

# The Stratford Greenway



## The Route

**Where:** Stratford-upon-Avon to Long Marston

**National Route:** 5

**Distance:** 5 miles each way

**Terrain:** flat and traffic-free railway path

**Public transport:** railway station at Stratford-upon-Avon

**Bike hire:** Clarke's Cycles, Guild Street, Stratford-upon-Avon - 01789 205057

**Maps:** Leaflet for the Stratford Greenway available locally or from the Country Parks Information Service on 01827 872660  
**OS maps:** Explorer 205, Landranger 151

**Tourist information:** Stratford-upon-Avon TIC - 0870 160 7930

**Towns to search for on Sustrans website mapping:** Stratford-upon-Avon, Long Marston (Warwickshire)



One of the mileposts along the route.

The Stratford Greenway follows the course of part of the Honeybourne Line, a single track railway built in 1859 by the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway (its nickname - the Old Worse and Worse). The line survived the Beeching cuts of the 1960s, but was closed after the derailment of a train in 1976 caused extensive damage to the track. Twenty-two years later, it was reopened as a trail for walkers and cyclists after Warwickshire County Council, working with Sustrans, sold the railway ballast to help cover the cost.

Stratford-upon-Avon is inevitably very touristy, but remains an extremely attractive place. The town caught on fairly quickly to the marketing potential of its Shakespeare connection (it held its first Shakespeare festival in 1769) and, possibly as a result of this, it has retained a rather higher proportion of its historic buildings than most market towns.

The route is signed southwards from the railway station at Stratford-upon-Avon,

and the railway path begins near the racecourse at Seven Meadows Road. If you keep quiet, you may hear the song of the skylarks which nest here. There is a picnic area beside the River Avon. The route crosses the Avon using the multi-span Stannals Bridge, and then crosses the Stour. The route continues through peaceful countryside to the village of Long Marston. The path has become a refuge for wild plants and animals as intensive farming practices drive them out of the surrounding fields, and as well as fruit and walnut trees, you may spot cowslips, knapweed, wild carrot and tansy.

If you are looking to keep the ride fairly short and traffic-free, Long Marston is the turnaround point. If you want to keep going, National Route 5 continues south-eastwards on-road through Shipston-on-Stour to Banbury (another 25 miles), from where you can catch a direct train back to Stratford-upon-Avon.