

TEA – Tim’s England Adventure



Our group of 17 cyclists in front of the Coal Wheel before we headed out for a social ride with Tim’s cycling group on our 1st day there



Winding Wheel from the Writhlington Coal Mine relocated to Radstock



Our last trip dinner together at the Redan Inn, Chilcompton

After 3 years in the works, we and 14 other Fuller Center Bike Adventure (FCBA) friends finally made it to England for our biking trip hosted by Tim, a 2019 FCBA cross-country rider. It was a great trip. We rode bikes 8 days averaging 40 to 60 miles a day and on the off-the-bike days went on tours Tim planned for us. His wife, Elaine, planned the dinners back at their house and stocked us with groceries for breakfasts and snacks.



Kudos to our hosts, Tim and Elaine and their dog, Hank for giving us a wonderful holiday (British for vacation 😊)

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How it all began



Dave and I met Tim at the very end of the 2019 ride on the Capital steps in DC. Then, later in the year we spent a week on a Fuller Center legacy blitz build with him in Beauregarde, AL. Tim invited FCBAers from the ride and the build to visit England in 2020 – first 20 to sign up got to go.

Where to next?



We attended the Fuller Center Zoom meeting announcing the 2023 Fuller Center Bike Adventure Rides

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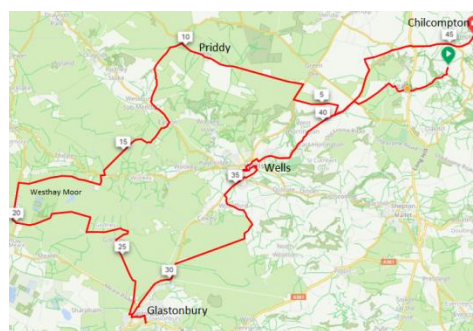
Biking: we biked 8 days for a total of about 370 miles



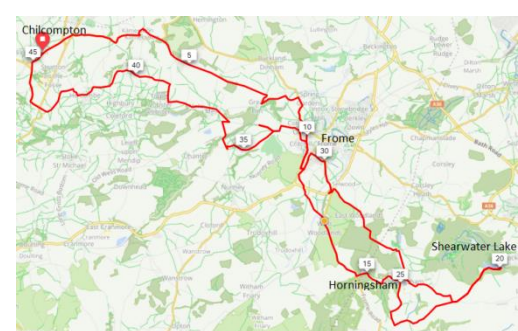
Local Social Ride with Tim’s bike club – 32 miles 9/3
Extra 5 miles shown are to our Ammerdown house



Bath and Bradford on Avon – 45 miles 9/4



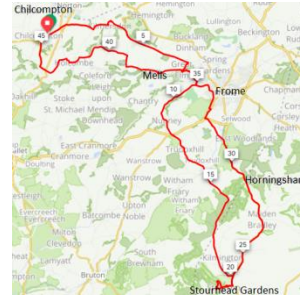
Somerset Levels to Glastonbury & Wells – 46 miles 9/7



Shearwater Lake – 45 miles 9/9



Westbury White Horse – 53 miles 9/10



Stourhead Gardens – 45 miles 9/12



Weston-Super-Mare – 61 miles 9/15



Local Lakes – 39 miles 9/16



Ammerdown House where 8 of us stayed for the two weeks
Tim picked us up every morning & dropped us off for showers & sleeping



Gardens behind Ammerdown House



Back behind Tim’s where we met every morning to prepare to ride

In the evenings after showering back at our respective houses we'd go back to Tim and Elaine's house to hang out and eat dinner. We transformed their living room into a dining room for 18 people 😊. The group took turns helping Elaine with cooking. Elaine baked two special birthday cakes for 2 of our group who had birthdays while we were there. Tim would often play relaxing "before dinner" music for us.

One evening their son prepared a bbq feast for us and the rest of their family came over to eat with us. We ate out in their back yard.



Tim's house and our van to take us on tours for the 2 weeks

We biked through lovely old towns and down bike trails, narrow country lanes, and roads with beautiful views. We had to keep reminding one another to "stay left." There were lots of blackberry bushes to enjoy along the paths and country roads. One day we rode past a mansion that Nicolas Cage bought. Sometimes we'd see pubs, castles, abbeys or old churches. It felt like we were riding through another space and time.



Stay left!



Yum! So many blackberries!! We stopped at every opportunity



Midford Castle owned by Nicolas Cage from 2007-2009



Lovely ride along the Avon River, Kennet & Avon Canal



Bath Bridge



Riding through quaint little towns



Royal Crescent, Bath



John, who provided great support for us, met us there



An alpaca farm



Narrow country lanes with two way traffic and no shoulders. Bikers would have to pull off on little side roads so that cars could pass. Often there would be tall hedge rows on both sides of the road.

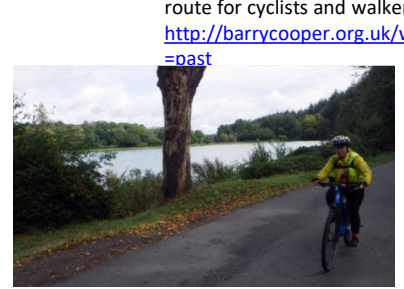


Glastonbury

9/7/2022 Castle in Wells

Cathedral in Wells

One of the 9 syrens/waymarkers (1998-99) on the Wells/Glastonbury route for cyclists and walkers:
http://barrycooper.org.uk/work_series.asp?ref=40§ion=3§ype=past



9/9/2022

Cutoff point for those not wanting to do extra 8 miles to the lake.

Lunch at Shearwater Lake

Biking by Shearwater Lake

Longleat Estate

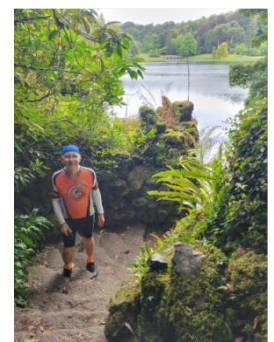


9/10/2022

View of White Horse from down in the valley

Gate to get through to look at horse & view – John always there to help us out

View from up by the White Horse



Stourhead Gardens 9/12/2022



Had to fix a flat on the way back



On our longest day (61 miles) we biked down scenic Cheddar Gorge into Cheddar and then on to Weston-Super-Mare along the Bristol Channel. Across the Bristol Channel is Wales. 9/15/2022



Dan Sheridan, my fellow sweep for the day

The "SEE MONSTER" is an old oil rig rehabilitated to showcase a thriving garden, a 10-metre high waterfall and renewable designs to start global conversation around our sustainable future. It took 5 days across the sea on a barge the size of a football pitch to bring it to Weston-super-Mare July 13, 2022. <https://seemonster.co.uk/a-big-week-for-see-monster/>



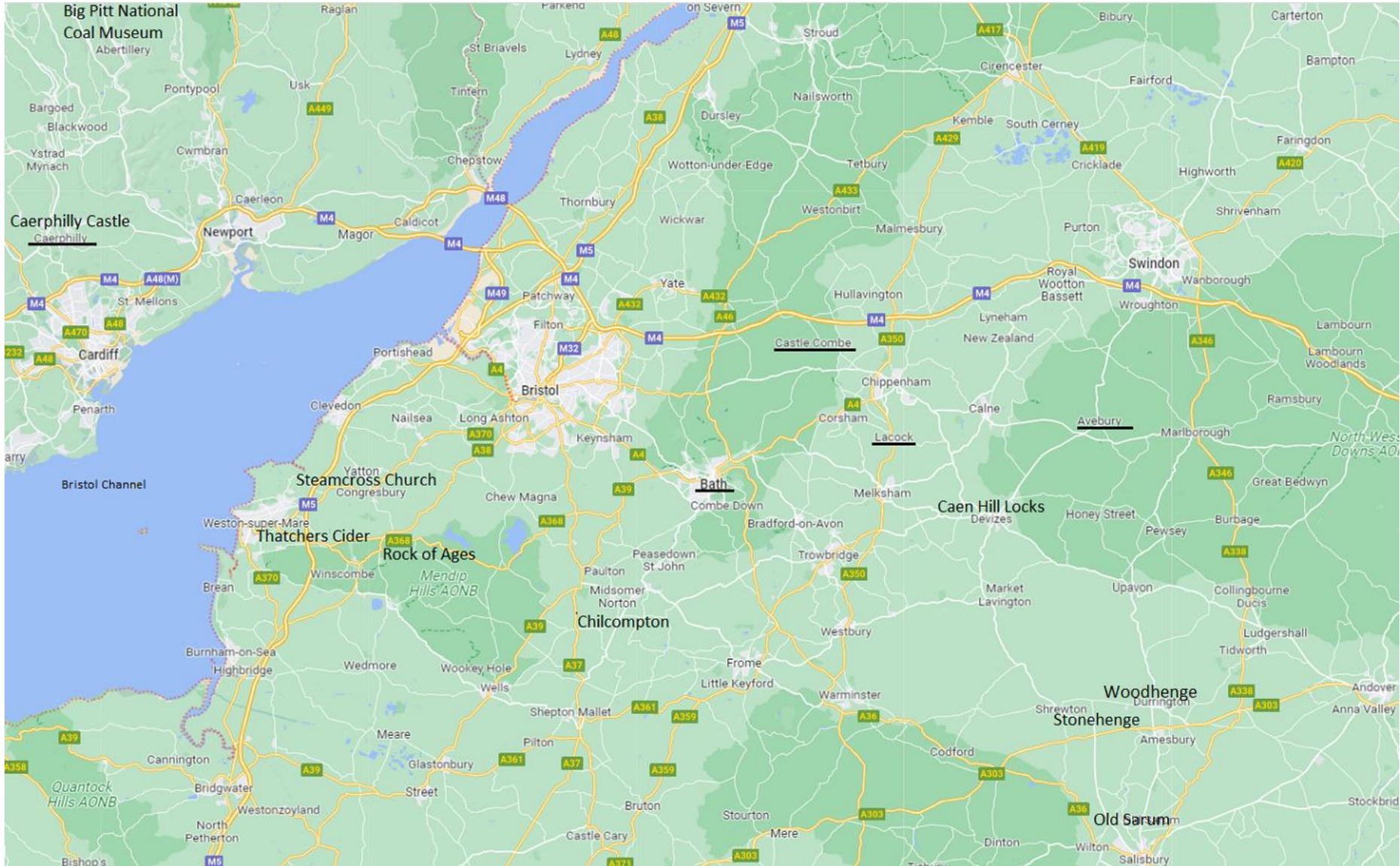
Our last ride day (9/16) we ride to two local lakes, Blagdon Lake and Chew Valley Lake. Along the way we see some beautiful panoramic views of Wales (I think ☺) and the lakes and some sheep grazing on a hill below a church.



Dan Hepp, my fellow sweep for today

TEA – Tim’s England Adventure

Tours: On days we did not bike, Tim planned tours of some of the sites around Chilcompton. The map below shows places we visited on our days off the bike. If a place we visited is on the map I underlined it. If it is not listed I added it in bold type.





Welcome to Caen Hill Locks

The locks are still operational. Boat owners have to operate the locks themselves. Jonathon tried it out.



Common Wood Pigeon – we kept hearing them and finally saw one. I thought it sounded like a Barred Owl

Welcome to the Avebury World Heritage Site

You are now on the approach to Avebury henge, an enormous circular earthenwork that encloses the largest stone circle in Britain.

The henge and stone circle were probably built in the late Neolithic period, in about 2500 BC. Within the large stone circle once stood two smaller circles, the northern one containing a cove of three standing stones, and the southern one a square arrangement. The purpose of Avebury henge is not known, but it is likely that rituals and ceremonies took place here. Many of the stones of the circle and the nearby West Kennet Avenue were re-erected in the 1930s.

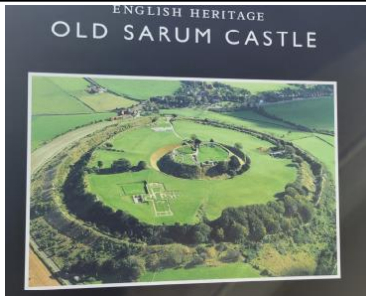
The Avebury area contains a cluster of outstanding monuments dating to the Neolithic period and Bronze Age. This was a significant place for prehistoric people, who gathered here to build monuments made of earth, timber and stone for over 2,000 years.



A special place

The most likely use for Avebury was as a site for ceremonies and gatherings. These might not have been religious, but it seems likely that they were.

We know the site was not for defence, as the bank was built outside the ditch. To enclose such a large area this way suggests that it was a special, perhaps sacred, place.



Woodhenge

You are standing at the entrance to a timber monument with six oval rings of posts, built at about the same time as Stonehenge.

The wooden posts were a variety of sizes, with those in the largest ring (marked by red pillars) possibly standing up to 9m tall. The oval rings were roughly aligned in the direction of midsummer sunrise and mid-winter sunset, the same as Stonehenge.

You might be able to make out a low ditch and bank to your left and right. This is a henge, built to enclose the site. Two standing stones, probably sarsen, were also added to the monument.

We do not know how Woodhenge was used, but people placed many objects and animal bones among the posts, even after some of them had rotted. These included Grooved Ware pottery, carved chalk objects, antler picks and flint tools. Fragments of human bones were also found here, as well as two later burials – a child near the centre (today marked by a flint cairn) and a young man in the ditch.



Our group at Stonehenge

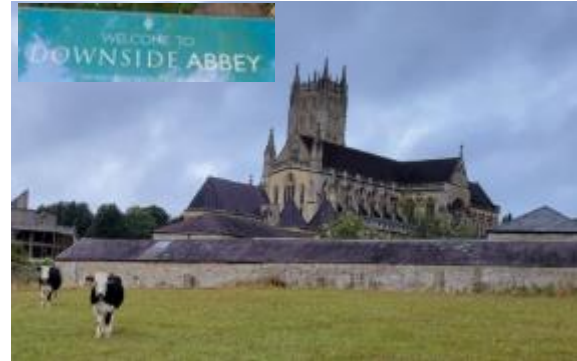


The people who built and used Stonehenge probably lived in houses like these. They are recreations based on the archaeological remains of buildings excavated at Durrington Walls, just over a mile from Stonehenge.

The floors of ten buildings were excavated, some within fenced enclosures, and it is likely that there were many more. They date from the same time that the stones were being put up at Stonehenge, about 2500 BC.

From the remains of animal bones and pottery found near the houses, it appears that people were gathering at Durrington Walls to feast, particularly at midwinter. This was not an ordinary settlement, but a place where people gathered to celebrate, conduct rituals and perhaps live while they built Stonehenge.

For our next tour we took Tim's dog, Hank, on a walking tour of the area near Tim's house and then visited Nunney Castle. 9/6/2022



Saw a number of houses with thatched roofs



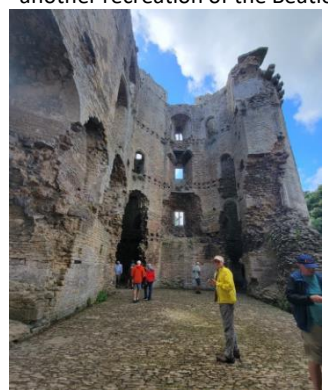
Upon finding another Abbey Rd we couldn't resist doing another recreation of the Beatle's Abbey Rd Album cover ☺



An old gaol house



To me a fascinating sign on the door going into this pub



A reminder of all the coal mining that used to be done in this area



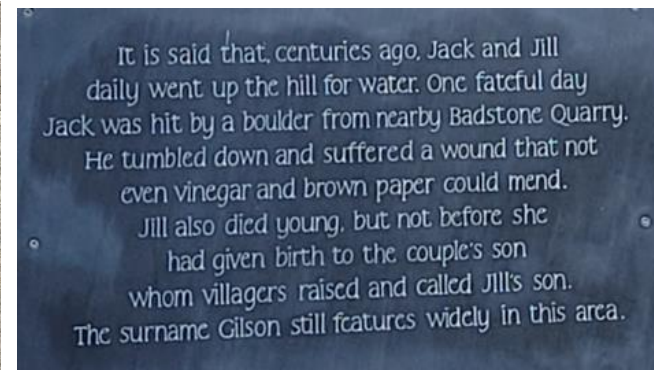
Outside a house across from the pub a lady has a cabinet displaying her creations for sale



← Lunch at the Old George Inn →



Origins of Two of Our Nursery Rhymes



Kilmersdon, UK



The history of Mells is believed to have been the inspiration for the nursery rhyme 'Little Jack Horner'! In 1543 the manor of Mells was acquired by Thomas Horner, but it is at this point that the old tale becomes mixed with the truth. According to the story John 'Jack' Horner stole the deeds to the manor – from a pie! The deeds had supposedly been hidden in the pie and sent from the Abbot of Glastonbury to Henry VIII as a gift. Little Jack Horner *put in his thumb and pulled out a plum* – in this case the "plum" being a desirable property.

Although a good story, it is without foundation as the document recording the purchase of the manor by Thomas (not John) Horner is still retained in the manorial records of Mells.

From: <http://www.house-historian.co.uk/tag/little-jack-horner/>



Little Jack Horner's plum 😊

Little Jack Horner's plum 😊

After Mells walk we even managed to squeeze in a mini-"build" helping neighbors remove a dead tree

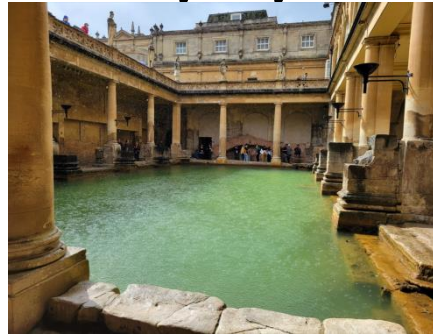


The neighbors and their young daughter help us out by removing debris

Bath 9/8/2022

MEET THE ROMANS

People visited the Roman Baths, Sacred Spring and Temple of Sulis Minerva from around the Roman world. They came to bathe in sacred waters, seek healing and pray. Men and women, soldiers and civilians, slaves and free...



It was interesting how they had walkways overlooking the old ruins and then had videos transitioning from the ruins to what they think it may have looked like

CONTROLLING THE WATER

In the 1st century AD Roman engineers built a stone-walled reservoir around the Sacred Spring to supply hot water to the baths.

The overflow to your left was built into the east wall of the reservoir. From here water pours into the main drain and flows beneath your feet to the river Avon.



THE ROMAN DRAIN

Energy from the thermal spring is used to heat this building



Still using the resources today



In downtown Bath the shrapnel damaged façade of the old Labour Exchange building was retained as a memorial to the 417 people who lost their lives in the Bath Blitz in April 1942 when the Nazis bombed Bath



GREAT PULTENEY ST
Jane Austen museum

Interesting tidbits



In the US we have machines that allow us to refill water jugs. In England you can get a refill of milk.

You can even add flavor to your milk and shake it up for a milk "shake" 😊.

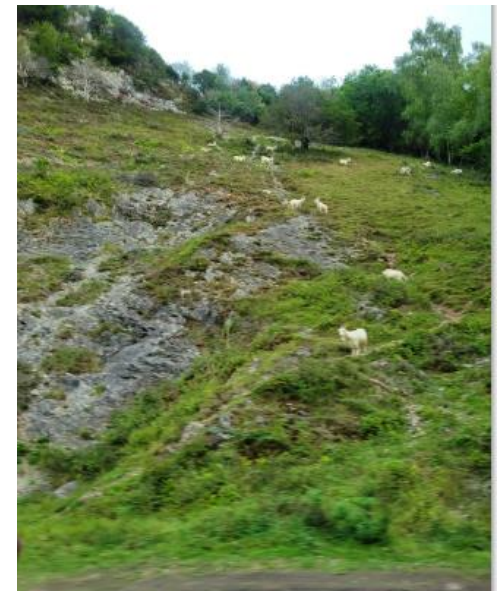


All mailboxes and those already in production with Queen Elizabeth's initials will remain intact, the service's website says. When a new mailbox is created, however, it will bear the insignia of King Charles, according to Mr. Baker, who pointed out that the country sends less mail than it used to. Sep 18, 2022

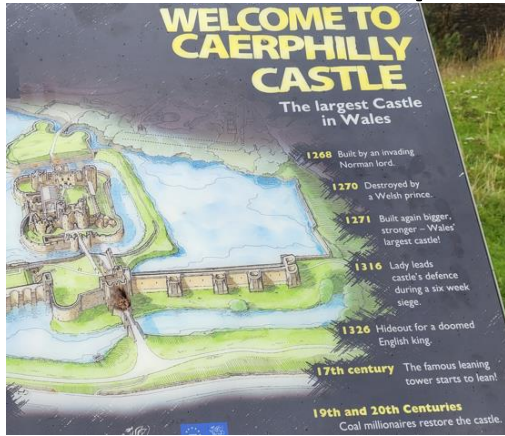


The Saxon Tithe Barn at Bradford on Avon, 180 feet long and 30 feet wide was constructed in the 14th century and is now part of Barton Farm Country Park. The barn was used for collecting taxes, in the form of goods, to fund the church. (9/6)

On Sunday we attended church and on the way home we stopped to see the "Rock of Ages" rock. Back in 1763 Rev. Augustus Mantague Toplady was inspired to write the hymn "Rock of Ages" when he took shelter in the cleft of this rock during a storm. (9/11/2022)



Caerphilly Castle and Big Pit Coal Mine (9/13/2022)



Big Pitt Coal Mine – 9/13/2022

I enjoyed the mine tour because it was located not far from where my Dad's family lived between leaving Ireland and migrating to the US.

BLAENAVON INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPE WORLD HERITAGE SITE is an outstanding example of a landscape created by coal mining and iron making in the 18th and 19th Centuries. Hundreds of men, women and children dug coal, iron and limestone which shaped this dramatic landscape.

Start your visit to the area at the Blaenavon World Heritage Centre, located in the restored St Peter's School, it provides an overview of how the stories of the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape are of global importance.



Before entering the mine we had to put on hard hats and give up anything with batteries, including cell phones ☹ due to risk of explosions

Big Pit was named after the size of its shaft.

Known in 1860 as 'Kearsley's Pit', it was one of 34 shafts and 162 drifts feeding the Blaenafon ironworks. The shaft reached down into much older ironstone workings. Then in 1880 it got Big. The shaft was made deeper and wider, and was the first in the area to raise two drams side by side.

Within a few short years Blaenafon became a bustling company iron town.

It carried on growing throughout the 19th century, developing many collieries to feed the ironworks.

The town also led innovations in making steel, one of only a handful of Welsh iron towns to move into steel production in the 1880s.

However, the loss of Blaenavon's overseas markets and the slump of the 1920s and 30s forced the last blast furnace to close in 1937.



When Big Pit closed it was the oldest working mine in Wales.

It had always provided coal for the steelworks. Later it continued to supply railway coal to Britain, France, and South America.

The last seam to be worked was The Garw. Only 71cm thick, it produced one of the best coking coals in Britain.

When work stopped at the coal face in November 1979, the Garw had thinned to half an arm in height.



9/14/2022 – Lacock & Castle Combe, UK



Visiting Lacock Village in the Cotswolds and seeing lovely old cottages featured in a number of films was fun.



Harry Potter's parents' house in Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

Lacock Village
A historic village with a thriving community

Lacock is a traditional medieval village full of unique independent shops, pubs and tea-rooms. There's history on every corner with quintessential English cottages, the village church, medieval Tithe Barn and war memorial.

You might recognise the historic streets from film and television productions such as *Pride and Prejudice*, *Downton Abbey* and *Cranford*.

Discover the natural beauty of this peaceful and ancient landscape. Among hidden villages of mellow stone cottages are picturesque Castle Combe and Lacock, the romantic film location for Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* and where photography itself was pioneered.



Horace Slughorn's Hideaway in Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince

Lacock Tithe Barn

The connection between this Tithe Barn and Lacock Abbey date back to the 1300s. Built into the precinct wall of the Abbey it housed tithes. Tithes were rent-in-kind, such as corn or fleece, paid by the villagers to the Abbey instead of rent.

The Tithe Barn has had few alterations over the years and must appear much as it did when it was first built. It underwent some restoration in 2007 due to problems with the roof. Timbers were replaced and the roof re-tiled with felting underneath in certain areas.

The Abbey closed as a nunnery under the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Since then the barn has had a several uses. It was a market hall in the 1700s and stored grain ready to make into threshes in the 1800s. In recent years it has been used for filming, exhibitions, craft fairs and as a venue for village events.



Another tithe barn in Lacock



9/14/2022 – Lacock & Castle Combe, UK



Since taxes were based on # of windows, they would sometimes fill in the windows



Exhibits honoring Queen Elizabeth in church



Clock from before 1500 when church tower was built



Castle Combe Church



Castle Combe Manor House (built in 14th century) and gardens

Thatcher's Gold Cider Factory (9/17/2022)

We got a tour of the factory and then got to sample some of their products



Cider tasting



Another beautiful sunset at Tim and Elaine's
A lovely ending to an enjoyable 2 weeks of biking and touring with some of our Fuller Family