

A Winter Warmer

Chatsworth Park in Derbyshire offers traffic-free roads, ancient woodlands and as much history as you can handle

Words Phoebe Sneddon Photos Andy Jones



HEADS UP

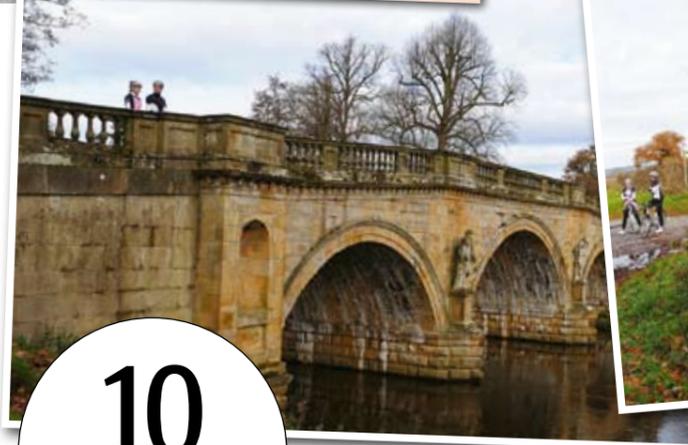
A quick blast round the stunning grounds of Chatsworth and surrounding Peak District lanes



Distance: 10 miles (16km)
Big hills: 2
Challenge: ★★☆☆☆
Cafe stops: 3

Chatsworth's 18th century bridge over the river Derwent

Peak District milestone



10 miles

This ride takes me home to the heart of Derbyshire, which is my absolute favourite place to ride. It is a short but sweet ride, perfect for those frosty winter mornings — just long enough to give the legs a workout, plenty of climbing to keep you warm, and just short enough to stop frostbite setting in.

We start this ride in the village of Rowsley situated on the A6 between Matlock and Bakewell. I have mentioned the A6 before as it is a popular road with cyclists — as is this entire area — so there should be plenty of people to wave to. We set off down the A6 in the Matlock direction and turn left after the Grouse and Claret pub and head towards the village of Beeley. As I turn the pedals, I look up the valley side. There are two famous roads leading up the hillside that many cyclists more serious than I have raced up over the years — not somewhere I plan on going today. The road rises gently up out of the village then drops down again into Beeley. The village marks the beginning of the Chatsworth estate and is also home to

Below: Old sawmill relics betray the gallery's former life



the Devonshire Arms pub (perfect for a summer evening pint or a winter warmer, but the food is a bit pricey).

Chatsworth Park

Once through Beeley, we head further into Chatsworth Park. I have lived in this area for 14 years and I still find the park magical every time I pass through. However, we must make it over the Humpback Bridge and traffic lights before we can enjoy the true delights of the views and wildlife. We try to carry enough momentum for a good start to our first climb. For beginner riders, this can seem a little bit of a slog but I promise you the views of Chatsworth House, gardens and wildlife are the perfect reward. I would suggest standing up for the cattle grid — it can rattle your bones.

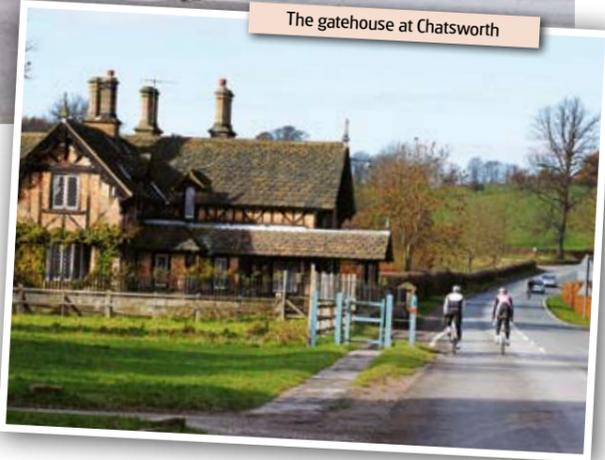
Once at the top, I always stop and admire the home of the Duke of Devonshire. Chatsworth has housed

the Cavendish family since Bess of Hardwick settled in Chatsworth in 1549. Some of you may recognise it from the films *Pride and Prejudice* and *The Duchess*. In the distance, you may be able to see the Hunting Tower — well worth the uphill walk on another day. The house is steeped in history — Mary Queen of Scots was held prisoner here for some time — but its stories are far too extensive and interesting to go into in a short article, but be sure to give them a read if you visit. Within the house you can discover treasures spanning nearly 4,000 years of art and craftsmanship, and there are also extensive gardens and sculptures and a farm and adventure playground for the youngsters. This is all far too much for us today, but we might pop down to the cafe for some refreshments and to catch a glimpse of the house decorated for Christmas.

Back on our merry way we pass the village of Edens and head up the



The gatehouse at Chatsworth



STOP!

Pubs and Grub

The Devonshire Arms
Devonshire Square
Beeley
Nr Matlock
Derbyshire
DE4 2NR
Tel: +44 (0)1629 733259

Caudwell's Mill Cafe
Bakewell Rd
Rowsley
DE4 2EB
<http://www.caudwellsmill-craftcentre.co.uk>

Tiroler Stuber Austrian Coffee Shop
Water Street
Bakewell
Derbyshire
DE45 1EW
Tel: 01629 813899

The Tea Room
Edensor Village
Chatsworth Park
Nr Bakewell
Derbyshire

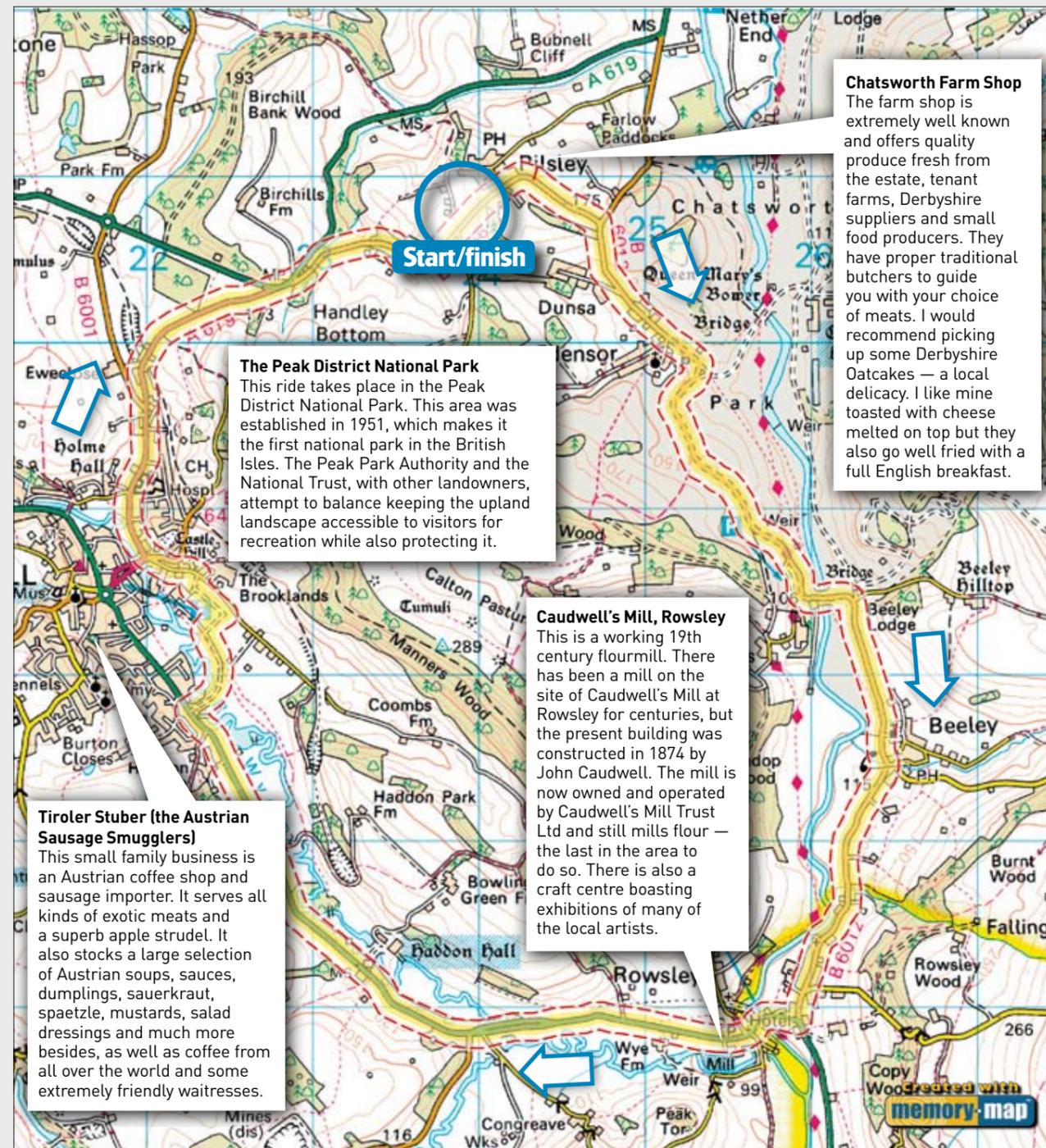
Bike Shop
STANLEY FEARN CYCLES LTD
19 Bakewell Rd
Matlock
Derbyshire
DE4 3AU
Tel: 01629 582089
<http://www.stanleyfearn.co.uk>

second climb of the day. The competitiveness starts to come out as we each fight to be first to the top. Nearing the crest, we turn left — the legs will continue to burn just a little more on this false flat. We arrive in the village of Pilsley, which is home to the Chatsworth Farm Shop — very much worth the visit to pick up some of the Duke's sausages to take home for tea. After Pilsley comes a thrilling descent that takes us back down to the valley bottom. We get low on the drops and try not to brake too much so we can carry our speed up the other side to the main road. Turning left on this road takes us towards Bakewell — this is a fantastic piece of road for getting your breath back. Pop the bike in a higher gear to build the momentum and enjoy the wind round your ears (or, in my case, ear warmers).

The other house
Bakewell is a traditional market town, founded by the Romans at a crossing of the river Wye. It boasts numerous shops but it can become quite busy during the holidays. To avoid the traffic we turn left before the bridge into Bakewell. This way we can have a quick glance at the gallery — Bakewell Arts and Design — located in a converted sawmill by the river. We turn left over the pedestrian bridge to the agricultural centre, one of the most modern livestock sales facilities in the country, held on a Monday and often a Thursday. This short detour allows us to avoid the hustle and bustle of

Top : A stout climb, but who cares when you have views like this?

Bakewell's town centre, and we follow the road and turn left back on the A6. This marks the final stretch to home. As I push the pedals I remember I must mention the other country house in this vicinity: Haddon Hall. We pass it just over a mile from home; it can easily be forgotten when focusing on the road as the Hall is hidden behind the trees and hedges. However, it can be seen from the road in the winter when the leaves have dropped. Quite different to Chatsworth, it's a fortified medieval manor house dating from the 12th century, and the home of Lord and Lady Manners whose family have owned it since 1567. This time of year it isn't open to visitors but during the summer it is yet another historical treat. Once past Haddon, we enjoy the final mile home. This ride is the perfect distance to blow out the cobwebs this winter and, as there is plenty to see along the way, it might even tempt out some of the more fair-weather riders.



Start/finish

The Peak District National Park
This ride takes place in the Peak District National Park. This area was established in 1951, which makes it the first national park in the British Isles. The Peak Park Authority and the National Trust, with other landowners, attempt to balance keeping the upland landscape accessible to visitors for recreation while also protecting it.

Chatsworth Farm Shop
The farm shop is extremely well known and offers quality produce fresh from the estate, tenant farms, Derbyshire suppliers and small food producers. They have proper traditional butchers to guide you with your choice of meats. I would recommend picking up some Derbyshire Oatcakes — a local delicacy. I like mine toasted with cheese melted on top but they also go well fried with a full English breakfast.

Caudwell's Mill, Rowsley
This is a working 19th century flourmill. There has been a mill on the site of Caudwell's Mill at Rowsley for centuries, but the present building was constructed in 1874 by John Caudwell. The mill is now owned and operated by Caudwell's Mill Trust Ltd and still mills flour — the last in the area to do so. There is also a craft centre boasting exhibitions of many of the local artists.

Tiroler Stuber (the Austrian Sausage Smugglers)
This small family business is an Austrian coffee shop and sausage importer. It serves all kinds of exotic meats and a superb apple strudel. It also stocks a large selection of Austrian soups, sauces, dumplings, sauerkraut, spaetzle, mustards, salad dressings and much more besides, as well as coffee from all over the world and some extremely friendly waitresses.

ROAD BOOK

Heading down the A6 towards Matlock turn left after the Grouse and Claret pub, by the art gallery. Continue out of the village along this road past the village of Beeley. Up over the hump-backed bridge and into Chatsworth Park. Continue along this road over the hill and down the other side past the village of Edensor. Still on the same road climb up out of Chatsworth with the golf course

on your ride. At the peak of the climb turn left towards Pilsley. Follow this road past the farm shop and the village and then descend back down to the main road. Take a left at the T-junction, sign-posted back to Bakewell. This road is a long run back into the town but take the second left before the bridge and then right by the car park, thus avoid riding through the traffic in the centre of town. When the road runs out turn left over the pedestrian bridge (you might have to hop off your bike here) and then right out the other side by the agricultural centre. Follow the drive that leads you back to the A6 — turn left and this road will lead you straight back to Rowsley.



Chatsworth Farm Shop stocks choice wares