



Great Rides

BORING TO DULL

ONE IS IN THE USA, THE OTHER IN SCOTLAND. THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF MILES BETWEEN THEM – MOST OF THEM INTERESTING, AS **MARK WEDGWOD** DISCOVERED

The best adventures have a way of finding you, even if you weren't looking for them. I think big cycle trips need a purpose, with a definite start and end. I also like them to be somehow unique or unusual. In 2022 I became the first person to cycle through all of the 204 Ordnance Survey Landranger maps in numerical order. This unlikely journey began in May in Shetland and ended in Cornwall, more than 7,000 miles and six months later. Little did I know that this first cycling adventure would lead to my second one.

Opposite: Boring was paired with Dull in 2012. It has since also been linked to Bland, Australia
Left: Mark's second visit to the small village of Dull. He first passed through on his 'Ride all the OS maps' tour in 2022

I was in Scotland for many glorious weeks. Towards the end of a sunny day on map 52, just after Loch Tay, I encountered a large road sign saying 'Welcome to Dull, paired with Boring, Oregon, USA'. I took a photo for my blog, finished my day and went out for a well-earned curry, thinking little more about it.

In January 2023 I flew to South America, with nothing planned for when I returned in late March. I don't like that feeling: it is always better to have something to look forward to. Then a friend invited me to hike the Pacific Crest Trail for the whole of July, south to north across the mountains and wilderness of Washington state to the Canadian border. I jumped at it.

Then I learned we would be starting near Portland, Oregon. A memory flickered in the recesses of my mind. Oregon is a big place but our trail started just a few miles from Boring!

A BORING SEND-OFF

I decided that after the hike I would cycle home. Or at least across America. One spring day, the concept of Boring to Dull arrived and wouldn't go away. Internet research revealed that the state of Oregon passed a law in 2013 designating 9 August as 'Boring and Dull Day', which is celebrated in Boring every year. I knew what I had to do. I had a week to prepare after my month of hiking, then I could be there in person to start my next cycling adventure.

Of course, I needed a bike. The obvious choice was the same Sonder Colibri that took me through all 204 OS maps in 2022. After a comprehensive service, it was FedExed to a friend's house in Seattle, where it was waiting for me after my hike, along with my trusty old Carradice panniers. I was ready to ride. ▶