



V-SPRINT

CHESHIRE COBBLED CLASSIC 2014

Thank you for entering the V-SPRINT Cheshire Cobbled Classic.

This rider pack includes rider information and additional materials on places of interest in the vicinity.

1. ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Start Date and Time: Sun 5 Oct 2014, 08:30am. Please arrive by 8am to sign on and collect your number.

Event Type: Cycle Sportive (non-competitive).

Venue: Wilmslow Leisure Centre, Rectory Fields, Station Rd, Wilmslow, Cheshire East SK9 1BU.

Event Website: <http://club.v-sprint.com/cheshire-cobbled-classic/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/cheshirecobbledclassic>

Emergency Mobile Number: 07708 648 106.

Getting There

By car, the easiest approach is via the A538 (south from the M56) to Wilmslow. Wilmslow Leisure Centre lies just off the A538 (Alderley Road on the map below). Alternatively, the A34 can be taken south from the M60. The A34 meets the A538 at the roundabout just north of the railway station shown on the map below.

(The M56 and M60 can be accessed from the M6 at junction 20/20A of the M6 from both the North and the South).

Wilmslow Rail Station is right next to Wilmslow Leisure Centre. Trains leave Manchester Piccadilly at 8:05am on Sunday mornings and arrive in Wilmslow at 8:21am – giving you just enough time to pick up your number and go! (In case of train delay you will still be able to start; your finish time will be adjusted accordingly).



Parking & Event HQ: The event HQ and start and finish areas are located at Wilmslow Leisure Centre. There is plentiful (free!) parking in the Broadway Meadow car park adjacent to and south of the Leisure Centre. There are more than

250 free spaces available on Sundays. The Leisure Centre has its own car park but you have to pay to use it, and it will likely be full of vans supplying antiques to an exhibition in one of the sports halls that weekend! There are also several other very large car parks within a few minutes walking distance from the Leisure Centre, although Broadway Meadow should easily suffice.

Hotels: There is no shortage of accommodation in the area. There are Premier Inns in Wilmslow, Handforth, Heald Green (for Manchester Airport), Macclesfield North (Bollington) just a few miles from the start and finish HQ. There are some nice hotels in Alderley Edge (if your budget will allow), such as The Merlin Hotel and The Alderley Edge Hotel.

Good luck & see you at the event!

Francis Longworth (Event Organiser)

Mobile: 07539 533556

Email: enquiries@club.v-sprint.com

2. ROUTE INFORMATION

The V-Sprint 'Cheshire Cobbled Classic' is a tough 105 km (65-mile) sportive, inspired by the Tour of Flanders – the Belgian one-day Classic. It features twelve cobbled sectors, including five cobbled climbs that exceed 20% in gradient. The most notable of these is the frighteningly steep *Corkscrew*, a twisting, snaking cobbled road whose 45% maximum gradient makes it the steepest climb in the country (see photo below).



The other major cobbled climbs are Woodbrook Road (after only 4km), Beeston Brow at 29km, Start Lane at 49km and Swiss Hill at 90km.

There are also two long flat cobbled sectors (something of a rarity in England), which, even more unusually, are surfaced with round cobbles rather than the more common square cobblestones or 'setts'.



The eastern half of the Cheshire Cobbled Classic is located within the Peak District National Park and takes in the spectacular Goyt Valley and the Fernilee and Errwood reservoirs. The route contains a significant amount of climbing – roughly 1800m in total – and the event builds to a climax on the iconic Swiss Hill, a 25% cobbled climb in Alderley Edge, which is used by Team Sky to prepare specifically for the Tour of Flanders. The profile of Swiss Hill can be viewed [here](#).

Further details and photographs of the route can be found on the event webpage: <http://club.v-sprint.com/cheshire-cobbled-classic/>. Additional information and latest updates are available on the event Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/cheshirecobbledclassic>

There is also the option of a shorter 65 km (40-mile) route, which skips sectors 5, 6 and 7, but is otherwise the same as the full 105 km route. All of the roads used on the route are relatively traffic-free. Feed stations, a broom wagon and medical support will be provided.

The event will have a Belgian theme, given that it is inspired by the Tour of Flanders, with a variety of Belgian foods and chocolates at the feed stations, and a glass of Belgian beer (Leffe) provided for every rider at the finish. In addition, everyone who completes the course will be presented with a genuine 17th-century cobblestone, reclaimed from a cobbled street in the Peak District village of Bollington, along which both the long and short routes pass. These cobbles are quite heavy (up to around 5kg each!) and if you want to take one home with you, it might be easier to transport it in a car rather than in a jersey pocket!

You can sign up for the Cheshire Cobbled Classic using British Cycling's online entry system via the event webpage at <http://club.v-sprint.com/cheshire-cobbled-classic/> until the evening of Saturday 4 October.

COBBLED AND UNPAVED SECTORS

START (0 km)	Wilmslow Leisure Centre			
Sector 14 (3 km)	Horseshoe Lane	200m	Flat	Cobbles
Sector 13 (4 km)	Woodbrook Road	300m	20% max.	Cobbles
Sector 12 (8 km)	Bradford Lane East	700m	Flat	Cobbles (rounded)
Sector 11 (9 km)	Hocker Lane East	1600m	Flat	Cobbles/gravel
Sector 10 (15 km)	Prestbury	50m	Flat	Cobbles
FEED 1	The Robin Hood, Rainow			
Sector 9 (24 km)	Jumper Lane	2000m	25% max.	Broken tarmac/gravel
Sector 8 (29 km)	Beeston Brow	300m	20% max.	Cobbles (irregular)
Sector 7 (41 km)	The Corkscrew	200m	45% max.	Cobbles
Sector 6 (42 km)	Bank Clough Farm	600m	- 5%	Gravel (descent)
Sector 5 (49 km)	Start Lane	300m	33% max.	Cobbles
Sector 4a (57 km)	Fernilee Reservoir	1800m	Flat	Hardpacked stones
FEED 2	The Robin Hood, Rainow			
Sector 4 (79 km)	Prestbury	50m	Flat	Cobbles
Sector 3 (86 km)	Hocker Lane West	1600m	Flat	Cobbles/gravel
Sector 2 (88 km)	Bradford Lane West	700m	Flat	Cobbles (rounded)
Sector 1 (90 km)	Swiss Hill	500m	25% max.	Cobbles
FINISH (105km)	Wilmslow Leisure Centre			

A GPX file is available on the event website <http://club.v-sprint.com/cheshire-cobbled-classic/> and at

<http://docs.google.com/file/d/0Bzg4BNX-Z-6wdEVDZnZtNUkxXzg/edit>

Although the route is very well signposted, we urge all riders to both familiarize themselves with the course, and download the GPX file if they have a Garmin-like device, in order to reduce the probability of going off-course. In addition you are strongly advised to print out the two 1:50 000 OS maps (attached as pdf files to your Rider's Pack email, and also available on the event website) and take them with you on the ride (perhaps in a Ziploc sandwich bag to keep them dry).

The cobbled Corkscrew climb is very steep, and if the weather is very wet, a decision will be taken on the morning of the event regarding its inclusion. In addition, the descent which follows is via a gravel track and it may also be necessary to make a decision on whether this is safe to ride down if conditions are poor. (We will only cancel/reschedule the event if the weather is very poor indeed).

The gravel track is on private land, and the inclusion of the Corkscrew in the Cheshire Cobbled Classic depends on the owners' consent. Please endeavour to ride sensibly and safely on this descent, and reduce speed to a minimum. The descent is only a few hundred metres long; taking care on this section of the course will not slow you down very much overall. There are plenty of other sectors on the route where you can safely ride as hard as you like!

3. WHAT TO BRING AND CHOICE OF EQUIPMENT

- ID in case of an incident.
- Food and energy drink (although there will be food available at the start, and at two feed stations *en route* at roughly 25km and 75km). There is a Co-op in Whaley Bridge at 50km should you require extra sustenance!
- Money/credit card.
- Mobile phone (emergency contact number is printed on your ride number sticker)
- Basic tool, ideally with a chain-splitter.
- Pump, tyre levers and *at least two* spare inner tubes.
- Helmet (mandatory).
- GPX device or mobile phone with maps.
- Printed 1:50 000 Ordnance Survey maps (route highlighted in pink – attached to Rider's Pack email).

Given that the road contains cobbled and unpaved sectors, there is a slightly increased risk of punctures. We therefore suggest thicker, reinforced, wider tyres (25-28mm ideally), paired with wheels that are not too rigid. Old-fashioned boxed rims (e.g. Mavic Open Pro) are ideal. Vittoria produce a tyre that is specially designed for cobbles with extra grip, and these are the preferred choice of many professionals in the Tour of Flanders and Paris-Roubaix: <http://www.vittoria.com/tire/pave-cg/>. These measures will also provide a less jarring ride over the rougher roads. You might wish to double-wrap your handlebars with tape, but this is not strictly necessary. A full-carbon frame is a perfectly good choice but other materials such as steel would be equally good. If you are worried about damaging an expensive bike on the rougher unpaved roads or cobbles, however, you may prefer to bring a training/winter bike, or a cyclo-cross bike. A mountain bike will handle the unpaved and cobbled sectors with ease, but will of course be considerably slower on normal tarmac roads (which comprise the majority of the route). Please make sure that your bike is in good condition, cleaned, and that you have carried out the standard safety checks before your ride. Pay particular attention to the condition of your tyres. It is not a good idea to ride this event with old or even slightly worn or nicked tyres. The most important factor in avoiding punctures, however, is not holding the bars too rigidly over the cobbled and unpaved sectors. In addition, absorbing shocks by bending your knees and lifting yourself slightly above your saddle ('hovering') will greatly reduce the probability of frustrating punctures. There are some very helpful tips from British Cycling on choice of equipment for riding on cobbles on this webpage:

<http://www.britishcycling.org.uk/insightzone/techniques/peddaling/article/izn20130412-Riding-the-Cobbles-0>

4. MEDICAL SUPPORT

The venue staff at the HQ are fully-trained first aiders. In the event of an incident on the route, for minor issues call the main event mobile number 07708 648 106 (printed on every rider's number sticker) and help will be arranged. For more serious incidents call 999 immediately. It is essential that all riders carry a (charged) mobile phone during the ride for this eventuality.

5. MECHANICAL SUPPORT

Riders must largely be self-sufficient in the case of minor mechanical incidents such as punctures, and should carry at least *two* spare inner tubes, tyre levers and a working pump, together with a simple multi-tool, ideally including a chain-splitter. For more serious mechanical failures, there will be a broom wagon/mobile mechanic van that will be able to provide assistance. If a serious mechanical incident occurs, riders are advised to call (or preferably text – to prevent the line being engaged) the main event emergency number 07708 648 106, and await assistance.

6. HQ FACILITIES

There is ample parking at the venue, and changing rooms, toilets and showers together with lockers if needed are available. There will be a range of food and drink available, provided by the venue staff (coffee and snacks). Particularly recommended are the Belgian frites and mayonnaise – ideally after rather than before the ride!

7. PRE-RIDE

Registration: Open from 7:45am.

On signing on you will receive your number sticker, which you should affix either to your helmet or to your bike (the bike's top tube or handlebar is preferable). There is no need to do anything other than sign your name on the sign-on sheet at the registration desk (which is located at the main entrance of Wilmslow Leisure Centre), and then make your way to the start area immediately outside.

Rider Briefing: A safety briefing will be given to riders immediately before the start, reminding them of the main safety issues discussed in this pack. This should last less than two minutes.

8. START

Riders should begin assembling behind the Start banner at around 8.15am. Riders will be set off in groups of 20 at two-minute intervals, as per British Cycling guidelines. Each rider will be assigned a start time according to their number. Riders should be in position ready to be called forward to the start no less than 5 minutes before their allotted start time. Start times are as follows:

8.30am: Numbers 1-20
8.32am: Numbers 21-40
8.34am: Numbers 41-60
8.36am: Numbers 61-80
8.38am: Numbers 81-100
8.40am: Numbers 101-120
8.42am: Numbers 121-140
8.44am: Numbers 141-160
8.46am: Numbers 161-180
8.48am: Numbers 181-200

The safety briefing will take place in the two minutes between the departures of successive waves of twenty riders.

Timing

Riders' times will be calculated from their time at the finish and their start time. No additional timing chips are required beyond your number sticker. If you wish to start at a different time from the time allocated to you, you may do so, with the approval of the organizer, but this will affect your calculated ride time on the published race results. For example, if you wish to start four minutes later than your allocated start time in order to ride with a friend who has a different allocated start time, you should subtract four minutes from your published ride time. Timing chips will be introduced for the 2015 Cheshire Cobbled Classic (already scheduled for Sunday 31 May).

9. DURING THE RIDE

Signage

The signs are A3 and A4-sized and have fluorescent yellow backgrounds with black arrows or 'CAUTION' warnings, etc. All bear the V-SPRINT logo. Ignore signs of different colours or those without the V-Sprint logo.



The route is roughly an 'out-and-back' route, with the return journey retracing some of the initial outward journey. This has been done in order to maximize the safety of the roads used, and to minimize the number of large junctions/traffic lights/roundabouts. As a result you may occasionally you may see riders coming past you in the opposite direction around the halfway point. Do not be put off by this. The route will be very clearly signposted and there should not be any ambiguity. The best way to make absolutely certain that there will be no confusion with the route is to print out and carry the attached OS course maps with you!

Hazards

There are five principal types of hazard on this route:

- Crossing 'A'-roads, and turning right across traffic onto or off 'A'-roads.
- Entering unpaved/cobbled sectors, if this involves crossing traffic (esp. 'A'-roads).
- Leaving unpaved/cobbled sectors and re-joining normal roads.
- The unpaved/cobbled sectors themselves.
- Narrow roads with blind bends.

The main areas where caution is required are below, in the order in which they are encountered along the route. Of these only two (**F, H & L** – asterisked and in bold) require extreme caution:

- Start: keep an eye out for any cars in Wilmslow Leisure Centre car park.

- B. Left turn onto the A538 on exiting the Leisure Centre. CAUTION REQUIRED.
- C. Roundabout (A34/B5359) just north of Alderley Edge. Caution required.
- D. Roundabout (A523) just west of Bollington. Caution required.
- E. Descent to junction with B5470 south of Bollington. Caution required at junction.
- F. ****CONTRAFLOW from Jenkin Chapel to the base of Sector 7 (The Corkscrew cobbled climb) – approx. 500m. Narrow road with blind bend. KEEP LEFT! This sector will be marshalled. EXTREME CAUTION.****
- G. The descent of the Corkscrew (Sector 6) is a gravel road. Not too steep, but caution required.
- H. ****The end of this gravel road comes out at the base of the Corkscrew. CONTRAFLOW back up to Jenkin Chapel – approx. 500m. KEEP LEFT! EXTREME CAUTION.****
- I. Approach to Sector 5 (Start Lane cobbled section). Blind bend. KEEP LEFT! Caution required.
- J. Right turn onto A5004 at Whaley Bridge.
- K. Left turn onto A5004 at Fernilee.
- L. ****Right turn off A5004 onto road leading down to Sector 4a along the east side of Fernilee Reservoir. EXTREME CAUTION REQUIRED.****
- M. Right turn off reservoir road.
- N. Descent to B4570 junction 1km north of Ginchlough. Caution required at junction.
- O. Right turn onto A538 east of Prestbury. Caution required.
- P. Left turn into Leisure Centre. Beware of cars parking in the Leisure Centre car park.

Each of the cobbled sectors is potentially hazardous, especially if wet. There are some great tips from British Cycling about how to ride cobbles on this webpage:

<http://www.britishcycling.org.uk/insightzone/techniques/pedalling/article/izn20130412-Riding-the-Cobbles-0>,

and from Rapha at <http://road.cc/content/news/3065-how-ride-belgian-cobbles-video-tips-rapha-condor>

For anyone who has not yet experienced riding on cobbles, two bloggers from British Cycling recount their experiences on the cobbles of the Tour of Flanders and Paris-Roubaix here:

<http://www.britishcycling.org.uk/sportives/article/sp20140416--Oisin-s-blog--Tour-of-Flanders-0>

<http://www.britishcycling.org.uk/sportives/article/sp20140507--Blog--Madeleine-rides-Roubaix-0>

If this is your first time on cobbles, the first flat, short sector on Horseshoe Lane should serve as a gentle introduction to the experience! Take it steady and feel your way in gradually. Again, try not to hold onto the bars too tightly and let the bike bounce.

One excellent way to tackle the Cheshire Cobbled Classic is to ride with a small group of people who are of a similar ability to you; a group of four to five is perfect. Riding with people you know provides an enjoyable social experience, and many riders and clubs enter as groups. You can then take the cobbled sectors at your own pace and regroup at the top of the climbs. This enables the group to maintain a brisk pace on the normal and flatter paved roads, and then for everyone to really challenge themselves on the harder cobbled climbs without feeling that they are going to get dropped by the other riders, or that they are holding anyone back.

Feed Stations: There are two feed stations, at roughly 25km and 75km, both at the [Robin Hood pub](#) in Rainow (the first on the way out, and the second on the way back). These will be clearly signposted by 'FEED' signs. There is also a Co-op in Whaley Bridge at 50km if you are desperate and require further sustenance!

10. POST-RIDE

After crossing the finish line and passing the 'FINISH' banner, you should ensure that you do not impede the riders who are finishing behind you. At this point, you should give your number to the finish marshal, who will record your time and make a note that you have returned safely. If you do not finish the course or do not wish to return to the finish area, please let the organiser know by text message on 07708 648 106 so that we do not have to send out a search party to look for you!

Every rider who finishes will be given a glass of Belgian beer, together with a commemorative cobblestone. The café has a great coffee machine and can also provide a range of foods – particularly recommended are the Belgian-style frites and mayonnaise!

11. PHOTOGRAPHY

The official event photographer is Henry Iddon (henryiddon.com). Details of how to purchase photos will be posted on the event website, and by email to all riders after the event. Henry will be taking photographs at various points around the course. We cannot guarantee that he will manage to photograph every rider but we *can* guarantee that he will provide many memorable images from the event.

12. DOS AND DON'TS

Do:

- Follow the Highway Code and be safe. This ride is non-competitive – therefore NOT a race. Please ensure you act accordingly when participating. Feel free to ride hard when it is safe to do so, but if vehicles, horses or runners/walkers are present please be extra careful and considerate to them. Some parts of the Tour of the Black Country use bridle paths which may sometimes be used by pedestrians and horses. It is essential that riders behave themselves in such circumstances. Our ability to run this event safely depends on riders being sensible and courteous to those with whom we share the roads and bridleways.
- Wear a helmet.
- Carry a phone.
- Make sure you are aware in advance of the areas of the course which have been highlighted above as requiring special caution and SLOW DOWN. Come to a complete stop if necessary.

Don't:

- Cross the dashed white lines in the middle of the road. This, regrettably, happens all too often – in sportives as well as races. There is plenty of opportunity to ride hard and fast without subjecting oneself and others to unnecessary risks.
- Ride in large groups more than two-abreast.
- Impede traffic flow.
- Behave in a manner that may offend others.
- Drop litter.

13. SPONSORS/EVENT PARTNERS

The Cheshire Cobbled Classic is promoted by V-Sprint Cycling, who organized the recent [Tour of the Black Country](#) (a Paris-Roubaix-inspired sportive featuring 15 unpaved/cobbled sectors and a velodrome finish), and the Strade-Bianche-themed [White Roads Classic](#), which features 9 white gravel/chalk sectors.

Please also support the sponsors and event partners who facilitate this event:

Photos: Henry Iddon www.henryiddon.com

Tyres and Wheels: Vittoria <https://www.facebook.com/VittoriaUK>

Mechanical Assistance: ATS Cycles, Macclesfield <http://www.atscycles.co.uk/>

Champagne and Beer: www.thechampagnecompany.com



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