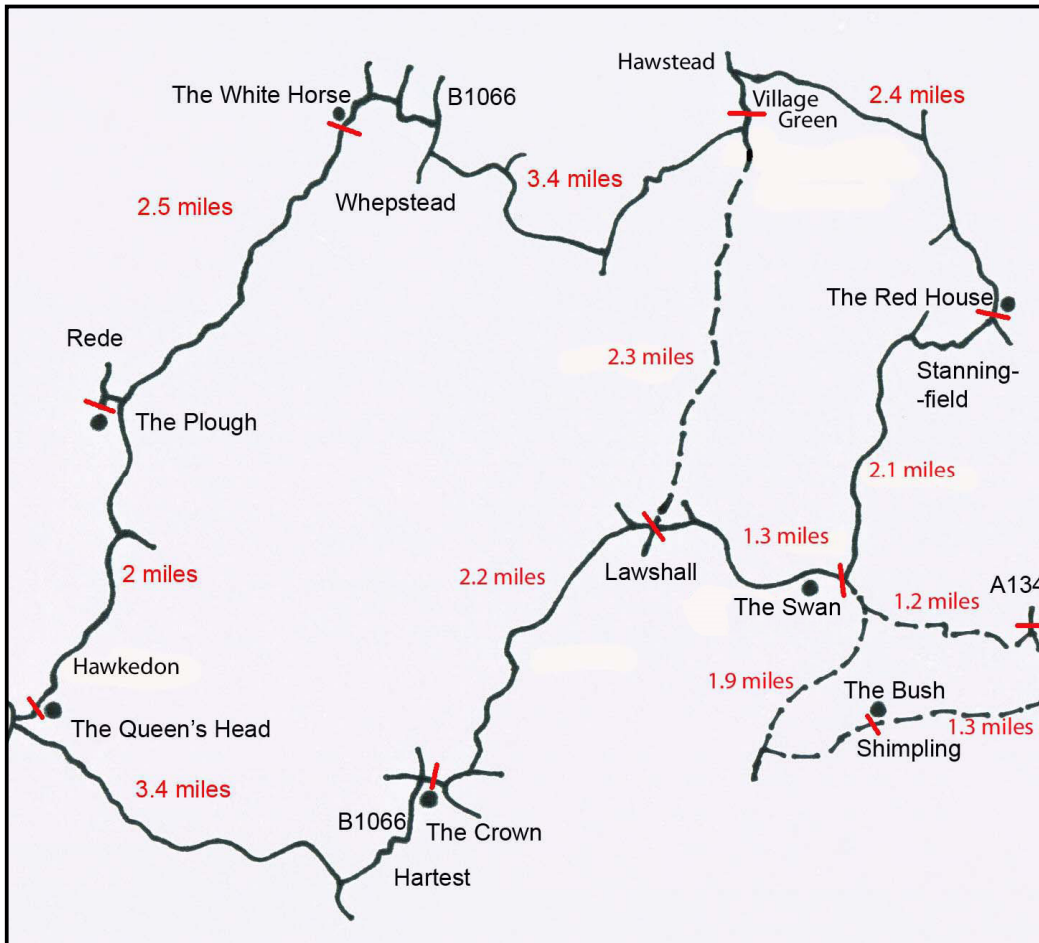


A Cycle Ride Around Hawstead

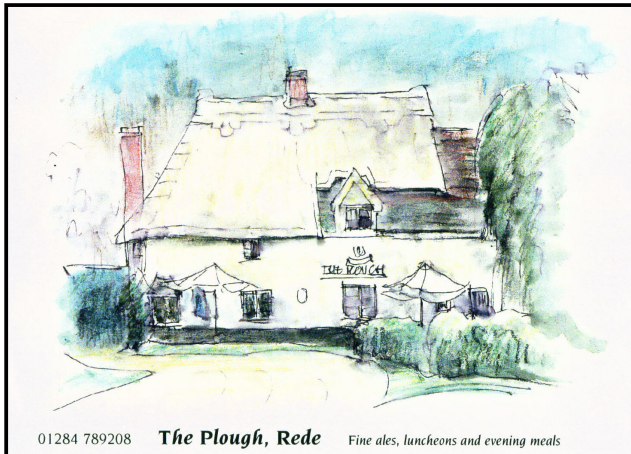
(Updated from an article in the Hawstead Journal a few years ago)



It's time to get your bicycle out and go for a gentle spin around the Suffolk lanes. The benefit of the suggested route here is that you get to visit lots of pubs – but you'll need to check opening times if your thirst is going to be safely quenched!

Start at the Village Hall car park on the Green and head south towards Lawshall, soon turning right along Whepstead Road by the post box. Keep going uphill past village houses and on the flat at the top turn right along Straight Road and through Mickey Green to the B1066. Now this cycle ride hardly touches A or B roads and here you've just a few hundred yards before you turn left and zoom down the hill. There's a sharp right-hand turn at the bottom so keep your hands on the brakes: turn left at the junction and you'll have *The White Horse* in sight.

Continuing on the same road, the land undulates and after another 2.4 miles the next village, Rede is reached. Visiting *The Plough* means a slight detour involving a right and then left turn, but it's only a few hundred yards – and it's a lovely building so go and have a look even if you're not imbibing. Then it's only 2 further miles to reach Hawkedon, but take care! The plateau land



continues for a while, but then there's a hilly bit as we descend quite steeply to the valley of one of the River Glem's tributaries. Luckily, at the top of the other side stands the welcoming free house *The Queen's Head*. Refreshments my well be in order! Then we turn left after the church, and there's a quiet, narrow lane which follows another stream valley before climbing for a

short stretch to meet the B1066 again. Turn left and after about half a mile you'll start entering Hartest. Turn right at the Green and you'll find *The Crown* half-hidden on the right amidst trees. It's 3.4 miles from Hawkedon, but only about 1 mile of this has been along the B road.

Turning right out of the Crown car park, we go over a small bridge and then turn left, along a very narrow road which leads us firstly uphill, and then again in a more undulating fashion amongst fields towards Lawshall. Joining a road from the left (Golden Lane) we soon come to a crossroads. Now here's a choice: turn left and you could complete your journey if short of time (it's the dotted line on the map – 2.3 miles): or continue across, and along Lambs Lane. Doing the latter, turn right at the next junction and keep going through this rather spread out village. If you pass All Saints Church on your left you're on the right road and a few yards further brings you to *The Swan*: at the next junction (by the Evangelical Church) you've got another choice: turn left along Donkey Lane and make for *The Red House* (2.1 miles) or continue, turning right after just a hundred yards or so, but then doing a left-left-left loop back to Donkey Lane again in order to take in a visit to *The Bush* in Shimpling. (This unfortunately necessitates a short stretch along the A134 and adds 4.4 miles to the journey.)

Donkey Lane takes us over to the village of Stanningfield, generally in a downhill direction: but shortly after the 'back entrance' to Coldham Hall, there's a right hand turn to take, then up a short hill past Stanningfield Church. It's but a short stretch now into the village and *The Red House*. After this watering hole comes the home stretch: the road is flat heading towards Great Whelnetham and then we take a left and travel down Bell's Lane, past Flat Farm and Brook Green, and then Hawstead Village Green comes into view with the Village Hall ahead in the distance. Turn left at the T-junction and you'll be back at the starting point in a jiffy.

Distances

- Short ride (missing Stanningfield and Shimpling) 15.8 miles
- Medium ride (missing Shimpling) 19.3 miles
- Full Monty 23.7 miles