Long Mynd Loop

This 18.6 mile mountain bike route is a classic on [Long Mynd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_Mynd), just south of Shrewsbury. It contains challenging steep climbs and fast descents, including the singletrack of Minton Batch, but with a flat ridge line that allows you a rest in between. The ride starts in the centre of [Church Stretton](http://www.churchstretton.co.uk/) conveniently next to a Co-op and some public toilets, at a pay and display car park that isn't expensive.

1. Leave the car park [(GR454936)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=345387&y=293632&z=115&sv=345387,293632&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=614&ax=345387&ay=293632&lm=0) from the exit by the supermarket and turn right. A short distance later at the mini roundabout turn right again. At the following crossroads continue straight on. Follow the main road for a while to a junction with the next road on the left, with the brown sign pointing to Carding Mill Valley [(GR453942)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=345337&y=294167&z=120&sv=345337,294167&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=345337&ay=294167&lm=0). Turn left and follow the road up the valley. After leaving the houses go past a layby on left, then the Visitors Centre. Follow the road through a ford and on to a car park.

2. Don't take the little track on the left but follow the wide track out the back of the car park and climb the track through a few fords. Eventually turn 90° right and cross the stream for the final time, after which the trail kicks up steeply to climb the left hand side of the valley. The loose rocks and steepness make this part of the climb hard going. While it is all rideable most will push at some point on this climb. After bearing left the trail continues to climb steeply until it levels out at the top and comes to a junction [(GR427958)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=342712&y=295812&z=120&sv=342712,295812&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=342712&ay=295812&lm=0).

3. Turn left and follow the wide gravel track down a gentle slope to a junction with a track on the right, just before the gravel track bears left (GR424956). Go through the low wooden posts to follow the track on the right along the ridge line. Follow this track straight on across two roads and stay on the ridge all the way to the trig point at the summit of Pole Bank [(GR414940)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=341547&y=294462&z=120&sv=341547,294462&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=341547&ay=294462&lm=0).

4. After the summit continue straight on down the rocky track to a junction with the lane at the other end. Go right on the lane and descend a short way to the stand of trees on the right, in the dip. Directly after the trees turn right into the car park [(GR413937)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=341307&y=293747&z=120&sv=341307,293747&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=341307&ay=293747&lm=0). Cut diagonally across the car park and follow the double track out the other side. This track soon points down hill for a fast, loose and rocky descent that goes through a few of bends before coming to a gate. After the gate the double track bears gently left for a fast finish to a gate at the bottom [(GR403931)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=340307&y=293167&z=120&sv=340307,293167&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=340307&ay=293167&lm=0).

5. After the gate and turn left onto the lane. Go straight on at the next junction, with a lane on the right. A short distance later, before the farm, turn left through the gate to follow the marked bridleway [(GR403929)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=340327&y=292857&z=120&sv=340327,292857&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=340327&ay=292857&lm=0). The next section is a grassy and muddy push if wet, but it’s only a short distance to the next gate where it becomes rideable again. Continue climbing the steep, grassy singletrack through the a few gates. When the track emerges from the trees it bears left and becomes even steeper. It eventually comes to a forked junction. Turn right and follow the singletrack through the bracken. The track soon levels off and heads in the direction of the Glider Club. Once at the fence bear left to the road [(GR405919)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=340482&y=291912&z=120&sv=340482,291912&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=340482&ay=291912&lm=0).

6. Go straight over the road and pick up the grassy track that heads off to the left. A short distance later, at the low marker post, bear right and follow the singletrack that leads towards the lone tree at the top of the valley ahead. Just before the tree drop through a quick right then left to start the fantastic descent of Minton Batch. Cross the bog on the wooden planking then follow the fast, flowing singletrack along the bottom of the valley, keeping just to the left of the stream. It’s great fun with lots of crests, corners, roots and rocks to keep you on your toes. Follow the track all the way to the farm at the bottom. Continue straight on past the farm and then follow the lane along the right hand side of the stream to where it ends at a junction with another lane [(GR424901)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=342452&y=290077&z=120&sv=342452,290077&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=342452&ay=290077&lm=0).

7. Turn right and head to the crossroad junction in the village of Hamperley. Turn right and follow the lane back towards the hill. Go straight on past a farm on the right to the gate at the entrance to the forest [(GR413894)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=341317&y=289377&z=120&sv=341317,289377&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=341317&ay=289377&lm=0). A low gear is required as this firetrack climbs all the way back to the top of the hill, although it is the easiest climb of the route. Stay on the main track and follow it through a series of bends. The track eventually flattens off a bit and goes through a long left hand bend before reaching a junction. Go left at this junction, and left at the next junction a short distance later. Climb straight on up the wide forest track to a crossroad junction at the top [(GR406903)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=340632&y=290307&z=120&sv=340632,290307&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=340632&ay=290307&lm=0).

8. Turn right at the crossroad and ride slightly down hill to a gate on the left. Go through the gate and follow the grassy track in the direction of the glider club. At the next junction, a grassy junction before the Glider Club marked by a white circular bridleway marker set into the ground, turn left to a junction with a lane a very short distance later [(GR403907)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=340262&y=290707&z=120&sv=340262,290707&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=340262&ay=290707&lm=0). Cross the lane and take the track leading off to the right, signed as the ‘Starboard Path’, that goes around the back of the glider club. After the grassy double track descends through a dip go straight on and climb to a fence on the right at the top. Bear right across the lumpy grass, keeping to the fence on the right. Pick up the gravel track a little while later then bear right through a couple of bends to a junction with a lane [(GR405919)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=340462&y=291847&z=120&sv=340462,291847&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=340462&ay=291847&lm=0).

9. Turn left over the cattle grid to the road junction. Turn right and follow the lane uphill along the ridge. Follow the road for about 1 mile then at the bottom of the second descent go past the previously visited car park by the stand of trees, on the left. Climb to the junction with the next trail on the left. Turn left and follow this previously ridden trail back to the trig point at the summit at Pole Bank [(GR414940)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=341532&y=294452&z=120&sv=341532,294452&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=341532&ay=294452&lm=0). After taking in the view it is time for the final descent , the long way though.

10. Continue straight on from the summit and descend the gravel track, watching out for walkers, as there can be quite a few on this section. Go straight on across the two road junctions then follow the track to the next junction with the low wooden posts. Go straight on through posts and continue along the ridge to the previously visited junction at the top of Carding Mill valley [(GR427958)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=342727&y=295832&z=120&sv=342727,295832&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=342727&ay=295832&lm=0). Bear slightly right and take the second track from the left to go past the right hand side of the maker post.

11. Follow the track as it bears right around the line of the hill right, then bear left over the crest. After the crest go straight on down the rutted, grassy track for a while to a wide, vague crossroad junction near a fence ahead on the left [(GR440967)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=343982&y=296712&z=120&sv=343982,296712&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=343982&ay=296712&lm=0). Turn right on the wide grassy track that sweeps down hill away from the junction. It’s then time to really put the hammer down on this undulating grassy track, although keep an eye out for horses and walkers. Keep going straight on down the trail. After a while the track steepens then reaches a rock section that jumps out you to get the adrenalin flowing. After the rocks continue straight on and climb over a small rise. After the crest drop down a short descent to an easy to miss junction in the bottom of the dip [(GR451962)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=345112&y=296262&z=120&sv=345112,296262&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=345112&ay=296262&lm=0). If the track then bears left and comes to a junction at a lane, with a house on the right, you have gone a little too far.

12. Turn right to cross the short, slightly boggy section towards the steep sided valley (last time I visited it looked like they were preparing to install planking sections to cross the bog). Near the end of the plateau take the track that drops into the cutting on the left. The tight singletrack bears right across some off camber bedrock before coming out to a small plateau. Go straight on to the junction at the far side [(GR450961)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=345032&y=296087&z=120&sv=345032,296087&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=345032&ay=296087&lm=0). Turn right for a sweet bit of singletrack that clings to the side of the hill and weaves its way down to a junction at the valley floor [(GR448961)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=344767&y=296072&z=120&sv=344767,296072&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=344767&ay=296072&lm=0).

13. Turn hard left and follow the wide grassy track down the valley, along the left hand side of the stream. The track soon bears right and becomes hardpack. After crossing the ford turn left then continue straight on down the valley. Go across the next ford to where the track becomes a tarmac lane. Follow the lane down through the houses to a junction with the main road at the bottom [(GR459954)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=345957&y=295412&z=120&sv=345957,295412&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=615&ax=345957&ay=295412&lm=0). Turn right and follow the main road all the way back to Church Stretton. Go straight on at the crossroad in the middle of town then at the mini roundabout turn left and return to the car park to complete the ride.

All of this route can be plotted on OS Landranger 137 although there will be some anomalies. From the start of the climb at Priors Holt, through the forest, the OS map and the streetmap links give a good enough idea of where to go without getting lost but some of the forest tracks seem to have changed slightly. The permissive path around the back of the gliding club is not on the map but it is on the ground. It may also be noted that the final descent uses a footpath and another unmarked track. I have included these in as they are shown as concessional tracks in the trail guide available from the [Tourist Information Centre](http://www.churchstretton.co.uk/visitors/index.php?page=visitor-information%20Centre)