

# CIRCULAR ROAD CYCLE RIDE

## Old Warden – Cardington – Cople – On Road

Central  
Bedfordshire

great  
lifestyles

This route is described in a clockwise direction but can be ridden in either direction.

A 25km (16 mile) circular cycle ride along quiet country lanes across the rolling hills and fine parkland of the Greensand Ridge and the Shuttleworth Estate. Old Warden was established as a model estate village in the late 18th century by Lord Ongley and contains many picturesque 'Swiss' style thatched cottages. Nearby are the popular attractions of the Swiss Garden, Bird of Prey Centre and the Shuttleworth aerodrome. At the foot of the Greensand ridge are the villages of Cardington and Cople sit on the river valley sands and gravels. Cardington is famous for its two airship 'sheds', built in 1915 by the Short Brothers that housed the famous R101 airship.

- Start from Old Warden (St Leonard's) church car park – please park considerately. (Note: you can also park and start the ride from Cople church). Turn right into Old Warden village, round the bend past the Shuttleworth College entrance and on past the Hare and Hounds PH.
- Continue along the High Street until the left hand road (signposted to Southill) and turn left here. Follow the lane through woodlands and up a slight incline and past the attractive thatched cottage on the left.
- Follow through the bends, past the tree nursery, until you reach Southill village and carry straight ahead past the Old Vicarage until you reach the T-junction.
- Turn right here and carry on the next T-junction where you turn right again and follow this straight road past woodlands (Moorhall Covert) on your right.
- Just over the bridge, at the next junction, take the right hand road and cycle into the small hamlet of Ireland and past the Black Horse PH (on your left).
- Take the next left-hand road down a hill through woodlands and to the T-junction at the bottom, opposite Yew Tree Lodge. Turn right here, under the old railway bridge and follow the bends past the old railway station cottages and past the entrance to Southill Sawmill (on the right).
- Continue along this road until you reach the edge of Old Warden village. At this sharp right-hand bend turn left across the road and follow the country lane (Bedford Road). (There is a shortcut here back to the start at the church).
- Follow the winding lane past Warden Abbey Farm and the remains of the Cistercian Abbey (founded in 1537), on your left. Continue straight until you reach the edge of the Greensand Ridge escarpment with its fine views across north Bedfordshire and Cardington with its airship sheds which dominate the landscape.
- Drop down the sharp incline (now on Southill Road), past Hillfoot Farm and follow the road across the flat landscape towards Cardington. The road crosses the old Shefford – Bedford railway line twice and has bends and twists but eventually you will find yourself cycling past the rear of the huge airship sheds.
- Enter the village of Cardington, round a right-hand bend and past the Kings Arms PH on the left. Carry straight ahead here (ignoring the road to the left) and cycle through the village, past the Farm Shop and leave the village.



- After a short stretch on the country lane you enter the village of Cople. Continue past the Duke of Bedford cottages on your left and at the T-junction by All Saints Church and opposite the Five Bells PH, turn right onto Northill Road (you can also park and start the ride from Cople church).
- Cycle through the remainder of the village and leave Cople and follow the road past Middle Farm then Hoo Farm on your left. After a few bends you start to climb steep Mox Hill up onto the Greensand Ridge.
- At the top of the hill you reach Sheerhatch Wood and the crossroads known as Deadman's Oak, opposite Oak Farm. Continue straight through then onto the straight section of road (Bedford Road) and past several large attractive old houses.
- The road passes alongside Home Wood, containing a restored (medieval) fish farm and ponds, past the stud farm then enters the village of Northill. At the T-junction next to St Mary's church turn right, past The Crown PH and the village pond and through the village.
- Next you enter the village of Ickwell Green, possibly one of the most attractive villages in Bedfordshire with its classic English landscape of cricket pitch, village green, large oak, maypole and pretty cottages.
- Follow the road across the Green, past the maypole, and cricket pavilion, past the splendid Ickwell Bury (across the fields, on the right) then up the short hill and out of the village.
- At the T-junction turn right and follow the road back to Old Warden then turn right by the cottage and back up the hill to St Leonard's church.

OS Map: Explorer 181, 182, 192 and 193.

## Remember when cycling:

- Please DO NOT cycle on footpaths.
- Always keep to the waymarked routes and do not enter private land.
- Always ride in single file when roads are narrow and never ride more than two abreast.
- Make sure you are visible to others.
- Always use lights after dark or in poor visibility.
- Plan your route according to the weather and daylight hours.
- Be aware of animals, other cyclists, pedestrians, horse riders and car drivers when cycling.
- Keep your speed down and give way to walkers and other path users.
- Be polite and considerate towards landowners and farmers.
- Keep away from farm machinery or farm/forestry operations.

## Contact us...

**by telephone:** 0300 300 8305 **by email:** recreational.routes@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

**on the web:** [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/environment/countryside/cycling.aspx](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/environment/countryside/cycling.aspx)

**Write to** Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

## Refreshments...

**Hare and Hounds**, Old Warden – 01767 627225

**White Horse**, Southill – 01462 813364 - [www.whitehorsesouthill.co.uk](http://www.whitehorsesouthill.co.uk)

**Southill Tea Rooms** – 01462 817430 - [www.southillvillagetearoom.co.uk](http://www.southillvillagetearoom.co.uk)

**Black Horse**, Ireland – 01462 811398 - [www.blackhorseireland.com](http://www.blackhorseireland.com)

**The Kings Arms**, Cardington – 01234 838533 - [www.thekingsarmscardington.co.uk](http://www.thekingsarmscardington.co.uk)

**Five Bells**, Cople – 01234 831330 - [www.fivebellscople.com](http://www.fivebellscople.com)

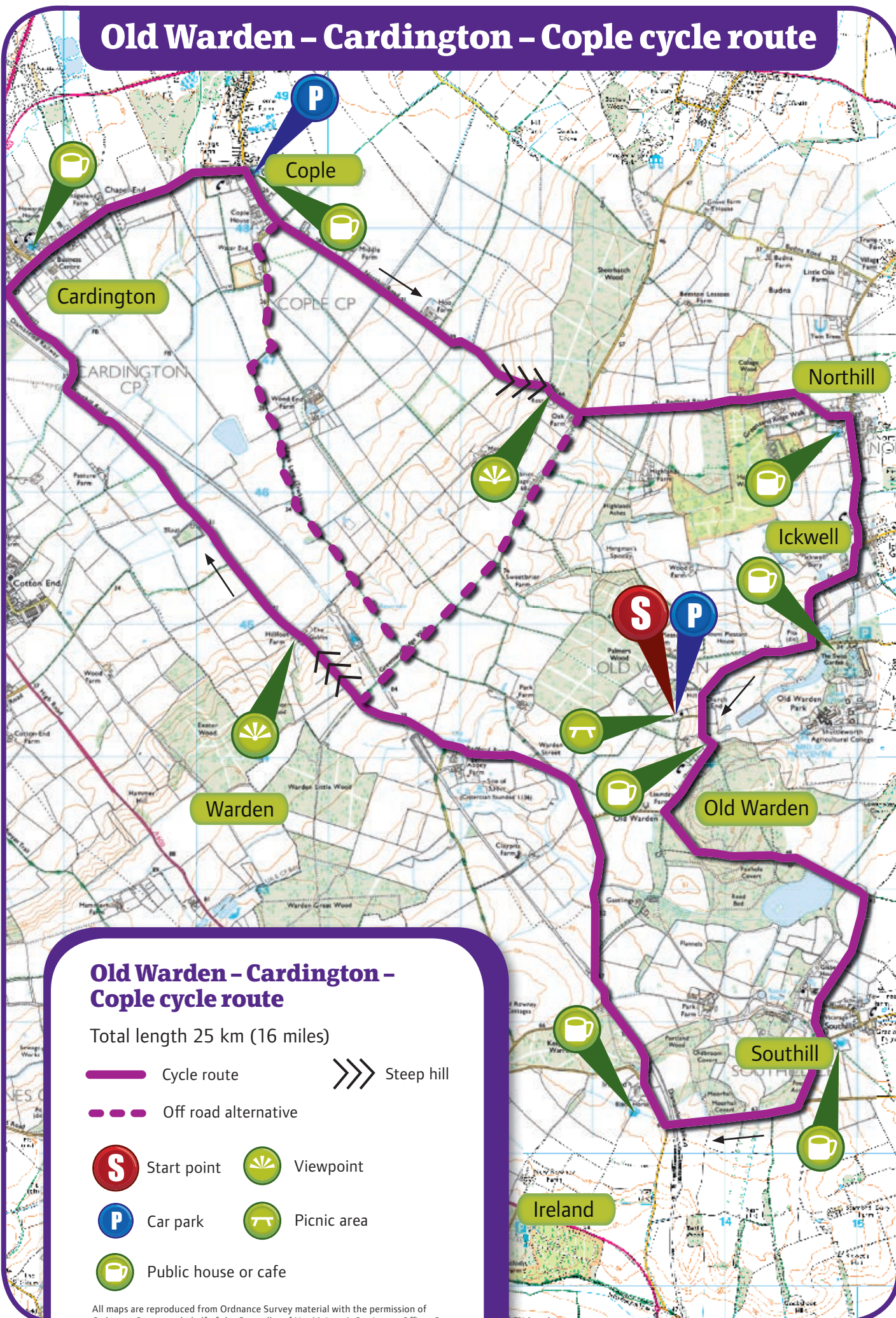
**The Crown**, Northill – 01767 627337 - [www.crownnorthill.co.uk](http://www.crownnorthill.co.uk)

**Shuttleworth Visitor Centre and Restaurant** - [www.shuttleworth.org](http://www.shuttleworth.org)













# Old Warden – Cardington – Cople cycle route



## Old Warden – Cardington – Cople cycle route

Total length 25 km (16 miles)

-  Cycle route
-  Off road alternative
-  Start point
-  Car park
-  Public house or cafe
-  Viewpoint
-  Picnic area
-  Steep hill

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