

HOLT STATION, TOWN, & COUNTRY PARK EXPLORER

Visit the Holt terminus of the North Norfolk Railway, pass the private Gresham's School (old boys include the poet WH Auden and actor Stephen Fry - the school's theatre is open to the public when it hosts touring companies), explore the Georgian market town of Holt - discover its shops, antiques, pubs and cafes - then extend your visit into Holt Country Park with its observation tower and adventure playground (take a picnic and a bottle of wine!). Or detour along the Norfolk Coast Cycleway to visit two great country pubs. Easy riding route on traffic-free paths and mainly quiet lanes.

Distance: Around 5 miles there and back to the Holt Station of the North Norfolk Railway. Or around 9 miles there and back if you include a visit into the town or to Holt Country Park.

Conditions: An easy riding and flat route. The first section to Holt Station is largely traffic-free and suited to all ages. The sections into the town and the park are on-road but our routes use quiet back streets.

PLEASE TAKE CARE TO LOOK AHEAD FOR OBSTACLES WHEN RIDING ON TRAILS - AND ADVISE THOSE WHO ARE BEHIND YOU

Turn right on to the road out of the cycle hire centre and at the junction turn right again. Follow this road until it takes a sharp right, carry straight on at this point down a track with a sign saying 'No Tourers Beyond This Point'). Continue to the crossing of the North Norfolk Railway, cross over and continue straight on along the path.

Where the path meets the road turn left. At most times this road is fairly quiet, however if you have youngsters with you please keep them on your inside or ahead of you. The road is straight and visibility is good.

Continue on until you reach the crossroads, where you turn left. Ahead is a road bridge which crosses the North Norfolk Railway, but a couple of hundred yards before this keep an eye out for an almost concealed entrance on your left. This is Stonepit Plantation, a protected lowland heath which must be explored on foot (lock your cycles in the car park area). It's a habitat for lizards and slow worms.

Cross the railway bridge and continue along this straight stretch of road until you reach the T junction at the top of the road. **CARE** just before the main Holt to Cromer Road cross over to the right **CARE** to turn right on to the cycle path that runs beside the main road (if you have young riders please make sure they stay well away from the main road).

DETOUR: Just before you take the cycle path notice the blue Route 30 bicycle signs. This is part of the Norfolk Coast Cycleway which follows quiet lanes for 59 miles from Cromer to King's Lynn (turn left for Cromer and right for King's Lynn if you're game!).

A quicker detour (4.5 miles each way) would be to turn right and follow the blue 30 signs in the direction of King's Lynn, ending your journey at the Bell public house in Wiveton (explore the nearby church where ships once moored outside, and note the upturned and partially exploded cannon barrel on the village green) - or visit the equally delightful Swallow public house in nearby Cley-next-the-Sea.

If you do not take the detour continue on the cycle path for a few hundred yards. At the Post Office stores continue on into the 'blocked off' Old Cromer Road. Continue to the end of the road then bear right **CARE** and right again into the car park of Holt railway station (shop, toilets, model railway, and museum).



Once you have explored the railway turn right out of the car park **CARE**, then next left into Grove Lane, following this road round to the right (the large buildings to your right are part of the private Gresham's School).

Continue straight on to the t-junction opposite Gresham's Preparatory School. Turn left at the t-junction **CARE** and follow this road to the next t-junction (opposite the vehicle servicing depot).

(At this point if you want to visit Holt Country Park see the detour notes, if not continue to follow the directions below into the town).

Turn right **CARE** into the centre of Holt (if you explore the town on foot please leave your cycles securely locked and remove any bags). There is a Tourist Information Centre and many good pubs and places of refreshment. Recommended are Byfords Cafe (try Yetmans Beer, brewed in Holt), The Beanery, The Owl Tearooms, and Jambos Cafe (the latter, tucked away in a small shopping precinct leading to Budgens Supermarket). Or hunt out Balthazar, a tiny tucked away tapas and wine bar, or the friendly Lawns Hotel which, with its garden, is ideal for a drink or a snack.

Retrace your route to return to Kelling Heath.

DETOUR to Holt Country Park: Just before the t-junction, opposite the vehicle servicing depot, turn hard left to walk through the underpass. On the other side continue straight on (Hempstead Road), following the brown sign marked 'Country Park' for just a short distance. After passing Charles Road on your right look out for a track on your right (at the end of the row of houses). Take this track to enter Holt Country Park.

After a short while you will see a gate ahead, where you continue straight on. Stay on this path and ignore all left turnings. The path bends to the right. When you get to a crossroads (by the wooden post with a red triangle) look to your right to see an archway which was once part of an old woodland garden.

From the crossroads continue straight on until you see buildings to your right. Take the next narrow track on your right which leads to the car park and the Holt Country Park Visitor Centre (toilets). Explore this area which has picnic tables and an adventure playground (look out for the totem pole!) and find out more about the park.

Cross the car park (heading for the main exit). As you go along the exit drive turn left almost immediately on to the first broad track. Continue straight on at the crossroads. At the next track junction turn left then immediately right to head for the observation tower just ahead. As you look out from the tower the white water tower in the distance is in the village of Baconsthorpe (and around two miles to the left of the water tower is Kelling Heath; see how far you have travelled!).

Leave the tower and turn left IN FRONT of the gate to follow the narrow track that runs beside the fence (watch out for tree roots). Towards the end this track curves to the left away from the fence. Follow the track for a short distance until you reach an open area where there is a fence and a gate. Go through the gate and turn left. This track will take you back to where you entered Holt Country Park, and from there retrace your route to Kelling Heath Holiday Park.

You are welcome to explore other areas of Holt Country Park but this is best on foot (please lock your cycles at the visitor centre).

