

## Be Safe

To enjoy your bicycle ride to the full, please follow our safe cycling code:-

- 1 Wear **bright clothing**; it makes you more visible to motorists.
- 2 Signal clearly to let other cyclists, pedestrians and motorists know your intention. **Be Aware and Be Alert.**
- 3 Wear a **helmet** to help protect you against head injury.
- 4 Is your bike safe? - Check the **brakes, wheels, tyres** and **lights**. If in doubt, consult a bicycle mechanic.
- 5 Carry a **lock, tool kit, puncture repair kit, spare inner tube** and **loose change** in case you need to use a public payphone.
- 6 It is a good idea to carry a **first aid kit** and some **identification**. Let somebody know your planned route and when you expect to return home - just in case!
- 7 On busy, narrow or twisty roads, it is safest to **ride in single file**. Always give yourself enough time to finish the route before it gets dark.

Need some training or a confidence boost? Contact Warwickshire County Council's Road Safety Unit.

**Tel: 01926 412776**

**www.StratfordBikeHire.com**

**The Stratford Greenway, Seven Meadows Road  
Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6GR**

Stratford Bike Hire and Carriages Cafe are based in refurbished railway carriages at the Stratford Greenway cycle and walking track.

Bikes can be collected from the cycle hire centre in Stratford or can be delivered and collected by prior arrangement.

**Call 07711 776340 to reserve bikes**

This cycle trail guide has been published with the joint cooperation of the following organisations:



For more local information, please contact Shipston Town Council on 01608 662180 or visit the Town Council website [www.shipstononline.org](http://www.shipstononline.org)



Please look out for the Two Towns, Shipston to Moreton Cycle Route

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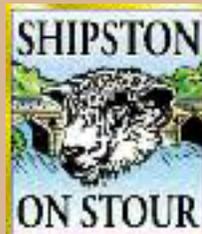
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# COTSWOLD AND FELDON CYCLE ROUTE

## Shipston-on-Stour to Brailes



# The Cotswold and Feldon Cycle Route

## Shipston-on-Stour to Brailes

### CHARACTERISTICS

An attractive rural ride through Feldon countryside and villages with views of the Cotswolds. The optional longer route includes the Cotswolds near to Whichford.

### TERRAIN AND DISTANCES

The shorter ride of 14 miles (22 kilometres) is mostly easy going with some undulations. The longer ride of an additional 7 miles (11 kilometres) includes some challenging hills.

### SIGNS

National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 5 ,  and .

### DIRECTIONS

From Shipston-on-Stour High Street follow the NCN Route 5 signs towards Banbury. After the recycling centre turn right, with care, to Barcheston and Willington. At the junction of the Sutton-under-Brailes and Cherington roads leave the NCN Route 5 and follow  to Cherington and Stourton. Continue to the T-junction in Stourton.

### SHORTER ROUTE

If following the shorter route turn left and follow  to Sutton-under-Brailes. Turn right by The Green to Brailes. At the T-junction in Brailes turn right on to the main road and continue through the village to visit the church of St George and the catholic chapel of St Peter and St Paul (accessible from the car park at the far end of Friars Lane). Return by the same route and after the three shops at the Feldon Centre turn right, with care, towards Whatcote. Continue down the hill past Aylesmore Farm. Turn left at the crossroads and return to Shipston-on-Stour.

### LONGER ROUTE

If following the longer route turn right, with care, at the T-junction in Stourton and follow  to Whichford. Continue to follow  to the junction with the National Cycle Network. Follow  to Sutton-under-Brailes crossing the River Stour at Traitor's Ford (foot bridge available). Follow the shorter route directions from Sutton-under-Brailes following  to return to Shipston-on-Stour.

## MAP COLOUR KEY

### Feldon Parklands

- A large scale rolling landscape
- Occasional steep scarp slopes
- Large woodlands often on rising ground
- Many small coverts and belts of trees
- Mature hedgerow and roadside oaks
- Large isolated brick farmsteads

### Vale Farmlands

- Broad flat vales with occasional small rounded hills
- A medium to large scale geometric field pattern
- Pockets of permanent pasture often with well preserved ridge and furrow – good example at entrance to St Dennis Farm
- Wide roadside verges typically bounded by a thick hedge and ditch

### Cotswold Fringe

- A varied undulating landscape of small rounded hills and valleys bounded to the south, east and west by steeply rising ground
- Pockets of permanent pasture often with well-preserved ridge and furrow; particularly good examples occur in the fields around Upper Brailes
- A medium to large scale geometric field pattern
- Many small stone villages eg Sutton-under-Brailes

### The Wold

- Broad rounded hills capped by limestone
- Deep secluded valleys
- Rich red soils supporting productive arable farmland
- A large scale geometric field pattern
- A remote landscape of small stone villages and hamlets eg Whichford
- Steep hillsides with unimproved grassland and scrub



### 1 Brailes Hill from Barcheston

An outlying hill typical of the Cotswolds in Warwickshire. On the top of the hill is Highwall Spinney at 760 feet (232 metres). The Vale farmland is seen all around.

### 2 St John the Baptist Church

St John the Baptist Church in Cherington with Stourton. The 1980 recording of the church choir singing a hymn upon the demise of Doris Archer was vetoed by the actors' union 'Equity' which demanded the use of a professional choir in the radio serial 'The Archers'.

### 3 Whichford Village and Wood

Indicated in the Domesday Book as a populous and valuable village. The Norman connections are remembered in the naming of The Norman Knight public house and the nearby Demohun Crescent. Reginald Mohun, Lord of the Manor from 1204 to 1213, is credited with the construction of the castle and moat. The village is home to Whichford Pottery.

### 4 Whichford Stone Fountain

Some time during the Imperial period (1751 to 1914) the public water supply was obtained from the fountain. Now the fountain incorporates a seat within the stone arch.

### 5 Traitor's Ford

No connection with treachery or treason but a corruption of Trader's Ford – a probable reference to its original use.

### 6 Sutton-under-Brailes

Although now in Warwickshire, the village is listed in the Domesday Book under Gloucestershire. As in medieval times the village is grouped around a rectangular area known as The Green.

### 7 Brailes - Church of St George

Recorded in the Domesday book as the most valuable manor in Warwickshire the prosperity of the village continued into medieval times and was based on sheep farming. This prosperity is reflected in St George's church, known as the Cathedral of the Feldon. Inside there is a remarkable matchstick model of the church.

### 8 Catholic Chapel of St Peter and St Paul

At the far end of Friars Lane is the catholic chapel of St Peter and St Paul. This began as an Augustan establishment when a rectory building was given to the monks by the Earl of Warwick in the 13th century. During Tudor and Stuart times the Bishop family maintained a secret mass here. The present building was built by the same family in 1726 when it was opened for public worship.

### 9 Castle Hill

At a height of 165 feet (50 metres) stands Castle Hill, a central mound formed from a natural hill and surrounded by earthworks. Brailes was part of the domain of Robert Newburgh, Earl of Warwick who probably constructed the mound with a timber tower on top in the 12th century.

### 10 Wold and Feldon

View across the Feldon towards the outlying hills at Ilmington.

### 11 Ridge and Furrow at St Dennis

Ridge and furrow was formed by the medieval ploughing technique of always turning the soil in the same direction. The reasons for the technique are obscure. Over a period a ridge was created with a depression on either side. In aerial photographs medieval ridge and furrow often appears as a reverse S or elongated C shape. These shapes were caused by the need to turn the oxen so as to avoid damaging adjacent strips.

### 12 Chapel Field

The site of the chapel dedicated to St Dennis and the probable site of the medieval settlement of Bradmore. Sixteen cottages were recorded in 1257 but by 1663 only the chapel survived. By 1683 the chapel had been converted to a dwelling. No visible remains exist but the field is still known as Chapel Field.

## Cotswold and Feldon Cycle Route Shipston-on-Stour to Brailes

This cycle route combines both the heritage and the uniquely attractive landscape of South Warwickshire. The leaflet describes 12 features along the route. These give an insight into the lives of people who dwelt in the area and demonstrate the relationship between the way of life and the landscape.

The shorter red route can be enjoyed by cyclists of all abilities while the extended green route includes some hills to challenge the experienced cyclist. Both routes mainly follow quiet roads and country lanes which are ideal for cycling.

To enjoy the ride and the pleasures it offers it is suggested that between half and a full day is allocated.

Enjoy your ride along the Cotswold and Feldon cycle route.

Shipston-on-Stour and the villages along the route have a variety of restaurants, pubs, tea and food shops to refresh and revitalise.

## Feldon and Cotswold Cycle Route

The visual character of any landscape is shaped by a range of factors - historical, ecological, and physical (soils, rocks and landform). The Cotswolds is a well-known landscape with a character and charm of its own. Other areas of Warwickshire such as Feldon, Arden and Dunsmore are less well-known but each has its own unique identity. Even within such regions there are differences that can make one area quite distinct from another. It is this subtle variation which gives rise to the rich diversity of the English countryside.

### Feldon

Feldon comprises most of the south eastern part of Warwickshire, the small market town of **Shipston-on-Stour** lying at the southern tip. The character of the Feldon landscape is strongly influenced by the historical development of the region. "Feld", an Old English term, means "open, cleared land". This character is still apparent and Feldon remains largely unwooded. It is a lowland agricultural region traditionally suited to grassland production, being a good stock rearing area. The farmed landscape also retains many historic features, in particular ridge and furrow and deserted medieval sites. It is characterised by large geometric fields, few direct roads and the strong impression of emptiness in many areas. Together, these features make Feldon an historic agricultural region with a strong rural character.

Red brick and stone are the main building materials, the latter becoming more common towards the Cotswold Fringe to the south. In Shipston, Blue Lias limestone buildings, often with ironstone edging, are a distinctive feature. Wealthy gentlemen farmers often established large mansions, and country estates, sometimes accompanied by ornamental parkland.

**Feldon can be divided into four different landscape types, two of which occur in this area:**

#### Feldon Parklands

A well-wooded estate landscape with many large country houses set in mature parkland. Found to the north of Shipston-on-Stour around the Honnington area and to the south along the Stour valley towards Tidmington.

#### Vale Farmlands

A flat open, hedged landscape with few roads or settlements and characterised by wide views to rising ground on one or more sides. Extending from the east of Shipston-on-Stour to the base of Brailes Hill.

### The Cotswolds

The Cotswolds comprise a series of prominent hills and steep scarps along the southern fringe of Warwickshire, bounding Feldon on three sides. It is a sparsely populated region characterised by open wolds or upland, large fields and stone villages. Ash frequently accompanies oak as a hedgerow tree.

In Domesday times much of the Cotswolds was cultivated. In medieval times this was replaced by sheep rearing. A flourishing woollen trade resulted in the growth of many distinctive limestone Cotswold towns and villages.

Unlike the majority of the Cotswolds escarpment, the northern fringe in Warwickshire is sparsely wooded, with the exception of Whichford Wood and Edgehill. There are also fewer stone walls here, and the plateau is lower and more dissected. Flat, open summits are therefore never extensive.

**This region can be sub-divided into four landscape types, two of which occur here:**

#### Cotswold Fringe

Visually characterised by the hilly terrain, in many places merging imperceptibly with the surrounding Wold. Small stone villages are often situated along spring lines at the base of the escarpment (steep slope) eg the group of villages around the southern and eastern fringes of Brailes Hill. The wider countryside is still sparsely populated with a strong feeling of emptiness.

#### The Wold

A varied large scale undulating landscape of rounded hills and ridges separated by broad valleys. It includes the majority of the 7 mile extension (green route), taking in Whichford, Traitor's Ford and the headwaters of the River Stour. It also includes Brailes Hill, a prominent exposed plateau summit which rises steeply from the adjoining Cotswold Fringe.

