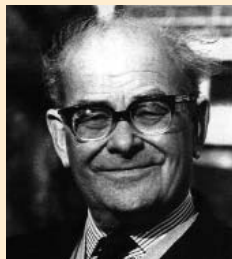




The Minton Hill Ride

Books, Falcons and Bombs

Malcolm Saville

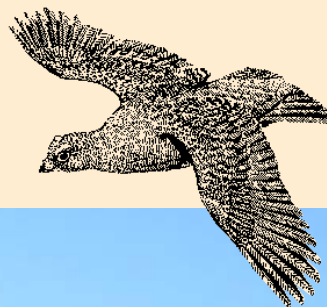


Malcolm Saville (1901-1982) based his 'Lone Pine Club' childrens books on real locations in and around the Long Mynd. He came to know the area well when his family were

evacuated there during World War II. He encouraged his readers to visit and explore the landscape in which his stories unfolded.

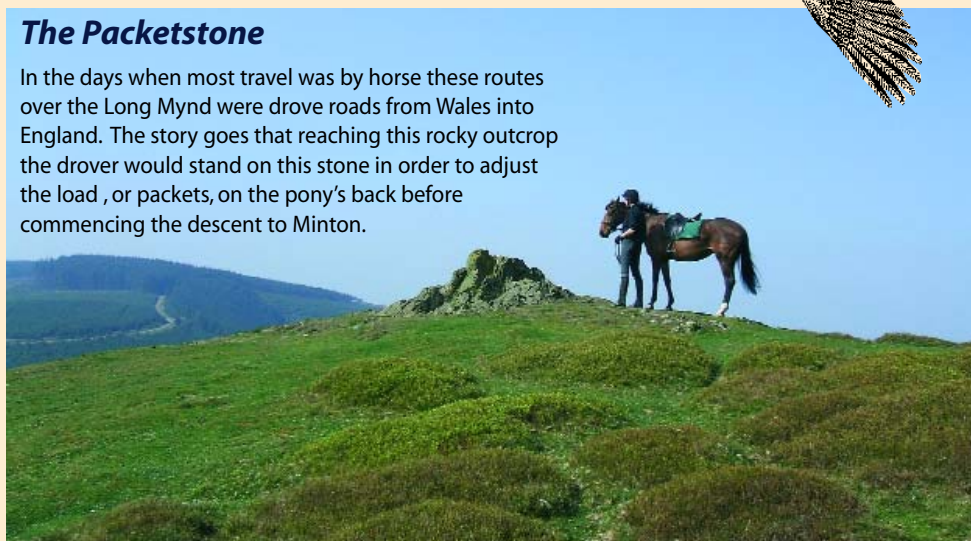
Red Grouse

You may spot a red grouse as you cross the Long Mynd. These game birds are in decline but if you are lucky you may see one as it rockets up out of the heather then flies low with fast whirring wingbeats. It makes a distinctive staccato "go-back, go-back, go-back" call.













The Packetstone

In the days when most travel was by horse these routes over the Long Mynd were drove roads from Wales into England. The story goes that reaching this rocky outcrop the drover would stand on this stone in order to adjust the load, or packets, on the pony's back before commencing the descent to Minton.



KEY to maps

-  Ride Route with direction number
-  Jack Mytton Way
-  Bridleway
-  Footpath
-  Byway
-  A Road / B Road
-  Other road

-  Public House
-  Telephone
-  Car Parking
-  Visitor Information
-  Cafe / Shop
-  Church
-  Public Toilet
-  Buildings

INFORMATION

Station Inn, Marshbrook: 01694 781208



The Long Mynd has its ancient tracks and Bronze Age works but the most fascinating history is far more recent. This ride is shrouded in tales of the Second World War, spies and secret bases the Home Guard and own goals!

In the War Minton Hill was used by the Germans as a landmark for their bomber raids on the Mersey. Pathfinder planes dropped flares setting the hill on fire so it could be used as a beacon for the bombers. The Home Guard dug small pools all over the hill to collect water which they used to extinguish the fires.

As you ride up to Minton Hill and over the Bronze Age cross dyke look to the north. On the next hill there was a gun emplacement

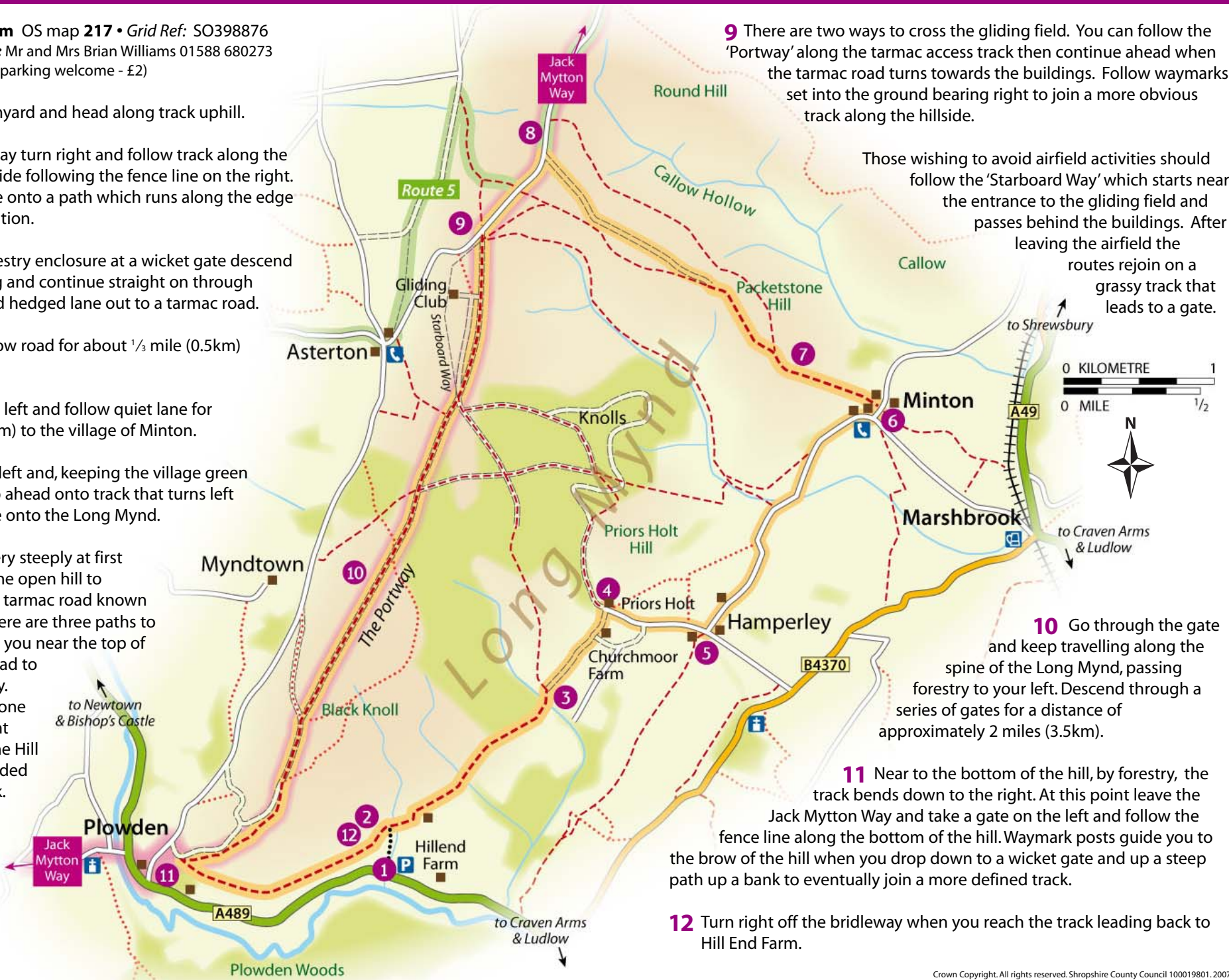
and it's said that after a late night at the local pub Minton was shelled by accident.

Just north of the route is Pole Cottage. It's not very much now but in the war it was a secret base where people trained in the art of falconry. The falcons killed the carrier pigeons used by German spies.

Perhaps the most famous WW2 connection is with the books of Malcolm Saville. He set his popular children's book "Mystery at Witchend" here on the Long Mynd. A group of children, who lived at Priors Holt, formed a club called "The Lone Pine Club". They went on to foil a German plot and capture the spies.

Start: Hill End Farm OS map 217 • Grid Ref: SO398876
Telephone beforehand: Mr and Mrs Brian Williams 01588 680273
 (donation to charity for parking welcome - £2)

- 1 Leave Hill End farmyard and head along track uphill.
- 2 On joining bridleway turn right and follow track along the bottom of the hillside following the fence line on the right. This leads to a gate onto a path which runs along the edge of a forestry plantation.
- 3 On leaving the forestry enclosure at a wicket gate descend to a brook crossing and continue straight on through gate and follow old hedged lane out to a tarmac road.
- 4 Turn right and follow road for about 1/3 mile (0.5km) to crossroads.
- 5 At cross roads turn left and follow quiet lane for about 1 1/4 mile (2km) to the village of Minton.
- 6 In the village bear left and, keeping the village green on your right, keep ahead onto track that turns left and leads to a gate onto the Long Mynd.
- 7 The path climbs very steeply at first then passes over the open hill to eventually join the tarmac road known as the Portway. There are three paths to choose from when you near the top of the hill which all lead to the road eventually. The most obvious one runs along the right flank of Packetstone Hill then turns left handed to join a wide track.
- 8 On reaching the tarmac road turn left and follow road to the Midland Gliding Club.



9 There are two ways to cross the gliding field. You can follow the 'Portway' along the tarmac access track then continue ahead when the tarmac road turns towards the buildings. Follow waymarks set into the ground bearing right to join a more obvious track along the hillside.

Those wishing to avoid airfield activities should follow the 'Starboard Way' which starts near the entrance to the gliding field and passes behind the buildings. After leaving the airfield the routes rejoin on a grassy track that leads to a gate.

10 Go through the gate and keep travelling along the spine of the Long Mynd, passing forestry to your left. Descend through a series of gates for a distance of approximately 2 miles (3.5km).

11 Near to the bottom of the hill, by forestry, the track bends down to the right. At this point leave the Jack Mytton Way and take a gate on the left and follow the fence line along the bottom of the hill. Waymark posts guide you to the brow of the hill when you drop down to a wicket gate and up a steep path up a bank to eventually join a more defined track.

12 Turn right off the bridleway when you reach the track leading back to Hill End Farm.