



Wellesbourne Cycling Guide

Ride 5 - Tysoe & The Vale of Red Horse (29 miles)

The Route

Take Ettington Road south west and after 0.25 mile turn left into Walton Road and continue straight on for 4 miles. Cross over the 'Fosse Way' and shortly after take the right fork where the road splits. After 1 mile you enter the village of Pillerton Priors where you turn right at the village hall.

Cycle up to the T-junction with the Banbury Road (A422) and turn right. In the village take the next left signposted Halford and Stow and turn immediately left into the small lane (not signposted). After 0.75 mile at a cross roads turn left. Continue for 2.25 miles passing through Whatcote and then entering Oxhill. In Oxhill village take the right turn where it is signposted 'Oxhill Village Only' and cycle through the village centre passing The Peacock on your right and then turning left after the church on the road to Tysoe.

2.25 miles from Oxhill you reach Tysoe and a T-Junction where you turn left. Continue through the village and 0.5 mile after the church the road has a sharp left hand bend, however take the lane on the right as if you were going straight on, signposted Radway. Continue pass the natural burial ground until you reach the A422 Banbury Road (where this road is at the foot of Sun Rising Hill) where you turn left and then right into the lane to Radway.

Continue for 1.75 miles along this lane and when you get to Radway village turn left into Langdon Lane opposite the bus shelter. At 1 mile there is T-junction with the B4086 (the Banbury to Kington Road) where you turn left and head towards Kington. In Kington turn left at The Swan Hotel and then immediately left into Bridge Street opposite the church. Follow this road for 2.5 miles through Little Kington and Butlers Marston to Pillerton Hersey where you turn right at the war memorial. Follow this road for 1 mile where you meet the fork in the road again and then the 'Fosse Way'. Cross back over the 'Fosse Way' and continue back towards Wellesbourne. After 1.5 miles turn right when you see the stone gate pillars (signposted Walton Hall and Hotel) and enter the grounds of Walton Hall. When you enter the hall grounds you will first go on a stone bridge over the lake and then you must keep left and follow the road around a large lawn. Once you are on the tree lined 'Jubilee Drive' follow it for 1.5 miles where you turn left into the Kington Road at a T-junction. Continue for 0.5 mile into Wellesbourne and when in the village turn left into Bridge Street (after the pedestrian crossing) and a further 0.25 mile brings you back to Chestnut Square

If you fancy something a little more challenging, beyond this route there are five notable routes onto the Edge Hill escarpment, three of which are suitable for cycling up (they all link up with the road that runs along the top of Edge Hill):

- Tysoe Hill, accessible from Tysoe village, a short steep ascent, total just under 1 mile.
- Lady Elizabeth's Hill, a 2 mile climb from Tysoe which gets steeper as you get towards the summit.
- Compton Wyngates Hill, again a 2 mile climb with a dip in the middle, the road gets steeper towards each summit.

The other two routes are suitable for descending only:

- Sunrising Hill on the A422 with its notable hairpin bend.
- Edgehill on the B4086 after Edgehill village.

Topography

A steep climb, 4 miles from Wellesbourne takes you out of the Dene Valley and up and over the 'Fosse Way'. 0.5 mile later there is a steady climb up into Pillerton Priors. Otherwise the route is gently graded with some descending on the return.

Advisory

A hill start is needed to cross the 'Fosse Way', traffic on this road travels fast so less experienced riders should consider dismounting and walking across.

If you are considering the many options onto the Edge Hill escarpment all the climbs are steep, the recommended ascent is Lady Elizabeth as the route is quiet and offers extensive views. The Edgehill road is not recommended as an ascent, not just for its steepness but it is also a busy road and extensive tree cover limits visibility. Likewise care should be taken descending this route as tree cover harbours slippery conditions in Autumn and Winter ice persists longer into the day than elsewhere.

Be careful when crossing The Fosse Way and when turning onto the A422 Banbury Road particularly between Tysoe and Radway as traffic can travel fast down Sun Rising Hill. There are two railway level crossings on the B4086, care should be taken going over these.

Points of Interest:

- Jurassic ironstone escarpment of Edge Hill flanking the south eastern side of the 'Vale of Red Horse'.
- Memorial to the English civil war battle site of 23 October 1642.
- The charismatic structure of the Castle Inn on the top of the scarp slope built in 1742.
- Attractive stone churches of Kineton, Oxhill, Tysoe and Radway.
- Stone cross war memorial in Butlers Marston.
- Little Kineton village and its large green and duck pond.
- Examples of 'ridge and furrow' encapsulated in the pasture.
- Kineton village centre, market square and St Peter's church.
- The historic St John's castle mound in Kineton.
- Bridges over and under the long disused Stratford Midland Junction Railway.

Shorter Options

- Continue straight on in Oxhill, cross over the A422 Banbury Road and carry on all the way to Little Kineton where you turn left at the village green and pick up the route again.
- Continue through Kineton on Southam Street for approximately 0.25 mile and turn left into Lighthorne Road (no signpost). At 2.5 miles cross over the 'Fosse Way' and continue back to Wellesbourne through Moreton Paddox). To the west of the Lighthorne Road you will see the parkland of Compton Verney and to the east evidence of the old Gaydon airfield, once home of the V-bomber.

Edge Hill forms part of a Jurassic ironstone escarpment stretching from Leicestershire to the Cotswolds. The section from Warmington to Upper Brailes forms the southern edge of the 'Vale of Red Horse'. The name derives from a red horse which was once carved into

the hillside above Radway village (no longer in existence), the redness coming from the colour of the stone. The village gets its name from the stone, the 'red way' and the parish of the area is known to this day as 'The Vale of Red Horse'.

23 October 1642 was the date of the English civil war battle and it is understood the site of the main battle was on the site of what is now Kineton military base, however there is a memorial to the fallen on the west side of the B4086 road between the two railway level crossings.

Up in Edgehill village there is The Castle Inn built in 1742 at the centenary of the battle at the spot where King Charles is alleged to have raised his standard before the two sides clashed. The Round Tower was intended to replicate that at Warwick Castle and you also get a good view of it down below between on the approach to and Radway.

Edge Hill is blessed with a number of roads all suitable for cycling and all with their own characteristics. Amongst the options is the ascent of the interestingly named Lady Elizabeth's hill. As the road twists and turns look out for the ruin of the windmill on the adjacent Windmill Hill. From the summit there are extensive views of the surrounding hills including Meon Hill at the head of the Cotwolds and the distant Malverns. To the east there are the intriguing small hills of Epwell and Shenlow sticking out above the escarpment. These are reminders of a post glacial past when this scarp restrained melt waters from the north before they burst through and moulded the Oxfordshire landscape behind. Other significant reminders of this episode include the Burton Dassett and Fenny Compton 'Gaps', now assisting the routes of the M40 and railway.

'Lady Elizabeth's Hill' is an odd name, its origin we do not know but perhaps something to do with Compton Wyngates House, home to the Marquess of Northampton the house of which is just visible from the minor road of the same name immediately to the west of Lady Elizabeth's Hill, this road being as equally steep. As you steadily climb this route keep your eyes looking out for the peculiar 'Compton Pike' folly to your right. From the road it resembles a distant church spire and indeed does resemble that of the nearby Winderton church.

If you make it up onto Edge Hill escarpment you will pass into the county of Oxfordshire. If you are lucky you may spot a Red Kite bird of prey which become more common as you progress further south.

In addition to Kineton, Oxhill, Tysoe and Radway are all blessed with attractive stone churches all adjacent to the roads you cycle on.

Refreshments

Tysoe Village Store Tea Room
Oxhill Horse Sanctuary
The Peacock, Oxhill
National Herb Centre, Banbury Road, Warmington
The Coffee Stop and Sandwich Deli in Kineton
Occasional farmers market in Kineton
The Swan and Shukurs Restaurant in Kineton