Knights Templar Compasses
103.7km Brevet Populaire event

Start time: 10:00 Saturday 7th February 2026, 8hours 40 minutes to complete.
From: The Battesford Court, Wetherspoons pub, Newland Street, Witham.
Event phone: 07831 133258

There is arranged free car parking at the Labour Hall in Collingwood Road, CM8 2EE, near the train station, please park considerately in the WHITE lined bays around the edge. There is a £1 fee for all day car parking to be paid at the event check-in desk. The Labour Hall is less than 5 minutes ride to the Battesford Court, join directions with R from car park.

Directions from the train station and car park:

L from booking office side of station
L@T at bus stop
L@T over railway bridge
R@mrbt, pass Labour Hall on RHS / R from car park if using Labour Hall car park
R@TLS, IMM SO TLS
Battesford Court, Wetherspoons pub, on RHS at Zebra crossing
Access the beer garden at the rear using side road for bike parking & back door to the pub.

At the time of writing there is rail replacement bus service from Billericay to Witham and Colchester to Witham.

Being a Wetherspoons pub there is breakfast served from 8am and plenty of refreshment opportunities when you finish.



Info control at Fuller Street

I hope you will take the time to enjoy the scenery and pub/café opportunities of Essex, you have plenty of time and after all it's not a race!
This is an 'X' rated event with 2 info controls, 3 stamp checkpoints and a commercial control in Coggeshall (Co-op/ATM). You need to be self-sufficient on the road, there is no rescue service but contact the event phone number if in trouble.

If this is your first experience of Audax note that the route is not signed, you will need to follow the route sheet instructions; A GPX track is available to download and use at your own risk. There is further useful information here - https://www.audax.uk/about-audax/new-to-audax/

The roads for the first hour of this ride are chosen for their winter friendly attributes which unfortunately means they may be busier with traffic than alternatives, but they are quite generous in width. On the Helpers' ride car drivers were reasonably considerate to cyclists.

There is a Maldon Town Center bypass option described on the route sheet. This avoids the notorious climb up Market Hill; it may be preferable if not planning to go in to Maldon for refreshments. The bypass road is wide enough to comfortably share with cars, but traffic is quite fast.

The event is in February so the weather may be winterish, if it is or has been wet recently **mudguards are recommended** as a courtesy to other riders and cafés or pubs you may visit.
On-the-road hazards are highlighted on the route sheet.



Essex countryside towards the end of the KTC ride

Note

There are lots of junctions either without finger post direction signs or broken if they were once there. Please use the intermediate distances on the route sheet to determine the next turn point if there is no $ indicated, and take note of road names where provided.

Controls, food and Points of Interest visited

There is just one commercial control on this ride, however you do pass a Tiptree Tea Rooms visit opportunity Cressing Temple Barns.
The Compasses pub at Littley Green is a checkpoint where a Controller stamp needs to be collected on your brevet. Eileen's Room at the back of the pub has been reserved for lunch between midday and 2pm, an excellent place to stop for refreshments but may be busy at lunchtime. Note that The Compasses opens at midday if you are on an early start and ride quickly.

Recommended refreshment stops
2MT Café - Roxwell Road, Writtle, Chelmsford - https://2mtcafe.co.uk/
Cressing - The Barns Tea Room - Tel: 01376 585081

More traditional and hard-core Audax fare establishments are passed: Maldon High Street; Danbury Tesco Express & Co-Op; Writtle pubs & cafes; Roxwell Road BP garage; Coggeshall pubs & Co-op; Kelvedon pubs (the Railway Tavern was Arrivée on the Kelvedon Oyster) & Co-op.



Essex countryside after Info control 3 of the KTC ride

So, to the theme of this tour around Essex and excuse for going past lots of pubs with Compasses in their name.
There is Knights Templar connection theorising at *An Essex Mystery* webpage - http://vulpeculox.net/misc/mystery.htm - from where my idea of this route germinated itself.

> *Why should three pubs in Essex all called **The Compasses** be in a straight line 10 miles long? The 4th pub called The Compasses creates a circle and points to an ancient centre of Templar activity. Other strange coincidences. Geomancy, Masons, Templars and the Peasants revolt (1381) could all be linked.*

It's also a great reason, should one be necessary, to visit the ACME Spiritual Home at the Littley Green Compasses. I'll let you visit the webpage to read more and just mention the places of interest passed by or very close to and called out on the route sheet, highlighted in {curly brackets}.

Witham - St Nicholas Church at Chipping Hill has always been associated (in folklore at least) with the Templars and Faulkbourne Hall between which there may have been a tunnel.
Danbury – **Bell pub** the Southern end of the perpendicular line dissecting the 12 mile diameter circle taking in the location extremities mentioned. Going back to at least 1758 It has a private cupboard behind the bar with religious relics, supposed to be on the site of a monastery and possibly related to an adjoining church no longer in existence but remembered in the cupboard.
Hertford End, site of **Ridley's brewery**. The start of this ride's West to East straight line connecting possible Templar locations.
Littley Green – **Compasses,** Ridley's brewery tap and ACME Spiritual Home.
Little Leighs - **Church St John the Evangelist**. There are two tombstones in the churchyard supposedly of crusaders with a cross pattée and 'a reversed omega'.
Fuller Street - **Square and Compasses**, turning North to the perpendicular line dissecting the circle which passes about half a mile to the east of a centre of Knights Templar activity - **Cressing Temple**.
Pattiswick - **Compasses** is the furthest North, not visited as of 2018 edition, the perpendicular line and top of the circle.
Great Totham – **Compasses** References in parish registers mention this pub in 1758, sadly no longer operating as a pub.

I wonder if we will reach a critical mass of bicycles visiting these mystical places to invoke an unexplained phenomenon, I suppose we'll have to wait and see on the ride.