

## Roaming disabled driver visits 650 Gloucestershire churches for Ride+Stride



On Saturday 9 September, Sarah Hargreave, a 73-year-old disabled driver from the Greenway Benefice near Cheltenham, completed a mission to visit all the churches in Gloucestershire. She combined a research project with a fundraising effort for the Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust (GHCT).

Sarah began her epic journey on 1 January and completed the mission on the day of GHCT's annual Ride+Stride event. Hundreds of people took part in the sponsored event, walking, cycling or driving between churches, raising money to help churches needing repairs or improvements. Many of Gloucestershire's churches date back to Saxon and Norman times and the cost of their upkeep is a huge challenge for local congregations.

'I've visited around 650 churches and seen how they've developed from Saxon and Norman times to modern buildings with solar panels,' she said. 'As well as raising funds for GHCT, I'm looking to record what churches are doing to help and attract the elderly and disabled,' says Sarah. 'I hope I shall raise enough money to fund a hefty grant for another ancient church to install a NatSol, the most effective and reasonable priced wheelchair-accessible toilet.'

Sarah has driven through snow and fog and covered a huge mileage – much of it down single-track potholed lanes. Her car has needed three new tyres, and she has an unrivalled knowledge of the local toilet facilities around the county!

Ride+Stride County organiser Glenn Duff said:

'We're grateful to Sarah and the many other participants who stepped out in the sunshine and came back in the rain on Saturday. Thanks must go, too, to all our local organisers who have worked so hard. We hope even more will join us for next year's Ride+Stride.'

*This article first appeared in Country Way 77: Rural Isolation and Loneliness, February 2018. Go to [germinate.net/country-way](http://germinate.net/country-way) for more information about how to subscribe.*