



Have yourself a Greensand Country cycling adventure

Greensand Country Cycleways: **Stone Way**

A 24km (15 mile) ride on country roads and the sandy, well drained Greensand soils. Starting at Maulden Church with its mausoleum to the Bruce family, the route takes in the picturesque Maulden Woods and the village of Haynes with its many 'Ends', Campton and Upper Gravenhurst. The ride also passes the nationally important Wrest Park (an English Heritage property); a mansion with 300 year old landscaped gardens and well worth a visit.

Key facts:

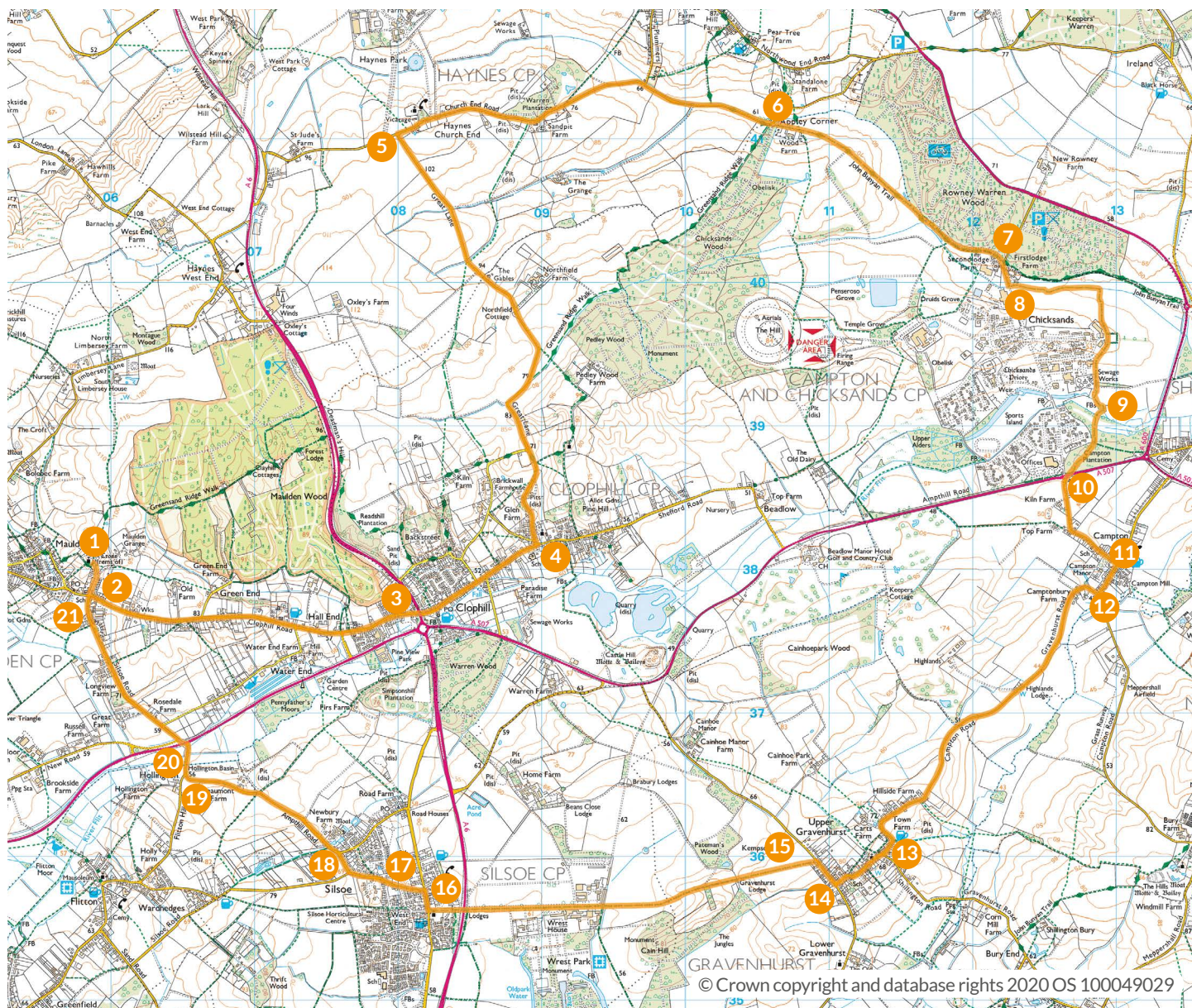
Route marker:



Length:	15 miles (24km)
Direction of travel:	Clockwise but route can be ridden in either direction.
Route type:	On and Off road
Options:	None.
Links to other routes:	Forest Way, Greensand Cycleway
Terrain:	Up & down. Four steep hills going up if ridden clockwise
Sites:	Wrest Park
Car park:	There is a car park available at St Mary the Virgin church in Maulden. Please respect the fact that this is primarily for church use including services and other events and should be used accordingly. MK45 2AU
Train station:	Flitwick is the nearest
OS Explorer maps: (Orange 1:25,000)	193 & 208



Route map





Maulden Church Meadow

Adjacent to the car park at Maulden church is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This area of old pasture land has not been ploughed or disturbed for many years and has many plants, which are now uncommon and of interest to botanists. The history of this site is that no fertilizer has been applied for many years, if ever, and this has encouraged wildflowers and butterflies: a small pond attracts damselflies. One curious feature of the site are the prominent grass mounds formed by yellow meadow ants in this old grassland.



- 1 Starting from the car park at St Mary the Virgin church, Maulden descend the short, steep hill to Maulden village.
- 2 Turn left by the school. Continue along the Maulden – Clophill road towards the A6.
⚠ Bear left at the junction to ensure you stay on Clophill Road.



Enclosures and Market Gardens

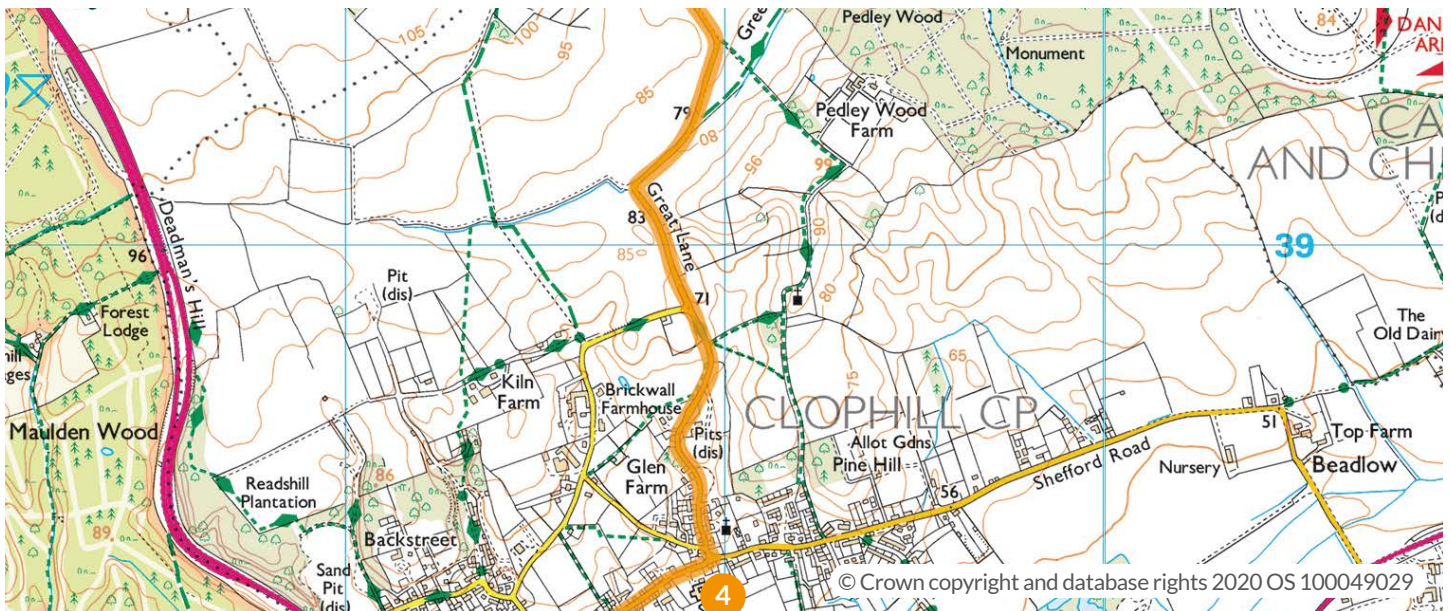
The road joining the villages of Maulden and Clophill, offers glimpses of the wooded Greensand Ridge on the left and the land falls away gently to the valley of the River Flit on the right. This land has always been valued as it offers a range of possibilities from market gardening on the slopes, to the digging of peat in the valley bottom. In 1796 the arrival of a party of surveyors in the village of Maulden with instructions to measure out the common land prior to enclosure, was opposed by a large mob of local people estimated at 200. What became known as the Maulden Riot required troops on horseback to be sent on the instructions of a magistrate. Eventually the land was enclosed and in the early 20th century this land supported an important market garden industry.

- 3 Take care crossing the A6 in the middle of Clophill and follow High St. which is the route of a Roman road. Look out for the parish lockup and pound on your right.

Brick and Sandstone

Clophill is an attractive village with a long High Street flanked by interesting cottages and larger houses which offer an insight into the local building materials. There are many stone walls built from the local rusty red sandstone which is often weathering badly at the base where road salt is causing damage. There is a large abandoned sandstone quarry at the edge of the village and smaller quarry sites in the village have now become plots for new housing. Mixed with this sandstone architecture are local Bedfordshire brick cottages with good examples of brick work in a 'patterned bonding', which adds to the overall appearance of the building. On the right at the junction with Mill Street is the site of the local water mill once powered by a horizontal mill wheel with water from the River Flit along a 'lade', behind the present houses.

- 4 Turn left onto Great Lane towards Haynes Church End. The church is also called St Mary the Virgin.

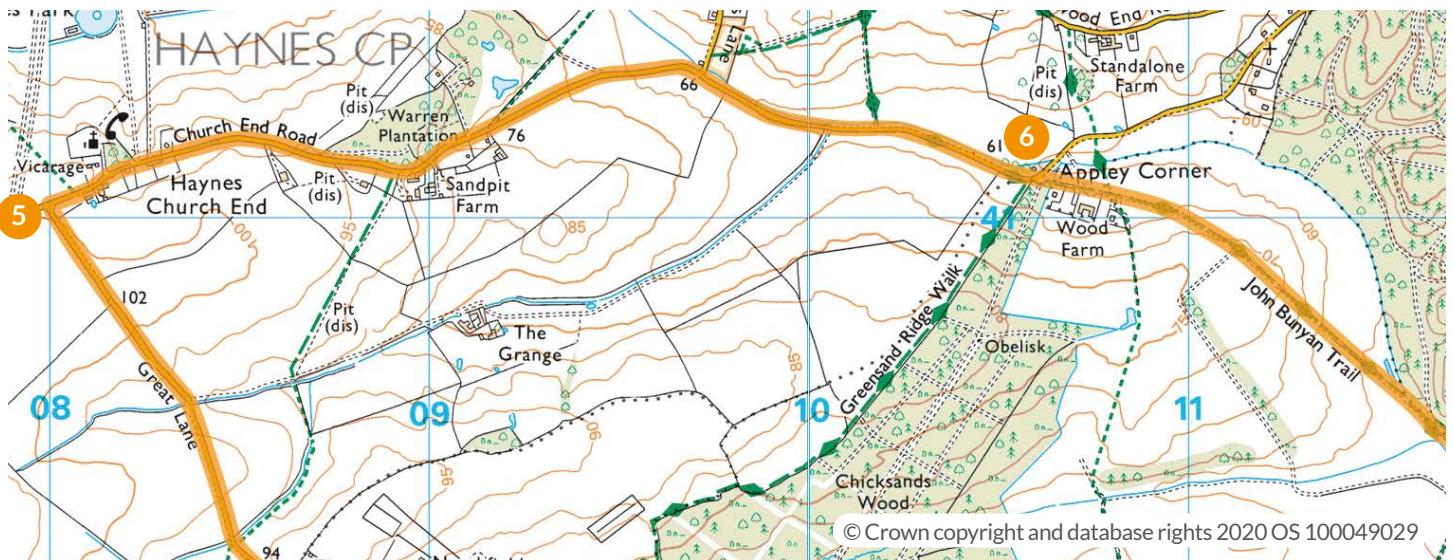


- 5 In Haynes Church End turn right onto Church End Road until you get to Appley Corner.

Chicksands Wood and Ecclesiastical Timbers

Appley Corner provides access to the long-distance footpath the Greensand Ridge Walk (GRSW) and the Bunyan Trail, which meet and cross at this spot which is a popular route for dog walkers. Chicksands Wood has relic ancient woodland but the majority was cut in the 1950s and replanted with conifers. These medieval woods supplied timber for the construction of the Octagonal Tower at Ely Cathedral after a catastrophic storm in 1322 led to the collapse of the Norman Tower. The logs were transported to the Flit, and then floated to Ely along the River Ouse. Chicksands Wood is well known for butterflies and archaeologists have recorded medieval woodland banks, which were early land boundary markers.

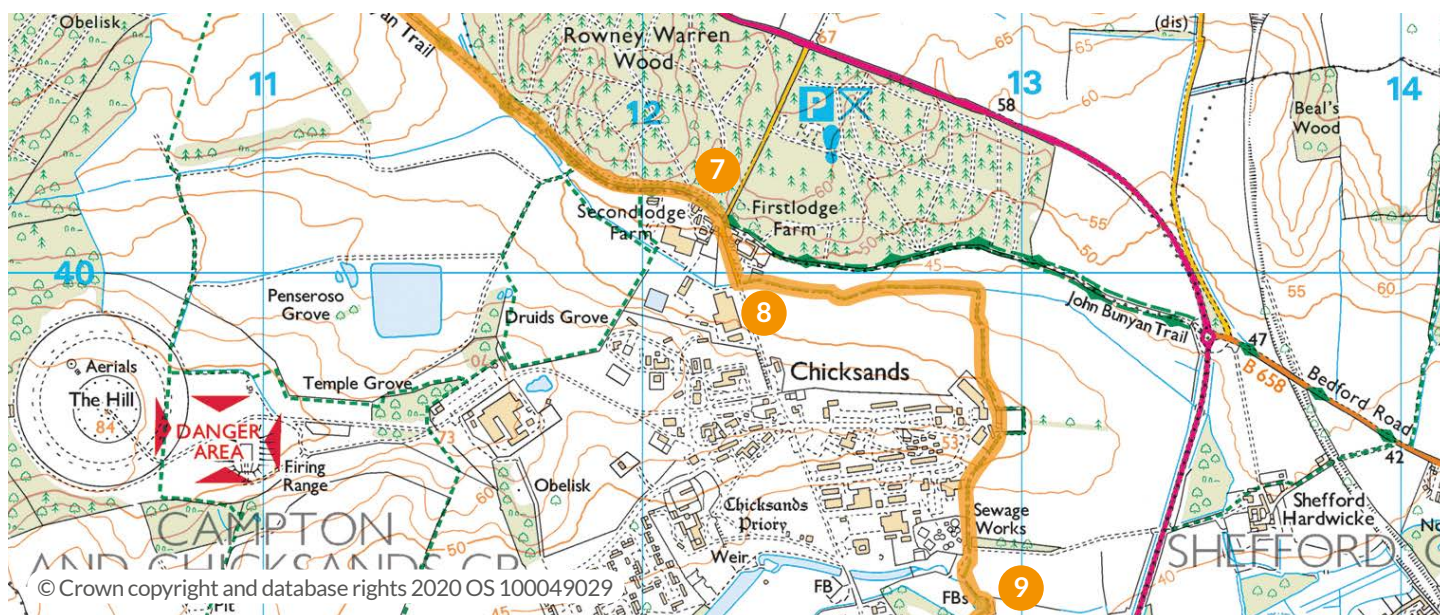
- 6 From here follow the bridleway (Campton & Chicksands BW7) through the bridlegate and cycle towards the edge of Rowney Warren.



Rabbits and bikes - Rowney Warren

The plantation woods of Rowney Warren are a modern use of land where the soil is sandy. This area was utilised by the monks of the nearby Chicksands Abbey as an organised rabbit warren. The keeping of rabbits was a profitable medieval business with both meat and fur being valued commodities. This plantation is now a very popular off road cycling venue with runs of variable grades of challenge: access is from the A600 road north of Shefford.

- 7** Stay on the bridleway and follow it until Second Lodge Farm then right for approx 100m on the road then left following the bridleway alongside a ditch. Follow the route and bear right away from the ditch.



A Mixed Priory

Chicksands Priory was founded around 1150 and was the home of 80 nuns and 40 monks at its height. The **Gilbertine Order** was one of the few in England which housed both monks and nuns. The demise of the priory came when Henry VIII sold off the lands in 1538. The estate is now owned by the Ministry of Defence: visits to the site of the old abbey buildings are permitted by the MoD on rare occasions.

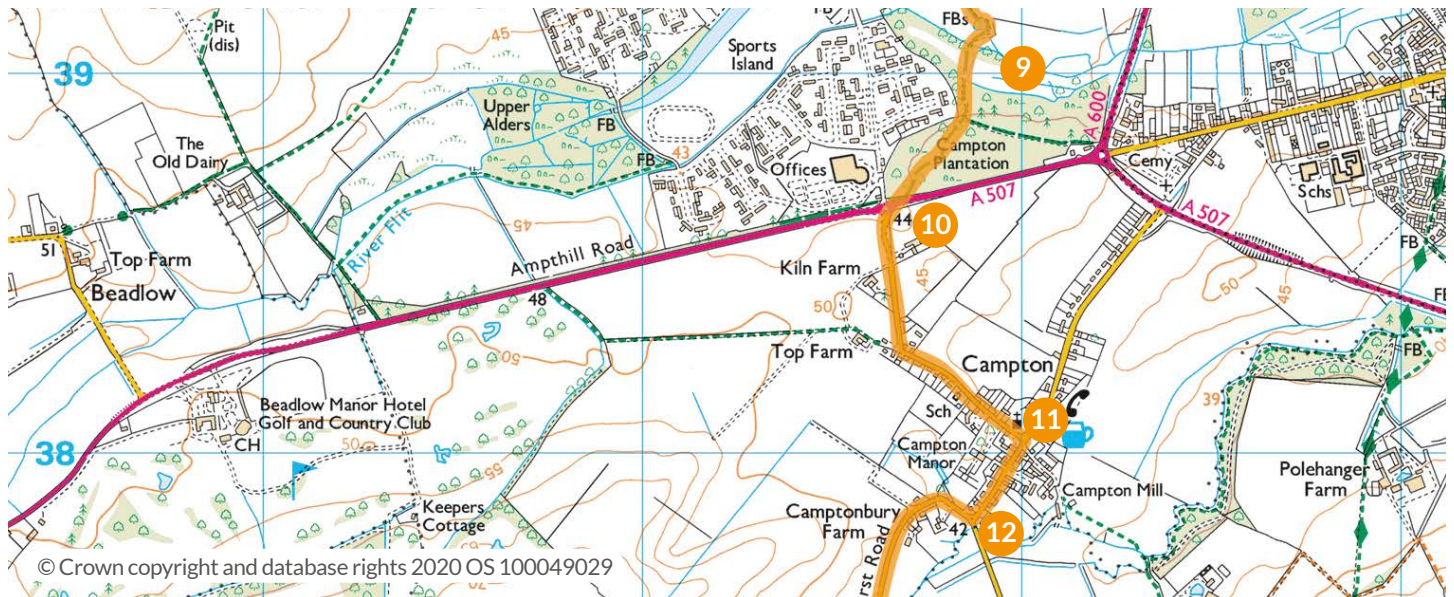
- 8** Continue on the bridleway around the perimeter of RAF Chicksands camp. This is on the site of Chicksands Priory, one of many monastic sites in the Greensand Country.

The Ivel Navigation

The River Flit is now a minor waterway but at the height of the canal boom was connected to the Ouse Navigation and the sea. The town of Shefford, a short distance downstream from the bridge (9), became the commercial centre of this canal traffic. However, this link was short lived as the new railways linking the small towns of Bedfordshire, replaced the waterways.

- 9** Cross the bridge over the River Flit. Follow the path through the woodlands of Lower Alders and Campton Wood past the wooden sculptures heading towards the A507 Ampthill Road.

- 10** Cross here using the pelican crossing and head straight down Priory Road towards the village of Campton.



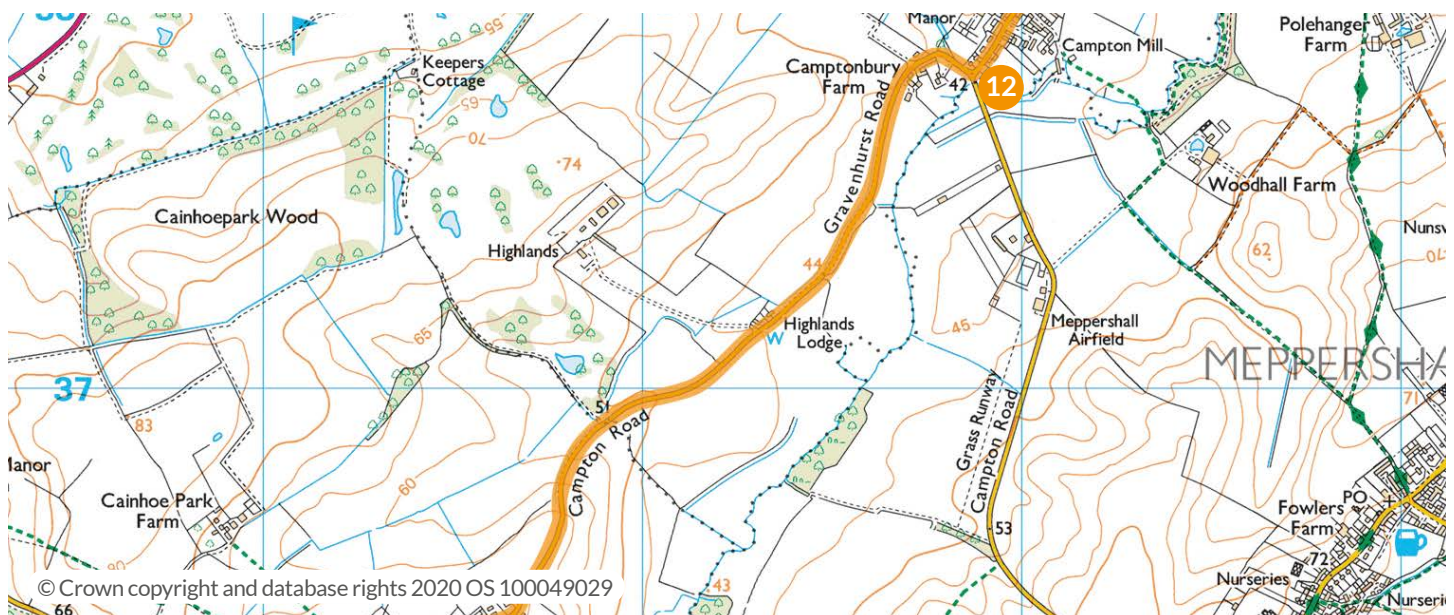
- 11** At the crossroads just beyond All Saints church turn right along the High Street.

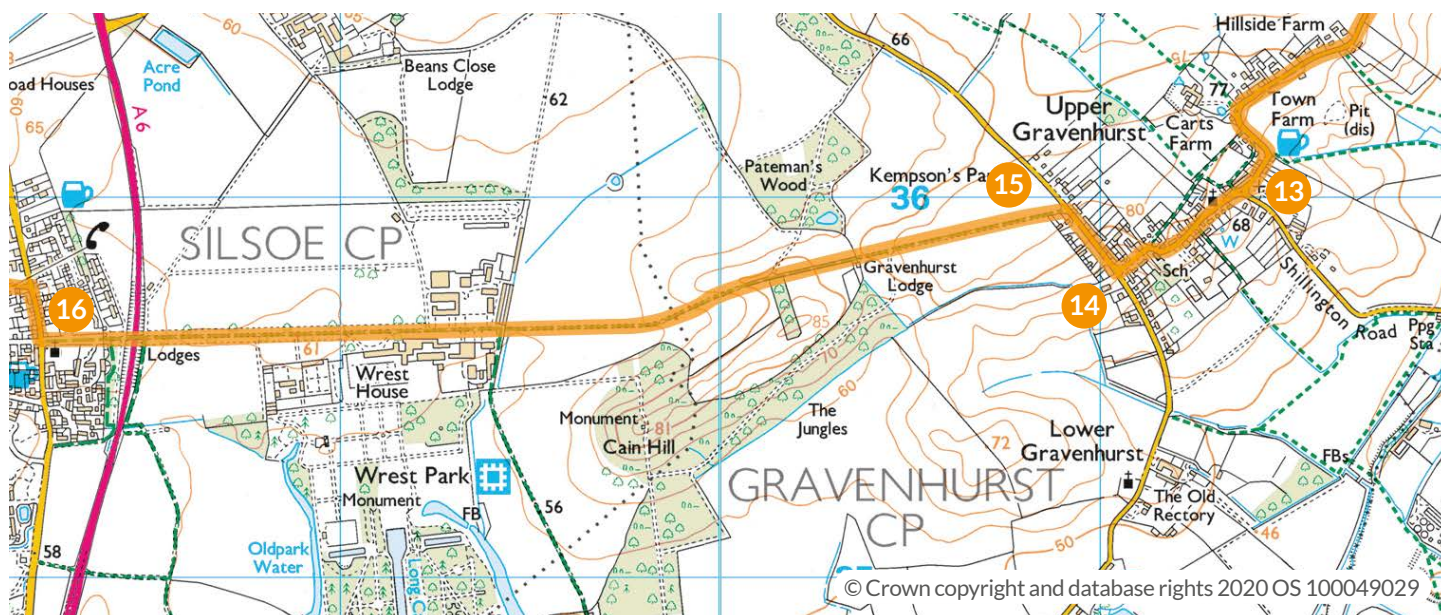
- 12** Turn right at the T-junction on to Gravenhurst Road. Continue along the road and up the hill to the village of Upper Gravenhurst.



The Hit Valley and Clay Hills

After the pleasant village of Campton the ride follows the small stream of the Hit, which joins the River Flit at Shefford, and then climbs steadily to Upper Gravenhurst. The clue is in the name - this sprawling village is positioned on one of the glacial clay hills in this area of Bedfordshire. Looking west the next hill has the local landmark of the Pulloxhill water tower.





- 13** Continue through the village and along the High Street past the former St Giles' church, now in private ownership, on the right.
- 14** Turn right at the T-junction, up the hill, along Clophill Road.
- 15** Then, past the last of the housing on the left, turn left along the bridleway (Gravenhurst BW11 then Silsoe BW13). Continue along the bridleway, past Gravenhurst Lodge, and down the slope with Wrest Park on your left. Continue past Wrest Park House and adjacent buildings. Wrest Park is now owned by English Heritage. Cross over the A6 (on a bridge) and into the village of Silsoe. Go past the church (on your left).



Wrest Park and the History of the English Garden

Leaving Gravenhurst, the track to Silsoe village is a welcome downhill spin, passing the woods at Cain Hill on the left. These woods were once part of the Wrest Park estate and had in the 18th century, a summer house used for family outings. The main house and gardens are below and these are now owned and operated by English Heritage as a premier visitor attraction in Bedfordshire. The gardens have a long history with examples of garden design from many periods, with a mixture of formal garden, informal woodland walks and a sinuous waterway. There are fine examples of both native and exotic trees.

- 16** Turn right at the T-junction and travel along Silsoe High Street.



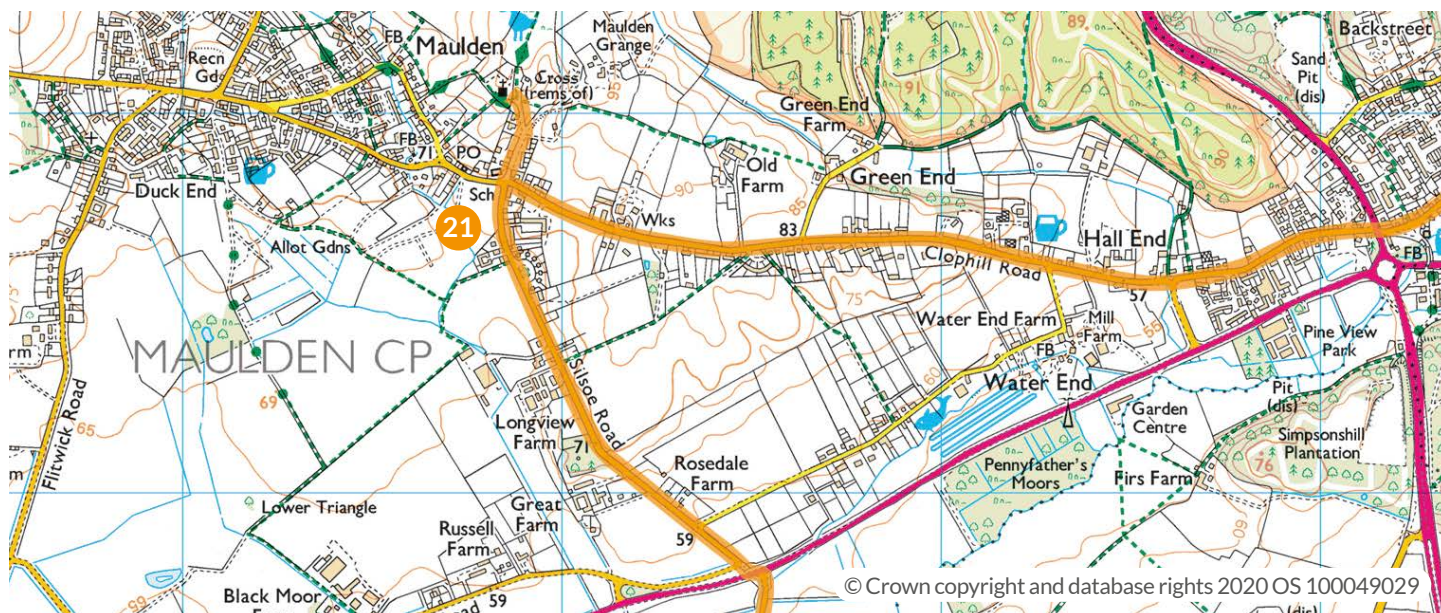
- 17** Turn first left up Amphill Road and follow this around the village.
- 18** Bear right at the junction to Wardhedges then left and out of Silsoe, up the hill and past Beaumont Farm on your right.



Bad Vapours and a cure?

Leaving Silsoe the ride again crosses the river Flit passing Beaumont Farm on the right. The farm was at one time the site of a special tree which if visited at exactly the right time would offer protection from the ague – likely to be a form of malaria, connected to the damp air of the valley. Such sickness was common in late medieval England and local cures were much sought after. The tree was protected for many years but eventually died and has been replaced by a new planting marked by a special plaque. The wide valley of the Flit at this point was at one time a source of peat cut by the people of Maulden. Hence the defence of their rights when threatened with enclosure and privatisation.

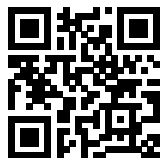
- 19** Bear right and across Hollington Basin.
- 20** At the T-junction on the A507 Ampthill- Maulden bypass it is probably safest to dismount here and cross the road **VERY CAREFULLY** to the other side and through the small gap to the sharp bend on the side road leading towards Maulden.



- 21** Head straight along this lane, up the hill and in to the village of Maulden. At the crossroads head straight across and up the short, steep hill to Maulden Church and finish!

Refreshments

Details of refreshment outlets can be found on the Greensand Country website



www.greensandcountry.com/experience

Remember when cycling

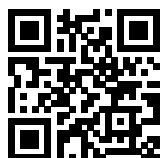
- If possible start your ride from your front door
- If you do drive to the start point then please park with consideration
- Please DO NOT cycle on footpaths.
- Always keep to the waymarked routes and do not enter private land.
- Always ride in single file when roads are narrow and never ride more than 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.

More information



What 3 Words: Download this app to your smartphone to help you find locations and to tell others where you are. Each 3m square in the world has been assigned a unique 3 word address that will never change.

The route passes a number of churches. More information on them including services, facilities and what else they have to offer can be found online.



www.achurchnearyou.com



www.explorechurches.org

This website may also tell you what is special about the buildings and makes them worth visiting.

Churches are attractive and worthwhile stopping places steeped in community history. They usually have benches to rest on and a porch in which you can shelter from the elements.

Signage for promoted routes throughout Greensand Country has been part-funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.