

Circular Mountain Bike Ride incorporating The North Dorset Railway, Stourpaine, and Blandford Forest.

There are limited parking facilities at Gain's Cross, the start and finish point of the ride, which is situated half a mile south of Shillingstone, on the A357. Alternatively there are other parking facilities at the northern end of Shillingstone, with a one and a half mile ride down the railway to the start.

The route begins from the signpost at Gain's Cross, **1** on the map, following the railway down to Stourpaine. When the railway closed, the cutting at Gain's Cross was filled in, hence the incline and descent to the original track bed level.

After crossing the River Stour at Enford, **2** on the map, continue on into Stourpaine. Approximately a quarter of a mile before reaching the village, the railway veers left from the railway track bed down a hard surfaced track. **3** on the map. Before reaching the village, it passes an exercise area, with stretching equipment, through the hedge on the right. The entrance to the recreation ground is also on the right, at the end of this track. Proceed to the cross roads at the centre of the village, **4** on the map.

To follow the route, turn right towards the church. However to take a detour to the village pub, The White Horse, go diagonally across and up the slight incline, where you will find it on the right.

Having reached the church, turn left and go to the bridleway gate next to the white cottage. **5** on the map.

Follow the route to the next gate



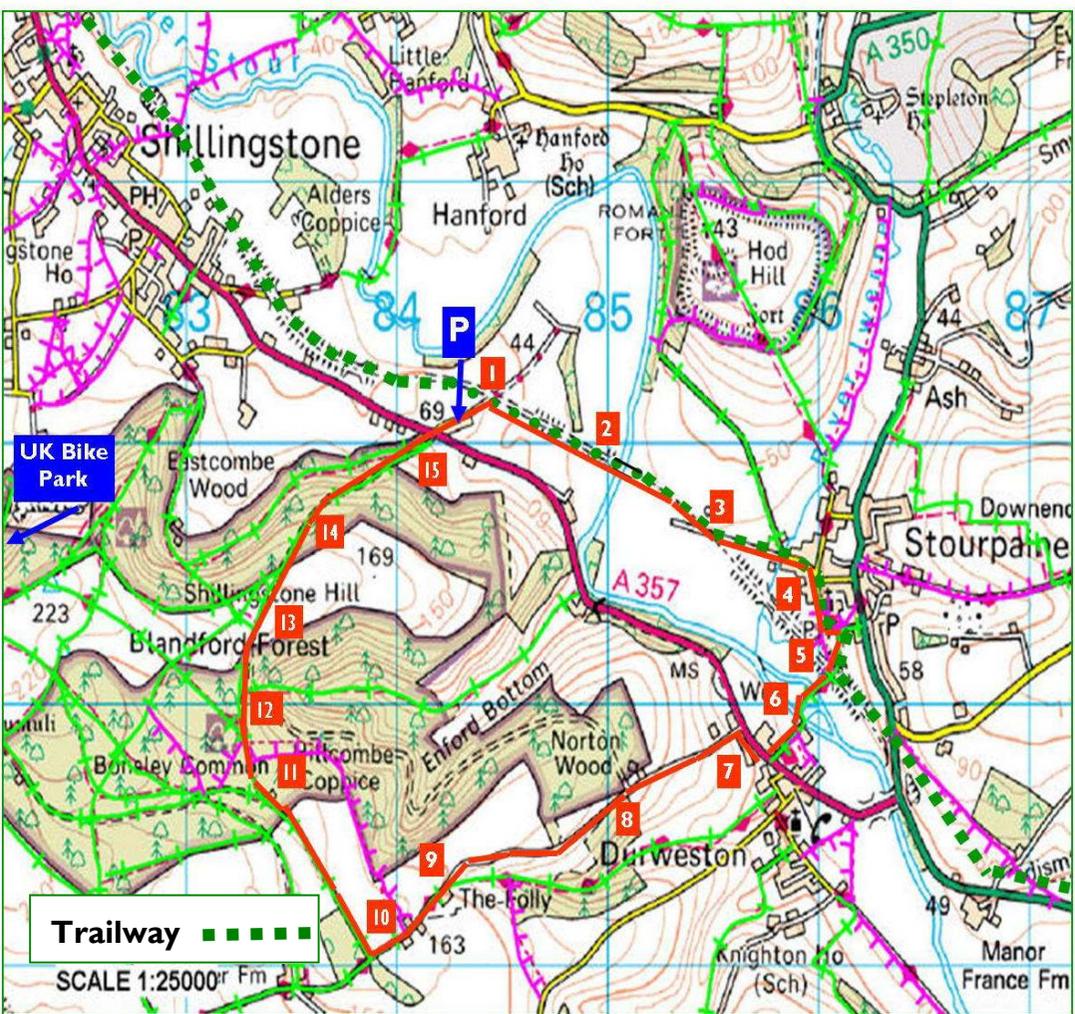
The Signpost at Gain's Cross **1** on the map



View towards Stourpaine from Gain's



Approaching Enford Bridge **2** on the map



View from parking area to start point **1**



View across Bonsley Common **13**

and turn right down a green lane. Carry on under the old railway bridge, then over the river and on to Durweston Mill, **6** on the map.

Care should be taken at the sharp right hand turn by the mill, both vehicles and pedestrians are often in this area. Follow the track up to the A357. Approximately 75 metres to right, on the opposite side of the road, look for a white notice board (Southern Rustics). This is at the entrance to Norton Lane. Go to it and proceed up the lane, **7** on the map.

After an initial steep climb, the lane levels out as you pass the entrance to Norton Wood on the right, **8** on the map.

The next building you pass is The Folly, where The Jubilee Trail joins the lane. This is a long distance footpath which at this point follows a route into the bottom of the valley. You have reached **9** on the map.

Two hundred metres further on, after passing another cottage on the left, turn right off the lane into a wide track along the edge of a copse, **10** on the map.

Carry on to the end of the copse, and through a gate. The track is now alongside large open fields, until it reaches the forest edge. After passing a large silo on the right, fifty metres further on The Living Classroom stands in a clearing, **11** on the map. Further information on The Living Classroom can be



Stourpaine crossroads **4** on the map



Bridleway up to green lane **5** on the map



Durweston Mill **6** on the map

found on The Dorset Coppice Group web site...

www.dorsetcoppicegroup.co.uk

After passing The Living Classroom, keep to the right fork on the main forest track, and pass a Coppice Group carved footpath sign on the right, **12** on the map.

Carry on through the forest on the main track, until you reach the open ground of Bonsley Common, **13** on the map.

Leaving this part of Blandford Forest behind, follow the track straight on over the common. There are good views to the right as far as Cranborne Chase in the east and The Blackmore Vale and Wiltshire border to the north.

After crossing the common, the track descends into Shillingstone Forest. About a hundred metres on, the track joins another at right angles. A detour here to the left will bring you to The Wessex Ridgeway a long distance bridleway, and the UK Bike Park... www.ukbikepark.com

Follow the track to the right, down the hill through the forest, to **14**, eventually reaching **15**, the A357 crossing at Gain's Cross. The circular route is approximately 5 miles. It is evident from the map, that there are alternative routes through both the Blandford and Shillingstone forest areas. If leaving the circular route at any time, please use the marked bridleways or main forest tracks. Cyclists are restricted from public footpaths.



View after leaving **10** and approaching **11**



The Living Classroom **11** on the map



Carved plaque indicates Coppice Group walk **12**