

18 Greensand Ridge

This longer circular ride starts from Priory Country Park and provides the on-road connections from Bedford to the other rides in the Greensand Country. It goes out through Cardington to the top of the Greensand Ridge at Warden Tunnel. It follows the ridge on bridleways and minor roads nearly as far as Moggerhanger before returning on tracks and side roads via Willington to Priory Park. It will appeal to off-road enthusiasts but is practical for other riders. It gives fine view as it follows the crest of the ridge and connects with several other rides, some with a significant off-road component (see Connections below).

**17 Miles
HARDER**

PUBS

Kings Arms, Cardington
The Crown, Northill
The Crown, Willington

TEAS & SNACKS

Garden Centre, Willington
Danish Camp, Willington
Shuttleworth Museum
Moggerhanger Tea Rooms

PICNIC SITES

Priory Country Park
Ickwell Green
Cardington Green
Swiss Gardens

Our description starts at the car park in Priory Country Park, Bedford.

1. PRIORY PARK TO WARDEN TUNNEL

- # From the car park in Priory Park go to the lakeside and turn left. Follow the way-marking to Cardington Lock, over two bridges, and go out of the park just beyond the lock.
- # Turn right at the junction with Stannard Way, over the first roundabout and just before the next one cross over to the right and join the path round the roundabout, using the toucan to cross Cardington Road, and turn left. Ride 15 joins from the right.

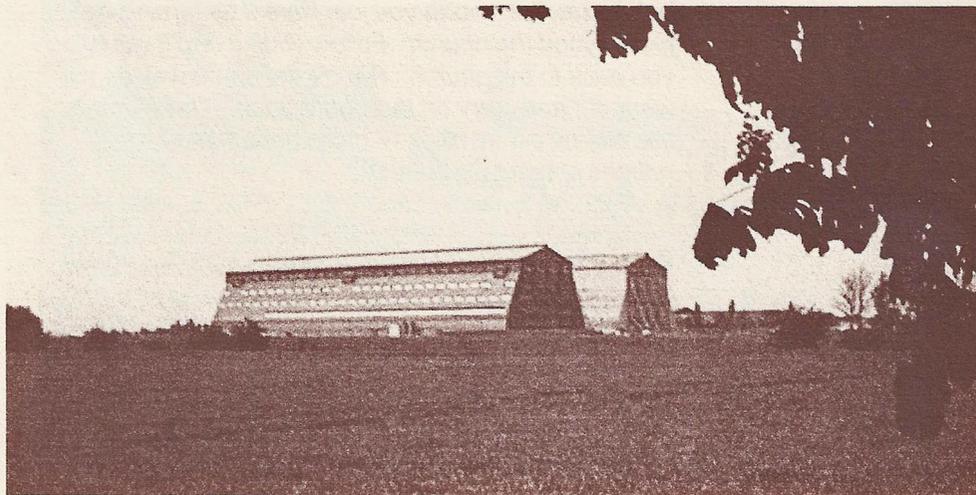
Take care at all the crossings.

- # Go under the bridge, across the access to the flyover and turn right into the next road.

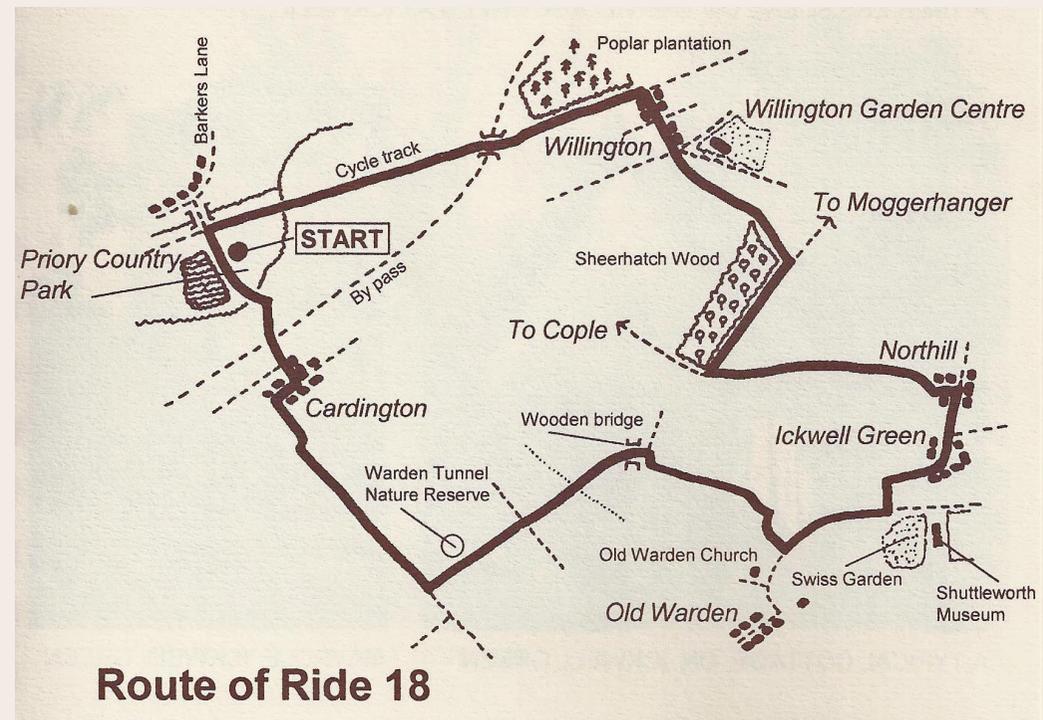
This takes you to Cardington but you can turn first right before Cardington to join Ride 13 (see Connections below).

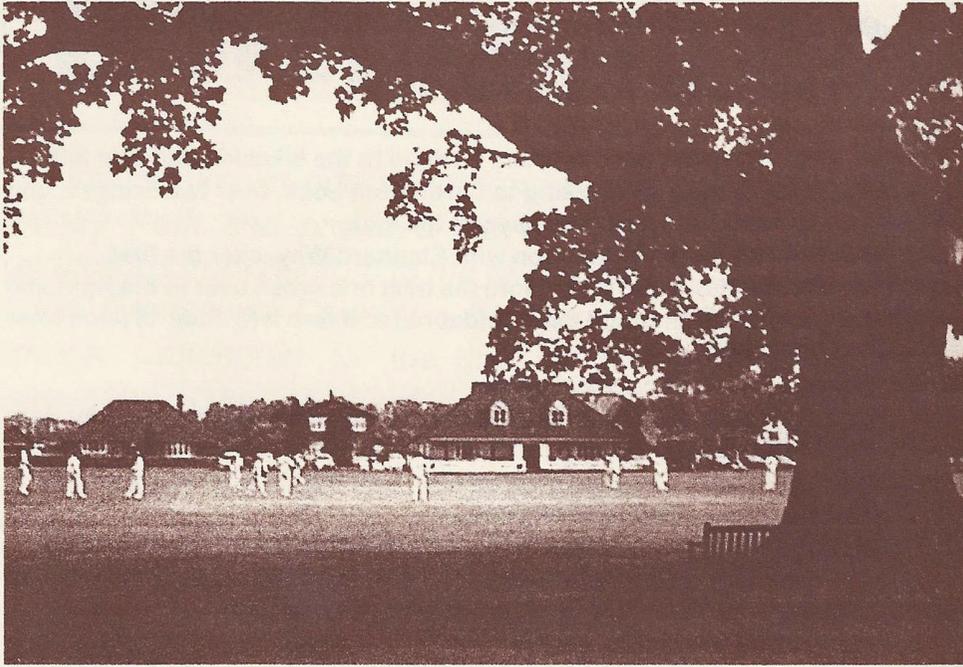
- # In Cardington go right at the far side of the Green towards Old Warden. Follow this road for about 3 miles and at the top of the hill (*no shame in walking*) turn left onto the bridleway.

Those using this ride to get from Bedford to Rides 14, 15 or 16 should keep straight on down the road (see Connections).



THE AIRSHIP HANGERS AT CARDINGTON

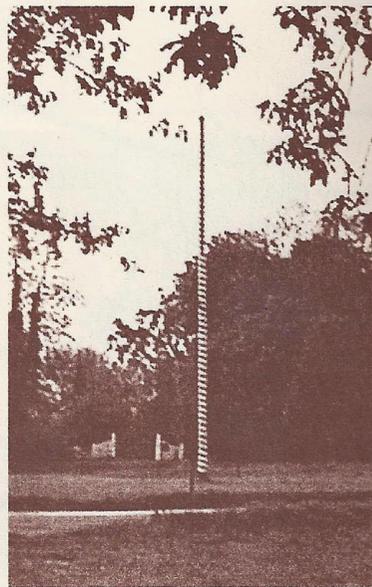




A TIMELESS SCENE ON THE VILLAGE GREEN AT ICKWELL



A TYPICAL COTTAGE, ON ICKWELL GREEN



MAYPOLE, ICKWELL GREEN

2. WARDEN TUNNEL TO WILLINGTON

You are now on the Greensand Ridge Walk which runs from Leighton Buzzard to Gamlingay. We will follow its distinctive GRW waymarking along the crest of the ridge for the next mile or so. The open airy views are very impressive, even if you are only 250 feet above sea level! If you wish to visit the local Wildlife Trust's Warden Tunnel Nature Reserve, on your left just after the start, please leave your bikes at the entrance.

At the end of the gravelly track continue on the GRW, right and left over another bridleway.

The next half mile or so can be soft in wet conditions but is OK in the dry.

Follow the GRW over a crossing footpath and it will bring you to a hedge where it bears right over a wooden bridge. On the far side of the bridge go right, on the non-GRW bridleway.

Mudlarks on mountain bikes may like to go left after the bridge following the GRW to Sheerhatch Wood but it is very muddy and churned up by horses so we do not recommend it. This takes 3.5 miles off the prescribed route, which continues (right from the bridge) as follows:-

After a short distance you emerge from the trees and, keeping Sweetbrier Farmhouse on your right, go straight on down the gravelly track.



THE VILLAGE POND AT NORTHILL

Follow the gravel track onto a concrete section down to the public road and turn left. Ride 15 joins from the right.

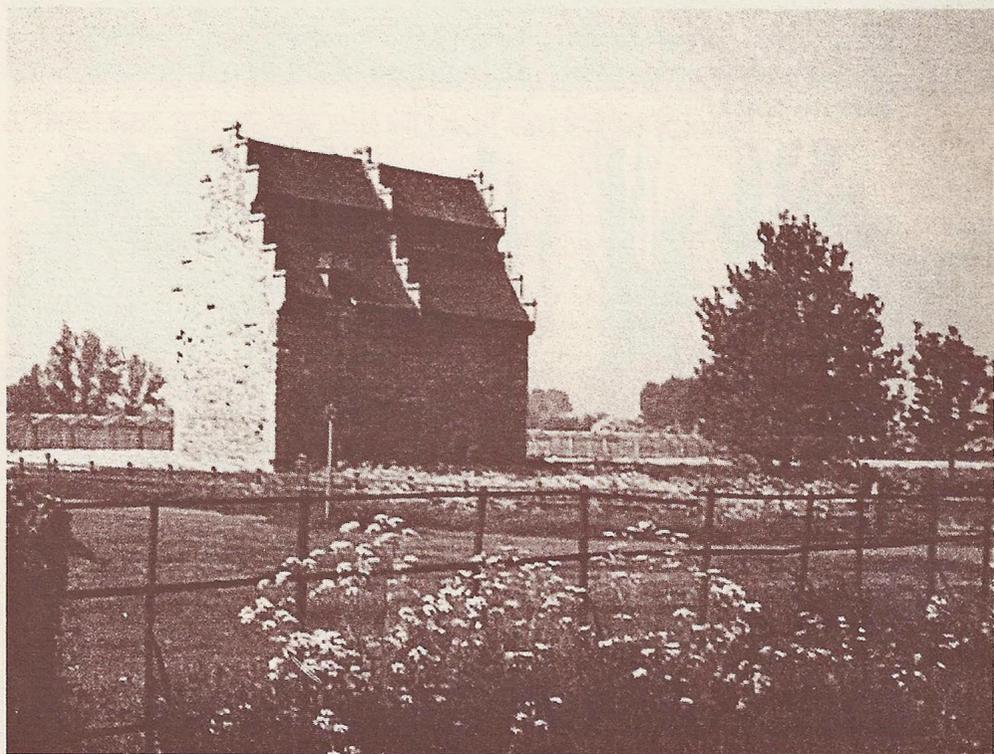
Old Warden with pub, is half a mile or so to the right. This also takes you (next right) to the start of Ride 16 and the end of Ride 15.

Go left again to Ickwell Green and Northill at the next junction.

If you wish to visit Swiss Gardens and/or Shuttleworth Museum carry straight on for quarter of a mile at the junction. Ickwell Green is a pleasant spot to stop with its Green and Maypole. The birthplace of Thomas Tompion, famous royal clock maker, is here, a short distance up the road to Caldecote.

In Northill turn left by the church on the road to Cople. At the top of the hill, about a mile further on, turn right along the road to Moggerhanger by the edge of Sheerhatch Wood (Ride 15 continues straight on into Cople).

The mudlarks should emerge from the left and simply need to cross over onto the Moggerhanger road. Buzzards have been seen here so keep your eyes open.



DOVECOTE AND STABLES AT WILLINGTON

At the end of the wood turn left onto another bridleway.

Although not surfaced this is not too difficult and it continues as a hardened track from the crest of the ridge (short distance) down to the lane to Willington. Take great care crossing the main road into Station Road.

At the bottom of Station Road go straight ahead, kinking right into Chapel Lane and left onto the track. Go left (in the old station yard) onto the cycle track back to Priory Park.

If you want a longer way back you can join Ride 17 by turning right onto the cycle track (see Connections).

If you want to visit the ancient dovecote and stables (now in the care of the National Trust) turn left at the junction where the track turns right over the brook.

3. WILLINGTON TO PRIORY PARK

The route back to Priory Park is very obvious; straight on turning left immediately after the bridge over the by-pass.

CONNECTIONS

From Bedford *Use Ride 1 to get to Priory Park. All the other town rides connect to Ride 1.*

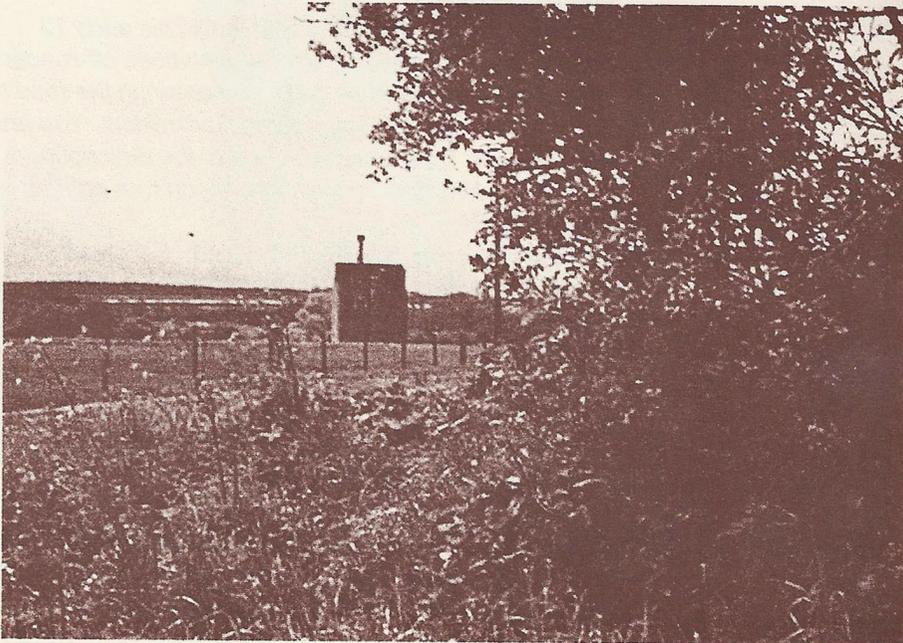
Ride 13 *Elstow, Haynes, Rowney Warren. This adds 12 miles but will appeal to the more ambitious off-roader. After going under the by-pass and entering the road to Cardington, take the first right to Harrowden. You are now on ride 13, towards the end of the description. Follow it to Warden Tunnel, where you turn right to rejoin this ride.*

Ride 14 *Rowney Warren, Shefford, Ireland. Follow the directions for this ride to Warden tunnel and keep straight on down the road. Turn right at the next junction into a lane signposted for Haynes. Turn right at the next junction and follow this road to the A600 crossroads. Cross with care and you are at the start of Ride 14. It is 8 miles from Priory Park to the start. See Ride 14 connections for directions on ways of returning.*

Ride 15 *Old Warden Circular. You join this ride at Cardington, 2 miles from Priory Park. By following its directions you will return to Cardington all on-road. An alternative way to Old Warden is to use the off-road section from Old Warden Tunnel (see section 2 above).*



GATEHOUSE TO SOUTHILL PARK - RIDE 16



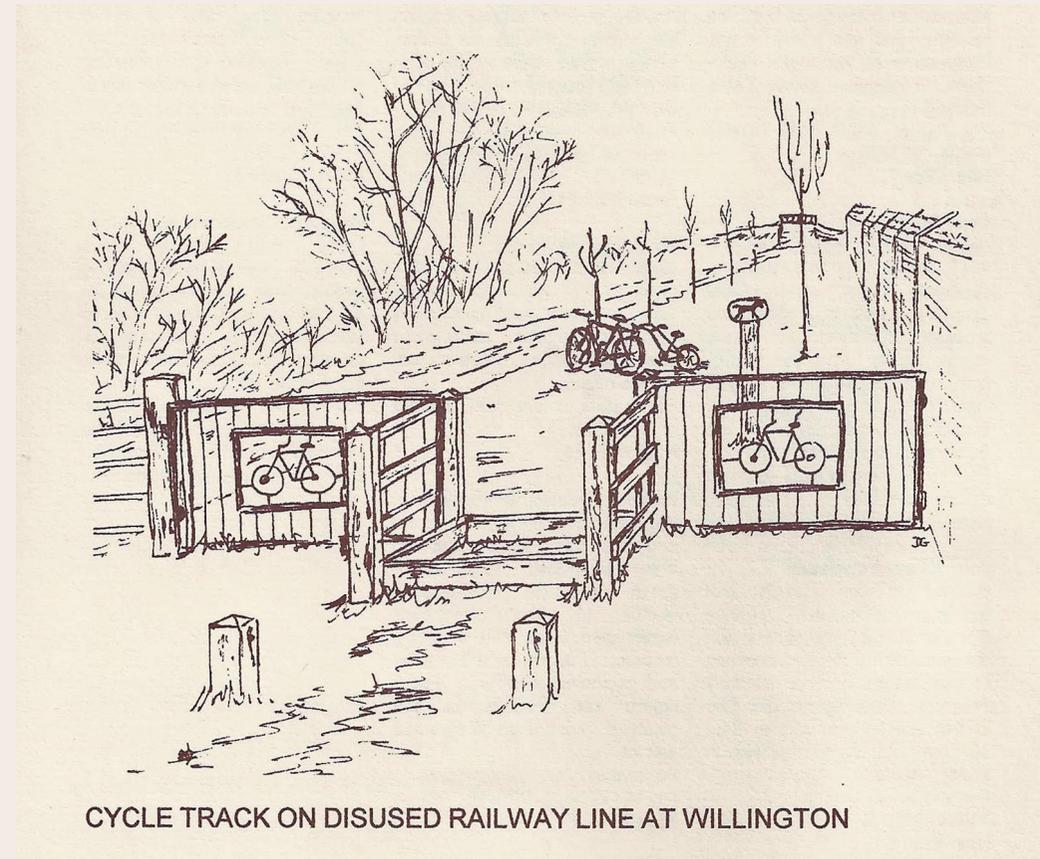
WARDEN ABBEY - RIDE 15

Ride 16

Southill, Old Warden. *Follow the directions for this ride to Warden Tunnel and keep straight on down the road. Ignore the first right turn (to Haynes), but at the next junction go right (virtually straight on). This is 7 miles from Priory Park and puts you on Ride 16 as it comes out of Old Warden heading for the old railway station. See Ride 16 connections for ways of returning to Bedford. An alternative way to the start of Ride 16 is to use the off-road section from Old Warden Tunnel (see section 2 above).*

Ride 17

Great Barford and Wilden. *This adds 11 miles, about 4 of which are off-road. You join it by turning right in the old station yard at Willington, onto the track. You rejoin this ride (18) on the far side of the old Willington poplar plantation, turning right onto the track to Priory Park.*



CYCLE TRACK ON DISUSED RAILWAY LINE AT WILLINGTON