

The Skylark Ride



Tempsford Airfield

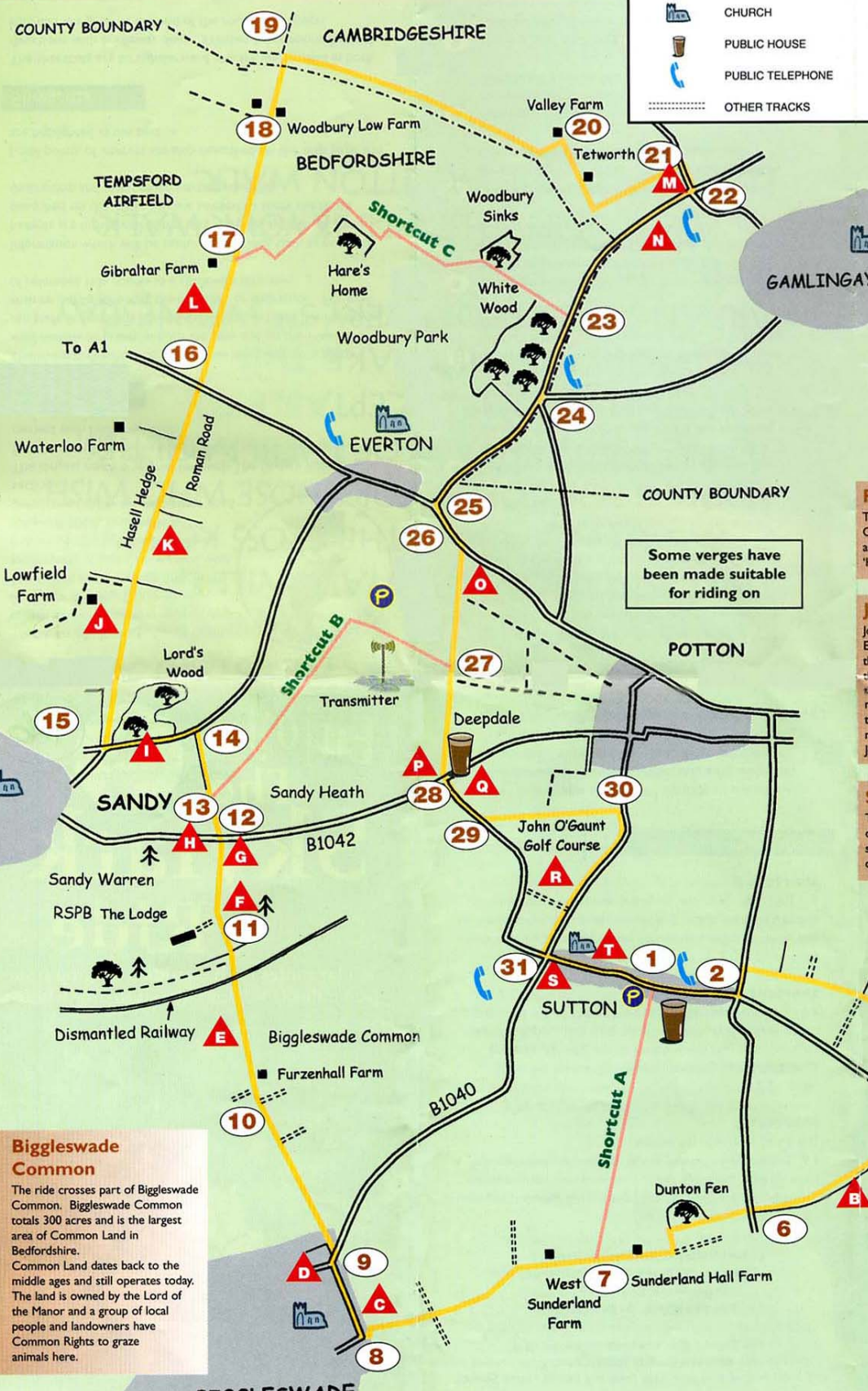
This was a Second World War aerodrome opened in 1941 and used by the Special Operations Executive. It was from this base that agents and equipment were dropped into German occupied Europe. It was closed to the RAF in 1947, although much of the runway remains. At Gibraltar Farm there is a memorial to the agents and airmen who lost their lives.

Key

- THE SKYLARK RIDE
- ROAD SECTIONS
- SHORT-CUT
- INFORMATION FOR RIDER
- OTHER BRIDLEWAYS
- PARKING
- CHURCH
- PUBLIC HOUSE
- PUBLIC TELEPHONE
- OTHER TRACKS

Rider Information

Track prone to rabbit holes	Track prone to be very muddy
Track prone to rabbit holes	Disused airfield, farm machinery
Busy residential road	Grazing animals
Busy junction with residential and main roads	Quiet but fast road
Grazing animals	Barking dogs
Busy driveway at start and end of working day	Fast road crossing
Busy car park at weekends	Quarry active Monday - Saturday, no blasting, just lorries
Fast road crossing	Golf course
Fast road	Fast road crossing
	Blind bend and ford



The Sandy Heath Transmitter

This tall aerial is visible from all around the route. It transmits all major television channels and local radio to much of Bedfordshire. The programmes are received by telephone or satellite and transmitted from the white section at the top of the aerial. It is also an important link in both mobile and terrestrial telephone networks.

Sandy Warren

In the Middle Ages, rabbit was a great delicacy and it was fashionable among large estates to manage a rabbit warren to ensure a good supply. In 1670 the Manor of Sandy included 1,300 acres of heathland called 'The Warren'. Now much smaller in area, the remains of Sandy Warren is managed by the RSPB as a nature reserve.

Roman Road

The ride follows the line of this Roman Road from Sandy to the Cambridgeshire border. It was constructed in early Roman times and extends to Baldock in the south. The ancient boundary 'Hasell Hedge' follows the line of the road.

John O'Gaunt

John O'Gaunt (1340-1399) was an English Prince, the son of Edward III. He was influential in the politics of the country during the reign of his nephew, Richard II. It was traditionally believed that John O'Gaunt once owned the manor of Sutton and hence the connection between his name and the area. However, it is more likely that his son Henry, the Earl of Derby actually owned the manor. All that remains of the manor today is an oval ditched mound. It is known locally as John O'Gaunt Hill and lies within the John O'Gaunt Golf Course. It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Sutton Bridge

This is the best surviving Medieval bridge in Bedfordshire and dates from the mid 13th Century. It is a footbridge and is made of sandstone. It is likely to have been built when Sutton Park was created, as a grand feature at its edge.

Biggleswade Common

The ride crosses part of Biggleswade Common. Biggleswade Common totals 300 acres and is the largest area of Common Land in Bedfordshire. Common Land dates back to the middle ages and still operates today. The land is owned by the Lord of the Manor and a group of local people and landowners have Common Rights to graze animals here.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Parking

Off road parking is available at two places and marked on the map as P

- Mr Stocker, Oak Farm, Deepdale, Potton tel 01767 691076
- Mrs C Rickwood, Manor Farm, Sutton, Beds tel 01767 260240

Please telephone in advance to arrange parking and for directions. A nominal fee may be charged.

Food and Refreshments

There are two pubs on the route, both have gardens and are happy to accept both horses and riders.

- The John O'Gaunt, High Street, Sutton. 01767 260377
- The Locomotive, Deepdale, Potton. 01767 260365

You are advised to telephone beforehand to check that food is available on any particular day.

Maps

This ride is covered by Ordnance Survey Landranger sheet no.153 and Pathfinder No.s 1002,1003,1025 and 1026.

Public toilets

There are no facilities on the route itself. However there are public toilets in Biggleswade, Sandy and Potton town centres.

Can you help?

If you spot any problems whilst riding The Skylark Ride, it would help if you could report them to us at the Project Office. tel 01767 601042

Emergency Information

Vet

- Helen Papworth Veterinary Surgeon, The Shuttleworth Centre, Old Warden Park, Biggleswade, Beds. tel 01767 627317
- Dr R K Medd, 49 Mill Street, Gamlingay, Cambs. tel 01767 651569

Hospitals

Hospitals with accident and emergency departments: Bedford Hospital South Wing, Lister Hospital, Stevenage, Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge

