



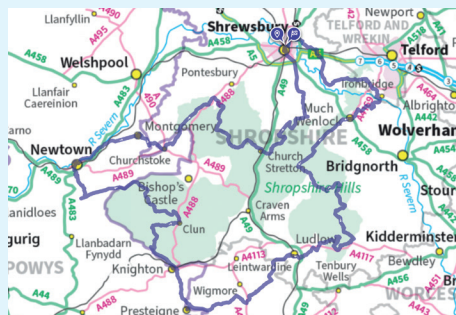
## Fact File: Marcher Castles Way

**Distance:** 290km. I recommend taking four days to do it.

**Route:** The route starts in Shrewsbury, heading south through Ironbridge and then up and over Brown Clee Hill towards Ludlow. It then goes west over the Kerry Ridgeway to Newtown. There is a brief respite from the hills on the greenway to Montgomery, then you climb over the Long Mynd to Church Stretton and back to Shrewsbury.

**Conditions:** We had a real mix of weather: hot sun, torrential rain, low fog and strong winds...basically, Wales in a nutshell! The terrain ranges from rocky bridleways to muddy fire roads, smooth tarmac and well-surfaced towpaths.

**Nearest stations:** The route starts and finishes



at Shrewsbury Station. There are also train stations at Ironbridge, Newtown, Knighton, Ludlow and Church Stretton.

**Accommodation:** We stayed at a mix of inns, Airbnbs, campsites and hotels.

**Bike advice:** A hardtail mountain bike or a gravel bike with wider 650B tyres and low gears would be best. There are some rough and steep sections.

**Maps/guides:** The GPX file and route guide

will be on the Cycling UK website, and also available for purchase as a printed guide and paper map.

**I'm glad I had...** A camera for the views. A rain jacket and some wet lube for my bike chain as there were heavy downpours.

**Next time I would...** Allow more time off the bike to explore the castles and hill forts along the route.

**Further information:** [cyclinguk.org/marcher-castles-way](http://cyclinguk.org/marcher-castles-way)

## SEASON OF MISTS

A sunny morning the next day gave us a chance to explore Much Wenlock. It's a gorgeous medieval town with half-timbered houses covered in climbing roses. The ruins of the old abbey sat cloaked in mist next to the river, and there was a small plaque declaring this spot as the birthplace of the modern Olympics.

After some sightseeing, we pedalled away from Much Wenlock in bright sunlight and found ourselves quickly lost in a wild and green landscape. The first 10km took a long time; there were several rocky and steep slopes that required pushing, as well as some thick mud along the Jack Mytton Way. But it was a beautiful setting: ancient beech woods and peaceful fire roads, with occasional tantalising views out to remote hillsides.

As in many off-road adventures, we soon found ourselves covered in mud, stung with nettles and looking thoroughly dirty. We shared some Welsh cakes and compared who had managed to collect the most spectacular mud splatters. Then we zoomed down to the smooth lanes of Corvedale. We were soon at the foot of Brown Clee Hill, the biggest on the route.

As we rode up, legs burning, we could see the pylons at the top of the hill almost lost in clouds. What a shame! It seemed we were going to ride all

**“As we neared the summit, the mist began to rise, showing off patchwork hills stretching away in every direction to a wild and beautiful horizon”**