



April 2010

**Gear up for Ride + Stride
Saturday 11 September, 10am - 6pm**

A nationwide event which raises money to save our historic churches

10,000 churches will throw open their doors to welcome cyclists and walkers

"No feature of the English countryside is more important, or potentially more vulnerable, than its churches. That's why I am so delighted to support Ride + Stride."

Bill Bryson

Explore and enjoy the countryside by taking part in *Ride + Stride*, a sponsored walk or bike ride between 10,000 churches. *Ride + Stride* involves over 13,000 people of all ages, crosses 34 counties and opens the doors to some of the landscape's most unusual and unknown churches.

Cyclists and walkers in Cumbria might like to visit the charming Newlands Church based in the hamlet of Littletown; Beatrix Potter's *Mrs Tiggy Winkle* was dedicated to the Vicar's daughter. In Dorset, participants could head over to Lodors' St. Mary Magdalene's Church, to offer sympathy and support to its gargoyles with toothache.

Riders and striders in Wiltshire can picnic by Bremilham Church in Cowage farmyard, the tiniest church in the UK, which has one pew and seats four. Or head over to Kent and spend the day on Romney Marsh visiting St Clements Church, Old Romney which boasts pale pink pews, having been painted for the filming of *Dr Syn* in the 1960s, and which were kept because the parishioners liked them. Or wander to St Thomas a Becket in Fairfield, which sits in the middle of a meadow that was only accessible by boat until the 1960s.

Ride + Stride is ideal for the young and old, the energetic and the more relaxed. In 2009, the oldest participant was a 101 year old lady from Oxfordshire who walked between six churches in hilly countryside; the youngest was still in his push chair. Some walk between two and three churches, others are more ambitious – one inspired rambler spent two weeks running 630 miles along the South West Coastal Path from his local church, St John the Baptist, Buckhorn Weston to Poole in Dorset.

There is also the opportunity to relax and recharge between journeys, with most churches offering a display of snacks and drinks, from cakes and biscuits to home grown plums and orange squash.

In 2009, *Ride + Stride* raised over £1.5 million to help preserve some of Britain's 47,000 churches, chapels and meeting houses. Many historical landmarks are falling into severe disrepair and need our help. Cyclists and walkers raise money for their favourite church or chapel, as well as the County in which they take part.

Ride + Stride is supported by The National Churches Trust, in partnership with County Churches Trusts nationwide. Keen cyclist and Channel 4 news presenter, Jon Snow, is the patron.

For more information about *Ride + Stride* and to register visit the website:
www.rideandstrideuk.org

For further details contact:

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Notes to Editors

1. The participating County Churches Trusts are: Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cornwall, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Devon, Dorset, Essex, Gloucestershire, Hampshire & the Islands, Herefordshire, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Manchester, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Rutland, Shropshire, Somerset, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, Warwickshire & Coventry, Wiltshire, Worcestershire and Yorkshire.
2. The National Churches Trust drives the restoration and revitalisation of Britain's churches. The charity was created from two long established charities that have worked for almost two centuries to protect and preserve Britain's churches.
3. The Trust is the leading national independent charity concerned with the protection and welfare of churches, chapels and meeting houses throughout the United Kingdom.
4. The Trust aims to:
 - a) Provide grants for the repair, maintenance and modernisation of church buildings
 - b) Act as a catalyst to improve and bring more resources to the management of church buildings
 - c) Promote the value of church buildings to the community at large