

A SUMMARY OF PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

The ride in this leaflet is based on tarmac roads. Along the route you will pass many Rights of Way, signposted from the road. If you do deviate from the ride route in this leaflet please observe the following:

- Byways open to all traffic (BOAT) are open to cyclists, walkers and motor vehicles
- Roads used as public paths (RUPOP) are open to cyclists, horses, walkers and possibly motor vehicles
- Bridleways are open to walkers, horses and cyclists
- Footpaths are open to walkers only

Remember you cannot legally cycle on a footpath. On other Rights of Way it is good practice to give others warning of your approach e.g. a bell or spoken warning. In addition you have to give way to walkers and horse riders. A horse cannot recognise a bicycle and may view cyclists as a threat. The horse can be startled thus endangering both horserider and cyclist.

OTHER CYCLE RIDES

In addition to this ride there are many other similar circular rides across Hertfordshire. For more details of other leaflets please contact the Countryside Management Service on (01727 848168). If you have enjoyed this ride why not plan your own using an Ordnance Survey 'Pathfinder' or Landranger map (No.166) its a great way of visiting the countryside.

THE COUNTRYSIDE MANAGEMENT SERVICE

The Countryside Management Service works throughout Hertfordshire and London to promote and enhance the enjoyment of the countryside. We provide practical assistance from pond clearance to woodland work and we offer grant aid and advice from tree and hedge planting to pond restoration. We increase opportunities for informal recreation including self-guided trails and guided walks. The service is sponsored by Hertfordshire County Council, District and Borough Councils. For further information please contact;

Countryside Management Service
CMS Building, Beech Farm, Coopers Green Lane
St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL4 9HW
Tel: (01727) 848168

PARTNERS

This cycle ride and leaflet has been produced with the support of: Hertfordshire County Council's Environment Department, Welwyn Hatfield District Council and with the kind assistance of the Cyclists' Touring Club, Hertfordshire Wheelers and local parish and town councils.

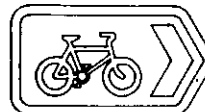
ROUTE DESCRIPTION

This is one of a series of countryside cycle rides starting in towns and large villages across Hertfordshire.

This ride starts in Welham Green where car parking may be found in the village. Leaving Welham Green, the ride will take you towards the open countryside. **Take particular care when crossing the Great North Road (A1000) at Bell Bar as this road is busy at times.** Follow the route until you arrive at the junction between Grubbs Lane and Kentish Lane (B158). A footway has been constructed to allow you to dismount, walk along the side of the route and then cross the B158 by foot at the point of best visibility before rejoining the route on Woodfield Lane. Cycle along Woodfield Lane until you reach the junction for Cucumber Lane. **Take care along this road as it is narrow with steep sides and car drivers may not see you coming.** Continue along Cucumber Lane until you reach the junction with the Kentish Lane (B158) again taking care turning right. A short up hill stretch will bring you to the village of Essendon. Leaving Essendon you are greeted with a steep downhill stretch. **Remember always test your brakes at the top of any hill.** Continue on the route along West End Lane following the undulating road, at places a good view of the surrounding countryside may be achieved. At Wildhill take a right hand turn along Woodside Lane and follow the route back to the crossing of the Great North Road (A1000) taking care on crossing as before. Return to Welham Green using the same route as you used when you began your ride.

WAYMARKING

Signs like this on the right are positioned to guide you round the route in an anti-clockwise direction. This will make the majority of the turns left turns, this means your journey will be a little safer.



SAFETY

- This is not an off road route, you will meet cars and other vehicles on the road during your trip.
- Wear a safety helmet
- Ensure your bike is safe to ride
- After dark you are required by law to display working lights. We recommend you cycle this route in daylight
- Wear brightly coloured clothes with reflective material
- Treat pedestrians and horses with the respect you expect to get from car drivers
- Get a bell and warn others of your approach
- Always ride in single file on roads which are narrow or busy, and never more than two abreast
- Always follow the advice for cyclists given in the Highway Code.

A Circular Recreational Cycle Ride from Welham Green, visiting Essendon, West End and Wildhill



Cycle Hertfordshire's Countryside



POINTS OF INTEREST

Refreshments

There are a selection of pubs to be found along the route. Alternatively why not take a picnic and enjoy a meal in the open air. For further information about the local area visit either the Campus West Information Centre, in Welwyn Garden City or the library in Hatfield.

Welham Green

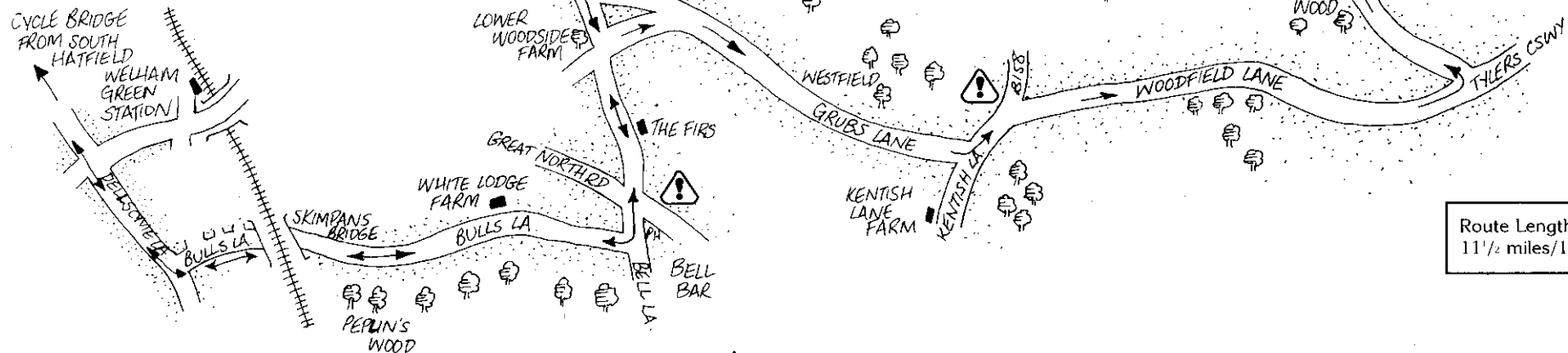
The start of this route is in Welham Green. With its assortment of busy industries and shops it is truly a modern village. However, the scene that greeted balloonist Vincenzo Lunardi in 1784 would have been much more pastoral. Lunardi holds the distinction of completing the first balloon flight outside France. Whilst on his epic journey from Moorfields in London accompanied by a dog and a cat, Lunardi found it necessary to briefly 'touch down' and let off the cat who had become airsick. Although Lunardi then continued with his journey, the cat was left in the capable hands of a local girl from the village. To commemorate Lunardi's ascent, a stone has been placed at the junction, known as 'balloon corner' between Dellsome Lane, Parsonage Lane and Huggins Lane where Lunardi is believed to have briefly settled.

Hidden Landscape

There are a number of archeological features that are hidden in the landscape along the cycle route. Ancient moated earthworks are to be found on farmland and coins and shards of Roman tile have also been found in the past.

Little Berkhamsted

An attractive detour to the route is to visit the village of Little Berkhamsted. The village is pre Norman in origin and the name is derived from 'Beork' meaning birch tree and 'Hamstede' meaning a homestead.



Route Length:
11 1/2 miles / 18.5km

Essendon

The Anglo Saxon chief Wulsin is said to have given the village to the monks of St Albans in the 10th Century. However, there is no mention of the village until its lands were reverted to the Crown in the 13th Century. This is probably as the village was included with the manor of Bayford during the survey of the Domesday Book.

Hedgerows and Coppice

As you travel along the cycle route you may notice coppiced woodland along the side of the road. Coppicing was once an important method of managing Hertfordshire's woodlands and provided a sustainable source of timber that was vital to the rural economy of the county. A coppiced tree may be recognised by a tree stump that appears to have grown a number of trunks, this is caused by felling the tree and then allowing new shoots to regrow from the cut stump. The hedgerows along the route provide an important refuge for wildlife including birds and small mammals.

Hedgerows are often dubbed 'wildlife motorways' as they provide a route for animals to travel around the countryside to woodlands and meadows.