

Cycling along the Severn Valley



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Opening from September 2005. An 8 mile return ride following **Route 45 – the Mercian Way**; a purpose built off road cycle track with views of the **River Severn** and **Severn Valley Railway**. If you are riding with young children consider just cycling the section from the Country Park to Hampton Loade which is all off-road, fairly flat and is a 5 mile return trip.



You may wish to combine your ride with a trip on the **Severn Valley Railway**. (Bikes can be carried at the discretion of the guard. £2 per single journey per bike). For more details tel. **01299 403816** or visit www.svr.co.uk

Start at Severn Valley Country Park: 180 acres of woodland, meadows and wetland. Facilities in the Country Park include a visitor centre, toilets, tea shop, picnic areas, ample parking, orienteering trail & easy access trail with bird hide. *Tel:* 01746 781192

- 1 At the visitor centre car park join the **Mercian Way** (steep downhill). Follow signs for the Country Park Halt and Hampton Loade.

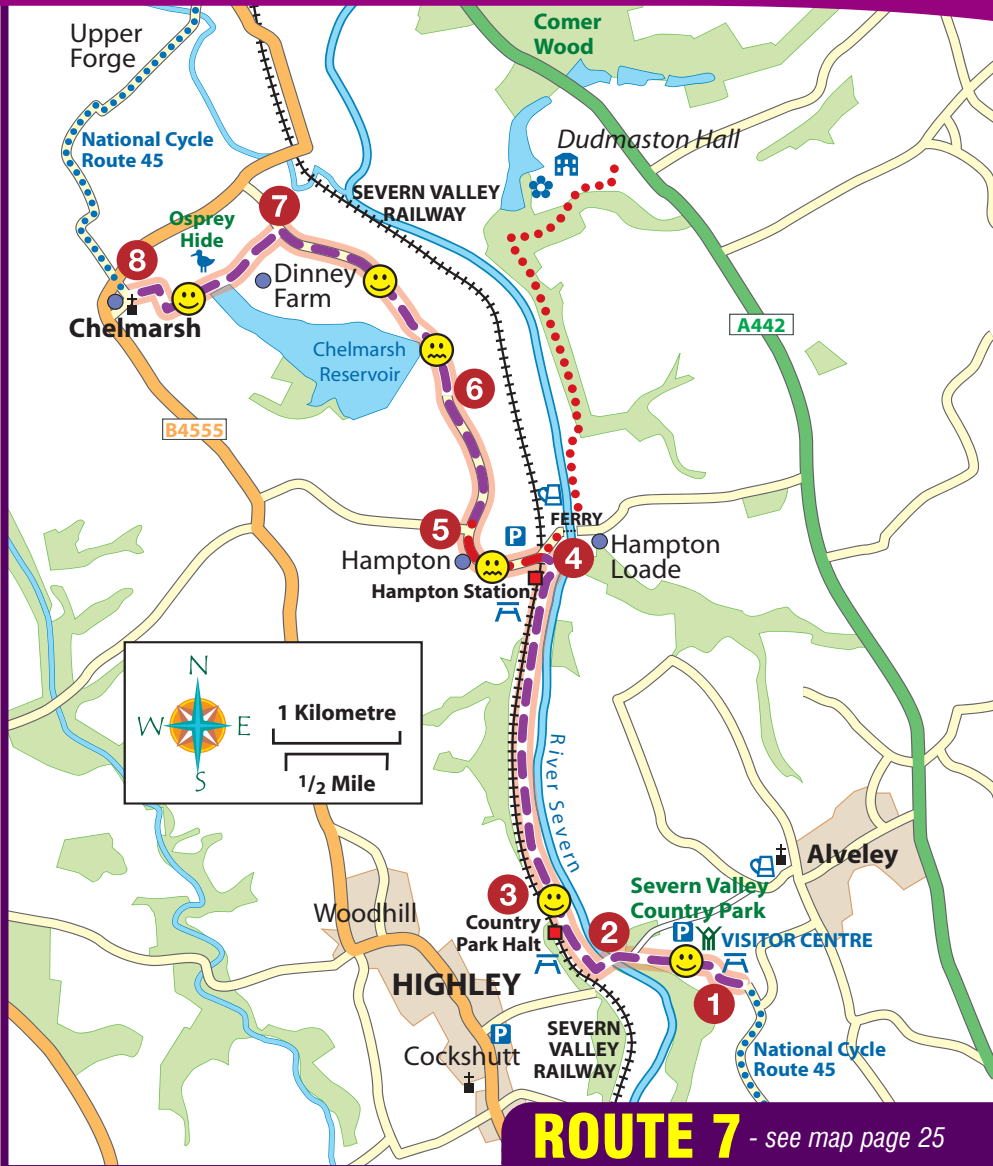
- 2 Cross the bridge, and turn right, following signs for the Country Park Halt. This is a lovely path through woodland. Continue past the **Country Park Halt** (Severn Valley Railway). There are picnic tables in this area.

Dormice are shy nocturnal animals which feed on flowers, fruit, nuts and insects. They have been spotted in the area, so hazel bushes and dormouse nest boxes have been put in to encourage them.

- 3 About 500m after the Country Park Halt, just before the route joins the Severn Valley Railway line, it starts to zigzag with a steep decent. It's best to dismount for this section. The route takes you alongside the **Severn Valley Railway** with views of the **River Severn** to your right. Continue for 1 mile to Hampton Loade Station.



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Hampton Loade has a pretty station with toilets and refreshments. Both the **Unicorn Inn** and **River & Rail Inn** (other side of the river) serve food. There is also a picnic site with tables. The current chain ferry was built by craftsmen at Blists Hill Museum from larch and oak. It weighs 4 tonnes and carries 12 passengers (it can also take bicycles). If crossing the river, consider a short detour to **Dudmaston Hall**, a National Trust property, which has a tea-room, ice cream kiosk, picnic tables, and baby changing facilities.

- 4 From Hampton Loade follow the signs for Chelmarsh and Bridgnorth. This section is uphill along a quiet, narrow road for ½ mile.
- 5 Turn right down a quiet access road (signposted Chelmarsh Reservoir). After half a mile you turn right off the tarmac road onto a stone track
- 6 Cross the shallow ford (follow the wooden Route 45 signs). The track climbs up a steep hill with the reservoir on your left. Watch out for loose stones. When you reach the top you'll be rewarded with great views of the Severn Valley. Continue on down the other side of the hill to the farm access road at the bottom. Turn left.
- 7 After less than half a mile, turn left. Continue past **Dinney Farm B&B** (on left).

Chelmarsh Reservoir attracts many birds including Osprey, Reed Warblers, Swans and Geese. To your right you will see the Shropshire Wildlife Trust Osprey feeding tables and bird hide.

- 8 Follow the wooden Route 45 signs to Chelmarsh village. From here you can turn around and return to the Severn Valley Country Park.

Alternatively, if you wish to continue to Bridgnorth, follow the signs for Route 45 the Mercian Way. The route follows minor roads then the busier B4555 (*not suitable for young or inexperienced cyclists*).

Other Options: Route 45 continues from the Severn Valley Country Park into the **Wyre Forest** near Bewdley (11 miles one way). Visit www.shropshire.gov.uk/travelwise.nsf for more details of this route.

