

CYCLING DISCOVERY MAP



Starting point: Bedford, Bedfordshire

Distance: 25 miles/40 km (or with short cut 20 miles/32 km)

Type of route: Day ride - moderate, circular; on roads, cycle paths and tracks

THE GREAT OUSE

This cycle ride starts from the peaceful setting of the Priory Country Park. From here the route follows the banks of the River Great Ouse into the market town of Bedford, where The Embankment is one of England's finest river settings. Then it's northwards into the Ouse Valley, past ancient limestone villages, over medieval river bridges and through stretches of wide open countryside. Along this route you can discover a working watermill, wander within a dragonfly nature reserve and see the 14th C. cross where John Bunyan (1628-1688) once preached.



Bromham

Essential information

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| Starting point: | Bedford - Priory Country Park. Located 1½ miles east of the town centre. Entrance off Barkers Lane, SP from the A428. |
| Alternative starting point: | Harrold-Odell Country Park. Located 3 miles north of the A428 Bedford to Northampton road. Start from 'I Harrold-Odell Country Park'. This would be a smaller circular loop, without link to Bedford (13 miles/21 km). |
| Car parking: | Bedford - Priory Country Park (free). Harrold-Odell Country Park (free). |
| Nearest railway station: | Bedford - St. Johns (1½ miles west of Priory Country Park); Midland (2 miles west of Priory Country Park). |
| Type of route: | Day ride - moderate, circular (with route linking to Bedford); on roads, cycle paths and tracks. |
| Summary of route: | Bedford (Priory Country Park) - The Embankment (Bedford) - Bedford Town Centre - Bromham - Oakley - Pavenham - Felmersham - Odell - Harrold-Odell Country Park - Carlton - Stevington - Bromham - Bedford Town Centre - The Embankment (Bedford) - Bedford (Priory Country Park). |
| Distance: | 25 miles/40 km. |
| Short cut: | From Pavenham, west along unclassified road to Stevington, 2¾ miles (5 km). Total route with short cut, 20 miles (32 km). |
| Terrain: | Gently rolling. Moderate climb between Carlton and Stevington. Lowest point - 108 feet (33 metres) between Bromham and Oakley. Highest point - 301 feet (92 metres) between Carlton and Stevington. |
| Cycle hire: | Bedford - Priory Marina Cycling Limited, Priory Marina, Barkers Lane (01234) 340090. |
| Cycle repair: | Bedford - Cycle King, 40-42 Greyfriars (01234) 351525; Michael's Cycles, 54-56 Midland Road (01234) 352937; Priory Marina Cycling Limited (see cycle hire above). |
| Ordnance Survey map area: | Landranger 153 - Bedford & Huntingdon. |
| National Cycle Network links: | Route 51. This ride follows the NCN from the Priory Country Park, west along The Embankment into Bedford Town Centre. |

Key to Symbols & Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|-----------------------|
| | Cycle Parking |
| | Places of Interest |
| | Refreshments |
| | Children Welcome |
| | Picnic Site |
| | Shop |
| | Toilets |
| | Tourist Information |
| | Caution/Take care |
| L | Left Turn |
| R | Right Turn |
| T-j | T-junction |
| SA | Straight Across/Ahead |
| X-roads | Cross roads |
| SP | Sign-posted |
| NS | Not Sign-posted |

Stevington



Points of Interest (listed as you would find them along the route)

Please note: within this map there is only room to list basic details regarding opening times. In this respect, if you are planning to visit any of the places of interest on this route, we advise you to telephone in advance to confirm exact opening days and times. Refreshment establishments listed on this map are just a small selection of those available. For further information, please contact the nearest Tourist Information Centre.

A Priory Country Park (Bedford) - 300 acres with lakes, riverside walks, bird-watching, marina and visitor centre. Canoe slalom course. Open all year. Admission free. (01234) 211182.

beside visitor centre.

Priory Marina Beefeater (01234) 352883.

beside visitor centre (also separate automatic toilet).

throughout park.

B The Embankment (Bedford) - one of England's finest river settings, with formal flower gardens, tree-lined walkways, bandstand and elegant suspension bridge.

Longholme Lake area.

throughout Embankment area.

C Bedford Town Centre - ancient county town, dating back to before Saxon times. The mound of the former Norman castle can be seen. Fine buildings and connections to the famous preacher and author John Bunyan. Market - Wed, Sat.

Allhallows; Lurke St.

Bedford Museum (Castle Lane) - displays of human and natural history of area, including lace making. Open all year. Admission free. (01234) 353323.

Cecil Higgins Art Gallery (Castle Lane) - Victorian mansion, originally home of the Higgins family and furnished in authentic style. Open all year. Admission free. (01234) 211222.

John Bunyan Museum and Bunyan Meeting Free Church (Mill Street) - personal effects and works of John Bunyan. Open Mar-Oct. Admission free. (01234) 213722.

St. Mary's Church (St. Mary's Street) - parts of the tower/south transept date from 11th C. Medieval coffin lids. Now archaeology centre.

St. Paul's Church (St. Paul's Square) - 14-15th C. but extensively restored in the 19th C. John Wesley preached from the pulpit in 1758. The statue of prison reformer and High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, John Howard (1726-90) stands outside the church.

St. Peter's Church (St. Peter's Street) - Saxon tower and Norman south door. John Bunyan's statue stands outside the church.

Wide selection throughout town.

Allhallows; Lurke Street; Riverside Square; St. Paul's Square; Silver Street.

Old Town Hall, St. Paul's Square (01234) 215226.

Open all year.

D Bromham - large stone-built village reached by a 13th C. medieval bridge, its 26 arches spanning the flood plain of the River Great Ouse.

Bromham Mill - restored 17th C. working watermill. Art gallery and craft sales. Open Apr-Oct. Admission free. (01234) 824330.

St. Owen's Church - restored in 1868. Gothic memorial to 12 year old Eva Trevor (died 1842), who is shown floating to heaven.

The Swan (01234) 823284.

at western end of bridge.

at western end of bridge.

E Oakley - market gardening village, once owned by the Dukes of Bedford. Many of the red brick houses of tile and slate are decorated with a coronet and letter B.

Oakley House - re-modelled by Henry Holland in 1795, for the fifth Duke as a hunting lodge. *Not open to the public.*

St. Mary's Church - mid 12th C. with fine north/south aisle painted screens.

The Bedford Arms (01234) 822280.

F Pavenham - pretty village set on a well-wooded river terrace, with limestone thatched houses and gabled farmsteads. Once noted for its rush-matting industry.

St. Peter's Church - splendid 13th C. church with uneven floors, Jacobean woodcarvings and fine green man corbel.

The Cock (01234) 822834.

G Felmersham - picturesque hilltop village with cream-coloured thatched houses, medieval bridge and 14th C. tithe barn.

St. Mary's Church - finest early English church in the county. Arcaded west front, massive central tower and 15th C. oak screen.

Felmersham Gravel Pits Nature Reserve - disused gravel workings, now nature reserve noted for its dragonflies. Open all year. Admission free. (01234) 364213.

The Sun Inn (01234) 781355.

H Odell - attractive farming village with brick/limestone houses. A country-style manor has been built on the mound of the former 11th C. castle.

All Saints Church - 15th C. with painted rood screen and memorial to Lt. Col. V.C. Richmond, designer of the ill-fated R101 airship.

The Bell (01234) 720254.

I Harrold-Odell Country Park - 150 acres with lakes and riverside. Visitor centre. Open all year. Admission free. (01234) 720016.

J Just off the route - Harrold (1/4 mile west of Harrold-Odell Country Park). Ancient village with plenty of stone and thatch. Tree-lined green with 18th C. butter cross and circular stone lock-up (c.1824). 13th C. pack bridge over river.

St. Peter's Church - 13th C. with ancient roof and Jacobean rood screen.

The Muntjac (01234) 721500.

Oakley Arms (01234) 720478.

K Carlton - stone-built houses line the narrow High Street.

Close by is Chellington, a deserted village burnt in the 15th C. to stop the plague spreading.

The Royal Oak (01234) 720441.

L Stevington - agricultural village with limestone houses and 14th C. medieval market cross, where John Bunyan once preached. In 'The Pilgrim's Progress' the cross is the point where Christian loses his burden.

St. Mary's Church - has Saxon origins, visible in base of tower. Carved bench ends and 'Holy Well', a spring whose waters reputedly never freeze or dry up.

Stevington Windmill (reached by footpath off Stevington to Bromham road) - 18th C. wooden post mill, fully restored in 1951 (re-restoration in 2004). The only fully complete windmill in Bedfordshire. Open all year. Admission free. Key from The Royal George pub. (01234) 824330.

The Red Lion (01234) 824138.

The Royal George (01234) 822184.

Harrold



ROUTE DIRECTIONS

STARTING POINT: Bedford (Priory Country Park).

A Priory Country Park (Bedford) - 300 acres with lakes. 🏡 ✖

1 With the Visitor Centre to your R, go SA so that you have the lake behind you. Turn L along the disused railway track (National Cycle Network - Route 51) towards Bedford.

2 When the surface suddenly improves, look for a gate on the R and go through this. Cross over the bridge, then turn L along the path. When you reach the main road, go under this using the subway, SP 'Town Centre'.

3 The subway emerges at a white bridge, turn L over this, then immediately R onto a path which has the river on one side and the boating lake on the other, SP 'Town Centre'. Continue westwards along The Embankment, over Boatslide Bridge, Boatslide Weir Bridge, Duckmill Weir Bridge, Rink Island Bridge and Chethams Bridge.

B The Embankment (Bedford) - gardens and parkland. 🗺️ 🏡

4 Go under the elegant Town Bridge (built 1813). The path then runs beside the main site of Bedford College.

C Bedford Town Centre - ancient county town. 🚲 🏡 ✖ 🗺️ 🗺️

5 Turn R onto Prebend Street, crossing over the river on the bridge. On the other side, turn immediately L to rejoin the cycle path beside the river. ⚠️

6 At the 4th bridge (Queens), turn R away from the river, along the cycle path, SP 'Queens Park'.

7 At the end of the path, turn R into Ford End Road to reach the roundabout. Take the 3rd exit, down Westbourne Road.

8 Turn L into Marlborough Road.

9 Turn L onto Winifred Road, then immediately R onto Westfield Road.

10 Bear R around the corner into Cutcliffe Place, then turn L into West Grove.

11 Turn L onto the cycle path beside the A428. Follow this to the 'Toucan crossing', where you cross over to join the cycle path on the other side. Remain on the path to Bromham.

12 Just before the roundabout, the path bears R away from the road. You emerge beside the road leading into Bromham. Follow the path beside the road, then over the bridge. ⚠️

D Bromham - stone-built village. 🏡 ✖ 🗺️ 🗺️

13 Turn R along Village Road, SP 'Oakley 2, Stevington 2 1/2'.



Oakley

14 Turn R, SP 'Oakley 1, Pavenham 4'. Follow the road down the hill and across the bridge. This was built in 1813 for the 8th Duke of Bedford. ⚠️

E Oakley - market gardening village. 🏡 ✖ 🗺️

15 Just after the church, turn L onto Church Lane, SP 'Village Centre only'. Follow the road through the village, bearing R around a corner into the High Street.

16 At the X-roads, turn L, SP 'Pavenham 2, Harrold 6'.

F Pavenham - once noted for its rush-matting. 🏡 ✖

17 Turn R onto Church Lane, SP 'Felmersham 1 1/4, Radwell 2'.



Stevington Windmill

Short cut (2 3/4 miles). Total route with short cut - 20 miles.

Continue SA at this junction (through Pavenham) for 2 3/4 miles to Stevington, SP 'Stevington 2 3/4, Carlton 2 3/4'. We recommend this short cut if you want to miss the moderate climb out of the village of Carlton (later on the main route).

Please now continue from 'L Stevington'.

G Felmersham - medieval bridge and 14th C. tithe barn. 🏡 ✖

18 Turn R (opposite The Sun Inn), SP 'Radwell 3 1/4'.

19 Turn L down the hill towards the church, SP 'Sharnbrook 1 3/4, Odell 2 1/4'.

20 Turn L, SP 'Odell 1 1/2, Harrold 3'.

H Odell - attractive farming village. 🏡 ✖

21 Turn L (beside The Bell pub) along Horsefair Lane. At the end of the lane (1/4 mile) you join the bridle path through the Harrold-Odell Country Park.

I Harrold-Odell Country Park - 150 acres with lakes. 🏡

22 At the entrance to the Harrold-Odell Country Park, turn L to reach the traffic lights. Cross straight over the river bridge. You may prefer to dismount from your cycle and walk across the bridge using the pavement. ⚠️

J Just off the route - Harrold (turn R at the country park entrance, then next L into village). 18th C. butter cross and circular lock-up. 🏡 ✖ 🗺️

K Carlton - stone-built houses. ✖ 🗺️

23 Turn R, SP 'Stevington 1 3/4, Bromham 4'.

L Stevington - 14th C. medieval market cross. 🏡 ✖

24 Remain on the road back to Bromham.

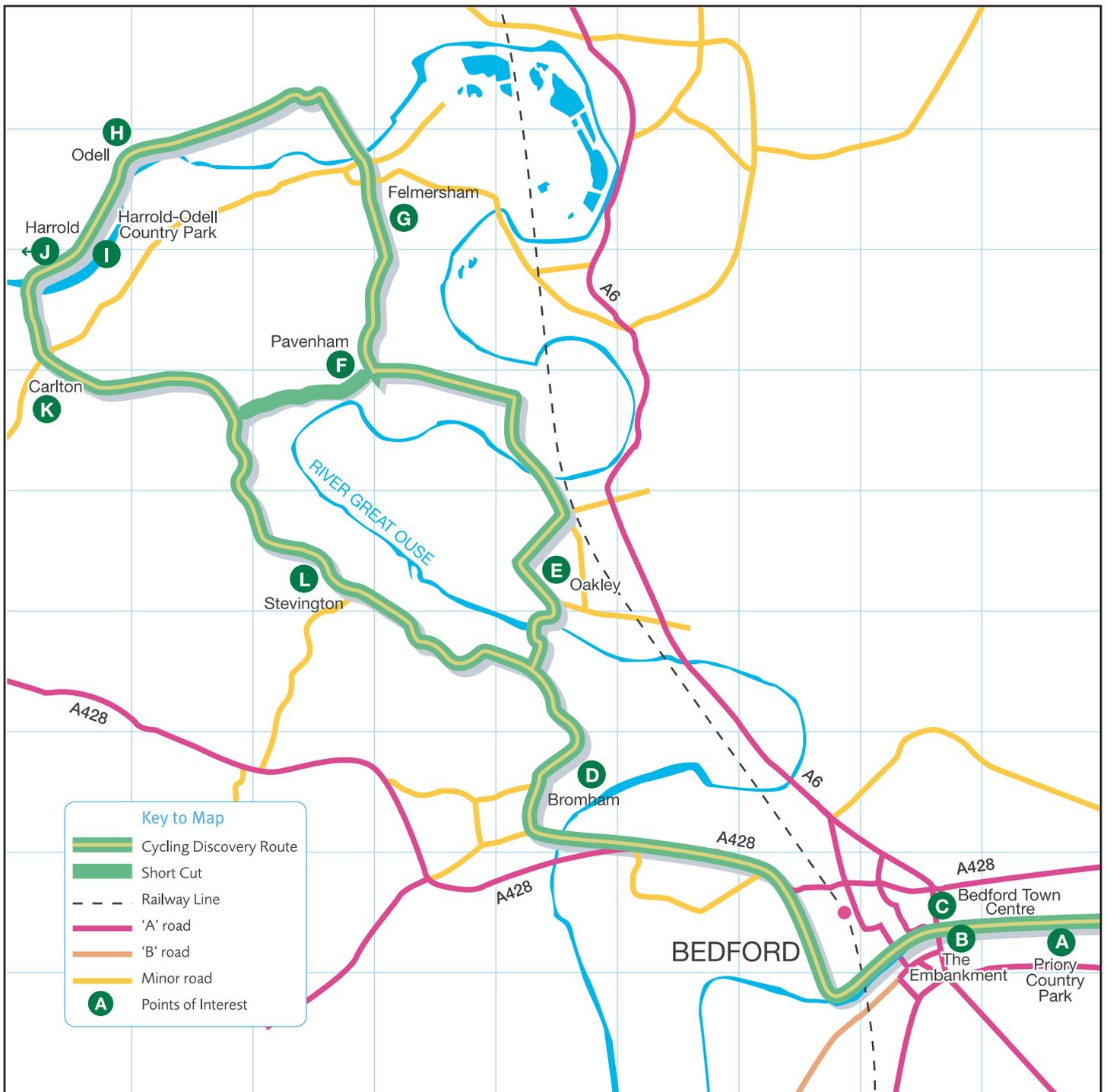
25 At the T-j, turn L, SP 'Bedford and Kempston'.

Now retrace your route back to the Priory Country Park (Directions 1-12 in reverse).

Go over the medieval bridge and rejoin the cycle path back to Bedford. After 1 3/4 miles, cross over the A428 using the 'Toucan crossing', then take the next R into West Grove. When you reach the T-j, turn R into Cutcliffe Road. Follow the road around the corner into Westfield Road. At the next T-j with Winifred Road, turn L, then immediately R into Marlborough Road. After passing the school, turn R into Westbourne Road.

At the roundabout, turn R onto Ford End Road. Then almost immediately turn L along the cycle path to return to Queens Bridge. Turn L to follow the path alongside the river, passing under two bridges. When you reach Prebend Street, turn R to cross over the river on the bridge. On the other side, turn L back onto the river-path for 1 mile.

Just before the Newnham road bridge, bear L over a little white bridge, then turn R through the subway under the road. Follow the path behind the Aspects Leisure Centre. After about a 1/4 mile, bear R over the river bridge, through the gate, then L along the disused railway track (National Cycle Network - Route 51) back to the Priory Country Park.



The Map shown in this route provides just a general outline - In this respect, we recommend that you purchase the Ordnance Survey Landranger Map which covers the area. Ordnance Survey map area: Landranger 153 - Bedford & Huntingdon. 'Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO ©Crown copyright (2006). All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100017282'.

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