

# Big Battlefield Bike Ride 2011

## D-DAY CYCLING CHALLENGE



7 days / 6 nights

**Depart:** Portsmouth – Le Havre

**Return:** Paris – London

### INTRODUCTION

**Our exciting cycle challenge takes us from Southwick Park in Portsmouth – a hugely important part of naval history – across the channel to Le Havre and Northern France.**

**Our challenging ride traces some of the region's most significant WW2 battle sites, including the Northern beaches around Arromanches, and the area south of Caen which witnessed the culmination of Operation Goodwood.**

**This will be a great physical challenge, but also an amazing emotional journey. We finish our challenge by cycling through central Paris, via the Arc de Triomphe before finishing at the Eiffel Tower.**

### ITINERARY

#### Day 1: Portsmouth – Le Havre

We meet for registration in Portsmouth where there is a rare opportunity to visit the D-Day map room, from where Eisenhower made all his tactical decisions, and also some of the museums at Southwick Park. We'll then have a send-off supper at Southwick House before cycling down to the ferry terminal, leaving our bikes with the transport crew and boarding the overnight ferry to Le Havre.

*(Dinner not included)*

**Cycle approx 5 miles**



#### Day 2: Ste Mere Eglise – Bayeux

Disembarking from the ferry, we board coaches and travel to our start point on the Cherbourg Peninsula, Ste Mere Eglise. Here, the first French town to be liberated in 1944,

we will remember the American Airborne Forces and lay the first of our memorial wreaths in a special ceremony. After looking around the Airborne Museum



we continue on to visit the main American landing beach, Omaha, before heading for our night stop in the beautiful town of Bayeux. Overnight hotel.

**Cycle approx 55 miles**

#### Day 3: Bayeux – Caen

Today – the British Day – we visit the coast where the troops landed. First we tour the museum at Arromanches and see the film footage of the historical events that took place. After a moving wreath-laying, we head onto the Gold, Juno, and Sword beaches, where guides will be waiting to deliver some history at your leisure. From here we continue on to Pegasus Bridge, where the first house to be liberated from the Germans in June 1944 still stands. Here we are piped over the Bridge by Pipers and after a gathering and historical briefing we ride to our hotel in Caen as the bugler sounds The Advance. Overnight hotel.

**Cycle approx 45 miles**

#### Day 4: Caen – Lisieux

Today, the Canadian and Polish are remembered as we cycle from Caen down to Falaise, where the Germans were very nearly defeated! After a stop in the square to hear the Guides explain how close it was, we take a spectacular climb to the Mace.

Here we will lay a wreath to commemorate the Polish soldiers, before continuing on to Lisieux. Overnight hotel.

**Cycle approx 75 miles**



#### Day 5: Lisieux – Evreux

The French Resistance and Special Forces Day, today we will remember the brave soldiers as well as women and civilians and hear the stories of the much-celebrated SOE (Special Operation Executive) Agents, who parachuted into the countryside to work undercover against the enemy. We will have SOE individuals who were there at the time, as well as modern-day SOEs, when we remember those no longer with us. We shall once again lay a wreath in the memory of resistance fighters. Then we continue to Evreux. Overnight hotel.

**Cycle approx 55 miles**



## Day 6: Evreux – Paris

Free French day – the liberation of Paris. An exciting day today, as it was back then, as we cycle eastwards and follow the route many soldiers took in the liberation of Paris. With personal memories from those who were there, we cycle towards the capital city where a wonderful celebration welcome awaits us. A wreath will be laid at the Arc de Triomphe as we cycle past, and on down the Champs Elysees to our finishing point at the iconic Eiffel Tower. This is a long, emotional yet rewarding day to finish the cycle challenge! All cyclists will be part of a celebratory evening reception at a hotel in Paris. Overnight hotel.

**Cycle approx 70 miles**



## Day 7: Paris – London

After breakfast you are free for the rest of the day to explore the city, going up the Eiffel Tower or visiting renowned attractions such as the Arc de Triomphe and Notre-Dame cathedral. You are responsible for getting yourself and your bags to the Gare du Nord on time for your afternoon Eurostar train back to St Pancras, where you will be reunited with your bike.

*(Lunch & Dinner not included)*



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## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Tour cost

The tour cost includes all meals (other than dinner on day 1, and lunch and dinner on Day 7); accommodation; support vehicle and Discover Adventure leaders, drivers & cooks. It also includes a Eurostar journey from Paris to London.

The tour cost does not include travel insurance, meals as specified, tips or personal expenditure.

Approx. £100 - £150 is recommended for personal expenses.

### Food and Accommodation

6 nights in \*\*/\*\*\*\* hotels. The hotels are comfortable and well-situated for our ride, but not luxurious. All rooms have en suite facilities. All food is included except dinner Day 1, lunch and dinner on Day 7 as above.

### Passport, Visa and Vaccinations

A valid ten-year passport is required. Visas are not required for British passport-holders. No specific

vaccinations are recommended for France but a Tetanus injection is essential.

### Climate

May 16 - 25°C

The climate of northern France is very similar to that of southern England, rain is a possibility in May and it may be windy.



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## CYCLING INFORMATION

Support vehicles are with the group all of the time. All luggage and spares will be carried in them. The cycling is mainly undulating. Distances are fairly long, varying from 50 – 80 miles per day, and participants should make sure they are fit enough to manage these distances. We ride mainly on small country roads. Traffic is light on most of the roads but when we pass through large towns we go through as a group.

### Bike Repairs

There will be a range of spares in the support vehicles along with a full tool kit. However it is impossible for us to carry spares for every eventuality so it is *vital* that your bike is in good order before departure. All spares will have to be paid for so that they can be replenished!

**IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU SUPPLY YOUR OWN HELMET AND HIGH-VIS VEST AND WEAR IT AT ALL TIMES WHILE CYCLING.**

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