

## The Route

**Where:** Norwich station to Whitwell

**National Route:** 1

**Distance:** 13 from Lower Hellesdon to Whitwell, 21 miles from Norwich to Aylsham, 30 miles from Norwich to Wroxham.

**Terrain:** railway path – level and well-surfaced as far as Whitwell. On-road sections through Norwich.

**Public transport:** mainline railway station at Norwich, steam railway from Aylsham to Wroxham, mainline station at Wroxham.

**Bike hire:** Broadland Cycle Hire, Hoveton (nr Wroxham) - 01603 783096

**Maps:** National Cycle Network map NN1B Hull to Fakenham - £2.99 from Sustrans

**OS maps:** Explorer OL40 and 252, Landranger 133 and 134.

**Tourist information:** Norwich TIC - 01603 727927, Aylsham TIC - 01263 733903.

**Towns to search for on Sustrans website mapping:** Norwich, Lenwade, Drayton, Whitwell.

## The Marriott's Way



**Cyclists crossing the River Wensum on the Marriott's Way**

The Marriott's Way follows the trackbed of a decommissioned railway, and is named after William Marriott, who was chief engineer and manager of the Midland & Great Northern Railway for 41 years.

Emerging from the railway station, turn left (south-west) following the river past new housing, cinemas and night clubs. At the first bridge turn right and cross the river on the Novisad Friendship Bridge and then turn right to join National Route 1 northwards up King Street. National Route 1 continues on-road through the City Centre, before crossing the ring road near the Barn Road roundabout where the route joins the traffic-free Marriott's Way.

The route begins close to the River Wensum, and continues through farmland, woodland and water meadows. Look out for the former stations at Hellesdon, Attlebridge, Lenwade, and Whitwell. It's also worth keeping an eye open for the local flora and fauna, as the closure of the railway was good news for the trackside vegetation and the wildlife that now inhabits it. Little Egrets have been spotted on the route, and there are frequent sightings of jays, magpies, green woodpeckers and wrens. A wide range of plantlife, including primroses

and wild strawberries, has attracted a rich variety of insects, particularly butterflies and moths. Where the verges are wetter, marsh-marigolds, meadowsweet, Norfolk reeds and horsetail also thrive.

National Route 1 follows the Marriott's Way to Whitwell, then continues eastwards on road to Fakenham. The Marriott's Way continues to Reepham and Aylsham, but the route beyond Whitwell is less well surfaced, and best tackled in dry conditions on a mountain bike. The narrow gauge Bure Valley Railway runs from Aylsham to Wroxham, and the Bure Valley Walk (cycling permitted) continues alongside it. Again, this path is not well surfaced, and it is narrow in places, but the railway will carry bikes. There is a mainline rail service from Wroxham to Norwich.

Visitor attractions just off the route include the Norfolk Wildlife Centre and Country Park at Great Witchingham, a 30-acre park with a play area and a huge range of animals including wolves and prairie dogs; and the Dinosaur Park near Lenwade. On a more literary note, Parson James Woodforde, whose diary provides a fascinating insight into life in the 18th century, lived for many years at Weston Longville.