

## Marriotts Way and Northern Woodlands Cycle Tour



### Safety

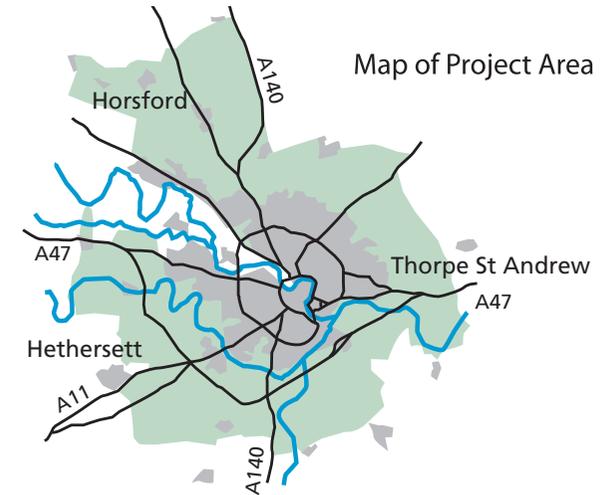
- Before starting your journey, check your bike is safe to ride.
- Although the route follows quiet lanes, you will meet other vehicles; ride in single file on narrow or busy lanes and never more than two abreast.
- Take care crossing main roads.
- Wear a safety helmet and brightly coloured clothing.
- Cyclists give way to horses and pedestrians and horses give way to pedestrians. Warn horses and pedestrians of your approach, slow down and give them room.
- **BE SEEN** – after dark wear reflective clothing and use lights.
- Signal before manoeuvre, motorists need to know what you are doing.
- Routes in and out of Norwich are busy during rush hour periods – take care at all times.



### Norwich Fringe Project

This leaflet is one of a series of self-guided trails that will help you enjoy the Norwich Fringe countryside.

Norwich Fringe Project aims to promote informal recreational facilities in the countryside surrounding Norwich.



**Norwich Fringe Countryside Management Project**  
Mile Cross Central Depot Admin Building  
Mile Cross Road, Norwich NR3 2DY  
Telephone: 01603 423303

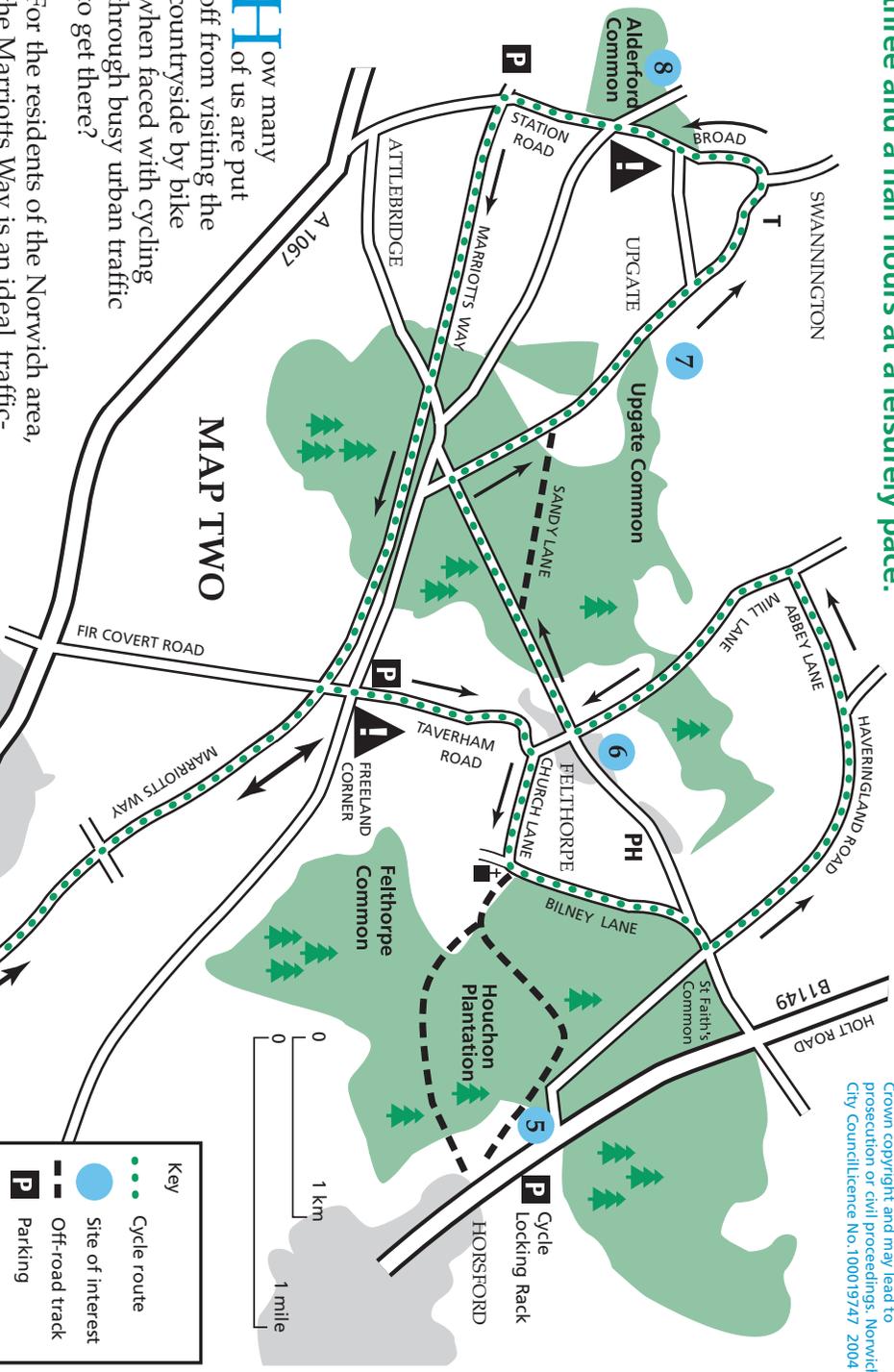
Email: [fringe.ncc@gtnet.gov.uk](mailto:fringe.ncc@gtnet.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.norwichfringeproject.co.uk](http://www.norwichfringeproject.co.uk)



# Marriotts Way and Northern Woodlands Cycle Tour

A distance of 20 miles, or 32 km, it should take about three and a half hours at a leisurely pace.

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**H**ow many of us are put off from visiting the countryside by bike when faced with cycling through busy urban traffic to get there?

For the residents of the Norwich area, the Marriotts Way is an ideal, traffic-free route between the city centre and the quiet lanes and woodlands of the modern fringe. Now adopted as part of Route One on the National Cycle Route, much of its surface has been upgraded to suit all weather cycling.

From New Mills in the heart of the city the route follows the Marriotts Way to Freeland Corner, north of Taverham. It then follows quiet lanes through Felthorpe and Swannington, rejoining the Marriotts Way at Attlebridge.

Please find the route description for features 1-8 on the next page.



Trail continues from here

**Key**

- Cycle route
- Site of interest
- Off-road track
- Parking
- Telephone
- Public House
- Busy Road

Car parking is indicated on the map at several places along the route, for those wishing to bring their bikes by car - cycle locking racks can be found at St Faiths Common.

A few off road detours or short cuts are highlighted, however it is recommended that they be only used during the summer months as in winter they can be extremely muddy.

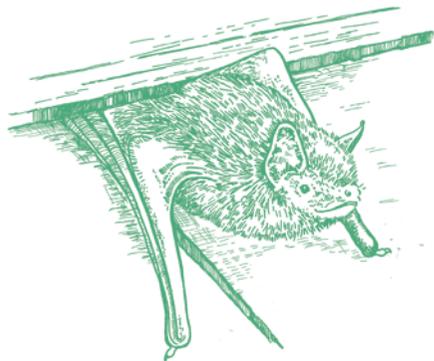
Leaflet design by Ruth Murray

# Marriotts Way and Northern Woodlands Cycle Tour

The tour is approximately 20 miles, or 32 kms.

1. Starting at **Barn Road** roundabout, adjacent to the Halfords Superstore, the route passes northwards through the site of the old City Station. All that remains of the station, which closed in 1969, are the gentlemen's toilet on the other side of St Crispins and the engine shed at New Mills. The railway opened in 1882 and was operated by the Midland and Great Northern Joint Company. Lines ran to Cromer, Great Yarmouth, and Kings Lynn via Melton Constable. The line to Cromer included the present North Norfolk Steam Railway. In its hey-day 140 passenger and 40 freight trains ran each weekday.

2. Travelling out of the city, the route passes **Sweet Briar Marshes**, a site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), an area nationally important for wildlife as it contains many rare plants. On a summer evening Sand Martins as well as Pipistrelle and Noctule bats are busy catching insects over the marsh.



3. Wildlife has been quick to colonise since the lines to **Attlebridge** were lifted in 1973. Harebells, Canadian Fleabane and Hoary Mullein can be found along the track. Buddleia, the 'butterfly bush' is common and attracts many butterflies. Parties of Long-tailed tits are frequently seen in trackside bushes and shrubs.

4. The route crosses the **River Wensum**, which flows 33 miles to Norwich from its source near Whissonsett. It is a slow meandering river with an average fall of less than 3.5 feet per mile. An ideal habitat for wildlife, it is a stronghold for otters and in summer is a great place for watching dragonflies.



5. **St Faith's Common** and the surrounding area is predominantly conifer plantations, however the landscape used to look completely different with heathland cleared of trees for firewood and grazed by sheep. Close to here was once a pub called the Flagcutters. It took its name from the practice of cutting flags of turf, used for fuel, from the heath.

Much of the heath vegetation can still be found, such as gorse, broom, birch and oak. The only remaining heather survives where it is not shaded in woodland rides and beneath power lines.

6. **Felthorpe** village is a convenient wayside stop with a public house for refreshments.

7. **Ugate Common** is another SSSI noted for a wide variety of habitats in a small area. A series of pools along a spring line are a haven for dragonflies and damselflies. In the spring hundreds of toads migrate up to three miles to congregate here for a frenzy of spawning!

Flowing along the northern boundary of the common the **Swannington Beck** has a thriving population of trout and is home to the elusive otter.



8. **Alderford Common** is covered in scrub providing the ideal home for many migrant songbirds. The nightingale can be heard on summer evenings with bursts of melodic sounds sung from the safety of thick shrubs. Once the site was dug for marl (clay), which was used to improve the surrounding sandy soils. Chalk was also excavated and burnt in a kiln on the site for use as agricultural quicklime. The excavated pit now contains rare chalk grassland with a wide variety of plants, including five species of orchid.

