



## TAYLOR DOYLE

Taylor is a Canadian tourer turned mountain biker, bikepacker and adventure racer.

## Great Rides

# THE REBELLION WAY

Cycling UK's latest long-distance route is a 370km loop around Norfolk. **Taylor Doyle** was one of its inaugural riders this summer

**J**essie and I were looking through a window to the past. A piece of clear acetate had been framed in front of an empty field, with a drawing of Venta Icenorum, the capital of Boudicca's Iceni tribe, overlaying the modern landscape. We were five miles into Cycling UK's latest long-distance route, which takes you through the history and landscape of Norfolk.

The Rebellion Way is named for two East Anglian uprisings: Boudicca's against Roman rule and rapacity in 61AD; and Robert Kett's in the 16th century. Kett fought against the enclosure of common land by wealthy landowners, an issue that still resonates today in the shape of discussions about public land access, rights of way, and who gets to enjoy these spaces.

The route is a mix of quiet lanes, bridleways, forest tracks, rail trails and singletrack. It's relatively flat, of course, but there's no shortage of historical sites, ruined churches and castles, charming towns, and tempting cafés, pubs and tearooms. It's a well-curated path of surprises.

### CYCLING THROUGH CENTURIES

From Venta Icenorum, a sunny lane with little traffic took us further away from Norwich. We stopped again at an old ruined church called St Mary's. You could get right into the middle of it and gaze up at its tall, windowless walls. We weathered a spot of rain here, sheltering under an archway.

The first off-road section, grassy and bumpy, came soon after, as did the first ford,

“  
The route is a mix of quiet lanes, bridleways, forest tracks, rail trails and singletrack. It's relatively flat, of course  
”

which we crossed with shrieks and laughter. After stopping at the Waterfront Inn in Diss for food and drink, we continued to Swattesfield Campsite in northern Suffolk where some lovely bell tents and a fire pit were waiting for us.

Day two began with strong sunlight and strong coffee. We were heading back into Norfolk on a mix of tarmac, off-road trails, and even some stretches of sand – short enough to walk over for those on thinner tyres. Gravel fire-roads took us through Thetford Forest to Lynford Arboretum, where we bought cold summer spritzers from a trailside café called Shepherd's Baa. Lynford Water was such a rich blue it looked like we were abroad. There was some great singletrack beside it too.

Our next stop was the mostly-ruined church of St John the Evangelist, Oxborough. Its spire collapsed in 1948, damaging the nave. Fortunately the Bedingfield monuments survived. These are renaissance terracotta tombs, said to some of the finest 16th century memorials in England. After inspecting them (I studied art history), we continued to Swaffham and beds at the St George Hotel.

### FOREST AND COAST

Castle Acre Castle was a breathtaking sight on the morning of day three. It's one of the most impressive Norman earthworks in the country. Plaques describe how the castle's purpose changed over its lifetime and explain the different layers of construction.

We then joined Peddars Way, an old

