

Bethlehem and Back

Total Distance: **30.3 miles**

Elevation Gain: **2242 feet**

Degree of Difficulty Index: **2242 ft / 30.3 mi = 73.97 ft/mi**

Terrain: **Very Hilly**

Killer Hills: **One short, very steep hill @ 12.4 mi (+/-) and several other longer, but less steep, hilly stretches**

Geographical Region: **Northwestern Connecticut**

City/Town: **Litchfield**

Starting Location: **Topsmead State Forest parking area in Litchfield; Take Rt. 8 Exit 42 (Rt. 118 Harwinton/Litchfield); go west on Rt. 118 toward Litchfield for about two miles; turn left on Clark Rd (sign for Wisdom House); go right at end onto East Litchfield Rd; take first left (about 1 mile) onto Buell Rd; then first right (about 0.3 mi.) onto Chase Rd and into Topsmead. Parking area is on right in about 0.2 miles.**

Ride Description: **This is a very scenic ride over rolling to hilly terrain through the towns of Litchfield, Morris and Bethlehem, with a possible visit to the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem. There are several short stretches on dirt roads (see route sheet), but they are easily navigable on road bikes. In early spring there are some lovely daffodil displays en route. It would be especially enjoyable during the fall leaf change season, generally around the second week of October. This ride has several hilly sections and should be attempted only by those bicyclists who are very fit. Be forewarned.**

Facilities and *Points of Interest*:

Mile	Facilities - <i>Points of Interest</i>
0.0	<i>Topsmead State Forest estate and grounds. Topsmead State Forest is the former summer estate of Miss Edith Morton Chase, daughter of Henry Sabin Chase and Alice Morton Chase. Henry Sabin Chase was the first President of Chase Brass and Copper Company in Waterbury. Chase Brass was one of the leaders in the brass industry when Waterbury was the Brass Capital of the world.</i> <i>The English Tudor style house was completed in 1925. The exterior woodwork is of cypress, the downspouts are lead, the walls of brick and stucco, and the roof is slate. The interior woodwork is oak, as is most of the flooring. The foyer, hallway and dining room floors are of polished terra cotta tile. Most of the interior walls are of the same type of stucco as is found on the exterior. Fine craftsmanship, an eye for detail and understated wealth are evident throughout the house, which is tastefully and simply furnished with 17th and 18th century English country antiques.</i> <i>Free guided tours of the residence are offered from June through October on the 2nd and 4th weekends of each month. Reservations are not required. On open weekends, tours are available from 12:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.</i> <i>Nestled in the Litchfield Hills, Topsmead State Forest remains a precious piece of an era past.</i>
13.3	Bethlehem: Market and various facilities
14.0	<i>Start of possible off-course excursion to Abbey of Regina Laudis (access may be restricted)</i>
19.8	Intersection of Rt. 109 and 63: Convenience store on left
25.4	<i>Windmill on left</i>
30.3	<i>Topsmead State Forest; estate and grounds</i>

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