

# Bledlow

A 10 mile circular route through the rolling Chilterns countryside

## Circular Ride

### Directions

- Leave Bledlow by the track running alongside the Lions and turn right after approximately 250 yards.
- Go straight ahead, crossing into Oxfordshire at the Leather Bottle and continue on what is now the Upper Icknield Way for 1½ miles then turn left to join the road at Crowell Hill.
- At the road, turn right and after 600 yards, turn left into Venus Wood. After a further 400 yards, turn sharp right, eventually emerging onto Town End Road and then left into Church Lane. After half a mile turn right onto another bridleway. The path emerges at the Chinnor Road close to Rout's Green.
- Go straight ahead through the village on a small road that is used as a bridleway and turn right where the bridleways fork. At the bottom of the hill turn left.
- The bridleway emerges at a bend in Wigan's Lane. Turn right at the road, then left at the Upper Icknield Way. After 500 yards turn right and follow the bridleway back to Bledlow.

### Features of Interest

- 1 The village of Bledlow has a public house dating from the 17th century. This was originally two adjoining pubs called the Red Lion and Blue Lion which were later combined as The Lions. The two front doors can still be seen. Bledlow Church dates back to the 12th and 13th centuries. At the end of the churchyard, the River Lyde runs in a deep ravine, which has now been made into an attractive garden.



- 2 Bledlow Cross was first recorded in 1827. It may be of considerable antiquity but could simply have been cut in the late 18th century to imitate the nearby Whiteleaf Cross. Over the years the area that it covers has grown and now measures 80 feet by 75 feet.

- 3 Chinnor Hill Nature Reserve contains a mixture of chalk grassland and scrub. As well as juniper trees, plant species include rock rose, pyramidal and twayblade orchid and carline thistle. The reserve is also home to a wide variety of birds, including several species of warbler.

- 4 Ideal for the making of cement, the soft Lower Chalk was quarried south of Chinnor from 1908 to 1999. The deep workings have become filled with water, which appear a bright blue due to particles held in suspension. The area will in due course be re-developed but it is planned that some of it will be retained for both conservation and recreation.



- 5 The Icknield Way runs along the chalk escarpment from the Dorset coast to East Anglia and is thought to be the

oldest track in Britain. It has been suggested that the track was used as a trading route by the Iceni, an iron-age tribe based in what is now Norfolk and from whom the name may derive. Much of the top of the Chilterns is capped by clay and flint which in prehistoric times would have grown an impenetrable forest. The Icknield Way runs below this half way down the slope where drainage is better and the undergrowth less dense. The word Chiltern is thought to come from the Saxon term 'cyte' or 'chilt' meaning chalk.

- 6 Much of Radnage Church dates from around 1200. It has some 13th century wall paintings and a magnificent 15th century nave roof. The village of Radnage consists of the three hamlets of Town End, Bennett End and the City.



- 7 Lodge Hill is of both archaeological and conservation interest. There are two tumuli (prehistoric burial mounds) as well as evidence of an iron-age settlement. The scrub growing on the hill contains a colony of juniper, which dominated the area at the beginning of the 20th century.

#### Follow the Countryside Code:

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

#### Further Information:

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