

Cycle routes from Kingham Station

Cycle Route 3: Cotswold Line Explorer: Charlbury



A medium distance ride on quiet lanes passing through the ancient Wychwood Forest area and past a restored Cotswold sheepwash. Catch the train back or return via Chadlington.

Grade: Medium, a few sharp/long climbs

Time: 3-4 hours

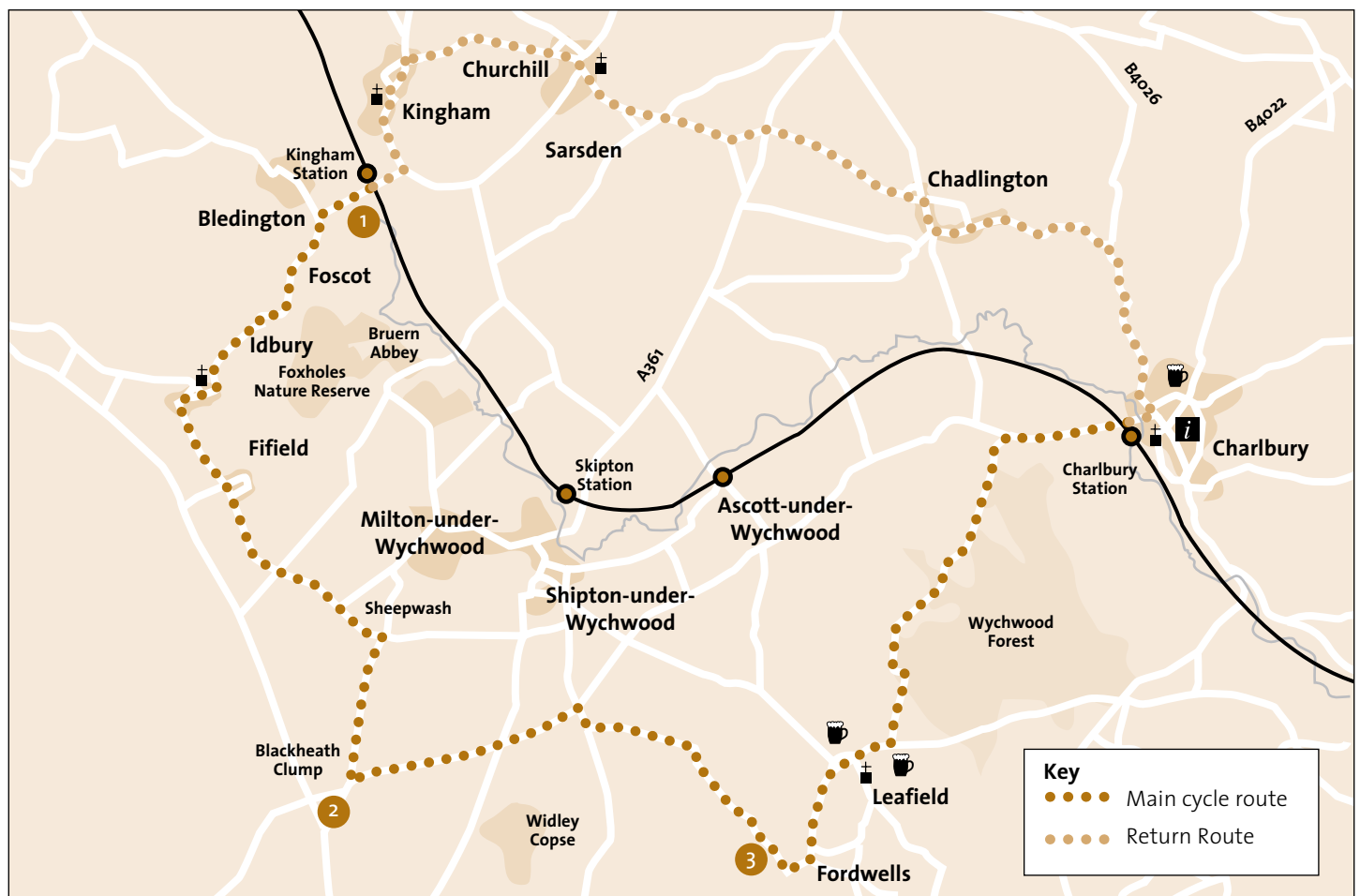
Distance: 26km/16 miles

Stops/pubs: Pubs and shops in Charlbury, Chadlington, Kingham and Churchill

Attractions: Cotswold villages, Wychwood woods and restored sheepwash

Highlights

- Kingham was voted 'England's Favourite Village' in 2004 by Country Life magazine.
- Churchill has a church tower visible for miles, a two-thirds copy of Magdalen College tower in Oxford.
- In 1086 the Royal Forest of Wychwood covered much of what is now West Oxfordshire. At Domesday, the Forest included meadows, cultivated open fields, heaths and downland with woodlands. The estates at Blenheim, Cornbury, Ditchley and Eynsham were once part of Wychwood Forest but only a small area south of Charlbury remains.



Turn over for route description

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www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

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Route Description

- 1 Turn right from station, and in 1/4 mile turn left signed Foscot and Bould and continue up through Idbury, follow road to left at junction, then turn left, signed Fifield. In 2 1/2 miles after passing several junctions turn right at X roads, by Sheepwash, signed Taynton.
- 2 After 1 1/4 miles turn left, then straight over X roads (taking care crossing A361) onto B4437, signed Charlbury. In 3/4 mile turn right at X cross, signed Swinbrook, then turn left, signed Fordwells, descend 2 miles to Fordwells and turn left, signed Leafield.
- 3 Turn left at T-junction, signed Leafield, and follow to village. After passing the church, turn left, signed Chadlington, and pass through Wychwood Forest to a T-junction, turn right, signed Harlbury. Continue to Charlbury Station.

Charlbury

With a tradition for glove-making until recent years and strong Quaker associations, Charlbury has a distinctive history. Today it is a very pleasant base from which to enjoy the nearby Wychwood Forest. The small town centre has a rural charm and there is a small museum. The station is a rare survival of a Brunel-designed railway station, now restored and an important link with Oxford, Worcester and London. The Youth Hostel is a converted stone built 19th century glove factory.



Wychwood Forest

Photo: Wychwood Project

Milton-under-Wychwood Sheepwash

Sheepwashes were used from medieval times up until the 1920s and are found throughout the Cotswolds, many of which have been mapped and restored by the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens. The sheep were washed to remove dirt, grit and some of the natural oils from the fleece, raising their price at market. Sheepwashing was a busy and noisy time for local villages as hundreds and even thousands of sheep were washed over a few days.

The Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

This route takes you through part of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Cotswolds was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1966 in recognition of its rich, diverse and high quality landscape. It is the largest of 38 AONBs in England and Wales, covering 790 sq miles, stretching from the City of Bath and Wiltshire in the south through Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire to Warwickshire and Worcestershire in the north.

For more information about cycling in the Cotswolds, go to www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/cycling