

Great Mystery was Solved

On the 7th July a group of intrepid explorers gathered at St Johns Church for the Great Mystery Trip, where would we all be going we wondered as the coach arrived. Well maybe not a great mystery as we knew we were going to villages in the Cotswolds and, for those who paid the extra it would also involve an outing on a steam train.

The trip started and we left for the Cotswolds but not the normal way as the Coach driver decided that we should not use the M5 but go down the A38 and round the back streets of Tewkesbury! One of the joys of coach travel is the ability to see over the hedges as we drove along and we were soon chatting about the beautiful countryside. The first stop turned out to be Bourton on the Water where we had time to wander round the centre and grab some refreshments. With the river flowing through the centre of Bourton it is a very picturesque village. It was busy, it is always busy, but not overly so and it was very pleasant walking along the banks of the river watching the children and dogs cooling off in the river.



Back on the coach we headed off to our next mystery location, which turned out to be the very pretty village of Broadway. Here we found out that those going on the steam train would be leaving after a short time as they would be travelling on the steam train from the newly opened Broadway Station on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway (GWR) down to the other end of the line at Cheltenham. Those of us who did not want to go on this part of the trip stayed in Broadway and enjoyed wandering round the quaint shops and a more leisurely lunch in one of the lovely eateries in the village.

Broadway was a good deal quieter than Bourton and a very pleasant time was had exploring the village and the pink ice cream bike outside the Lygon Arms is definitely worth stopping off at, wonderful ice cream.

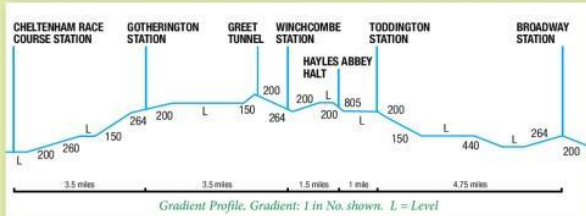


The coach took the train travellers off to the station and they boarded the train to Cheltenham. This is a truly wonderful experience, Sandra and I did it a few weeks before so stayed in Broadway, but the trains are well kept, and all the staff look the part of being in the wonderful steam era of the train. The train winds its way down through places like Toddington and Winchcombe to Cheltenham Racecourse. The views are spectacular, and everyone enjoyed themselves on the train part of the trip.

Those of us that stayed in Broadway caught the coach later on in time to drive down to Cheltenham where we re-united with the intrepid Steam Train travellers and then we all came back to Worcester to complete yet another wonderful outing organised by the St Johns Travel Company, sorry Events Team. Thanks for a wonderful day Tracey, Catherine and Sandra.

Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway

Cheltenham Race Course - Winchcombe - Toddington - Broadway



The line between Broadway in the north and Cheltenham Race Course in the south is over 14 miles long. There are stunning views of the Cotswolds to the south and east and the Malvern Hills to the west.

It passes through a 690 yard tunnel at Greet and over a 15 arch viaduct at Stanway.



Views over the fertile Vale of Evesham

Toddington Manor
Owned by the artist Damien Hirst

Toddington

River Isbourne
Said to be one of only two rivers in England which flow due north from their source

Greet Tunnel
690 yards, second longest tunnel on a British heritage railway

Greet

New Town

Stanway

Hayles Abbey
English Heritage NT

Winchcombe

Salter's Hill

Sudeley Hill

Sudeley Castle
Historic home of Catherine Parr, sixth wife of Henry VIII

Postlip

Winchcombe

Woodmancote

Nottingham Hill

Gotherington

Oxenton Hill

Dixon Hill

Prescott Hill
Speed hill climb motor sport and home of the Bugatti Owners' Club

Gretton

Winchcombe

Cleeve Hill

Cleeve Cloud
Highest point in the Cotswolds 330m (1083ft)

Belas Knap
Long barrow

Cleeve Common

Southam

Cheltenham

Cheltenham Race Course

Prestbury Park
Cheltenham Racecourse

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The Severn Vale and Avon Valley plains, the Malvern Hills and, on clear days, Hay Bluff at the northern end of the Welsh Black Mountains, are all visible from the railway.

Cheltenham
Elegant Regency spa town and regional shopping centre. Regular bus service to the town from the Race Course Park & Ride car park, which is 20 minutes walk from our station.

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