

THE BREDON HILL CIRCUIT

A lovely rural route with wonderful views of Bredon Hill (as in the Housman poems from "A Shropshire Lad") all round and, on western side, the Malverns too at several points. So cycle, drive or walk round the hill (a last outcrop of the Cotswolds) reciting:

In summertime on Bredon
The bells they sound so clear;
Round both the shires they ring them
In steeples far and near,
A happy noise to hear.

The route can be done in full or picked up or finished at any point. It is written anti-clockwise starting at Eckington, at 11.00 o'clock as you look at the O.S.map (150).

Holy Trinity, Eckington.

Getting there The 382 bus goes from central Pershore (roughly hourly) to the Bell Inn , Eckington only a few yards from the church. If going by car, check if Eckington bridge is open as it is the quickest way to get from Pershore to start the tour, If not you need to go across Pershore bridge, first right and then follow signs for Great Comberton and then Eckington. (see notes at end of this)

Parking – cars take first left after the church and park in Cotheridge Lane. Cycles can go in church yard.

What to See. An active church in a large village with shop, 2 pubs and other amenities. Its Perpendicular tower at west end is unmissable on main street. Many late Norman features including the west door (moved there) and 14th century chancel.

Bredon's Norton. St Giles. Chapel of Ease

Getting there. No public transport from Eckington but go south on B4080 signed Bredon for about 1.5 miles. Then left (signed Bredon's Norton) and follow road round to right. Take first left and park in lane about 50 yards up. There is a narrow alley leading to the church. No amenities in the small village

Parking-leave car in narrow lane before church. Cycles in church yard.

What to See Usually open and immaculately maintained by the congregation. Chancel and nave mainly by Preedy, the famous Worcestershire Victorian architect and glass make/designer, but it is a medieval church in origin with a few remaining Norman features and an embattled medieval tower surmounted by a sparkling gilded cockerel wind vane.

Bredon, St Giles

Getting there. There are approx. hourly buses (no 540) from Evesham High Street (0.3 miles from the train station) to Ashton Under Hill, Beckford, Conderton, Overbury, Kemerton and **Bredon**. And from Tewkesbury the other way

From Bredon's Norton, return to the B4803, turn left and after 1.5 miles, turn right at T junction into Kemerton Road. After 300 yards bear right into Church Street with church after c 200 yards. (1.9mils in all)

Parking- for cars plenty in Church Street (many attractive old houses). Cycles in church yard.

What to See. A large village with shop and pubs and other amenities. Many old houses and a magnificent and interesting church whose spire is visible for many miles around (and from M5) as it stands on a bluff over the River Avon. (not visible from the church yard)

Unusually wide Norman nave and later side aisles, a good Norman Northwest porch and many interesting monuments. Rare 14th century armorial tiles of local noble families and French and English royal arms set on risers to the altar steps.

Kemerton, St Nicholas (Anglican)

Getting there. There are approx. hourly buses (no 540) from Evesham High Street (0.3 miles from the train station) to Ashton Under Hill, Beckford, Conderton, Overbury, **Kemerton** and Bredon. And from Tewkesbury the other way

From Bredon, turn round and back down Church Street, bear left along the Kemerton road for about ½ mile then when road swings right, go straight - still Kemerton Road and signed Upper Westmancote, through this village and onto Kemerton. Straight on till you see Crown Inn. Turn right just after it into Back street. Church is on left 300 yards down the street and just after the impressive stone wall of the community orchard on the right-hand side. (1.9 miles in all)

Parking for cars on road and for bikes in churchyard.

What to See. Largely rebuilt in 19th century in neo- Gothic style, but with 13th century tower with 16th century battlements. Again, beautifully kept and open most days.

Kemerton St Benet's (R.C.)

Getting there. There are approx. hourly buses (no 540) from Evesham High Street (0.3 miles from the train station) to Ashton Under Hill, Beckford, Conderton, Overbury, **Kemerton** and Bredon. And from Tewkesbury the other way

Turn round at St Nicholas' and back to the main road by pub. Turn right and ¼ mile down road to Overbury on your left is St Benets. (1/2 mile) It is the last building in the village.

Parking- bear left into lane by church and park there off main road. Cycles also.

What To See. May not be open. Run by the Benedictines of Douai Abbey near Reading. Enter through arched gateway diagonally to the main road. Built 1842-43 in Puginesque style inside and out with neighbouring Rectory in neo-Gothic style.

Overbury, St Faith's

Getting there. There are approx. hourly buses (no 540) from Evesham High Street (0.3 miles from the train station) to Ashton Under Hill, Beckford, Conderton, **Overbury**, Kemerton and Bredon. And from Tewkesbury the other way

From Kemerton, continue along Kemerton Road B4080 for only ½ mile till you see church on the left.

Parking. In lane on left (Church Row) just after the church.

What to See. A well-kept church yard with good views across the countryside (seats to use!) .and unusually a stream disappears under the lychgate. Usually open. One of several churches dedicated to St Faith in this area of England.

An almost complete Norman nave with early English chancel including clerestory (2nd storey) windows and a very fine late 12th century font.

Beckford, St John Baptist

Getting there. There are approx. hourly buses (no 540) from Evesham High Street (0.3 miles from the train station) to Ashton Under Hill, **Beckford**, Conderton, Overbury, Kemerton and Bredon. And from Tewkesbury the other way.

From Comberton, continue on B4080 for 1.9 miles into Beckford. Parking in small, tarmacked square on left (formerly the village green) just before Village shop/Post office (now a coffee shop).

What to See Large well-kept church, usually open. Magnificent Norman south doorway (and less well preserved north one) and nave columns. A full range of medieval window types. Handsome clock on the multi staged (and dated) tower.

Ashton under Hill. St Barbara

Getting there. There are approx. hourly buses (no 540) from Evesham High Street (0.3 miles from the train station) to **Ashton Under Hill**, Beckford, Conderton, Overbury, Kemerton and Bredon. And from Tewkesbury the other way.

From Beckford, take first right after the church, and down Beckford Road, past the Silk Mill (excellent refreshments) and follow road for 2.3 miles.

Park by tall village cross (15th century) by T junction where a road goes right to Evesham.

What to See. Go through lychgate behind village cross and then under a magnificent old yew tree battling with a large beech tree up the path to the church. Usually open. St Barbara is a rare dedication, one of only 3 in England. Striking gargoyle waterspouts on the top of the tower. Rare Jacobean Gothic chancel built by Sir John Franklin and a Norman south door.

Ashton Under Hill, Free church

Getting there. Continue straight on up the Beckford road (now renamed Elmley road) for 500 yards and it is on your left.

Parking on street.

What To See. Built 1923-4 by Andersons of Birmingham with some attractive modern stained glass. Not always open.

Elmley Castle, St Mary the Virgin

Getting There. The 565 bus from Pershore to Evesham stops at Elmley castle. But only 2 buses a day and none on Sundays.

From Ashton under Hill continue to follow Elmley road for 3.1 miles to T junction opposite the highly regarded Queen Elizabeth Inn .in the village. Turn left into Main St. and park by church house.

What to See Through gate and up through churchyard - look for the 2 unusual 16th century sundials with several gnomes. The church is long and low with a squat tower, but attractive battlemented C15-16 north façade. Inside much C14 work and a Victorian restoration by Preedy. Unusually, the font stands on 4 carved writhing dragons(C13). North transept has 2 magnificent C17th tombs, including one to the First Earl of Coventry (seat at nearby Croome) which the second earl refused to allow in the Croome church as he disapproved of his stepmother's ancestry!

Bricklehampton, St Michael and All Angels

Getting there. The 565 bus (see above) stops at the end of the road (not Sundays) and then 500 yards walk to the church.

From Elmley Castle church, turn round and go straight down Main St which bears left at the end (signed The Combertons) and after ½ mile take the second right signed Crothorne.. Church is set well back on right amidst trees after about 500 yards (just after houses on both sides). Parking in road.

What to See. Lovingly cared for small, rather dark village church approached through yew avenue from lychgate. Another Norman south doorway and font, but with Victorian (1870s) restored chancel, glass and many features.

Little Comberton, St Peter

Getting there. The 565 bus from Pershore to Evesham stops here (not on Sundays) but only 2 buses a day each way.

From Bricklehampton church, turn round and go back to the junction, Turn right and follow the road for just under a mile. Church is on left in a much-raised church yard. Parking alongside churchyard wall.

What to See. Good Early English tower, some Norman windows and unusual tympanum over north door. Mostly heavily Victorianised in 1880s.

Great Comberton, St Michael

Getting there The 565 bus from Pershore to Evesham stops here (none on Sundays) but only 2 buses a day each way.

From Little Comberton, continue on main road for 0.4 miles and then turn left (signed Great Comberton) and continue for about 0.8 mile and then bear left by red telephone box into Church Street.

Parking After 200 yards pull into small layby by rather hidden church gate.

What to See. Magnificent and well supported 800-year-old yew tree in the Living churchyard. May not be open. Tall 3 stage tower with large Perpendicular corner finials. Impressive cradle roof to nave, while church Victorianised by no less than Giles Gilbert Scott.

If you have want to go onto Eckington (depending on the order of your itinerary) continue on past the church, bear right with the road and at the T junction turn left and follow road for over 2 miles to T junction, turn right onto B4080 and church is ½ mile on right.