

KEY



Feed stops



Entry on the line



GPS mapping



Changing facilities



Electronic timing



Affiliated to charity

Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, May 16

Midland Monster



Patrick Trainor

BILLED as 'the only true Midlands sportive', the route also was to prove that the area isn't flat. The Midland Monster's 103 and 73-mile routes lived up to the organiser's proclamation, finding a lot of lumps to roll over.

Just over 400 riders started in cool but sunny conditions from the Rosliston Forestry Centre near Burton-on-Trent. Both routes headed north into the quiet lanes of the Peak District.



Short and sharp climbs needed good gear choice

Lulled into a false sense of security at the beginning with smooth, easy roads, the climbing was to come. The middle was splattered with many steep sections, catching a lot of riders out with a wrong gear choice.

Relentless climbing

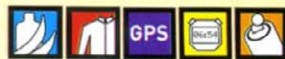
Although no big-name climbs worthy of Simon Warren's seminal *100 Greatest Cycling*

Climbs, Thorncliffe, Wetton and Ilam climbs were relentless. The key was having them in such a sequence that even tested local riders. Overgearing seemed the common mistake of the day, meaning quite a few riders had to admit defeat and walk the sting of the day — Grindon.

The feeds were attacked with the same ferocity as

the climbs. Strategic placing meant appreciative riders had a chance to rest from the climbing.

A quick final section back to the finish where free food awaited each finisher seemed to reinvigorate everyone; no matter how many hills they had climbed — on bike or foot.

www.wheelsinwheels.com

Distance	103/73 miles
Climbing	1,594m/847m
Major climbs	Four
Terrain	Rolling
Participants	405
First finisher	103 miles 5-21 73 miles 3-53
Last finisher	103 miles 9-34 73 miles 7-26
Best	Rolling run in to the finish
Worst	Walking the climbs



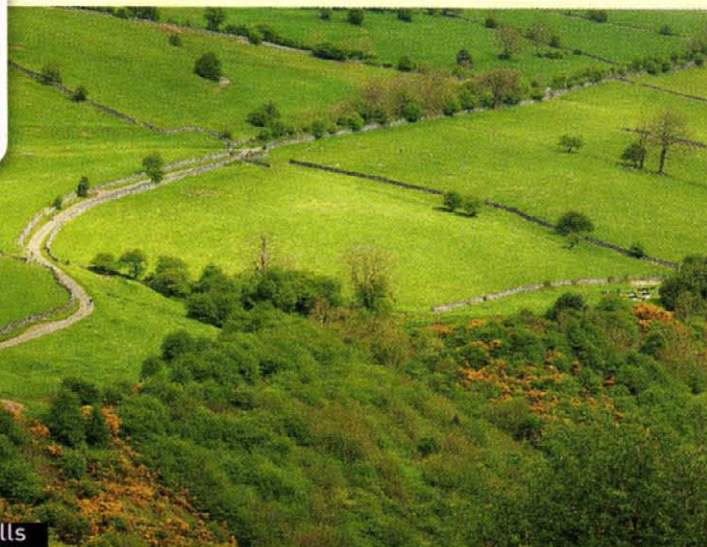
Jon Bister (42)
103 miles in 5hr 53min

Lives: Solihull
Rider no. 429

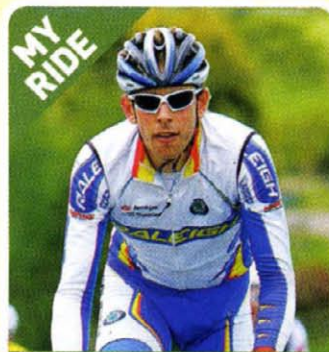
"This year the climbs seemed steeper than last year. I was down to four miles per hour on the Grindon climb but at least I wasn't walking. The last 30 miles were quite fast to make up for it though."

Missed it? Try this...

Try the Ride to the Horns — the sportive for F1 driver Mark Webber at Mentmore, near Milton Keynes on July 4. Full details at www.wheelsinwheels.com



Proof that the Midlands has hills



Dan Fleeman (28)

103 miles in 6hr 22min
Team Raleigh professional

"I thought I knew all the roads in the area but for about an hour round the middle of the course I was on roads I'd never been on before. There were some real steep hills and I got caught out as I only had the 23 on, but I really enjoyed the day."