

Introduction

Distance	19m/30km or as little as 8m/13km
Start Point	St Neots
OS Map	Landranger 153 Bedford and Huntingdon

This ride eastwards, away from the bustle of St. Neots, is in gentle countryside. Like the rest of Huntingdonshire, it has seen its share of activity in World War II.

The ride can be extended by taking a detour to what is probably the most fascinating airfield of World War II, and probably the one with the highest casualty rate. The top secret activity here included landing on makeshift airfields in occupied Europe to pick up returning agents - as risky an activity as one can imagine, and one which won many medals and cost many lives.

On our main ride we see yet another plaque to a Pathfinder Force squadron on Gransden Lodge airfield, now used for civilian gliding. Near the airfield is a wonderfully restored windmill.

The return part of the journey can be done in more than one way, each of which has its own features. Readers are invited to try them to decide which is their favourite.

■ Cover photo shows Gransden Mill.

Points of Interest

St Neots (A)

- The river and Riverside Park are features of the town which also has an impressive Market Square and river bridge.
- The Tourist Information Centre and the local museum are in New Street. They share the same premises - the old courthouse. The museum tells the history of the town and has 100-year-old prison cells.



Waresley

Waresley (G)

- This is a picturesque village with many thatched cottages and a fine church which is a landmark for miles around. A cross in the churchyard marks the site of the former church destroyed in 1724 and rebuilt 4 years later. The present church dates from 1857.
- Outside the Duncombe Arms is an iron lamp standard. Inscriptions tell us that it was built in 1897 to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria and that it was converted to electricity in 1935 to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of King George and Queen Mary.
- Nearby in Vicarage Road is a fascinating Millennium Stone describing the village in the year 2000.
- Also nearby is Waresley Park Garden Centre which serves food.

Abbotsley (H)

- This is a pretty village with two pubs and a church from the 13th century. On the altar is a Flemish painting of the Magi, dating from the 16th century.



Abbotsley



The River, St Neots

Eynesbury (B)

- Once a village separate from St Neots, Eynesbury has now been absorbed into the town. Here, we can see a 17th century rectory, 18th century cottages and an old timbered inn. The church has exceptional animal carvings on pew ends.

Tempsford Former Airfield (C)

- This is a detour of about 6 miles. See route instructions and map. Tempsford is best known, although it was top secret at the time, for the parachuting of Special Operations agents into enemy occupied Europe, and the landing on makeshift airstrips to bring them back to England. However, the major activity was parachuting supplies to Resistance forces in Europe. In the remaining building are memorials to agents who were parachuted into occupied Europe and the aircrew who took them. This place was their last contact with home ground for some time, and in some cases forever.



Gransden

Great Gransden Windmill (D)

- This magnificently restored post mill dates from the early 17th century and is open to the public. It was in use until 1911.

Gransden Lodge Airfield (E)

- Near the mill is a memorial to those who served from 1942 to 1945 at the nearby airfield in World War II, a Canadian squadron of the Pathfinder Force. The airfield is now used for civilian gliding.

Great Gransden Village (F)

- In the church is a stained glass window and plaque commemorating the Canadian airmen who flew from the nearby airfield in World War II.
- Around the church are some fine 16th and 17th century buildings. Note also Gransden Hall with its large Dutch gables.

Getting Here...

- ➡ Rail Enquiries: 08457 484950
- 🚌 Bus & Coach Enquiries: 08705 808080
- ☎ Traveline (bus/coach/rail): 0870 6082608

Huntingdon Tourist Information
Tel: 01480 388588 Fax: 01480 388591
Email: Hunts.TIC@huntsdc.gov.uk

St Neots Tourist Information Centre
The Old Court, 8 New Street
St Neots, Cambs PE19 1AE
Tel: 01480 388788 Fax: 01480 388791
Email: StNeots.TIC@huntsdc.gov.uk

Electronic Tourist Information Kiosks:
Huntingdon St Benedict's Court, Huntingdon
Ramsey Great Whyte, Ramsey
St Ives Market Hill, St Ives

For details of accommodation vacancies, contact Huntingdon or St Neots Tourist Information, or **Huntingdonshire Association for Tourism's Vacancy Line Tel: 0870 2254858 (national rate call).**

If you require a large print version of this information, please contact Huntingdon Tourist Information.

Huntingdonshire
district council

www.huntsleisure.org

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Huntingdonshire

Cycle Ride 8 – 19m/30km
St Neots & The Gransdens



Drift Through Time...

www.huntsleisure.org

The Route

1 St Neots (A) to Eynesbury

Two starting points are suggested - the railway station and the Market Place.

a) From the Railway Station:

Turn left out of the station yard down Station Road to a roundabout. Take the second exit and immediately, at another roundabout, take the first exit (Cromwell Road). If traffic is heavy consider using the shared cycleway/footpath on the other side of the road. After about 1 mile, turn left on the B1046 (Potton Road).

b) From the Market Place:

Leave the Market Place (a one-way system) by the south east corner, near The King's Head. Turn right, to pass the marina and then, opposite the parish church and near The Woolpack, turn right into Church Street to EYNESBURY (B). After about ½ mile, at a roundabout, take the first exit and soon turn right on the B1046 (Potton Road) towards Abbotsley.

2 Eynesbury to Gamlingay Cinques

At about ½ mile beyond the edge of town turn right towards Abbotsley Golf Club. Keep forward to GAMLINGAY CINQUES, where there is a crossroads, but no name sign.

3 Tempsford detour (C) (not shown on map)

A detour of about 6 miles includes a visit to this former airfield from World War II. At GAMLINGAY CINQUES turn right for 2 miles to a crossroads, then right again. At a T-junction turn right to enter EVERTON. In the village turn right to the top of a steep hill. At the foot of the hill, to the right is the former airfield which is now private, although one building can be accessed from a bridleway.

Unless wanting to visit the airfield, enjoy the view from the hilltop, and cut out the steep climb on the return. Return through the village for about ¼ mile, then turn left. At GAMLINGAY HEATH go straight on to GAMLINGAY, and at the crossroads go straight over into Church Street.

4 Gamlingay Cinques to Great Gransden

If you are not making the detour, keep forward to GAMLINGAY. At the B1040 turn right and soon left into Church Street signposted Gransdens, to pass the church and many old houses, and continue for about 2 miles. At the B1046 turn left to enter LITTLE GRANSDEN. Opposite The Chequers Inn turn right into Primrose Hill, and at the top (D) and (E) bear left through GREAT GRANSDEN (F)

5 Great Gransden to Eynesbury

Leave Great Gransden on the B1046 signposted St Neots.

From here one possibility is to ride direct to EYNESBURY on the B1046, which is a pleasant enough road, visiting the pretty village of ABBOTSLEY on the way.

A more pleasant option is to turn left a short way along Meadow Road in Great Gransden to WARESLEY (G). At the end of the lane the route takes you to the right, on the B1040 towards Eltisley for a short way. Just beyond the church, where the road bends right, we need to turn left into Manor Farm Road (signposted with a warning “Unsuitable for HGV’s”). This pleasant lane follows the line of the B1046, but remains on high ground, affording some fine views. After about 2 miles another choice is offered. You can turn right to ABBOTSLEY (H) and then left on the B1046 to EYNESBURY to the end of Potton Road.

Alternatively, you can go straight ahead for another ¼ mile and then, at a T-junction, turn right (retracing the outward route for a couple of miles or so) to rejoin the B1046 within sight of EYNESBURY, which you enter on Potton Road.

6 Eynesbury to St Neots

To the station:

Turn right into Cromwell Road and continue to the end, using the shared cycleway/footpath if traffic is heavy. Turn right and immediately left to the station.

To the Market Place:

To avoid the roundabout to the left, cross Cromwell Road into the closed-off road directly ahead and continue to its end. Turn right into Barford Road and through Eynesbury to a T-junction near St Neots church. Turn right (the left is “No entry”). At the traffic lights, turn left to the Market Place.

Possible short cuts



1 From Thistle Hill to Abbotsley to give a circuit of 9m/14km. About 2 miles beyond the right turn towards Abbotsley Golf Club turn left to ABBOTSLEY (H). Turn left on the B1046 to EYNESBURY and follow the directions in Section 5.

2 From Gamlingay to Waresley to give a circuit of 15m/24km. At GAMLINGAY in Section 4 turn left on the B1040 to WARESLEY. At the far end of the village turn left into Manor Farm Road and follow the directions in Section 5.

