

2009 Easter Tour

After arrival by car at Bridges Long Mynd Youth Hostel in the Shropshire Hills on Good Friday (some rode down and arrived later) the early part of the afternoon was spent in the local pub sheltering from a rainstorm. However the weather brightened sufficiently for us to take a short ride to Bishops Castle to get a taster of the countryside to be enjoyed over the next three days. In the brightening weather we had chance for a short walk around the town after a stop at the Poppy Cafe where we were served by a friendly Latvian hostess.

Saturday dawned bright and we eagerly set up our bikes. There was an A and B group and the B group rode off for an anti-clockwise circular tour taking in the quiet lanes which always involved long climbs followed by descents. Most of these were on single track roads. A few of these roads were double arrowed on the maps so walking had to be resorted to on more than one occasion. At some points we entered Wales with only the dual language signage indicating this.

The lunch stop was at the pretty village of Clun. A cafe by the narrow road bridge was patronised. It was then back on the road towards Clunton where the group split with Beryl and Sandra taking a more direct route back, but most of us took the steep uphill in the direction of Craven Arms with the back roads being taken to Church Stretton including at one point a stretch of rough stuff. By this time our map reader and leader Brian Richards had acquired a new nickname from Derek – “Brian the Torturer” – having seemingly deliberately sought out the hilliest roads. In reality the hilly roads are unavoidable here unless using the busy main roads. At one point we paused for photographs in a very pretty valley. After a cafe stop at Church Stretton it was the big one – the climb over Long Mynd. Parts of this had to be walked but the descent down to the Youth Hostel was exhilarating. 48 miles on our computers didn't do justice the day's exertions. The hostel's evening meal went down particularly well that night.

Sunday's ride for the B group was to local landmark Stiperstones, again in glorious weather. The A riders had their opportunity to ride over the Long Mynd setting off directly from the hostel. Having reached the summit they took the ridge road to continue their day's cycling.

Most opted for a walk on Monday morning prior to the drive home. Those riding home set off straight after breakfast. A third consecutive fine day contributed to a very enjoyable tour.