

Ride 5

Cyclist comment: This route should be suitable for cyclists in all but the wettest weather.

CARLTON

Approximately 6½ miles (with option to shorten to 4½ miles)

This ride offers lots of grassy tracks with few hard surfaces and only about 150 yards of roadwork on a quiet county lane. However there are a lot of gates, some of which may require you to dismount, and you will probably encounter some livestock in fields. The route is described anticlockwise but can be ridden in either direction.

The Emmaus Village Carlton has a bistro and shop to raise funds for their work with the homeless (these are open Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 4pm). Call 01234 720826 in advance to arrange parking – a donation to the charity's funds will be appreciated. The "overflow car park" behind the bistro is recommended for horseboxes.

1. Start at the Emmaus Village Carlton (GR955544) – shown as St Margaret's School on map. Continue down the track through the Village, heading south. The track turns into a grassy bridleway straight ahead. Bear right across a field and through a large gap in the hedge to a signed Bridleway (BW) junction and gate at field edge.
2. Continue straight ahead on grassy track across next field and through signed BW gate. Continue straight on to cattle grid and gate.
3. Turn left here up tarmac drive towards Great Oaks Farm (passing through a gate next to another cattle grid). After the farmhouse the track becomes grassy once more. Through a gate (signed) and straight on between hedges then across a field on grassy track.
Option: Turn left by short post down then up, and on your left is the BW gate. Head slightly left across field towards waymark post. Follow BW with hedge on your right to junction with footpath at field edge. Turn right here to pass through BW gate and then left shortly after through (signed) gap in hedge. Continue down BW with hedge on right to a wooden bridge. Cross and turn right. Follow track up to field end, turn sharp right (signed) then left (signed) and into field. Through BW gate on left and straight on to BW gate by New Barns Farm (fence on your left) – rejoin directions from 11 below. This shortens the route by about 2 miles.
4. Through yet another gate (signed) and straight on, on grassy track, to a gate on the right hand side of the track (signed). Through this gate and follow field edge track (watch out for rabbit holes). Continue straight on until you reach a bridge over disused railway track.
5. Cross the bridge, then turn left and through a tall gate (this may have a chain but should not be locked) into parkland with llamas and deer. Straight ahead to waymark post, then aim right. Find another high gate in fence at corner before the tennis court. Turn left here through the gate and then straight ahead on a gravel path alongside the perimeter wall and then onto grassy track.
6. At corner by gate on left, turn right (signed) and head for waymark post in front of barn. At this post turn left, and through BW gate (signed) to pass in front of farmhouse (barking dogs) and on to a grassy track.
7. After about 100 yards on this track look out for turn to left – do not go straight ahead into woodland. Follow the track with trees on your right, fence on left to Moat Farm. The BW bears left by the barn and continues through two gates to another railway bridge.
8. Immediately after crossing the bridge, turn left and then sharp right onto a grassy track through recently planted woodland. Continue along this BW through another gate. At the edge of the woodland, with hedge on left, go through gap in hedge and immediately right along grassy headland.
9. Continue on this BW alongside two fields. In the third field, turn right about half way along (signed).
10. Follow this field edge track to the end of field and then through gap in hedge. Turn sharp left then immediately right. Follow this BW (which kinks left and right at one point – signed) to a BW gate. After this gate, head diagonally right across this field to a BW gate in the far right corner by New Barns Farm.
11. Through gate and farmyard to the farm drive. Continue down this drive for about a mile to New Barns Farm House (a bungalow on your right).
12. Just after this house, turn left onto a wide grassy bridleway between two hedges. At the end of this section, bear right along quiet country lane between farmhouses for 150 yards to BW (signed) on your left.
13. Turn left here (if you wish to visit the Fox Inn in Carlton turn right and then right again at the road – you will see the pub sign ahead of you). Through the gate, follow the grassy track uphill to another gate in the top left corner of field. Turn right through this gate (signed) and follow the BW uphill and then down to field edge, then across the next field to the far left corner.
14. Turn right at this corner and follow headland and signs round past the derelict Bagden Farm. After the Farm, follow grassy headland to the BW signpost at far field edge. Turn right here to return to your starting point.

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