

## Two-day cycle quest

Phil Weber and daughter Bethan spent a summer weekend looking for BCQ locations

**E**arly on a warm June Saturday morning we sneaked the tandem onto a quiet train and trundled out to Dorridge, hastily planning a route as we went. Our aim: to cycle to Worcester through the gentle Vale of Evesham, staying overnight in Stratford and taking in as many of the British Cycle Quest (BCQ) questions as possible.

At our first destination, Packwood House, we were stumped! Eventually we convinced ourselves that the evidence had changed, so we took a photo as proof of achievement, and retraced our steps to Meriden. The BCQ was giving us an excuse to visit new places – the cyclists' memorial, a windmill we had recently seen from the M40, and Warwick's traffic-snarled

town centre!

En route we spent an interesting few hours in Kenilworth Castle, mostly because we innocently trespassed in by the back gate, rather than hoick the bike round the long way... the serendipity of the long-distance cyclist! Forty-one miles later (ahem, 25% over-budget) we were very pleased to reach the Youth Hostel.

Sunday's ride couldn't begin until we had done cyclists' justice to breakfast, had the Two'sday envied by another group of cyclists, and played with the frisbee in the grounds that Bethan (aged 11) had been too tired to see last night. Three more BCQ questions then dictated our route through hot, flat country lanes to Evesham before the hills hit for the last



few miles.

Fortunately the Sustrans route signs coincided with our plans, and we could switch off a little and let ourselves be led into Worcester to find out

who opened the bridge, before stocking up on high-energy foods and collapsing onto the train. With perfect timing, just as we got under cover the heavens opened.

## Slowest ever LEJOG?

Steve Milner and Rob Jackson cycled from Land's End to John O'Groats in exactly 15 years. Here's how...

July 2nd, 1995: Two single young men who enjoy cycling start a ride from Land's End to John O'Groats. Armed with a pile of Landranger maps and a highlighter pen, we set off in a vaguely north-easterly direction along the quietest roads we can find.

The bikes are the ones we rode in Sheffield as medical students, budget offerings from the Far East bearing the well-known names of former British cycle builders. But at least we both have the essential touring upgrade – a Brooks B17 saddle. Land's

End to Warwick is completed in a week, a triumph of enthusiasm over lack of planning. But then our time runs out and we have to return to our homes and jobs.

A month later we cycle from Warwick to Derby, and that is it for 14 years. Apart from a number of other cycle rides that take us no further towards John O'Groats. And five new jobs, four house moves, three children, two marriages, and one divorce. We are each appointed as consultants in our respective specialities. In 2009 we finally manage to organise ourselves and cycle from Derby to Edinburgh.

July 1st, 2010: Two middle-aged men who enjoy cycling arrive in John O'Groats. We have ridden there from Edinburgh in a week. The maps have been replaced by an iPhone, the route planned meticulously beforehand. The bikes under our B17 saddles are now custom-built tourers (one Mercian, one Thorn). After photos by the official signpost, we go into the cafe to sign the End-to-End logbook.

An older couple have just done their LEJOG in five weeks. How long did it take us? We tell them, reflecting how LEJOG is more about the journey than the arrival.



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