

Off-road cycle ride 3

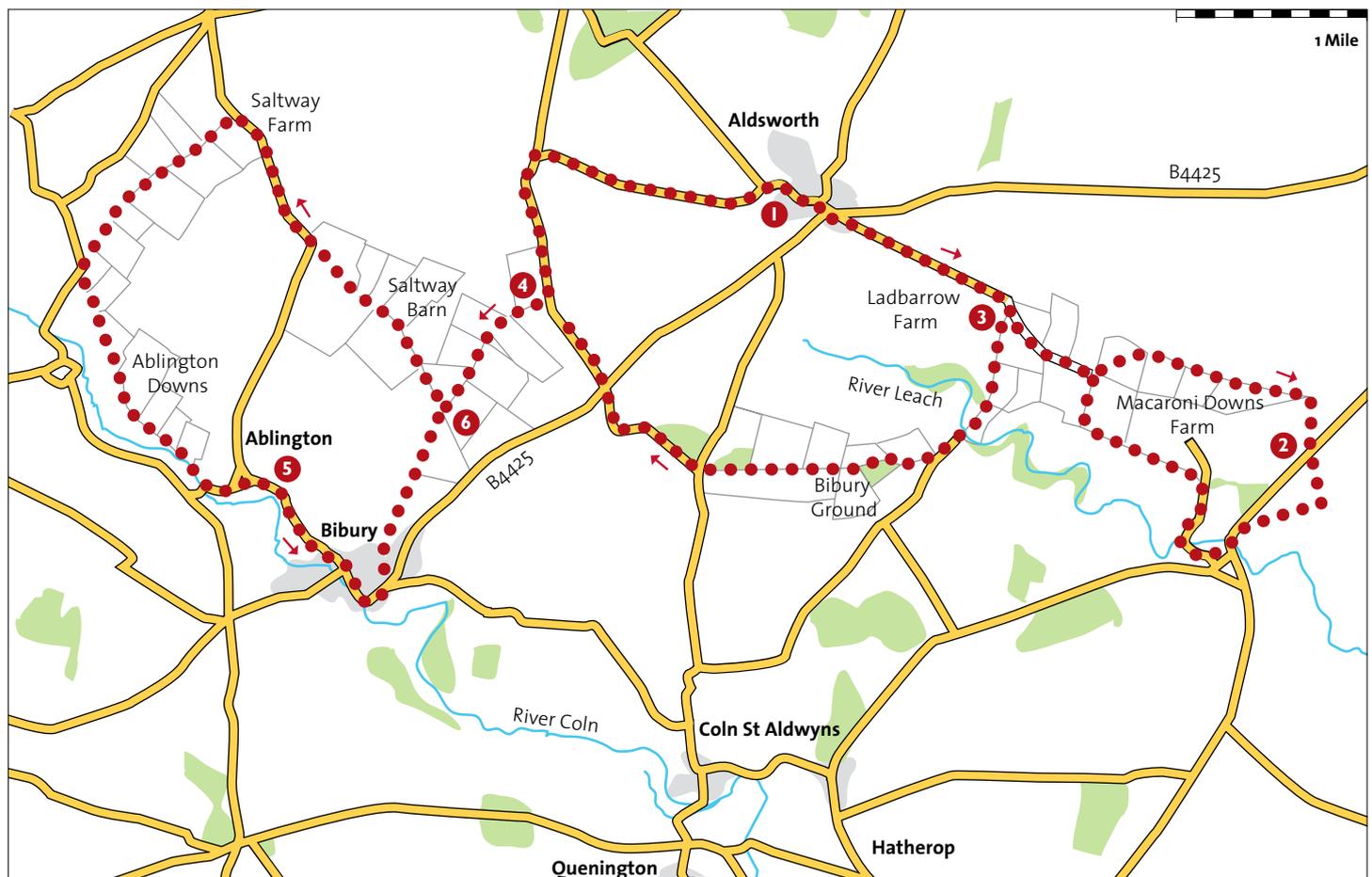
Aldsworth Bibury – Up to 21 Miles



This ride is made up of 3 interlocking loops so you can make it as long or as short as you like. It takes you around the good tracks and quiet lanes of the mid-Cotswolds lowlands and cuts down into the stunning lower Coln and Leach valleys.

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.

The route is described starting in a clockwise direction but the western loop is described anti clockwise. Enjoy!



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Aldsworth Bibury – Up to 21 Miles



1 Downhill from the Aldsworth war memorial to the main road (B4425). Turn left at the T-junction and then take the first right (Ladbarrow Farm). Stay on this lane as it turns sharp right then left. Just before the tarmac ends bear left across a small grassy triangle to join a bridleway that takes you diagonally across a field. At the field corner bear right past a bridleway sign and through a wooden gate to join a byway. Carry straight on with the dry-stone wall to your right; the byway becomes a lane at a farm. After a small wood turn right to join a bridleway.

2 Straight across the road to continue following the bridleway with another wood on your right. When a track cuts through the wood turn right and immediately left to follow the narrow bridleway through the middle of the wood. Turn right when the tracks cross, up the short slope and along the field edge with the dry-stone wall on your left. At the road turn left then right to take the lane over the cattle grid and through a stunning valley. Leave the lane at the bridleway sign to climb up the left hand side of the valley. Through the white gate to follow a byway running past the farm buildings and a derelict wind pump. Straight on at the wind pump to take the byway between the fence and the hedge. Through the wooden gate and carry on with the hedge to your left. Follow the good track as it bears left to join the lane (which you will recognise if you have ridden section 1).

3 Just before the farmhouse the lane bears right. Leave it at this point to follow a bridleway left through a white gate with a wheel. Follow the bridleway keeping the hedge to your right. At the bottom it joins a track and passes some buildings on your right before becoming a tarmac lane. Leave the lane to join the first bridleway on the right. At the small wood 'Bibury Ground' turn right then left keeping the wood to your left. At the end of the wood, carry straight on. At the road go straight across to join a lane (Eastington 4, Northleach 5). Straight across at the next junction too (Eastington 3, Northleach 4).

4 Take the first bridleway on your left opposite the farm. Follow it along a well made up track until it crosses another good track. Turn right here through a metal gate to join an un-waymarked byway which follows the route of the old 'salt way'. Stay on the byway as it curves round the buildings of Saltway Barn to continue straight on. Go straight on again when the byway joins a road. Turn left to join a restricted byway immediately before Saltway

Farm. Follow this beautiful hedge bounded track until it reaches the road. At the road bear left to join another restricted byway. When this track meets a field go through the metal gate which leads you straight on. Ignore the gate on your left. The track can be wet where it crosses a valley. Just go for it. The track is firm under the water and who wants to stay dry anyway! At Ablington the track turns into a tarmac lane. At the road turn left.

5 Right at the T-junction (Bibury 3/4). In Bibury left at the T-junction, effectively straight on (Aldsworth 3 1/2, Burford 10, B4425). After you pass the lane signed Bibury Court on your right take the first left (no through road sign). The tarmac soon turns into a concrete track with an earth and grass middle. Leave the track when it turns right into a yard by carrying straight on to follow an un-waymarked bridleway. When you come to a T-junction with another track turn left through a metal gate and head towards the wooden gates by the pond. Through the bridleways wooden gate, past the pond, through the next gate then across the field with the dry-stone wall to your left.

6 At the field corner cross the salt way track to carry straight on all the way to the road where you turn left. Take the first right (unsigned) at a grassy triangle. After a long straight stretch turn right, effectively straight on, at the junction (Aldsworth 1/2, Burford 7). Follow this road through Aldsworth. At the T-junction turn right (Bibury 3 1/2, Cirencester 10 1/2) to pass the war memorial on your left.

Maps

This ride in its entirety can be found on both the Ordnance Surveys Landranger 163 'Cheltenham & Cirencester' map and the Explorer map OL45 'The Cotswolds'.

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 and photographs by Simon Smith