

Ride 1

Cyclist comment: The route has no cross-field sections. Some parts (particularly the Byways) may be muddy after prolonged wet periods.

UPPER DEAN and YELDEN

Approximately 13 miles (with option to create two shorter rides of 8 and 9 miles; can be extended by using Ride 2)

Ride described clockwise, as this provides best canter opportunities, but can be ridden either way. No gates on full route but two on the option to shorten or split the ride. This route is mostly on field headlands and farm tracks with several grassy canterers. There is about 2 miles of roadwork on the full route, rather more if the route is split into two rides, on generally quiet lanes as described.

Parking is available with advance notice at High Street Farm, Upper Dean (07803 037237). The farm offers B&B for horses and riders and the pub serves food Weds to Sun.

1. Starting from High Street Farm (GR 048677) turn right – or from the Three Compasses (marked as 1A, just to west) turn left – through Upper Dean on the road (quiet village road), past Dalton Hall and playing fields on left to start of Byway on right (signed).
2. Follow this Byway (closed to vehicles Oct to May) about 1¼ miles, entering woods after about one mile. The Byway bears to right and comes to a junction. Follow this Byway around to the right for another mile past Swineshead Wood. The grassy track becomes a lane and emerges at the road by Swineshead Church.
3. Turn right on the road, for about 300 yards. Turn left into Green Lane and follow this lane, which becomes a Bridleway (BW), for about 400 yards. As the lane bears right into a driveway, continue straight on towards field gate and turn left between hedge and field fence. The BW emerges over a bridge into a field; continue straight ahead with hedge on left along headland, bearing right up hill to road by Grange Farm.
4. Turn right on to road and continue for about 250 yards to BW on left (signed). Follow this BW for ½ mile down track and straight on across grassy meadow with wood to your right. In the far corner of this field, the BW passes through a gap in the trees (signed) on to a concrete track through the woods.
5. Follow this track to T-junction with wider track. Turn right here (signed) and follow track until it emerges from wood.
6. Turn left here with wood on your left and follow grassy track for just under one mile. As the track approaches Worley's Wood and bears to the right, look out for gate on left with BW sign and gap to side of gate.
7. Turn left here and follow track through woods for ½ mile. Shortly after BW emerges from woods, take BW (signed) to right and follow this for about ¾ mile to road.
8. Turn left on road for 300 yards and turn right onto Three Shires Way BW (signed). Follow this BW for one mile (taking care to take the grassy track through copse on right of farm track after about ½ mile – signed). Pass two mobile phone masts at top of hill and continue straight on, ignoring signed BWs to left. Eventually BW turns into headland with hedge on left – continue for about a mile to road.
9. Turn left on road and descend past ancient motte and bailey to edge of Yelden. (You may continue about 400 yards into village to The Chequers pub, which offers food and is horse-friendly). Closed Monday & Tuesday lunchtime. The Three Shires Way is signed to right – follow this for just over ½ mile to BW (signed) on right.
10. Take this BW uphill and round to left to diagonally opposite corner of field. At this corner, the BW turns right through gap in hedge (signed). Do not continue on round field downhill.
11. BW soon joins a farm track – turn left and follow track for a total of about ¾ mile, with two right turns along its route, to houses next to track, at Dean Lodge.
12. Follow BW signs to turn left down drive. Follow down drive to road, turn left on road to Three Compasses – continue another ¼ mile if you parked at High Street Farm, which is about 200 yards after the road bends to left.

Option to shorten or split route: Turn right here through gate into grassy field and follow fence line on your right (take care of badger sett towards end of this field). Through gate and follow headland round with wood on your right. BW passes through gap in hedge (signed) as it descends to bridge then up to concrete track. Turn right here and follow track and then road to Upper Dean (about 1½ miles).

This shortens the route to about eight miles. If you later

Ride 1

Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of her Majesty's Stationery Office (C) Crown Copyright 100017665 2008

