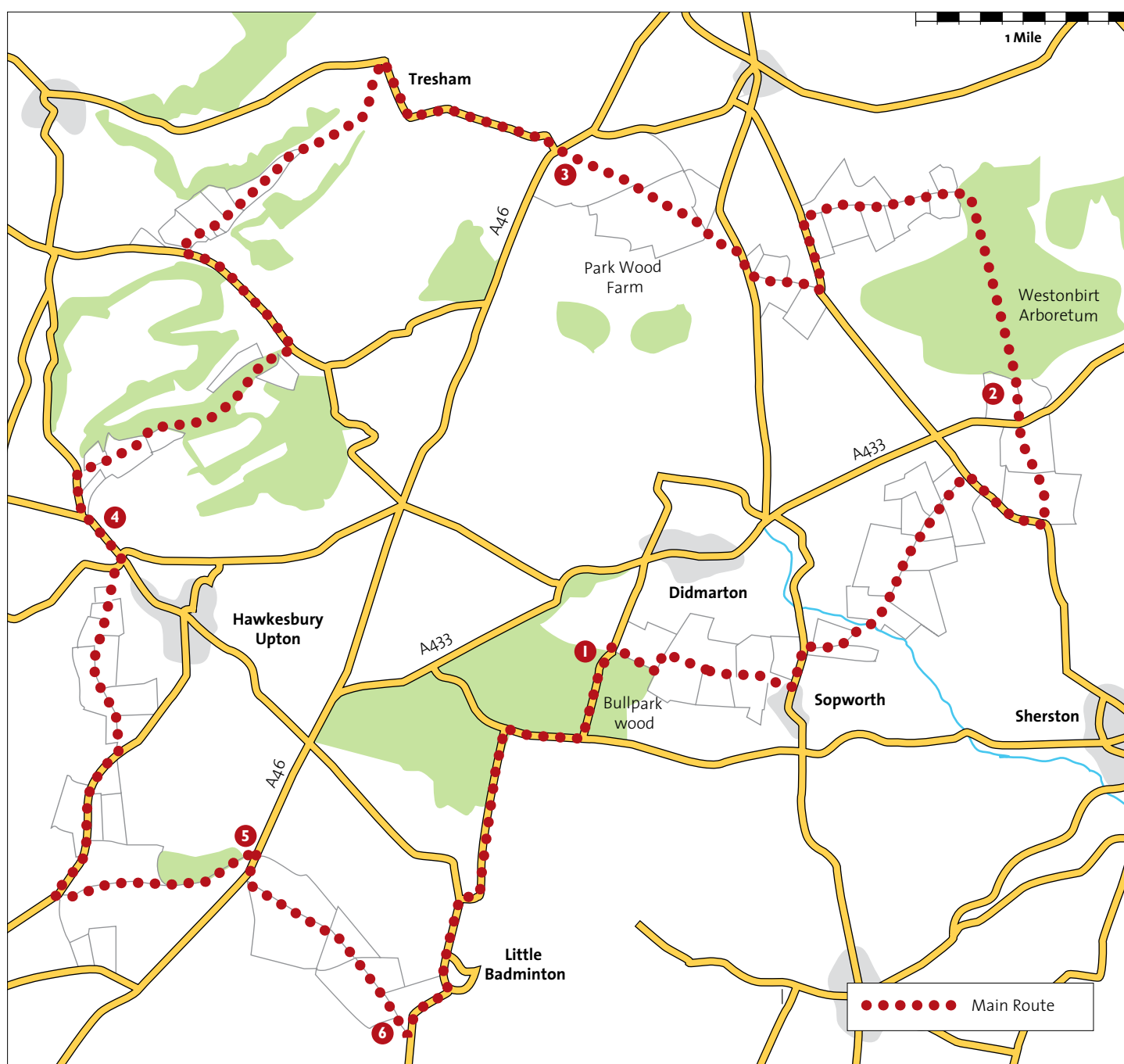


Off-road cycle ride 6

Hawkesbury Westonbirt – 18 Miles



This ride explores the high wold dip-slope, the rolling hills and valleys around Lower Kilcott and skirts along the top of the scarp. Magnificent! You can start the ride at any point, please try to get to it on your bike if possible. If you do drive please park with consideration for the local community. Brackets indicate the wording of signs and the route is described in an anti clockwise direction. Enjoy!



Off-road cycle ride 6

Hawkesbury Westonbirt – 18 Miles



The Route

1 When the road emerges from the wood, turn right to join a bridleway. At the end of the field turn left then right to follow the bridleway through the hedge. Turn left when the bridleway reaches a road. Take the first right to join a track at the Sopworth sign. Carry straight on past a barn conversion on your left. Keep the alternating dry-stone walls and hedges on your right as you go through 3 gates. Then straight on across a field following a line of trees to meet a road at the fourth gate. Right at the road then turn left at the sharp right-hand bend to follow a bridleway along a track. Ignore the turnings to the barn on your right and house on your left to carry straight on. Through the wooden gate and buildings, cross the A433 and go through the metal gate to continue straight on towards the wood.

2 At the field corner, go through the wooden gate to follow the bridleway through Silk Wood. Carry straight on at the ride junctions (Broad Drive). At the end of Broad Drive you come to a T junction with Waste Drive (wooden sign). Carry straight on across the grass and into the trees. Go through the wooden gate and carry straight on. At a T junction with another ride in a small valley bottom turn left. Follow the bridleway along the valley bottom when you emerge from the wood. At the road turn left. When the road bends to the left leave it to join a byway on your right. When you reach a road, turn right. At the new dry-stone wall (Whitely Stud, Park Wood Farm) leave the road to join a byway – with the new dry-stone wall on your right. Follow this good and clear track all the way to the A46.

3 At the A46, turn left then right (Tresham 1, Alderley 2 1/2). In Tresham leave the road where it turns sharp left to join a bridleway on a short track on the left. Follow the bridleway down the valley side starting with the fence to your right. Stay on the bridleway when it is joined by the Cotswold Way. At the road turn left. Leave the road to follow the Cotswold Way along a public bridleway on your right. Follow this well waymarked National Trail for a lovely ride. Turn right when you go through a metal gate, keeping the wood on your right (you leave the Cotswold Way which carries straight on along a footpath). Leave the side of the wood to stay on the bridleway heading towards a barn across the field. Left at the road.

4 Immediately after you have passed the Somerset Monument on your left you are rejoined by the Cotswold Way. Stay on the Cotswold Way by turning right onto a lane before a bus stop. Leave the lane by turning left to follow the Cotswold Way along a top quality bridleway (Cotswold Way, Public Bridleway, Horton 2). When you reach the lane leave the Cotswold Way and turn right onto the lane. At the brow as the road bears right, turn left to join a bridleway for a great off-road section.

5 Through a wooden gate and straight on to the A46. Turn right onto the A46 and after a short straight stretch turn left to follow a narrow bridleway through the woods before the road curves right. The bridleway soon emerges onto a track. Turn right onto the track then left when the tracks cross to go through a wooden gate. Carry straight on with the hedge to your right. Go straight across where the tracks cross and straight across the concrete track too. You now have a hedge on your left. Through the metal gate in the field corner and through the gateway in the dry-stone wall to join a lane at a metal gate.

6 Left at the lane and stay on it through Little Badminton. Turn right opposite a cottage to go through a pair of short pillars to follow a wonderful secret lane. Turn right at the T-junction just past another pair of short pillars. Take the first left (before a cottage) to take the lane to back to 1.

Maps

This ride straddles the Ordnance Survey Landranger maps 172 Bristol, Bath & surrounding area and 173 Swindon, Devizes & surrounding area. It also straddles the Explorer Maps 167 Thornbury, Dursley & Yate and 168 Stroud, Tetbury & Malmesbury.

Further Information

The Cotswolds AONB website contains more information about cycling, including downloadable routes, maps and places to hire bikes. Visit www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/cycling.

Words by Simon Smith