

CAR@FREE in The Brecks

Biking and Brewing in Thetford Forest

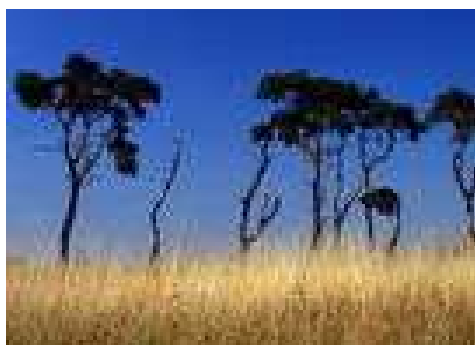
ONE OF A SET OF
CAR FREE ITINERARIES
IN THE EAST OF
ENGLAND'S SPECIAL
LANDSCAPES



- Easy cycle routes on quiet lanes and forest tracks
- Challenging trails in Thetford Forest
- Cycle in the largest lowland pine forest in the UK
- Taste local beers
- Stay in or close to Thetford Forest
- No bike? No problem! Order one for your arrival

Cycling in The Brecks is a great way to enjoy this unique landscape of forests, heaths and farmland. Many of the flat and straight roads have relatively little traffic and the shady, peace of Thetford Forest is an idyllic setting for cycling for all the family or the more adventurous can take the more challenging off-road routes. It will introduce you to two local beer producers where you can sample their brew!

This itinerary suggests ideas for cycling and takes a route through the Forest that will give you a taste of the local beer and starts at Brandon at the Brandon Brewing Company connecting to the Icen Brewery at Mundford. Or you can carry on south for other cycle routes. You can also visit some interesting visitor attractions along the way and take a local produce picnic.



Brecks Pine Belt



Exploring the Brecks by bike



Brandon Brewing Company

Contents

THE ITINERARY – Details of the routes that you can follow and places you can visit
ITINERARY LISTINGS – Contact information for local businesses mentioned in the itinerary
ADDITIONAL LISTINGS – Other useful contact details



THE ITINERARY:

This itinerary suggests a combination of cycle routes that use local roads or are described in detail in the Cycling in the Brecks leaflet pack (see Additional Information for how to get hold of a copy). The roads and lanes referred to are clearly marked on the OS Explorer Map 229.

Brandon to Mundford

You can arrive at Brandon by train or bus. At the nearby **Brandon House Hotel** you can enjoy Brandon's local brew from the **Brandon Brewing Company**. The brewery, only a few minutes cycle away, is in an 18th Century cottage on the High Street, close to river. If you get there between 9am and 1pm on Monday to Saturday, you can buy bottles of Rusty Bucket or Slippery Jack to take away with you.

From Brandon the most direct route to Mundford (10 miles) is along the straight, flat A1065 Mundford Road but it can be busy with heavy traffic.

Brandon: The Little Ouse river runs through Brandon, a bustling town that has made its livelihood from flint, fur and forestry. Collections in the Brandon Heritage Centre illustrate the town's colourful history from the Stone Age to the present. You can hire a rowing boat or take a stroll along the river. In the Market Place you'll find a market



The Little Ouse at Brandon

Brandon to Mundford via the Weeting Area

A more scenic route is to head north on the Brandon Road to Weeting and join a network of easy cycling routes through the village and into Thetford Forest.

If you follow the track north from Weeting along the Pilgrims' Walk it turns west joins the a lane heading north that will take you through the Forest and up to the lane that heads east into Mundford. The Weeting Area for Cyclists leaflet, in the Cycling in the Brecks pack, has details of a 12-mile network of 12 miles of easy cycle routes around the area.

Brandon to Mundford via the more adventurous Flint Hunters' Explorer Trail

The full Flint Hunters' Explorer Trail is a themed circular 15-mile cycle route that takes you from Brandon Heritage Centre to the prehistoric flint mines at Grimes Graves. The route is mostly off road; it is not waymarked and is intended for adult cyclists. See the Cycling in the Brecks pack.

You can follow the northern section of the route out of Brandon towards Santon Downham and on up to Grimes Graves. From here you can join a lane that heads north east and crosses the A134 at Lynford. You can either cycle north on the A134 to Mundford or for a quieter lane, cross the A134 and continue to the next crossroads where you can turn left to Mundford.

Grimes Graves

A flint mine worked between about 2200 and 2500 BC. It is a fascinating Neolithic site that consists of over 350 hollows in the ground marking the location of former mine shafts. Open March to October www.english-heritage.co.uk

THE ITINERARY:

Mundford to Icen Brewery

In Mundford you can stop for lunch at the **Crown Hotel**, which dates back to 1652 when it was a renowned hunting inn. However you might decide to wait for a beer until you reach the Icen Brewery, a mile north on the A1065 Swaffham Road.

Staying in the Mundford area

Mundford is an excellent base for exploring Thetford Forest by bike or venturing further north towards Swaffham. Cyclists are welcome at the **Lynford Hall Hotel**. A 3 star hotel in a Grade 2 listed mansion is built in the Jacobean style and is set in beautiful estate grounds. You may recognise the building, which has featured in several television series including 'Allo Allo' and 'Dad's Army.

If you'd like to stay for two or more nights Wendy Allingham runs a four diamond bed and breakfast (and dinner by arrangement) at **Colveston Manor**, an 18th century farmhouse and working farm.

The **Tithe Barn House** is ideally situated at the edge of Thetford Forest at Ickburgh. Paul and Dawn offer a warm welcome in their four diamond bed and breakfast. From here you can cycle to Brandon or High Lodge Forest Centre.

Cycle routes from Brandon

South of Brandon there are some great cycle trails to be found either side of the B1106 in Thetford Warren and Brandon Country Park.



Icen Brewery was set up by Brendan Moore when he began brewing beer commercially in 1995. The brewery now produces 38 different bottled beers and has its own hop garden. With so many beers to sample from Boadicea Chariot Ale to Wooley Mammoth you could make this into a full day's visit. Take a tour of the brewery and sniff the malt, rub the hops and sample



Brandon Country Park

Leave Brandon on the B1106 heading south. About one mile from the centre of the town on the right is the Brandon Country Park with its beautiful woodland, parkland and ornamental lake which is rich in amphibians and dragonflies. A new visitor centre and tea room is due to open in Summer 2006.

There is an easy to moderate 6 mile circular route, the Blue Cycle Route, in the Country Park. The trails are open and have variable surfaces and are best suited to cyclists who are experienced and have a good level of fitness. The Blue Route links to the High Lodge Green Cycle Route across the B1106 in Thetford Forest.

Marked cycle routes in Thetford Forest

THE ITINERARY:

Brandon to High Lodge Visitor Centre in Thetford Forest

Opposite the entrance to the Brandon Country Park on the east side of the B1106 is the cycle track that will take you the 2 miles through Thetford Forest to High Lodge Forest Centre.

From the Forest Centre there are two circular cycle routes, an easy Green route for beginners and family cycling that can be 3 or 6.5 miles long. Or there's a rough, tough Black mountain bike route of around 10 miles only for experienced riders over 14 years. Maps and details of the Green, Blue and Black routes are on the Thetford Forest Park website (see Itinerary Listings).

High Lodge Forest Centre



High wire forest trail at Go Ape! Thetford Forest

Cyclists have free admission to High Lodge, and there is a forest toll for motor vehicles. The Centre is the start of walking and cycling trails and it is advised that all cyclists purchase a map (priced at 50p) from the Centre before starting out on any route. Cycle hire is available at **Bike Art**, who can deliver bikes to your accommodation. They also sell bikes, equipment and accessories and you can also hire trailers and bikes for children.

There's a lot for children to do at High Lodge Forest Centre. It has an adventure play ground suitable for children of all abilities, Squirrel's Maze, a Giant Play Sculpture Trail. For older children and adults there's high-wire tree-top adventure at **Go Ape!**

There are good facilities at the Centre including a restaurant and gift shop and events are organized throughout the year.

Go Ape!

A High Wire forest adventure course of challenging rope bridges, tarzan swings and zip slides up to 35 feet above the forest floor providing around 3 hours of fun and adventure. Minimum age 10 years. Minimum height 1.4m. Open daily: February half-term, 24 March to 20th October; November weekends only. Pre-book

Staying in Thetford Forest

You can stay, self-catering, in the heart of the forest in a log cabin at **Little Lodge Farm**, Santon Downham. The farm is down a mile long drive close to the Little Ouse River. From Little Lodge Farm you can walk to Thetford or Brandon along the Little Ouse Path waymarked trail that passes around by the farm. You could also cycle or walk through the forest to High Lodge and enjoy the restaurant and the many activities and events on offer.

ITINERARY LISTINGS

Cycle Hire:

- **Bike Art**, High Lodge Forest Centre. Tel: 01842 810090 www.bike-art.com See website for events throughout the year. Bikes delivered to accommodation.

Things to see and do:

- **Brandon Brewing Company**, Dennis Cooper, 76 High Street, Brandon, Tel: 01842 878496/07876 234689
- **Brandon Country Park**, Bury Road, Brandon. 01842 810185
- **Brandon Heritage Centre**, George Street, Brandon IP27 0BX. Tel: 07709 236446 Open weekends/Bank Holidays from Easter – End of October.
- **Go Ape!** High Lodge Forest Centre. Tel: 0870 444 5562 www.goape.co.uk
- **Grimes Graves**. Tel: 01842 810656, www.english-heritage.co.uk Open March to October.
- **High Lodge Forest Centre**. Tel: 01842 815434 www.forestry.gov.uk/england
- **Iceni Brewery and Hop Garden**, 3 Foulden Road, Ickburgh, Norfolk, IP26 5HB. Tel: 01842 878922. www.icenibrewery.co.uk Open all year – closed Sundays. Telephone regarding Brewery tours.

Where to eat and drink:

- **Brandon House Hotel**, 2 star. High Street, Brandon, Suffolk. IP27 0AX. Tel: 01842 810171, Larissa Nevins. Email: reservations@brandonhouse.co.uk www.brandonhouse.co.uk
- **The Crown Hotel**, Crown Road, Mundford, Thetford, Norfolk, IP26 5HQ. Tel: 01842 878233
- **Lynford Hall Hotel** 3 star *Green Tourism Business Scheme Award* Lynford, Thetford, Norfolk, IP26 5HW. Tel: 01842 878351. Email enquiries@lynfordhallhotel.co.uk www.lynfordhallhotel.co.uk

Places to stay:

- **Brandon House Hotel**, 2 star. High Street, Brandon, Suffolk. IP27 0AX. Tel: 01842 810171, Larissa Nevins. Email: reservations@brandonhouse.co.uk www.brandonhouse.co.uk
- **Colveston Manor** 4 Diamonds. B&B Wendy Allingham, Mundford, Thetford, Norfolk, IP26 5HU. Tel: 01842 878218. Email mail@colveston-manor.co.uk www.colveston-manor.co.uk
- **Little Lodge Farm** self-catering (National Grading Scheme applied for). Hannah & Jeff Hibbs, Santon Downham, Brandon. IP27 OTX. Tel: 01842 813438. 07789 527407 Email: info@littlodgefarm.co.uk www.littlodgefarm.co.uk
- **Lynford Hall Hotel** 3 star *Green Tourism Business Scheme Award (Silver)* Lynford, Thetford, Norfolk, IP26 5HW. Tel: 01842 878351. Email enquiries@lynfordhallhotel.co.uk www.lynfordhallhotel.co.uk
- **Tithe Barn House** 4 Star. 6 Tithe Barn Close, Ickburgh, Mundford, Thetford, Norfolk. IP26 5JY Tel: 01842 878026. Email: tithebarnhouse@aol.com
- **Riverside Lodge** 2 Star. 78 High Street, Brandon, Suffolk, IP27 0AU. Tel/Fax: 01842 811236

Additional places to stay:

- See Where to Stay in the Brecks, available from the Brecks Tourism Partnership Tel: 01842 760116 www.brecks.org or a Tourism Information Centre.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Useful Maps:

For **country walking or cycling**, the orange-covered Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 scale Explorer maps 229 Thetford Forest in the Brecks and 230, 236 and 237 show all the detail you are likely to need, including public rights of way and field boundaries – even individual buildings and back gardens. The Pathfinder 1:25,000 series: 942 Lakenheath and Brandon; 943 Thetford also cover the area.

For **general purposes**, the purple-covered Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale Landranger map 144 Thetford, Breckland has a very useful amount of detail, including public rights of way and tourist information.

Tourist Information Centres:

- **Brandon.** Tourist Information Point, Brandon Country Park, Bury Road, IP27 OSU.
Tel: 01842 814955 www.tiscover.co.uk/brandon Open: Mon, Tues, Thurs 10am-4pm.
- **Swaffham.** The Shambles, Market Place Tel: 01760 722255 Email: swaffham@eetb.info
Open: Mon-Sat 10am-4pm (closed for lunch 1pm-1.30pm daily).
Telephone enquiries: Mon-Fri 9am-9pm, Weekends 9am-5pm, Bank Holidays 10am-4pm.
www.aroundswaffham.co.uk
- **Thetford.** 4 White Hart Street. Tel: 01842 820689 Email info@thetfordtourism.co.uk
www.explorethetford.co.uk Open: Mon-Sat 10am-4pm [1 April to 30 Sept]
- **Watton and Wayland.** The Visitor Centre, Wayland House, Watton IP25 6AB
Tel: 07818 670694 Email: waylandtourism@aol.com www.wayland-tourism.org.uk
Open: Mon-Fri 9.30am-12pm Wed & Sat 9.30am-2pm [open Easter, then 1 May to 3 Sept]

Useful leaflets:

A wide range of publications are available free of charge from Tourism Information Centres or can be downloaded from the Brecks Tourism Partnership website www.brecks.org including *Come Alive in the Brecks – What to See and Where to Go*; *Where to Stay in the Brecks*; *Where to Buy Food, Drink, Arts and Craft*

Additional publications cost £2/£3 and are available from Tourist Information Centres or can be ordered from www.brecks.org. They include *Cycling in the Brecks*; *Riding in the Brecks*; *Walking in the Brecks*

Useful websites:

- **Breck Tourism Partnership** www.brecks.org
- **CTC** The UK's national cyclists' organisation www.ctc.org.uk
- **English Heritage** www.english-heritage.org.uk
- **Forestry Commission** www.forestry.gov.uk/england
- **Mildenhall Cycle Rally** www.mildenhallrally.org.uk Rally held every August.
- **Norfolk Countryside Access** www.countrysideaccess.norfolk.gov.uk Information on footpaths, bridleways and byways for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
- **Norfolk Wildlife Trust** www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk
- **Peddars Way** (including where to stay and what to see in the area)
www.nationaltrail.co.uk/PeddarsWay
- **Suffolk Wildlife Trust** www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org.uk
- **Sustrans** for National Cycle Network routes: www.sustrans.org
- **Tastes of East Anglia** www.tastesofanglia.com

- **Transport Direct** www.transportdirect.co.uk
- **Visit Norfolk** www.visitnorfolk.co.uk
- **Visit Suffolk** www.visit-suffolk.org.uk

Green Tourism Business Scheme Award Winners have demonstrated their commitment to a more sustainable environment. The scheme is based on the implementation of a range of actions helping the environment and local area.

HOW TO GET THERE

Train: Thetford station is on the Norwich to Cambridge line linking to the major railway network to all parts of UK. The journey time on Anglia Railways, operated by One, London to Thetford service (via Cambridge) takes just 1 hour 50 minutes. Cyclists with bicycles are welcomed on these trains and a range of excellent fares is available for cyclists and their bicycles. www.one.anglia.com Central Trains (Peterborough to Norwich line) stops at Lakenheath, Brandon, Thetford and Harling Road and on to Liverpool via Manchester www.centraltrains.co.uk Tel: 0870 6096060. Rail stations are also at Bury St Edmunds and Kennet. For timetable information call National Rail Enquiries 0845 7484950

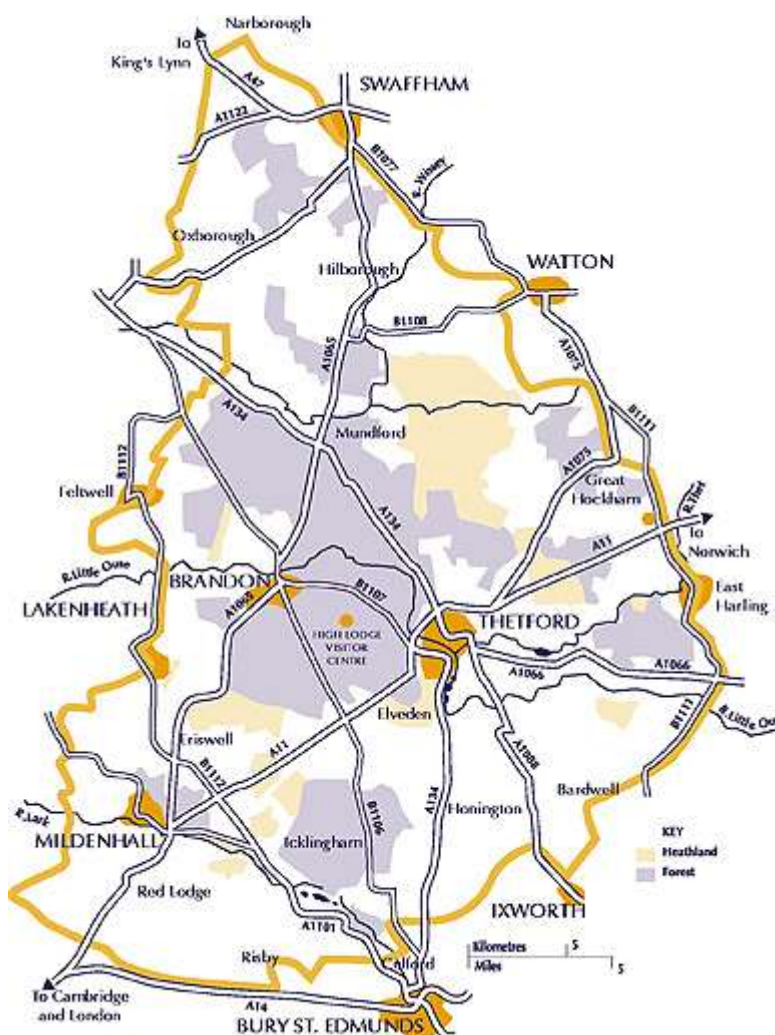
Bus: National Express operate a service from London Victoria to Norwich via Thetford and Attleborough with journey times to Thetford of only 1 hour 30 minutes. There is also a service from London Victoria via Stanstead with a journey time of 3 ½ hours. National Express Tel: 08705 808080 www.nationalexpress.com. For local bus routes from most major towns and up to date times please visit Traveline www.travelineeastanglia.org. or Tel 0870 6082608

How to get around:

You can find information on local train and bus services on www.transportdirect.co.uk. There are also two local bus services for visitors:

Brecks Bus is a demand-responsive service that operates from Monday to Friday 09.00 and 16.00. The Bus will help you get out in the countryside around Brandon and Thetford to access leisure attractions or walking routes. Contact them on 01842 816170.

Peddars Wayfarer Bus runs twice daily between Thetford bus and rail stations and Swaffham market place, calling at villages and major access points along the Peddars Way. The bus tows a specially built trailer that can carry up to 8 bicycles. Runs from Easter to October. Contact Traveline Tel: 0870 6082608 www.traveline.org.uk



Photographic acknowledgements: 'Brecks Pine Belt' & 'Marked cycle routes in Thetford Forest' Graham Portlock; 'Exploring the Brecks by bike' Forest Life Picture Library; 'The Little Ouse at Brandon' Forest Heath District Council; 'High wire forest trail at Go Ape!' Go Ape!

THE CAR@FREE PROJECT:

The *CAReFREE* itineraries are designed to encourage visitors to explore and enjoy the special landscapes of the East of England with minimal impact on the environment, while generating positive benefits for local people. The itineraries give visitors exciting ideas about what to do in the area, by leaving their car at home or at their accommodation, and exploring the area by bike, boat, bus, horse or train.



The itineraries for each area can be found at the following websites:

The Brecks

www.brecks.org

- Biking and Brewing in Thetford Forest
- Enjoy living on a working farm
- Horse riding breaks in and around Thetford Forest

The Broads

www.broads-authority.gov.uk

- Canoe Safaris
- Great ideas for discovering the best of the Broads by cycle
- Walks and sights of the Broads by train and bus

The Chilterns AONB

www.chilternsaonb.org

- Grand Union Canal and Tring Reservoirs
- North Chilterns Villages by Bicycle
- Walking and Cycling in the Northern Chilterns and Hitchin

Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley

www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org

- A day walking through Constable Country
- Days out cycling on the Painters' Trail
- Exploring the Stour Valley on foot

Norfolk Coast AONB

www.norfolkcoastaonb.org.uk

- Exploring the Norfolk Coast Cycleway
- See the wildlife wonders of North Norfolk by bus
- Great ideas for making the most of the area by bus and train

Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB

www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org

- A car free break in Southwold
- Exploring the Stour Estuary
- Woodbridge, Sutton Hoo and the Deben Estuary

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY: If you are business in the one of these areas and would like to write your own itinerary to show visitors how to enjoy the area near you without using their car to get around, you will find a blank itinerary template (a Word document) together with a toolkit explaining how to complete the itinerary, at the websites listed above.

For further information contact:

Lynne Finnigan, Brecks Partnership, King's House, King Street, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2AP

Tel: 01842 760116 Fax: 01842 765400 Email: brecks.tourism@et.suffolkcc.gov.uk

www.brecks.org



The *CAReFREE* itineraries are funded by

