



Longer descriptions of Rides 2019

Wed 1 May. HAMBLETON BLUEBELLS 6 miles. This Ride is on private tracks, courtesy of Anglian Water, and open for riding on this day only. It offers unrivalled views of the water from the Hambleton Peninsula and the bluebells should be at their best. The parking is on the grass verge and is limited to 25 vehicles. Apart from the half mile or so to and from the parking, the riding is on a private track only used by anglers' cars, cyclists and walkers. Because of an accident a few years ago, this is a walk and trot Ride and you must NOT take your horse down to the water's edge. There are a number of gates, some of which have been improved since last year - stewards man all the tricky ones.

Priority will be given to entrants bringing two or more riders. Local riders-in will not be limited. Entrants arriving by vehicle MUST NOT arrive before 3.15pm and MUST obey the precise instructions of the parking stewards. Riders should come prepared for a swift commencement of and completion/departure from the Ride as there is not space on the verge safely to wash down horses etc. Anglian Water will be contacted the week before to put out warning notices to cyclists. You must bring your own Hi-viz as there as there will not be a Ride Secretary from whom to collect. The last gates steward will give out rosettes.

Riders arriving early could have the option of going around the track twice should they wish, making a total length of 11 miles. Companions are welcome to cycle round with their rider/s.

There is a good pub in Hambleton village but please do not stop there on the way round as the organisers have to poo-pick the track at the end of the event.

Saturday 18 May. GUMLEY 6.5 or 9.5. miles. Lead-rein route up to 2miles completely off-road near venue. This is a NEW Ride through some of Leicestershire's most scenic countryside. It will include Foxton Locks, (*this can attract many visitors*), and will use bridleways, permissive routes (*for the day only*), and quiet country roads mostly with good verges. The route passes through two pretty villages with good pubs (*horses welcome!*) and has some excellent cantering opportunities. There will be gates, but difficult ones will be stewarded, and you will encounter cattle. There are three canal crossings on good bridges.

Friday 21 June. PRESTWOLD EVENING FLEXI-RIDE. LAST CHANCE to explore the full extent of the Prestwold Estate near Loughborough. All lengths from short lead-rein to 12 miles on grassy field edges. Build your own route from map sent to all entrants. Short length of road from Venue, otherwise 99% off-road except for road crossings. Start time 4pm-7pm. Collection for Air Ambulance.

Sunday 7 July. EXTON ESTATE This Ride is a much-loved favourite. The 10-mile route is entirely on the private estate of Exton Park (*North of Rutland Water*) and we use it by courtesy of Lord Gainsborough. It uses BWs, and private tracks and Estate roads not normally available to horse riders. The countryside is beautiful and varied and you are free to enjoy it without the fear of traffic. The route is easy to follow; many people come back again and again such is the uniqueness of Exton. There will be a collection in aid of Exton Church.

Sunday 21 July. HICKS LODGE Set in the National Forest, the ride starts at Short Heath on a permissive grass bridleway, which on crossing a road becomes a track. The route then follows the canal towpath to [Moira Furnace](#) where you cross the canal on a swing bridge - a steward will be available here to assist if necessary. On leaving the canalside, the route follows the road (*hopefully we may have the path through the housing estate in time, but not certain*) a short way to a multiuse trail which leads to Hicks Lodge.

Here there is a lovely grass bridleway through Shellbrook Wood, with lots of cantering opportunities. The wood is also used by a separate cycle trail and the trails do cross at points. Returning to [Hicks Lodge](#), if you wish you can leave your horse in the corral whilst you get some refreshments. Leaving Hicks Lodge, the route follows roads for a mile (*I'm still trying to see if we can get access to avoid some/all of this road work, but looking unlikely*) until you come to a gate into a field - there will be a steward here to assist with the gate, however there are another two gates to negotiate independently. There may be stock in the fields.

The route then takes you onto Boothorpe/Hanging Hill permissive bridleways where you can canter across the beautiful parkland and enjoy the views. This ends on a track, leading down to a road which you cross. Traffic can be quite fast on this road but you have good visibility. After crossing the road, those doing the shorter route follow the track to Conkers Discovery car park, at the end of which there is a tunnel through which a small train also runs - a steward will be available here to assist if necessary. Those wishing to extend the ride turn in the opposite direction on a track alongside the road to a stepover towards Albert Village Lake. The route follows the lakeside and then turns away to cross a road where the track leads through woods to eventually return to the start.

Sunday 4 August. THE BORDERS RIDE A NEW Ride of about 2-3 hours with the option of a shorter route. Enjoy unspoilt countryside using bridleways, tracks, part of an old wartime airfield, and country roads in South Leicestershire and Northamptonshire around the Welford area. Some of the route will be permissive 'on the day' and you will cross the source of the River Avon. There will be gates, bridges, and you may encounter livestock (*including cattle*).

Sunday 18 August. SOMERBY HARVEST-TIME RIDE 10 or 14 miles in the mainly mixed farming country of quiet, rural, East Leicestershire. Some gates, also hills, and possible (*shallow*) fords. A mix of quiet roads, bridleways and field roads. Spectacular scenery, beautiful villages. Collection for Air Ambulance.

Saturday 31 August. HELPSTON HEATH 9miles A NEW Ride north of Peterborough using mostly bridleways and quiet country roads. Mainly arable land alongside some wooded areas, this completely new route in John Clare (*poet*) country has far-reaching views and really gets off the beaten track. No gates to open. Possibility of cattle fenced off in an adjacent field on a very small section of the ride. Two wooden bridleway bridges. Lots of wildlife may be seen, especially deer and red kites.

Saturday 21 September. RUTLAND WATER LAGOONS 7 & 9 miles. Tracks alongside Lagoons by courtesy of Anglian Water. This Ride was offered as the Manton-Brooke Ride last year. It has two stewarded crossings of the busy A6003; a stewarded railway crossing; a short stretch on pavement/verge adjacent to the busy stretch of the A6003 before Sounding Bridge, following which bridleway E358 now has the vegetation previously concealing the emergence of trains from the Manton tunnel cut back; several un-stewarded gates and a field of cattle.

It also includes a unique chance to ride on a part of Rutland Water estate, past the Lagoons provided for the wading birds, which is normally inaccessible to horse riders. It takes in the deserted plague village of Martinsthorpe as well as the pretty village of Brooke, with an option to go past an alpaca farm, then by Brooke Priory. Mainly BWs and off-road tracks with some quiet tarmacked roads.