO21 got underway at 08:00 this morning with the usual low key roll out from Land's End. No more pre race faffing, no more worrying if you have enough socks... now it's just you and the open road/trail/rock garden.





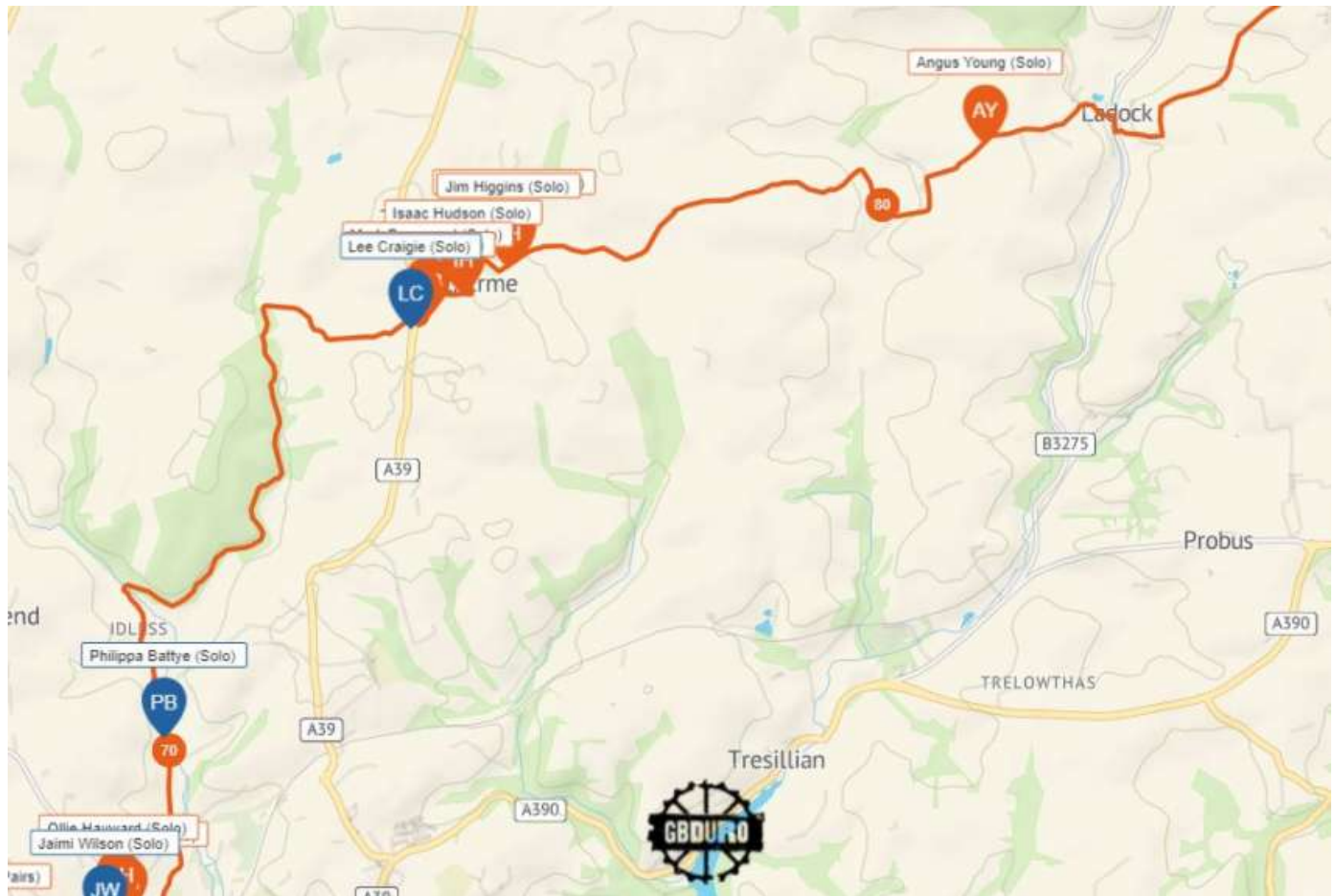
Credit: Breakaway Digital

The pace is fast at the front, with Angus making an early break - he's already built a 5 minute gap over his rivals. There's then a big cluster behind with some of the favourites including Mark Beaumont, Liam Yates, and Lee Craigie.

There's a real mix of bikes in this group and it'll be interesting to see how it plays out. Angus on his Mason Bokeh will be well suited to the next 150km but Chris Simps



a full suspension Canyon Lux will be looking to claw him back on the rougher terrain in Exmoor and the muddy sections once the race reaches the Mendips.



Great roadside support this morning from Penzance Wheelers in their "fanzone"!





Credit: Jonathan Butt

[Aug 14th 2021, 12:25](#)

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Angus Drops The Hammer



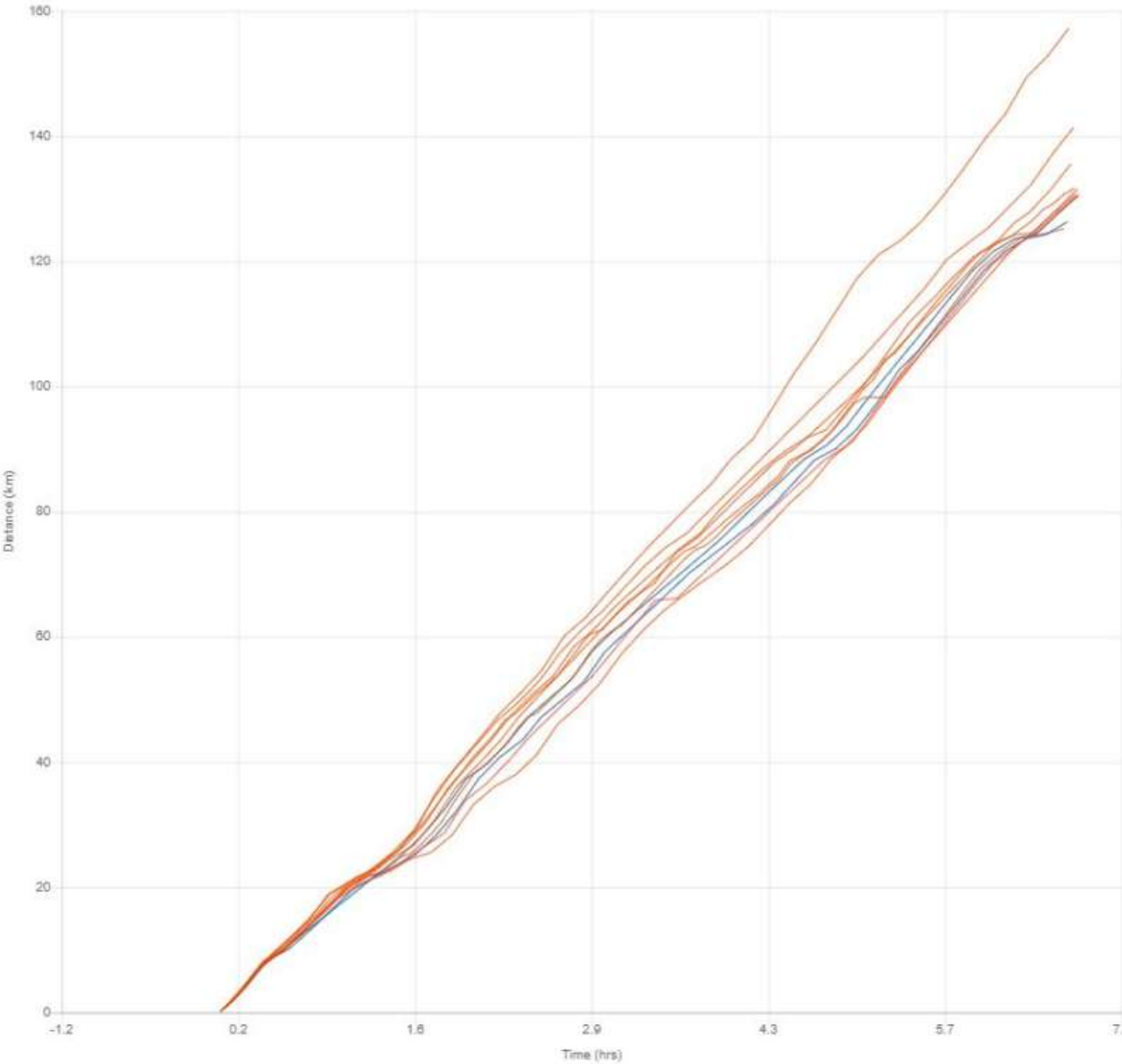
Position	Start #	Name	Dist On Track
1st	AY	Angus Young	157.28 KM
2nd	CS	Chris Simpson	141.36 KM
3rd	MB	Mark Beaumont	135.51 KM
4th	LB	Leslie Brown	131.69 KM
5th	IH	Isaac Hudson	129.16 KM
6th	LB	Lee Brown	128.28 KM
7th	JH	Jim Higgins	127.71 KM
8th	SH	Sharn Hooper	127.51 KM
9th	PB	Philippa Battye	126.32 KM
10th	OH	Ollie Hayward	124.31 KM

!

After this morning's closer affair, Angus has accelerated away from the pack this afternoon to build a 15km lead. He is absolutely flying on these tarmac back lanes which also play to his bike choice. Nonetheless, the rate he's distancing his competitors is astounding:

Race Flow at 15:00:





Needless to say, none of the top 10 have stopped yet.





The peloton rolls out. *theracingcollective* / *@breakawaydigital*



Misty start. *theracingcollective* / *@breakawaydigital*





Brunch on the road for Liam Yates. *theracingcollective* / *@tommy.check*





Angus Young powers away from the field. *theracingcollective* / *@tommy.check*

[Aug 14th 2021, 16:31](#)

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Bikepack Racing Rookies Rise Up the Order

Position	Start #	Name	Dist On Track
1st	AY	Angus Young	242.29 KM
2nd	MB	Mark Beaumont	220.70 KM
3rd	LB	Lee Brown	216.49 KM
4th	SH	Sharn Hooper	214.62 KM
5th	LC	Lee Craigie	209.09 KM
6th	PB	Philippa Battye	209.05 KM
7th	OH	Ollie Hayward	204.44 KM
8th	CS	Chris Simpson	203.15 KM
9th	IH	Isaac Hudson	201.21 KM
10th	CH	Carl Hopps	197.98 KM

The order is starting to settle down as we head into our first evening, with female riders occupying half of the top 6 spots. Elite XC MTB racer but ultra-race rookie Sharn Hooper heads a trio of women that also includes the experienced Philippa Battye and Lee Craigie and indeed is starting to distance these two who are quite close together on the road.





Sharn Hooper is 4th overall and first woman. *theracingcollective* / @tommy.check



Philippa Battye leads Adam Colvin this morning in Cornwall. *theracingcollective / @tommy.check*



Two Scottish cycling legends, Lee Craigie and Mark Beaumont, share a few words before the start. *theracingcollective / @tommy.check*

Ahead of them Lee Brown is running third in his first bikepacking race, with Mark Beaumont, another racing rookie, running second. Sure I've heard of Mark before though...





Lee Brown, 3rd overall. *theracingcollective* / *@tommy.check*

It'll be interesting to see how the riders handle sleep tonight. Will they push on through the night or bivvy for a few hours to preserve their positions? 630km is still a long way on this terrain so it would be surprising but certainly not impossible for someone to try and do it in one hit (Sofiane Sehili is in Kyrgyzstan afterall!).

Aug 14th 2021, 19:48

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Dog Chases in Devon

It wouldn't be a proper bikepacking race without the odd dog chase... and it seems a "demonic" Jack Russell has dutifully obliged by trying its best to get its teeth into several riders this evening near Coombe Kennels - a escapee perhaps?

Jack Williams, Ben Rickaby, and Howard Perkins all managed to stay away and reported that the hound had a "turn of speed and some stamina" - although Howard took the easy way out and shouted "STAY" - which it apparently did!

Totally unrelated (and better behaved) dog at race start:



@theracingcollective / @breakawaydigital

Aug 15th 2021, 24:54

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Day 1 Summary

Solo

Position	Start #	Name	Dist On Track
1st	AY	Angus Young	357.52 KM
2nd	MB	Mark Beaumont	296.63 KM
3rd	PB	Philippa Battye	293.02 KM
4th	CH	Charlie Holden	273.12 KM
5th	JW	Jaimi Wilson	270.62 KM
6th	CH	Carl Hopps	270.21 KM
7th	IH	Isaac Hudson	263.62 KM
8th	OH	Ollie Hayward	263.50 KM
9th	AC	Adam Colvin	263.29 KM
10th	EM	Ed Milbourn	262.36 KM

After a 15 hours of racing Angus Young still hasn't stopped for long enough to show on the tracker and this combined with his rapid pace means he has opened up a sizeable lead which equates to around 2.5hrs.

Another as yet non-stopper is Philippa Battye, who has moved up to 3rd overall in the last few hours as those around her drop away. Note that the battle for 3rd is closer than it appears as some of the trackers are updating relatively infrequently.

Mark Beaumont took advantage of only a brief stop at Great Torrington whilst others opted for a more lengthy resupply, and is now reaping the rewards by stopping to sleep earlier in the Quantock Hills whilst those behind have to keep riding to close the gap. Philippa will pass him to move up to second shortly unless he gets going again.

Pairs

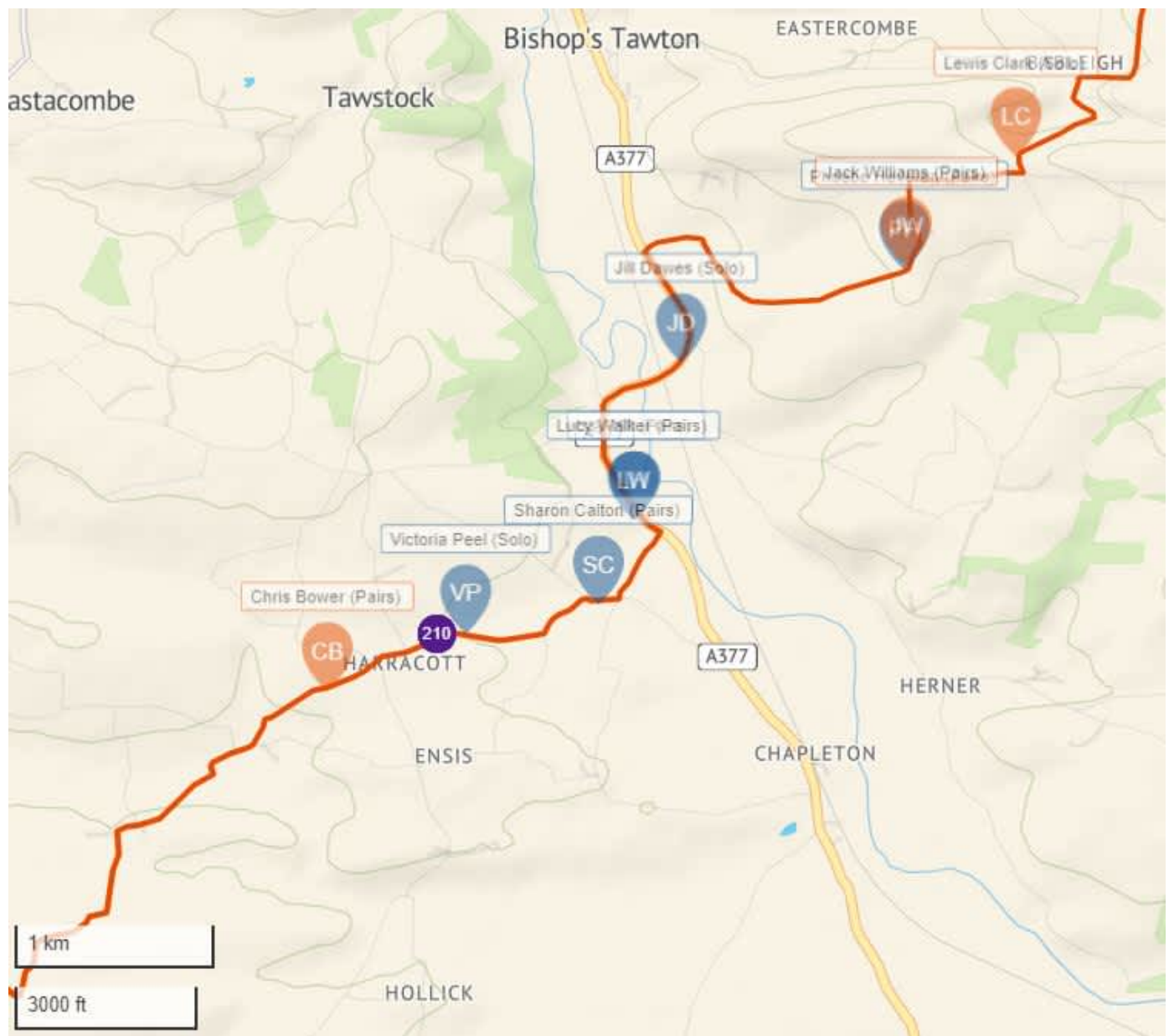


Position	Start #	Name	Dist On Track
1st	PH	Phoebe Heveron	214.84 KM
2nd	JW	Jack Williams	214.84 KM
3rd	TG	Tim van Gemert	213.50 KM
4th	SJ	Sofie Joore	213.50 KM
5th	IH	Issy Hill	211.56 KM
6th	LW	Lucy Walker	211.39 KM
7th	SC	Sharon Calton	210.88 KM
8th	CB	Chris Bower	209.41 KM
9th	PW	Pete Worsfold	154.60 KM
10th	LN	Loo Nalton	151.64 KM

The pairs classification is a very close affair with the top 8 split by just 5km, and all electing to bivvy within a few km of each other, right where the "demonic" Jack Russell was sighted. Maybe it got them all?

This group are all sitting right on the 210km/day limit they will need cover to make the time cut, so expect an early start tomorrow.





Finally, some riders are already sporting a few battle scars - that gorse at the start is painful I tell you!





@theracingcollective / @tommy.check

A collective of racers assemble:



@theracingcollective / @shimanogravel / Markus Stitz

[Aug 15th 2021, 01:51](#)

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Leaders Push Through The First Night



Position	Start #	Name	Dist On Track
1st	AY	Angus Young	490.98 KM
2nd	JW	Jaimi Wilson	385.77 KM
3rd	EM	Ed Milbourn	367.63 KM
4th	CH	Charlie Holden	361.76 KM
5th	AC	Adam Colvin	353.21 KM
6th	CH	Carl Hopps	353.14 KM
7th	PB	Philippa Battye	343.07 KM
8th	NS	Nick Spencer-Vellacott	342.25 KM
9th	IH	Isaac Hudson	337.94 KM
10th	LB	Lee Brown	335.49 KM

Note Mark Beaumont and Philippa Battye's trackers are not updating

It's been a big night for the leaders who have not had much sleep. Angus Young continues to dominate, passing through Bristol at 04:10 - around 2 hours faster than Lachlan Morton's pace from 2019. This is really an astounding ride. He's currently well into Wales, about to climb The Gap through the Brecon Beacons. His tracker registered a 10 minute stop so it's possible he had a powernap but otherwise he has been riding almost continuously for 27 hours.

Angus pushing up the first climb of the Mendips: @theracingcollective / Miles Resso





Angus crosses the Severn Bridge at dawn: @shimanogravel / Markus Stitz



Mark Beaumont continues his sterling ride in second place after the sleeping giant was mistakenly awoken by fellow round-the-world cyclist Jaimi Wilson in the early hours. She describes spotting his bivvy spot in her torchlight before he woke up and chased her down, passing whilst she stopped for water in Bridgwater. Mark's tracker is not working but we think he is around 10km ahead of Jaimi, having just passed Bristol.

Philippa Battye is running third or fourth, within minutes of Jaimi, her tracker also having stopped. Both women are in great spirits, with Philippa reporting she'd had a "90 minute lie down" and Jaimi a similar short nap.

Jaimi Wilson leads Philippa Battye through the Mendips: @james.illman



The rest of the field will be passing Bristol through the afternoon and evening, so feel free to get out and give them a cheer!

[Aug 15th 2021, 11:53](#)

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[Stage 1: Lands End to Ysbyty Cynfyn \(Part 2\)](#)



- **Stage 1:** Lands End, England to Ysbyty Cynfyn, Wales
- **Distance:** 631km
- **Elevation Gain:** 8654m
- **Fastest Known Time:** 32hr 10min (Lachlan Morton, 2019)
- **Time Cut Pace:** _ 210km/day

With the leaders approaching the Welsh border it's time to look at the second part of stage 1.

km420-km450 After crossing the Severn Bridge, the GB Divide route heads up into Welsh hills, with the first climb featuring a lengthy staircase. The slog up is rewarded with a lengthy descent and fast ride along the valley.

km450-520km The route now enters the Brecon Beacons, and the remotest stretch so far. A long gravel climb up to a disused quarry is followed by a rutted descent and even tougher climb up to The Gap - at 594m the highest pass on stage 1. The top of the descent is loose and tricky, but it soon turns into a fast off road descent towards Brecon.

The climb towards The Gap, Brecon Beacons: @james.illman



km520-km560 A stretch along the Epynt military ranges famous with rally fans offers stunning views and smooth tarmac before the GB Divide heads onto the forestry



tracks which make up the bulk of the rest of the stage.

Epynt ranges: @james.illman



km560-km610 A long gravel climb will take riders to the Llyn Brianne dam, heralding the start of a long remote stretch through mid Wales. Following the dam is a section with a series of gates which can be locked - the riders will get used to hurdling them!

Llyn Brianne dam: @james.illman





km610-km631 The final few miles of the stage see a mix of tarmac and gravel, with a short descent to the checkpoint, and a well earned rest.

[Aug 15th 2021, 13:05](#)

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