

SHERINGHAM AND CROMER CHALLENGE

A challenging ride to the seaside town of Sheringham (with an optional short detour to the ruins of Beeston Priory, and the neighbouring Priory Maze, Gardens and Tearoom), and on across country to visit Cromer and its famous pier.

NOTE: The Priory Maze and Gardens open from April until the end of September, and its tearoom all year. However they are closed on Mondays and Wednesdays (but open on all Bank Holidays and every day in August).

Distance: Around 19 miles there and back (or around 22 miles there and back if you return by the Norfolk Coast Cycleway - see note).

Conditions: A good 80 per cent of this ride is off-road. But you will need to be fit, and game for a challenge. It is an excellent ride but there are some harder sections, and there and back makes for a long day. Sorry, but this ride is not suitable for cycles fitted with child seats or tags.

ALSO PLEASE NOTE: Apart from retracing your route, another option for your return to Kelling Heath is to follow the quiet lanes of the Norfolk Coast Cycleway, a 59-mile route that travels from Cromer to King's Lynn (not to mention an extension to Great Yarmouth). A map pack detailing the Norfolk Coast Cycleway is available from the cycle hire centre, price £2.

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

Leave the Kelling Heath site by its main entrance, turning left at the road junction and dropping down the short but steep hill **GREAT CARE**. Just before the bridge by Weybourne Station (North Norfolk Railway) turn right through the large gap in the hedge. Follow the grassy track which runs parallel to the railway (heading for Sheringham).

Weybourne Station and nearby Sheringham Park (with its 40-foot viewing tower) are well worth visits. But you probably won't have time today... instead, ask for our Sheringham Explorer route for another day.

Follow the twists and turns of the track (at all forks keep to the left) until you reach the back entrance gate to Sheringham Park (as you approach the park the track may become busy with other people, so please ride slowly). Just before this section you will have to negotiate a barrier - but it is easy.

Pass through the gate into Sheringham Park (which is owned by the National Trust). Continue straight on to where the path becomes tarmac. Continue straight on, ignoring the path that goes off to your right. As you leave the park (across a cattle grid) you join a quiet lane that leads into the village of Upper Sheringham. At the junction with the 'Give Way' sign continue straight on, passing All Saints Church (note the water feature that once supplied the village). This road (Sheringham Road) bends sharply to the left **CARE** and you follow it for one mile into Sheringham. At the t-junction with the main road **GREAT CARE** cross straight over into Church Street. Cross the railway bridge and turn right into Station Approach.

After passing the Sheringham Station of the North Norfolk Railway (pause to explore, or try the tearoom - or hire your cycles on another day for our Huff & Puff ride, which includes a trip on the railway) continue on to the t-junction. Turn left **CARE** at the t-junction then first right into Melbourne Road (don't be confused by the arrow painted on the road, it is not one way).



At the next junction turn right and then immediately left into Barford Road, following this road through its zig-zags to its end. At the t-junction turn left and then right into Priory Road. As you enter Priory Road turn immediately right **CARE** to take the path beside the stream (technically this short section is a footpath - so you may need to walk if others are present).

At the end of the path turn right on to the road and pass under the railway bridge, then immediately left on to a path. Follow this path to its end (taking **CARE** as you cross the small bridge over the stream). At the next road junction continue straight on (signposted Beeston Priory). At this point there is an optional detour to visit the ruins of the priory and/or the Priory Maze and Gardens (which include the excellent Foxgloves Tearoom). There is an admission charge for the maze, but access to the tearoom is free).

DETOUR to Beeston Regis Priory and the Priory Maze (1.5 miles there and back).

Passing Church Lane on your left continue straight ahead, over the gravel road and on to the track. At the end of this short track (say hello to the horses) turn right on to a grass track (signposted Beeston Regis Priory). The priory is now on your left. It is administered by English Heritage and admission is free.

If you wish to visit the maze and tearoom continue along the grass track. After a short distance you will reach the main coast road. Dismount here and turn right to walk along the wide grass verge to reach the entrance to the Priory Maze and Foxgloves Tearoom. Cycles can be locked under the group of trees that you will see to your right as you view the front of the tearoom building.

Once you have finished exploring here retrace your route to Church Lane. Decide now if you wish to continue your ride to Cromer, or retrace the route to return to Kelling Heath.

Continuing to Cromer (a further 4.5 miles each way from this point)

Turn into Church Lane and go to the end of the road where you turn right through a narrow entrance to a footpath which runs beside the Sheringham to Cromer railway (please dismount if people are walking - this is only a short section and once you reach the allotments it is legal to cycle again).

Follow the track past the allotments (after which it curves to the right). In a short while you will reach the main coast road. Cross straight over **GREAT CARE** to take the road that is just over to your left (signposted 'Norfolk Coast Path'). Follow this short road then turn right at the sign for Hall Farm.

DETOUR: At this point there is a brief optional detour to All Saints Church (Beeston Regis) for, perhaps, a picnic lunch overlooking the sea. Instead of turning right at the sign for Hall Farm turn left to return to the main road. Cross straight over **EXTREME CARE HERE** and simply follow the path to the church. Use the right hand path which crosses over the railway, rather than the left path which is the entrance to a caravan park.

Retrace your route to return to the sign for Hall Farm to continue the ride to Cromer.

After turning at the sign for Hall Farm continue straight on, heading gently uphill towards the woods. At the junction with other tracks turn left (signposted 'Norfolk Coast Path'). Ignore the right hand track that soon appears and continue straight on, ignoring all other tracks until you reach a junction with a road. At the road turn left.

As you drop down this road note the Shirehorse Centre to your left (another excellent visit option). Just past the Links Hotel and just before the railway bridge beside West Runton Station turn right into Station Close, which runs beside the golf course. (If you are thirsty at this point continue over the bridge for a short distance into



West Runton - dismount at the main road and turn right to walk to The Cat's Whiskers Tearoom, or opposite to The Village Inn).

Follow the road beside the golf course which, after a short while, crosses the fairway - so watch out!!! After crossing the fairway turn left on to the path in front of the fence (signposted 'Public Path'). At a fork in the track take the right fork. Ignore all other turnings and continue straight on until you reach a road.

Turn left on to the road, passing under two high bridges and then take the next turning on the right into Mill Lane. This road eventually becomes a track - continue straight on until you reach a railway bridge. Turn right to cross over the bridge and then left at the road. Follow this road through the housing estate to its junction with the main road. Turn left on to the main road **CARE** for a short section into Cromer.

Phew! You made it!! Now all you have to do is get back!!!

As you descend the hill into the town you reach a mini-roundabout. Turn left here (Beach Road) for a quiet route to the seafront, or continue straight on for the town centre. Either way, just ahead of this roundabout please note the large blue signpost for the 'Norfolk Coast Cycleway', as you may want to use this route to return to Kelling Heath (see later).

There are various places for refreshment in Cromer, on the seafront (the Rocket Cafe is excellent) and in town. However, as this is a town, please ensure that you lock your cycles while exploring and please remove any pannier bags. Places to visit include Cromer Pier (and its famous theatre), the local museum, the lifeboat museum, and Cromer Parish Church which has the tallest tower in Norfolk (and worth the climb if it is open). As you look out to sea there is no land until you reach the North Pole! It is the reason why the area often enjoys dramatic skies and bright light, making it a favourite with artists. The Tourist Information Centre (by the town car park) is open every day.

The return to Kelling Heath

There are two options.

1 Simply retrace your route (making a round trip of some 19 miles)

For a slight variation, when you return to the railway bridge after passing through the Cromer housing estate (Sandy Road), instead of crossing the bridge you can continue straight on... taking the uphill track that appears ahead of you (signposted 'Norfolk Coast Path'). Follow this wide track, eventually passing under a railway bridge just before reaching a road. Turn right on to the road to enter the village of East Runton. Turn left just before the pond and continue straight on to rejoin your original track (signposted 'Public Bridleway').

2 On quiet lanes via the Norfolk Coast Cycleway (making a round trip of some 22 miles)

Return to the mini-roundabout and find the large blue sign for the 'Norfolk Coast Cycleway'. Turn into Hall Road. You are following the direction that is signposted 'King's Lynn 59 miles' (much of this route is signposted with the regional cycle route 30 symbol, which appears in blue and white).

The route climbs steadily out of Cromer (passing the privately owned Cromer Hall). Eventually you pass under a railway bridge, and come to a fork in the road. Take the right fork (signposted 'Felbrigg Hall').

At the top of the hill cross straight over **GREAT CARE** into the grounds of the National Trust property Felbrigg Hall. Follow this path to the hall (teas and toilets) until you reach a gate with a sign 'Estate Vehicles Only'. Pass through this gate to continue along the path. When you reach the exit turn left



on to the road.

At the next road junction continue straight on. At the next t-junction turn right. At the next junction (marked by the tall stone of Aylmerton Cross, once used for religious gatherings and rumoured to cover a subterranean passage!) turn left.

Follow this road through the village of Gresham. Shortly after this you will start a steady climb (the radio tower that eventually comes into view over to your left marks the highest point in Norfolk!). At the top of the hill continue on past the staggered crossroads (signposted 'Sheringham' and 'Matlaske' respectively). Take the next turning left (not signposted at the time of writing).

At the t-junction continue straight on (signposted 'Bodham'). Ignore all turnings and continue straight on, passing the church that eventually you will see ahead of you. Ignore all turnings and continue to follow the signs for 'Holt' and 'Kelling'. Eventually you will come to the main Holt/Cromer road.

Cross straight over onto Bridge Road. Continue straight along this road, over the railway bridge and up to the cross roads. Turn right. This road can be busy at times, please watch younger riders. Continue along this road past Emcy Garden Centre. After a short distance, on your right you will see a vehicle width track with a public footpath signpost pointing right. Turn right. Keeping right follow this path until you reach the white railway crossing gate next to a cottage. Cross the track taking care and always looking for trains. Please shut the gates on either side as you cross. Continue straight ahead along the track until you reach the bottom of the site. Continue straight on the tarmac road until you reach the village centre.

Now... what tales will you have to tell in the bar tonight!

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