



Forest Heath
District Council

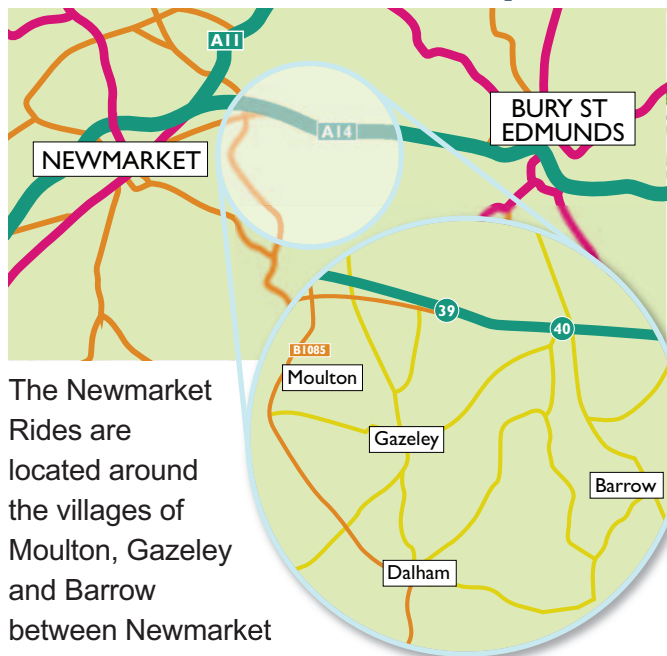


The Newmarket Rides

Three circular routes to enjoy on foot, by bike or on horseback between Newmarket & Bury St Edmunds



Location Map



The Newmarket Rides are located around the villages of Moulton, Gazeley and Barrow between Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds.

Public Transport

Moulton is just 4 miles (6km) from Newmarket train station. Barrow is approximately 6 miles (9km) from Bury St Edmunds train station.

Both villages are served by bus. Visit www.travelineeastanglia.co.uk or telephone **08712 002 233** for more information

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Introduction

A landscape of rolling chalk valleys, pockets of ancient woodland, seasonal streams and picture-perfect clusters of thatched lime-washed cottages – the area between Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds is special in so many ways.

Climb its occasional steep slopes and it promises the most stunning countryside views. Take time out amidst its quiet leafy lanes dotted with local brick and flint barns and the occasional smart stately hall or gatehouse, and it cannot fail to charm you.

With countless sites of moated farmsteads, medieval churches and mills, the remains of a motte and bailey, a malt kiln and packhorse bridge, this is an historic area with thousands of tales to tell.

The Newmarket Rides offer a mix of off-road, quiet lane and on-road routes for walking, cycling and horse riding. The bridleway and byway network here is quite extensive and very popular for horse riding. Some routes are also used by farm vehicles, so please take care at all times when following these routes.

In wet weather off-road paths become very muddy and therefore more challenging if cycling – be prepared to walk some sections! If you are not keen on off-road cycling, you may prefer to stick to quiet roads.

Did you know?

The Icknield Way path which winds its way through this landscape is probably the oldest road in Britain and was already ancient when the Romans came. It is still a very popular long distance path today. Prehistoric in its origins, it runs along the chalk spine of England, stretching 100 miles from Ivinghoe Beacon (Buckinghamshire) to Knettishall Heath (Suffolk).

Moulton Circuit

The Travel & Trade Route

Start: Near the Packhorse Bridge, Moulton

Park: In the village or at the Village Hall

Distance: 8 miles (13 km)

Picturesque Moulton's famous flint, stone and brick Packhorse Bridge ❶ dates from 1446. Spanning 20m over the River Kennett it sits on the ancient Bury to Cambridge trade route. Built to allow packs to swing clear over the low parapet walls, and unusually wide enough to take carts, nowadays it is just pedestrians that make their way over the bridge.

Leave on the Moulton Road to Gazeley, climbing for about 1km before the road levels out. At the top of the rise, on a very clear day, Ely Cathedral, the 'Ship of the Fens', is visible some 15 miles away. It is said this is how the village got its name – Gaze-Ely.

Gazeley clusters around the massive medieval All Saints

Church. An old Blacksmith's still sits on the green in front of The Chequers and a six storey Victorian tower mill masquerades as a house. As you descend into the village, passing the water tower, you follow National Cycle Route 51. This route is very well signposted; just look out for the blue markers.

A number of ancient woodland sites grace the chalk upland here mainly on pockets of boulder clay, originally private manorial woods from Domesday times or medieval coppices for firewood and fencing. In Gazeley, if you are on foot, you can follow the Icknield Way through Bluebutton, Blocksey and Brick Kiln Woods ❷ to Dalham village and then back to Moulton. Between April and June this is a beautiful bluebell walk.

Further on the Dalham Road, Dalham offers a mix of lime-washed thatched cottages lining the river bank, a rare conical malt kiln towering some 8 metres by the roadside, a Queen Anne Hall, weather-boarded smock mill and St Mary's Church full of fine wall paintings. At the 16th century Affleck Arms, allegedly haunted by a gray lady, turn right ❸ over the River Kennett, up a steep climb. Here you pass Lower Windmill complete with beehive 'cap'. Built in the 1790s, it is also known as 'Opposition Mill', perhaps for originally stealing trade away from Ashley's Upper Mill or having sails which turned in the opposite direction.

Turning left ❹ along the Dalham Road, climb steadily then run gently into Ashley. As the route reaches a flat-topped plateau you look down across the ruins of All Saints Church and its parochial past at Silverly. At the Gazeley Road turn left for a stop at The Crown ❺.

Retrace your steps to the Gazeley Road which, after the junction you came from, runs steeply downhill. Take care on your approach to the junction with the B1085. After crossing, the route continues downhill. Look out for the Icknield Way ❻ which crosses at the bottom of the valley, and turn left to follow the River Kennett for the next 2 km. The track, initially wide then narrow, passes through woods to Moulton at the medieval St Peter's Church, crowned with its golden fish of a weather vane.

From here it is a very short distance back to the Packhorse Bridge.

Did you know?

The River Kennett in this area flows northwards from Dalham to Kennett, then on to join the River Lark near Mildenhall. The river has shrunk in size considerably since Moulton's packhorse bridge was built to span it in the 15th century.



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Gazeley Circuit

The Deer & Beer Route

Start: Gazeley Village

Distance: 9 miles (14.5 km)

Follow National Cycle Route 51 onto Higham Road. ⁷ About ¾ km out of the village, at the junction curiously named 'Beggars Bush' ⁸ take the right fork, signed Desning Hall. The long straight road eventually takes a sharp left where you have 2 options – on-road or off-road ⁹.

On-road, keep following Route 51 along an undulating and winding route towards Barrow. You will pass 'Castle Holes', Denham's levelled earthwork remains of a motte and bailey timber castle. When you meet Denham Road ¹⁰ turn right towards Denham, passing Denham Estate, a local deer farm, to the solid medieval brick and flint Church of St Mary, backed by the 16th century moated Denham Hall, to Jillings Farm ¹¹.

Offroad, at the sharp left, ⁹ turn right along a bridleway, signed as a dead end, uphill to Desning Hall Cottages, past a phone box, through a gap by an electric gate and through the farm yard of Desning Hall, a site ('Daeseling') recorded in the Domesday Book.

As you leave the farm and medieval barn behind you, turn left onto a bridleway following a field edge track. For the next 3kms the route skirts and crosses arable fields. If cycling, take care. In or after wet weather this route can be very muddy and hard work – great fun, but very challenging!

After crossing a field, travel through a tree-lined avenue, arriving on the Denham Road at Jillings Farm ¹¹.

Here, you rejoin the main circuit and all your hard work pays off as turning right you cruise on a 3km long downhill all the way into Dalham. Either turn right back to Gazeley or join the Moulton Circuit.

Barrow Circuit

The Explorers' Route

Start: Barrow Village Hall or The Three Horseshoes pub

Distance: 8 miles (13 km)

As its name suggest, Barrow sits on higher ground. Its centre clusters around crossroads with an historic heart full of moated halls and medieval fishponds. All Saint's Church is rich with memorials and bright altar paintings.

Head through Barrow towards the village green and turn left onto the Bury Road ¹².

Leaving Barrow, on your right is an off-road route along a well defined track signed 'Byway' ¹³. Initially very easy to follow, this byway becomes a field edge path. You can follow it along the edge of ancient Wilsummer Wood before meeting the main road where you either head north back to Barrow or south towards Hargrave ²⁰ to re-join the circuit.

Bury Road is a gentle downhill. Turn right at Twite's Bridge ¹⁴ and climb steadily into Great Saxham. Look out for the carved nutmeg on the gateway to Great Saxham Hall ¹⁵. In 1588 explorer John Eldred introduced nutmeg to England. His Great Saxham home, replaced by the present house in the 1790s, was known as 'Nutmeg Hall'.

After the village, at the brow of a hill, a very wide bridleway to your right ¹⁶ offers off-road riding past woodland known as 'The Park'. You can rejoin the circuit later on at Frogsend Farm ¹⁷.

This quiet, winding country lane leads to St Andrew's Church, a well-earned stop after nearly a mile of uphill riding and another Great Saxham site with overseas connections – this time beautiful stained glass probably from Switzerland.



After the church at a bend in the road is a bridleway signed to the right ¹⁸. This offers a steep descent past Hearse Wood; a sometimes muddy and well ridden track by horse riders and a challenge for walking and cycling. You can rejoin the main circuit at Frogsend Farm ¹⁷

At New Potash Cottages ¹⁹, turn right to join National Cycle Route 51 and follow its markers as you descend, sometimes quite steeply, towards Hargrave –mind the sharp bends by Frogsend Farm!

Where the road bends to Hargrave ²⁰ continue straight on. This is Church Street with St Edmund's, with its redbrick tower, the Old Rectory and Hargrave Hall off to the right.

This very quiet road eventually meets a bridleway at a bench – a great place to catch your breath! ²¹

You now enter a section of off-road cycling towards Abbot's Farm. The bridleway is well used by horse riders and can get very muddy and rutted in wet weather – take care and if cycling be prepared to walk this first section. The bridleway soon opens up to a wide grassy track and then becomes a concrete track before meeting the Denham Road.

At this point you can join the Gazeley Circuit or turn right, climbing slightly to Denham Church, before winding your way back to Barrow.

