

Route 11: The little church on the hill

Route Overview:

A circular route from Rowlands Castle Station with beautiful downland views. The ride takes in the villages of Chalton and Finchdean and past the ancient chapel in the field at Idsworth. This relatively easy route on quiet country roads is suitable for families. There are a couple of steep climbs and some narrow country lanes with rough surfaces in places and single track sections.

Distance	10 miles (15.8 km)
Time	1hr to 2hrs (without stops)
Level/ Terrain	Easy to Moderate, undulating with a few steep climbs and fast descents.
Elevation:	Climb 463ft / 328 calories
Start & Finish Point	Rowlands Castle
Optional Detour to local attraction: Adds 2 miles in total distance Buster Ancient Farm www.butserancientfarm.co.uk (check opening times). The farm features archaeological reconstructions of ancient buildings from the Stone Age, Iron Age and Roman Britain which appear are often used as locations for documentaries and films	

Route Description:

1. From Rowlands Castle station turn right on Bowes Hill. Carry on up this road for about a mile, ignoring signs to Finchdean, and bear left on to Treadwell Lane.
2. Keep going for half a mile, pass Idsworth Park drive and take the next right turn on to Woodhouse Lane. After 300m take the left fork signed to Blendworth and carry on along this lane for 1km (if you pass the house sign 'Woodhouse' then you've gone too far).
3. At the T-junction turn left, then immediately right, into Duckstile Lane then bear left in to the hamlet of Blendworth and arrive at Holy Trinity Church. (Fun fact: The bells chime on the quarter hour, every hour. Olympic rower Matthew Pinsent's father was rector here: there's a moving memorial here to Matthew's twin brother, who died aged 18.)
4. Re-trace your steps from the church and turn first left into Crabden Lane, follow this around and take the first turn on the right on to Duckstile Lane which brings you back to the village. Pass St. Giles churchyard (the church itself is no more) then bear left and carry on to the end of this road.
5. At the T-junction turn right and after about 400m take the left turn signed Chalton down a long winding descent to meet the main road. CAUTION: Fast descent meeting main road after a tight bend.
6. Turn left on to South Lane and follow the road into Chalton Village. As you climb a steepish hill you are welcomed by the view of the thatched 16th century (though you wouldn't know it from the inside) pub, The Red Lion.

7. After the pub turn right and follow signs to Finchdean and Idsworth.
8. Follow this road up a short steep hill and enjoy the open views at top. Descend the other side, an exhilarating beech and yew-lined lane - CAUTION: sharp bend at the bottom of the hill. This crosses a narrow hump-backed railway bridge then bears sharply round to the right. Watch for traffic on the other side of the road as it comes around the bend.
9. Continue along the road, through Old Idsworth, and past the Old Chapel (the 'little church in the field', definitely worth a look, with its 14th century wall paintings) on your left, until you enter Finchdean village.
10. Bear left after the George Inn – which does a great Sunday lunch, by the way, and is very welcoming to cyclists - then turn right at the T-junction back onto Finchdean Road. Follow signs for Rowlands Castle.
11. Continue for about a mile and turn right under the railway arch and immediately right again by the Tea shop on to Bowes Hill and back to the railway station.

Optional Detour to Butser Ancient Farm - At point 7:

From the Red Lion in Chalton bear left towards Clanfield and follow the road for some 3/4 miles. Butser Ancient Farm is signed on the left, down an unsurfaced track.

https://gb.mapometer.com/running/route_4938839.html