

16 Southill

A lovely circular ride through some of Bedfordshire's prettiest countryside and villages, all on quiet roads. The ride connects with other rides in this, the Greensand country. If you want more extensive rides see Connections below, which also explains how you can reach this ride by cycling out from Bedford. Alternatively you can park at Old Warden Church car park and start from there. Before you leave the car park consult the notice boards for information about the locality and have a look in the church.

6 Miles EASY

PUBS

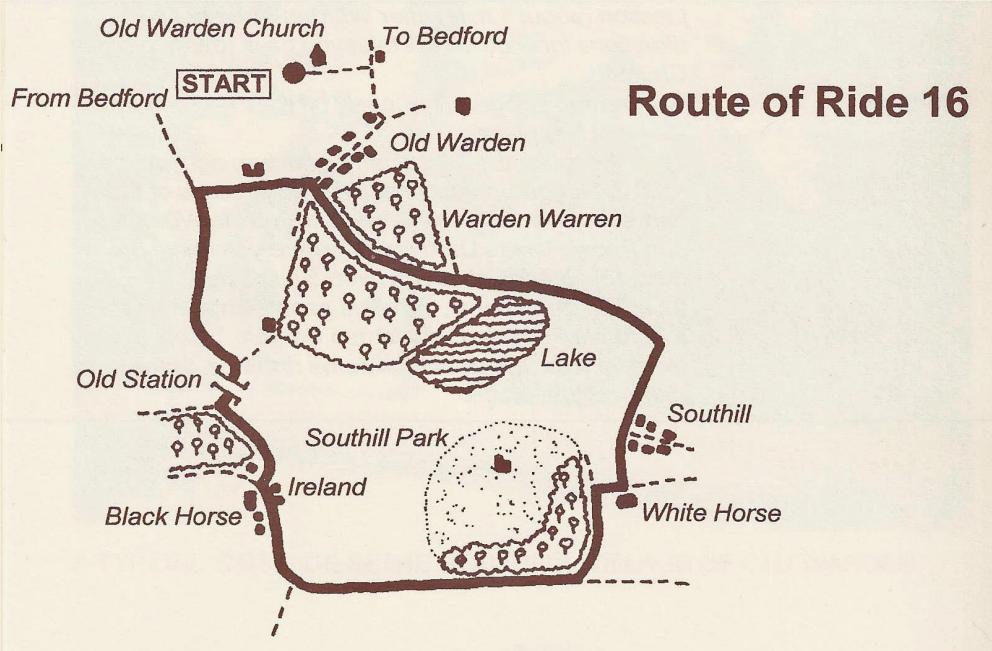
Hare & Hounds, Old Warden
Black Horse, Ireland
White Horse, Southill

TEAS & SNACKS

Southill Village Stores & Tea Room

PICNIC SITES

Old Warden Church Car Pk.
Shuttleworth Museum
Swiss Gardens



Our description starts from the car park at Old Warden Church. This ride can easily be reached from Bedford using the on-road sections of Ride 18.

A SHORT CIRCULAR RIDE STARTING AT OLD WARDEN CHURCH

- # Turn right at the bottom of the lane and go through Old Warden village, ignoring the left turn to Southill as the road bears right. At the top of the hill swing left. The ride from Priory Park, Bedford comes in from the right here (see Ride 18).

Enjoy the downhill run, a bonus early in the ride, which will help you to the old railway station.

- # Turn left immediately after the old railway bridge (signposted for Southill).

As you go up the hill look out for a monument in a clearing in the wood on the right. It was erected in 1864 to William Henry Whitbread for his "Zeal and energy in promoting railways through the County of Bedford". The bridge you have just come under carried the second railway into Bedford in 1857 and, for a brief period, this was the main line to London.

- # At the top of the hill turn left into the hamlet of Ireland. See Ride 14 for an explanation of the name. If you turn right here you can join the Rowney Warren Circular (Ride 14) and extend your ride by 5 miles.

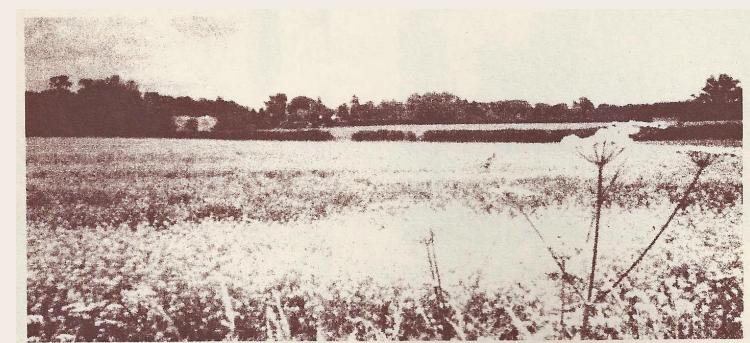
- # Beyond the Black Horse turn left to Southill.

This junction is where those taking the Rowney Warren Circular will rejoin the ride. Southill Park, the family home of the Whitbread's is on your left.

- # Turn left at the next junction into Southill and then, just after swinging right, go left again, with the White Horse on your right. Go straight on at the next junction (signposted Old Warden).

- # Follow this road past the Southill Park Lake, just visible on the left. *This is the home of one of only two heronries in Bedfordshire.*

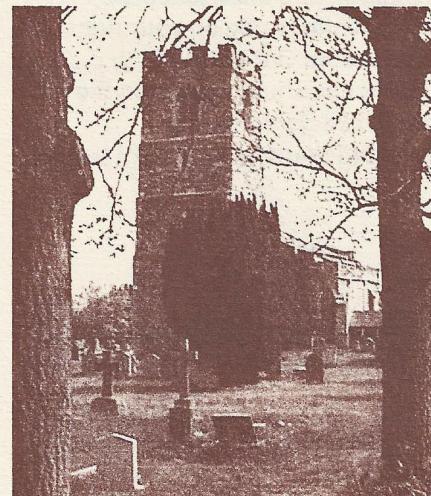
- # Go through more woods to return to Old Warden via a right turn at the T-junction.



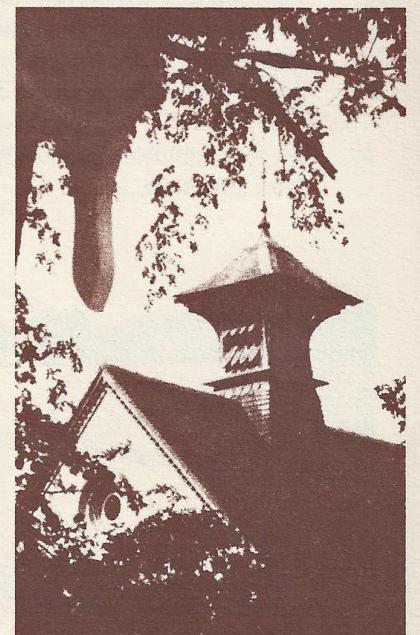
EARLY SUMMER SCENE NEAR OLD WARDEN



HARE AND HOUNDS PUB AT THE CENTRE OF OLD WARDEN



OLD WARDEN CHURCH



SPIRE ON OLD SCHOOL, OLD WARDEN

At the edge of the village swing left and then turn left back up the hill to the Church car park,

CONNECTIONS

From Bedford *Follow the directions in Ride 18 from Priory Country Park (all on-road). It is 7 miles to where this joins the ride at the top of the hill just out of Old Warden. People can return to Bedford by the same route but we suggest following Ride 15 from Old Warden Church to Cardington and back to Priory Park, by turning right at the Green and picking up directions in Ride 3 (which comes in from the left at the next junction. It is just over 8 miles back to Bedford this way.*

Rides 14 *Rowney Warren. Turn right at the top of the hill after the old railway bridge and just before Ireland. This will add 5 miles to the ride. Over 2 miles of it are off-road but on a good easy to ride surface. You rejoin this ride by turning right just before Ireland (signposted Southill).*

Ride 15 *Old Warden Circular. If you are still feeling energetic when you get back to the church, why not carry straight on and do a figure of 8 by completing the Old Warden Circular - an additional 12 miles through equally lovely parts of the Greensand Country. Or if that is too daunting just pop down the road to the Swiss Garden, Shuttleworth Museum, etc (see Ride 15 for details).*



THE BLACKHORSE AT IRELAND