

CYCLING LONDON TO PARIS

**THE CLASSIC DOVER/CALAIS ROUTE
AND THE AVENUE VERTE**



About the Author

Mike Wells is an author of both walking and cycling guides. He has been walking long-distance footpaths for 25 years, after a holiday in New Zealand gave him the long-distance walking bug. Within a few years, he had walked the major British trails, enjoying their range of terrain from straightforward downland tracks through to upland paths and challenging mountain routes. He then ventured into France, walking sections of the Grande Randonnée network (including the GR5 through the Alps from Lake Geneva to the Mediterranean), and Italy to explore the Dolomites Alta Via routes. Further afield, he has walked in Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Norway and Patagonia.

Mike has also been a keen cyclist for over 20 years. After completing various UK Sustrans routes, such as Lôn Las Cymru in Wales and the C2C route across northern England, he then moved on to cycling long-distance routes in continental Europe and beyond. These include cycling both the Camino and Ruta de la Plata to Santiago de la Compostela, a traverse of Cuba from end to end, a circumnavigation of Iceland and a trip across Lapland to the North Cape. He has written a series of cycling guides for Cicerone following the great rivers of Europe.

Other Cicerone guides by the author

The Adlerweg

The Rhine Cycle Route

The Moselle Cycle Route

The Danube Cycleway Volume 1

The Danube Cycleway Volume 2

The River Rhone Cycle Route

The Loire Cycle Route

CYCLING LONDON TO PARIS

THE CLASSIC DOVER/CALAIS ROUTE AND THE AVENUE VERTE

by Mike Wells

CICERONE

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The route maps in this guide are derived from publicly available data, databases and crowd-sourced data. As such they have not been through the detailed checking procedures that would generally be applied to a published map from an official mapping agency, although naturally we have reviewed them closely in the light of local knowledge as part of the preparation of this guide.

We are always grateful for information about any discrepancies between a guidebook and the facts on the ground, sent by email to updates@cicerone.co.uk or by post to Cicerone, Juniper House, Murley Moss, Oxenholme Road, Kendal, LA9 7RL, United Kingdom.

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Front cover: Two iconic landmarks; the London Eye, start point of Avenue Verte (Ave Verte Stage 1) and the Eiffel Tower, finish point of the classic route (classic route Stage 11)

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Symbols used on route maps

	route		building
	alternative route		cathedral or church
	route direction		abbey, monastery or priory
	start/finish point		castle or château
	start point		tourist office
	finish point		youth hostel
	woodland		battlefield
	urban areas		ferry
	international border		monument
	station/railway (England)		viewpoint
	station/railway (France)		airport

SCALE: 1:100,000
0 kilometres 1 2
0 miles 1

GPX files

GPX files for all routes can be downloaded for free at www.cicerone.co.uk/914/GPX





ROUTE SUMMARY TABLES

Stage	Start	Finish	Distance km (miles)	Page
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Classic route

1	London, Tower Hill station	Rochester bridge	50 (31)	42
2	Rochester bridge	Ashford, Henwood roundabout	47.5 (29.5)	56
3	Ashford, Henwood roundabout	Dover Eastern docks	49.5 (31)	67
4	Calais Gare Maritime	Desvres, Pl Léon Blum	41 (25.5)	82
5	Desvres, Pl Léon Blum	Hesdin, Pl d'Armes	49.5 (31)	94
6	Hesdin, Pl d'Armes	Abbeville fairgrounds	40 (25)	103
7	Abbeville fairgrounds	Amiens, Maison de la Culture	46.5 (29)	111
8	Amiens, Maison de la Culture	Beauvais cathedral	65 (40.5)	119
9	Beauvais cathedral	Chantilly, Pl Omer Vallon	46 (28.5)	133
10	Chantilly, Pl Omer Vallon	St Denis market	38.5 (24)	142
11	St Denis market	Paris, Eiffel Tower	16.5 (10.5)	150
Total	London	Paris	490 (304.5)	

Avenue Verte

1	London Eye	Redhill station	40.5 (25)	158
2	Redhill station	Eridge station	49 (30.5)	171
3	Eridge station	Newhaven ferry terminal	62.5 (39)	184
4	Dieppe ferry terminal	Neufchâtel-en-Bray, old station	37 (23)	197
5	Neufchâtel-en-Bray, old station	Gournay-en-Bray, Pl Nationale	45 (28)	205
6	Gournay-en-Bray, Pl Nationale	Gisors, Pl de Blanmont	35.5 (22)	213
7	Gisors, Pl de Blanmont	Neuville-sur-Oise bridge	60.5 (37.5)	221
8	Neuville-sur-Oise bridge	St Denis station	44 (27.5)	232
9	St Denis station	Paris, Notre Dame cathedral	13 (8)	242
Total	London	Paris	publicly available (240.5)	



Façade of the old Carmelite abbey in Forges-les-Eaux (Avenue Verte, Stage 15)

INTRODUCTION

The City of London skyline has many modernistic buildings (classic route, Stage 1)



Near the northern edge of Western Europe stand two great capital cities, London and Paris, undoubtedly two of the greatest cities in the world. Both were the capitals of worldwide empires that competed for domination around the world. This imperial past is long gone but has resulted in cosmopolitan populations with residents drawn from around the globe. Grand government buildings, important centres of worship and famous museums and galleries line world-renowned streets surrounded by popular parks and gardens. Everything one has, the other claims to match or better: Paris has the Eiffel tower, London has Tower bridge; Paris has

Notre Dame cathedral, London St Pauls; Paris has the Louvre, London the National gallery; Paris has the Bois de Boulogne, London the Royal parks; the list is endless.

But these two cities are not isolated phenomena, both being surrounded by attractive countryside with rolling chalk downland, pastoral Wealden valleys and picturesque country towns. There are even two great cathedrals in the land that lies between them: Canterbury (off-route) is the mother church of the Church of England while Amiens (classic route, Stage 7) is the largest cathedral in France. Before the last ice age, which finished about 10,000 years ago, this

was one continuous landmass but as the ice melted and sea levels rose the two countries became separated by the English Channel. The opening of the Channel Tunnel in 1994 revolutionised travel between London and Paris. Frequent trains now make the journey in less than two and a half hours, speeding between London St Pancras and Paris Gare du Nord at up to 300kmph. Passengers have a brief glimpse of the countryside of south-east England and northern France as they rush past, but no time to explore or savour it.

A compensating breakthrough came in 2012. To celebrate the London Olympics (the choice of venue for which had resurrected old rivalries with a tight contest between the two cities before London was awarded the games) a waymarked cycle route was inaugurated running from centre to centre. Known as the Avenue Verte

(Green Avenue) this 387km route uses suburban streets, quiet country roads and cycle tracks along old railway lines to traverse Surrey and Sussex in England and Haute Normandie in France, crossing the English Channel between Newhaven and Dieppe. The route has become popular with cyclists, particularly French cyclists heading for London.

However, the Avenue Verte is not the only way of cycling from London to Paris. Traditionally the busiest route has always been via the short ferry link between Dover and Calais, indeed this is the preferred route for British cyclists riding to Paris, many of them undertaking sponsored rides to raise money for charity. This 490km ride (described here as the classic route) is not waymarked as a through journey, but can be ridden following NCN (National Cycle Network) routes through Kent to the English Channel,

and then quiet country roads, canal towpaths and dis-used railways across the Pas de Calais and Picardy to reach the Île de France and Paris.

While some cyclists are happy using just one of these routes to travel between London and Paris, making their return journey by Eurostar train or by plane, others seek to complete the round trip as a circular journey going out by one route and returning by the other. This guide provides detailed out and back descriptions for both routes, enabling cyclists to complete the return ride in either direction. Allowing for a few days sightseeing in the destination city, the 877km round trip makes an ideal two-week journey for average cyclists. There are many places to stay overnight in towns and villages along both routes, while places to eat include country pubs in England and village restaurants in France. Surely this is a

more rewarding way to travel between London and Paris than flashing past at 300kph in a Eurostar train!

BACKGROUND

The first residents of the British Isles arrived from continental Europe before the last ice age when Britain was attached to the mainland. They probably followed the downland chalk ridges that run across what is nowadays northern France and south-east England, keeping above the then thickly forested and swampy valleys of rivers like the Medway and Somme. Traces of these routes still exist and are occasionally followed by the classic route in this guide.

Roman civilisation

By the time the Romans arrived in the first century BC, rising sea levels had split Britain from continental Europe,



Avenue Verte follows an old railway line from Neufchâtel-en-Bray to Serqueux (Avenue Verte, Stage 5)



Samara was the site of Caesar's winter camp when he conquered Gaul (classic route, Stage 7)

with both sides of the English Channel inhabited by Iron Age tribes of Gauls and Celts. Julius Caesar captured Gaul (most of modern France) between 58 and 51 BC, but although he visited Britain, Roman occupation of England did not commence until AD43. The Romans involved local tribal leaders in government and control of the territory. With improvements in the standard of living, the conquered tribes soon became thoroughly romanised and tribal settlements became Romano-Gallic or Romano-British towns. Both London and Paris have their roots in the Roman Empire but while Londinium (London) was the capital of Britannia, Lutetia (Paris) was merely a provincial town in Gaul. The Romans built Watling Street, a road that linked the port of Dubris (Dover, the site of the best preserved Roman

house in England) with London and the north. The towns of Canterbury and Rochester were built along this road, while Amiens and Beauvais were Roman towns in northern Gaul between Paris and the Channel. During the fourth century AD, the Romans came under increasing pressure from Germanic tribes from the east and by mid-fifth century had withdrawn their legions from both England and France.

Frankish and Anglo-Saxon settlement

After the Romans left there followed a period of tribal settlement. The Franks were a tribe that settled in northern France. From AD496 when Clovis I became their king and established a capital in Paris, the Frankish kingdom expanded by absorbing neighbouring states. After Charlemagne (a Frank,

ruled AD768–814) temporarily united much of western Europe, only for his Carolingian empire to be split in AD843, the Franks became the dominant regional force. During the same period, southern England was settled by Saxons (from eastern Germany), with an area of Jutish (from Jutland in Denmark) settlement in Kent.

The Vikings from Scandinavia began migrating to the region in the early-ninth century AD. In France they settled in Normandy, while in England they initially occupied an area in the north known as the Danelaw. In 1015 the Viking king Canute defeated the Anglo-Saxons in southern England and extended Viking rule over the whole country. In 1066, a disputed succession caused the Normans from Normandy led by William the Conqueror to invade England and for the first time since the Romans left, unify England and northern France under one crown.

The Hundred Years' War

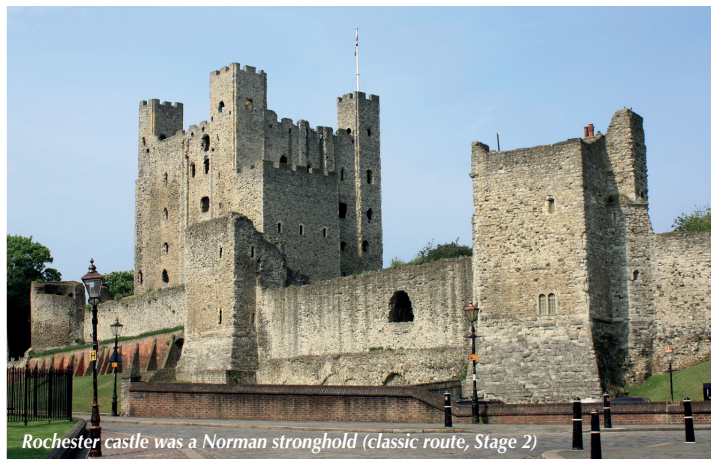
For nearly 500 years the Norman kings of England and their Plantagenet successors sought to consolidate and expand their territory in Britain and France. The main confrontation was the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453) fought between France and an alliance of England and Burgundy. For many years the English and Burgundians had the upper hand and success at Crécy in 1346 (classic route, Stage 6) led to the capture of large areas of France. The turning

point came in 1429 when a French force led by 17-year-old Jeanne d'Arc (Joan of Arc) succeeded in lifting the siege of Orleans. By 1453 the English had been driven almost completely out of France, consolidating the French monarchy as the dominant force in the region. The last English stronghold at Calais (classic route, Stage 4) fell in 1558.

Religious influences and the rise of Protestantism

The Romans converted to Christianity in AD312 and this became the predominant religion in France. St Augustine brought Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England in AD597, establishing a church at Canterbury which later became the most important cathedral in the country. Following the murder of Thomas Becket (1170), Canterbury became a destination for pilgrims visiting Becket's grave. Many ventured further, with both English and French pilgrims continuing through France to Rome or Santiago. During the reign of Henry VIII (1509–1547), the Church of England split from the Catholic Church becoming Protestant. While there was a period of religious turmoil, the change stuck and Protestantism became the dominant force.

In France, the country's biggest Catholic cathedral was built at Amiens in the 13th century (classic route, Stage 7) and an even bigger one started at Beauvais (classic route, Stage 8), but this was never finished.



Rochester castle was a Norman stronghold (classic route, Stage 2)

STAGE 1

Tower of London to Rochester

Start	Tower of London (18m)
Finish	Rochester bridge (4m)
Distance	50km (31 miles)
Ascent	207m
Waymarking	CS4 Southwark–Woolwich (under construction), LCN18 Woolwich–Barnes Cray, NCN1 Barnes Cray–Ebbsfleet, NCN177 Ebbsfleet–Strood

This stage starts with a level ride through suburban south-east London, mostly on cycle lanes beside minor roads but with some busier sections. After Dartford, it follows cycle tracks beside the old Roman Watling Street (now a busy motorway), climbing over two small outliers of the North Downs before descending to cross the Medway into Rochester. If you want to avoid cycling in London, Southeastern trains have frequent services from Charing Cross and London Bridge stations to Dartford.

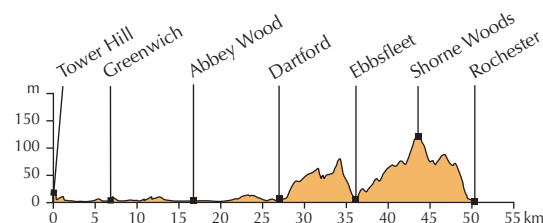
THE TOWER OF LONDON

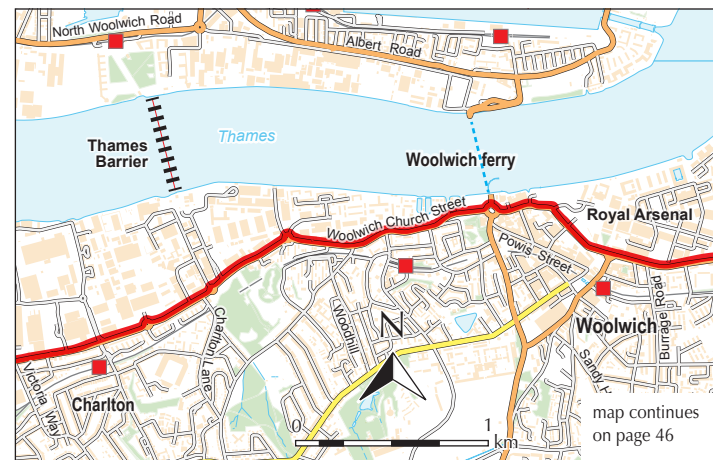
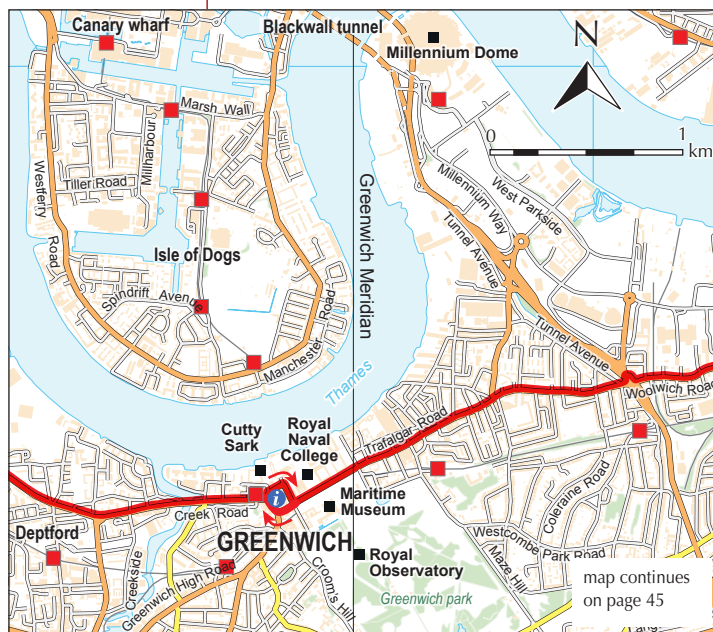
When it was built in 1078, the Tower of London was seen by the Anglo-Saxon English as a hated symbol of Norman oppression following William the Conqueror's invasion in 1066. However, over the centuries it became a cherished symbol at the heart of London, Britain and the British Empire. It is said that if the ravens that live there should ever leave, the kingdom will fall. The tower has been used as a fortress, royal palace, armoury, treasury, the home of the royal mint and is nowadays a museum holding important national collections including the British crown jewels. For over eight centuries (1100–1952) it also housed a prison, mostly for prisoners who had fallen foul of the monarch including the uncrowned king Edward V (imprisoned by his uncle Richard III who took the crown for himself), Anne Boleyn (second wife of Henry VIII) and Sir Walter Raleigh. The heart of the complex is the White Tower, the oldest and best-preserved Norman stone keep in Britain. This is surrounded by other buildings, two sets of encircling walls and a moat, which is nowadays dry. A poignant use of the moat in 2016 saw it filled with 888,246 ceramic poppies in commemoration of British and empire combatants killed during the First World War.

STAGE 1 – TOWER OF LONDON TO ROCHESTER



From Tower Hill on N side of **Tower of London** follow Tower Bridge Approach S and cross Thames on **Tower bridge**. Turn L (Queen Elizabeth St) and R at end (The

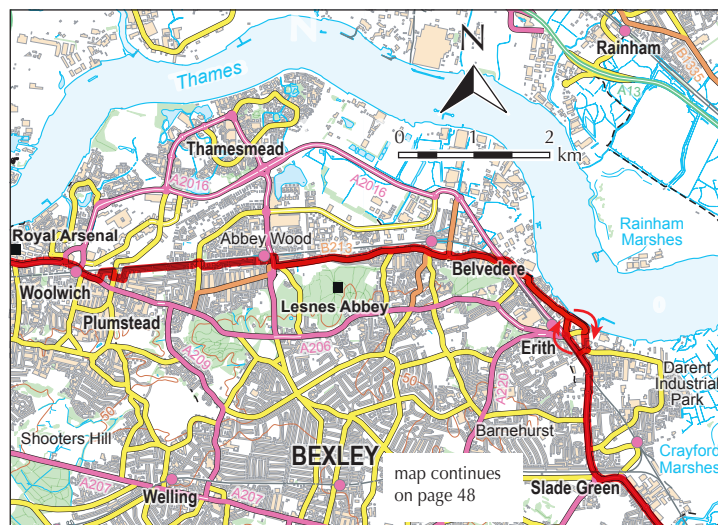




Shad) to reach T-junction. ▶ Turn L (Jamaica Rd, A200), using bus lane, to **Rotherhithe** roundabout. Turn R (third exit, Lower Rd, sp Greenwich) past **Surrey Quays** shopping centre L (3.5km, 3m) and continue on Evelyn St to **Deptford**. Go ahead (Creek Rd) over Deptford Creek to reach T-junction in **Greenwich** (7km, 6m) (accommodation, refreshments, tourist office, cycle shop, station).

Cycle Superhighway CS4 will be joined here.

Greenwich (pronounced Gren-itch), which has a long maritime history, is synonymous with the zero meridian which passes close to the Royal observatory in Greenwich park. The former naval hospital designed by Christopher Wren, which became the Royal Naval college from 1873–1998, now houses the university of Greenwich; while the old naval asylum has been the National Maritime museum since 1934. The tea clipper *Cutty Sark*, preserved in a dry dock beside the Thames, was built in 1869 for the tea trade from China. This three-masted sailing ship held the record for the journey to Australia for 10 years before steam ships took over the route.



To visit the Cutty Sark, continue ahead on Church Street.

Turn L following one-way system and bear R (College Approach). ◀ Turn R again (King William Walk) in front of entrance to old Royal Naval College then L at crossroads (Romney Rd, A206). Continue between old Royal Naval College L and National Maritime museum R (with Royal Observatory in Greenwich park rising behind) into Trafalgar Rd. Continue into Woolwich Rd then go ahead over roundabout beneath motorway and pass through **Charlton** (10km, 4m) (refreshments, cycle shop, station).

Go ahead over two roundabouts and at third, turn R (third exit, Woolwich High St, sp Woolwich ferry) to reach roundabout by ramp leading to **Woolwich ferry** L (12.5km, 6m) (accommodation, refreshments, cycle shop, station).

Go ahead past Waterfront leisure centre L and bear R at next roundabout (second exit, Beresford St). Pass modern development on site of former **Woolwich Royal Arsenal** L and continue on Plumstead Rd beside bus lane. Where road turns L, bear R across road and fork R on bus and cycle only lane past Plumstead bus garage L. Rejoin



road and pass **Plumstead station** R (14km, 6m) (refreshments, station).

Turn first L (Heverham Rd) and at end turn R (Reidhaven Rd). Follow this bearing R and turn L at crossroads (Hartville Rd). Continue over crossroads to T-junction and turn L (Barth Rd) then follow this bearing R into Marmadon Rd. Road becomes Bracondale Rd and passes under road bridge, eventually becoming Abbey Grove. Where road ends, continue ahead on cycle track between houses 8–9. Turn L (Wilton Rd) and follow this bearing R past **Abbey Wood station** L (16.5km, 2m) (refreshments, station) and under road bridge.

Turn R (Florence Rd) then L at crossroads (Abbey Rd, B213) using cycle lane L. Pass **Lesnes Abbey** ruins R. ▶ Continue ahead into Gilbert Rd, becoming Picardy St and finally Lower Rd. Pass B&Q/Asda superstore L and fork L on cycle track dropping down to pass under roundabout in **Belvedere** (station). Rejoin main road, then pass over railway and road bridges and go ahead over two mini-roundabouts. Follow road bearing R into West St and go ahead over mini-roundabout into **Erith** (21.5km, 10m) (refreshments, station).

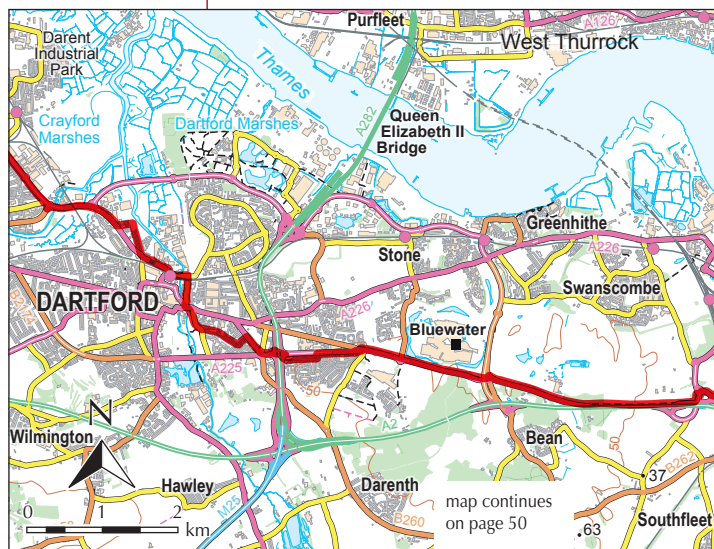
The Royal Artillery's Firepower museum is in the former Woolwich Royal Arsenal

Lesnes abbey (built 1178) was closed by Cardinal Wolsey in 1525 and was one of the first abbeys pulled down during the dissolution of the monasteries in 1534.

Queens Road is a
busy main road.

At next roundabout bear L (first exit, Erith High St) to reach T-junction. Go ahead on dual use pedestrian/cycle track passing under bridge linking two parts of shopping centre and continue to reach roundabout. Turn R (James Watt Way, fourth exit) then L at traffic lights onto dual carriageway Queens Rd (A206). ◀ Follow this over small roundabout then pass under railway to reach second (larger) roundabout. Turn L (first exit) and immediately after roundabout use staggered crossing to reach other side of main road. Turn L on cycle track R of road then fork R past third roundabout and continue ahead over small fourth roundabout to reach Barnes Cray roundabout (25km, 8m).

Follow cycle track anticlockwise around roundabout and continue beside Thames Rd (A206) under railway bridge. Bear R past next roundabout then follow cycle track crossing to L of road and turn R (Burnham Rd, A2026). Turn L (Lawson Rd) and bear R at end (Priory Rd). Emerge on main road (Victoria Rd) and turn L. Go



ahead over mini-roundabout past gasholder L then use cycle track L to pass next roundabout, continuing into Mill Pond Rd past back of **Dartford station** R (27km, 4m) (accommodation, refreshments, cycle shop, station).

Cross bridge over river Darent and turn R at traffic lights (Overy St), passing under railway bridge. Bear L at end and go ahead L over traffic lights into road reserved for buses, using cycle track L. Follow this uphill then bear L on cycle track continuing uphill onto parallel road (Darenth Rd). Fork L beside Ivy Leaf pub (Brent Lane) continuing uphill. Where road bears R, continue ahead (still Brent Lane) and turn immediately L (Downs Ave). Turn R at T-junction (Park Rd, A296) on cycle track R. Pass Hesketh Park L and cross to other side at central reservation. Continue to roundabout and bear L. Pass under foot-bridge and continue beside main road (Princes Rd, A296). Follow cycle track bearing R under next roundabout, then turn L on bridge over M25 motorway and R to pass under opposite side of roundabout. Turn sharply L, then L again through barriers and pass car park of Dartford Bridge pub L. Emerge onto Hesketh Ave and continue ahead on Fleet Rd. Turn L between houses 73–75 then R at T-junction (Princes Rd), parallel with main road. Where this ends, turn sharply L through bollards and cross service road beside bus stop. Turn R and after 70 metres, turn L across main road using staggered crossing. Turn R alongside main road (Watling St, A296), then continue past next roundabout. Dogleg R and L across slip road and cycle past huge **Bluewater** shopping mall in quarry below L (32km, 45m).

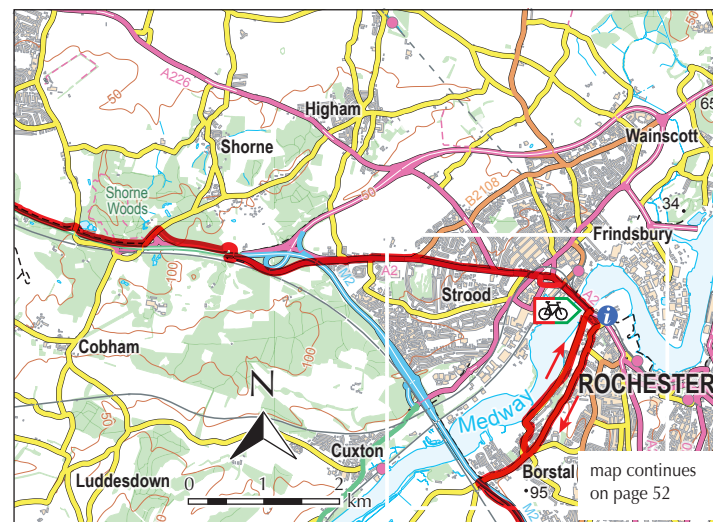
Bluewater, the sixth largest shopping mall in Europe, is built to a triangular floor plan inside a former cement quarry. It opened in 1999 with 330 stores and 40 restaurants employing 7000 staff. Accessible only by road, it has parking for 13,000 vehicles.

Follow cycle track beside main road then fork L through gate. Pass under road bridge then bear L to cross

slip road beside roundabout. Turn R to continue beside main road, ascending to pass junction with A2 dual carriageway then descending into Ebbsfleet valley. Bear L then zigzag down R to cross slip road for Ebbsfleet at staggered light controlled crossing (35.5km, 19m).

Turn L and follow road curving R past roundabout then cross second slip road at more traffic lights and continue on other side of road. Pass second roundabout R and follow slip road beside A2 as it ascends towards next junction. At top of hill turn immediately R across four staggered crossings over dual carriageway B262. Continue parallel with A2, soon bearing L through scrubland past Gravesend **Cyclopark** R (38.5km, 43m) (refreshments).

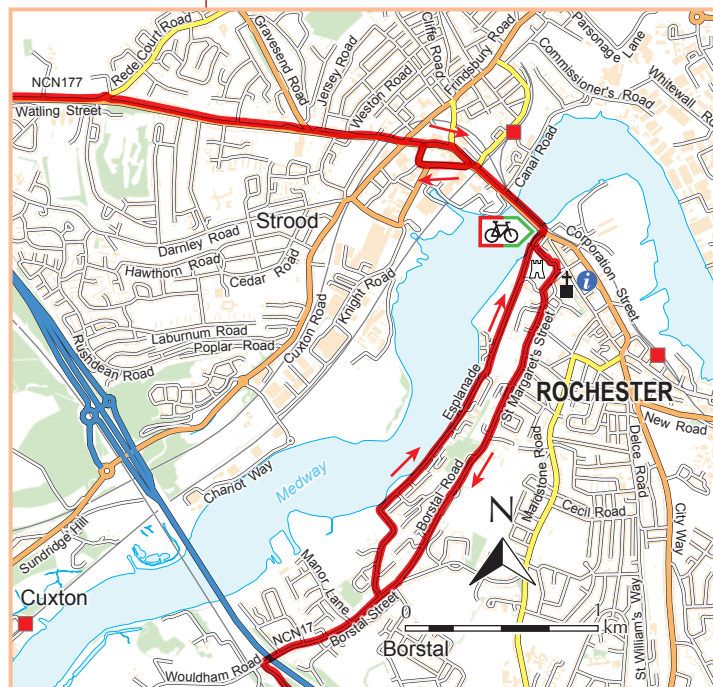
Dogleg R and L across entry road to Cyclopark then continue ascending past petrol station L and fork L on cycle track winding through scrubland along route of old motorway. Cross slip road and emerge on main road with car park R. Turn R and immediately cross road at light controlled crossing then follow cycle track bearing L past



roundabout to run parallel with motorway. Follow track away from motorway to cross side road and pass Inn on the Lake hotel L. At top of hill, bear L beside Brewers Rd and turn R (Park Pale) just before entrance to **Shorne Woods** country park L (43.5km, 111m).

Follow Park Pale descending to run beside motorway, then turn L (sp golf club) at first junction and follow road curving R over motorway bridge. Where road bears L under railway, fork R on cycle track and turn back under bridge. Continue beside slip road and follow this over motorway to reach roundabout. Continue beside Watling St on cycle track R, then after first turning R, cross road at reservation. Keep R at fork beside petrol station and continue downhill on tree-lined cycle track L, then pass under railway and follow High St through one-way system in centre of **Strood** (refreshments, station). Continue under second railway bridge and cross Rochester bridge over river Medway to reach **Rochester** (50km, 4m) (accommodation, refreshments, youth hostel (in Gillingham), tourist office, cycle shop, station).

Gravesend Cyclopark has road and off-road cycle race tracks



ROCHESTER

Rochester (pop 27,000) is, with Chatham and Gillingham, part of the Medway conurbation (pop 250,000). Founded by the Romans to control the place where Watling St crossed the Medway, it was further developed by the Normans who built a castle, the well-preserved main keep of which still stands, on a ridge overlooking the river crossing. The cathedral, built between 1080–1130 with later additions, is one of the oldest in Britain. High St, between the castle ridge and the river, has many old buildings including the Guildhall and Corn Exchange. One of Rochester's eminent Victorian residents was the author Charles Dickens who used it as a setting in *Pickwick Papers* and *Great Expectations*. Inspired by the works of Dickens, an annual Sweeps Festival is held every May, a revival of a longstanding tradition described in *Sketches by Boz* (a Dickens's nom de plume) that had died out in the early 1900s. One odd aspect of Rochester is that despite having a cathedral and being recognised as a city since 1211 it is now forbidden from using its city title. When the old city merged with Gillingham to form Medway in 1998, the new council failed to apply for the 'city' title to be transferred. Later in 2010 when the council started referring to the 'City of Medway' it was rebuked by the Advertising Standards Authority and told to desist.

REVERSE ROUTE: ROCHESTER TO TOWER OF LONDON

Cross Medway over **Rochester bridge** and pass under railway. Fork L (Commercial Rd, A2, sp London) and bear R around one-way system in **Strood** (refreshments, station). Turn L (High St) passing under railway, then continue uphill (London Rd, becoming Watling St) out of town. Go ahead at roundabout and cross motorway. Follow cycle track beside slip road and pass under bridge. Turn sharply back L then bear L to cross motorway. Follow road bearing L and turn R beside motorway to reach entrance to **Shorne Woods** country park R (6.5km, 111m).

Turn L, using cycle track R, then bear R to continue beside motorway, now descending. Go ahead over side road and continue to roundabout. Bear R beside first exit then turn L across road at traffic lights and follow cycle track away from road beside truck park L. Cross next road then continue ahead parallel with motorway past Gravesend **Cyclopark** L (11.5km, 43m) (refreshments).

Continue to road junction and use four-part staggered crossing to cross B262 and its slip roads. Turn immediately L beside motorway and follow

cycle track past roundabout by slip road for Ebbsfleet (14.5km, 19m). After roundabout, turn L across road then bear L past second roundabout. Turn R across dual-carriageway using staggered crossing and continue ahead zig-zagging up embankment. At this point route joins NCN1. Bear R on cycle track beside motorway ascending then descending to reach roundabout by slip road for **Blewater** shopping mall L (18km, 48m).

Pass roundabout and turn L across road. Bear R on cycle track under road bridge and continue through gate to run parallel with Watling St (A296). Continue ahead past next roundabout to reach complicated road junction. Turn L across middle of figure of eight roundabout using staggered crossing then turn R beside road for 75 metres. Turn L across service road beside bus stop then bear L on concrete ramp and turn sharply R (Princes Rd). Turn L beside house 604 then R into Fleet Rd. At end continue ahead on cycle track beside carpark of Dartford Bridge pub R. Turn R and spiral down R to pass under roundabout. Turn L over M25 motorway then R under other side of roundabout. Bear L then R beside A296. At next roundabout, bear R ahead on cycle track beside Park Rd and cross to L of road at next central reservation. Turn L (Downs Ave) and R downhill (Brent Lane). At end turn R (Darent Rd) and bear L on cycle track beside road reserved for buses. Go ahead over crossroads and fork immediately R (Overy St). Pass under railway and turn R (Mill Pond Rd) past back of **Dartford station** L (23km, 8m) (accommodation, refreshments, cycle shop, station). *To avoid cycling in London, frequent trains run from Dartford to London Bridge and Charing Cross stations.* Continue past roundabout and fork L (Victoria Rd, A2026). Continue into Burnham Rd and fork R (Priory Rd North). Follow this bearing L (Lawson Rd) and turn R at end beside Burnham Rd. Follow cycle track across road to L and continue past next roundabout onto Thames Rd (A2026). Pass under railway to reach roundabout at Barnes Cray (25km, 8m).

Continue on cycle track beside A206, going ahead over first roundabout, bearing L at second and R at third (sp Erith), where cycle track ends. Pass under railway and continue over small roundabout to reach five-way roundabout in **Erith** (28.5km, 10m) (refreshments, station). *The roundabout has a fish statue in the centre.*

Go ahead R (third exit, Walnut Tree Rd, sp town centre) and bear L at roundabout (West St). Follow this round bends R and L into Lower Rd and go ahead over two small roundabouts onto B213 (still Lower Rd). Cross road and railway bridges and follow road through **Belvedere** (station). Go ahead over small roundabout and continue on Picardy St, Gilbert St and Abbey Rd. Pass

Lesnes abbey ruins L and go under road bridge. After bridge, turn R (Wilton Rd) to reach **Abbey Wood station** (33.5km, 2m) (refreshments, station).

Before station, turn L on cycle track L of Abbey Arms pub and pass between houses. Emerge onto road and go ahead (Abbey Grove, becoming Bracondale Rd). Pass under road bridge and continue into Marmadon Rd. At end, bear L (Barth Rd) and turn R (Hartville Rd). Turn R again at second crossroads (Reidhaven Rd) and follow this bearing L. Turn L (Heverham Rd) and R into Plumstead High St (A206), passing **Plumstead station** L (36km, 6m) (refreshments, station).

Continue ahead between former **Woolwich Arsenal** R and Woolwich town centre L (accommodation, refreshments, cycle shop, station) and go ahead at large grassy roundabout by ramp for **Woolwich ferry** R (37.5km, 6m). Follow main road bearing L at next roundabout (A206, sp Greenwich) then ahead over two small roundabouts into **Charlton** (40km, 4m) (refreshments, station). Continue under motorway and pass between **National Maritime Museum** L and former **Royal Naval College** R to reach **Greenwich** (43km, 6m) (accommodation, refreshments, tourist office, cycle shop, station).

Follow one-way system bearing R (Church St) then turn L (Creek Rd, A200). Cross Deptford Creek then bear R at major road junction (Evelyn St). At one-way system, bear L (Bestwood St), then turn R (Bush Rd). Follow one-way street bearing L (Rotherhithe New Rd) and fork R (Rotherhithe Old Rd). Bear L into Lower Rd, past Surrey Quays station R (46.5km, 3m) to reach **Rotherhithe** roundabout. Bear L (first exit, Jamaica Rd, sp Bermondsey) and follow this to point where road bears L. Turn R across road between old brick warehouses (Shad Thames) and L (Queen Elizabeth St). Turn R at major crossroads (Tower Bridge Rd) and follow this crossing

Thames on **Tower bridge** to reach end of ride at Tower Hill beside **Tower of London** (50km, 18m).



The tea clipper Cutty Sark is preserved at Greenwich