

## **The Tiger Trail**

Howletts Zoo Park is probably one of the finest zoos in this part of England and John Aspinall has done much to protect endangered species by returning zoo bred stock to the wild. Gorillas and Tigers are the main attraction at Howletts. This ride also lets you pass along parts of the Little Stour River and visit the pretty villages of Littlebourne, Wickhambreaux, Stodmarsh and Fordwich. Some of the village inns are worth visiting.

1. From the station bear left and pass through a new housing estate bearing right all the time until you reach North Lane, cross and go straight ahead into the Causeway. Turn left into St. Radigunds Street, cross over the Stour River passing the Millers arms on your right and continue following this road until it meets Northgate. Turn left, pass Broad Street, on your right and turn right into the next alleyway on your right. Follow this road as it twists and turns until you reach Military Road.
2. At staggered pedestrian crossings go straight ahead into North Holmes Road. and at T junction by the side of the local prison turn left and in a very short while turn right into Spring Lane signposted Cycle Route 16/17 towards Dover. By the Chaucer School turn right into Pilgrims Way. At the end of the housing estate the route enters a private road and Cycle Track 16. Follow this route carefully through the orchards. (Straight in at the crossroads, and just after passing under high tension electric power cable fork left and climb a short incline.)
3. In a while join a lane on a sharp bend and go straight ahead passing Hode Farm and its oasthouses. Descend a hill and beware there is a T junction at the bottom. In a very short distance there is a mini roundabout.
4. Turn left at the roundabout, signposted Bekesbourne and Littlebourne. Follow this road until you come to Howletts Zoo on your left.
5. After visiting the zoo either return to Canterbury the way that you came or continue along the lane and enter the village of Littlebourne.
6. At staggered crossroads by Anchor Inn, go straight ahead signposted Wickhambreaux and Ickham. Leave the village of Littlebourne, the river on your right is the Little Stour. Pass a watermill, now a private home. Enter the village of Wickhambreaux.
7. Pass the Rose Inn on the village green and keeping to the main lane leave the village by Grove Road. By Gate Lodge Cottage on your right turn left into an unsigned lane. This is not an obvious turning (grass growing up the middle of the lane). Turn left by a cottage called Wild Goose Cottage. At T junction turn right signposted Stodmarsh. Ignore side turnings and enter

the village of Stodmarsh. Pass Red Lion Public House. The pub has a good reputation for both food and real ales.

8. Climb a gentle hill out of the village and on the brow of the hill you will have a fine view of the Stour Valley. To your right you may catch a glimpse of the Great Stour River and the Little Stour River is hidden in the valley to your left. Continue following the signs for Fordwich and Sturry.
9. Pass through Trenley Park Woods and area of coppiced woodland. These trees are cut down every 15 years and are used for fencing and rustic furniture but the roots are left intact. With the woodland being regularly cropped this is one of the oldest examples of sustainable forestations.
10. After the wood take the second turning on your right into Moat Lane signposted Fordwich and Sturry and descend into Fordwich village.
11. Fordwich is a very interesting village to have a walk around. Note the variety of the architecture of the houses. The Town Hall is the smallest in Kent. Take a walk by the side of the Great Stour River. Leave the village by the George and Dragon Public House.
12. By the George and Dragon turn left onto a new dedicated cycle path. Follow this route through the water meadows and an area of woodland. Eventually the track will come out at the rear of a Community Centre. When you reach the road, pass through the barrier at the end of the path and turn left and follow the cycle route signs to the City Centre and Northgate, past the Canterbury City Council Offices. In a while at crossroads in cycle tracks by North Holmes Road turn right and follow the same route as you used outbound back to Canterbury West Station.