



TRAVELLING BY BIKE

BLACK & WHITE

VILLAGES TRAIL



BLACK & WHITE

VILLAGES TRAIL



Cycling winding country lanes through quintessentially English villages

TOTAL DISTANCE - 42 MILES - 2/3 DAY ROUTE

Tucked beneath the wooded hills of the Arrow and Lugg river valleys in north-west Herefordshire lies a cluster of Black & White villages. The history of these ancient settlements is far from monochrome, however, and among the timber-framed houses you'll discover reminders of Norman conquerors, including fine stone churches and the remains of castles built to defend from Welsh incursions.

PLANNING YOUR TRIP

Follow this moderate circuit over 2 or 3 gentle cycling days, dismounting often to enjoy local food, drink and heritage. Start from Leominster, with its handy train station, or base yourself in one of the villages. Visit in spring to see the cider orchards blossoming pink and in autumn for the harvest of apples and perry pears.

- | | | | |
|---|--|----|---------------|
| 1 | Leominster | 7 | Luntley Court |
| 2 | Eyton | 8 | Almeley |
| 3 | Kingsland | 9 | Eardisley |
| 4 | Eardisland | 10 | Weobley |
| 5 | Pembridge | 11 | Dilwyn |
| 6 | Dunkertons Cider Mill & The Cider Barn | | |

DOWNLOAD THE ROUTE HERE:

www.strava.com/routes/2924613046931332902



Black & White Villages Trail

Cycling Route

1 - Leominster

Start the trail in the market town of Leominster, a beautiful Black and White town with a treasure trove of antique shops. It boasts the finest example of the area's typical timber-framed buildings, most of them constructed between the 15th and 17th-century: Grange Court. The ornately carved work of 'King's Carpenter' John Abel is the former market hall, built in 1633; later re-erected here and used as a family home. It's now a community hub housing a gallery and a welcoming café with tempting cakes, hot meals and a lovely little garden. From here, stroll to the magnificent Priory Church, admiring its imposing Norman West Door (look for the beasts carved in the corners, including a quirky Green Man inside) and the last ducking stool used in England, as recently as 1809. Then, spot the various Tudor, Stuart and Georgian-era buildings along Church Street, Broad Street and Drapers Lane, perhaps picking up tasty treats in Drapers Lane Deli.



2 - Eyton

Leaving town, first travel north along Broad Street, then along peaceful backroads on the Lugg's northern banks, watch for chickens crossing — this is farming country! After delightful Pond Cottage, detour briefly right (follow the sign to Luston) to Eyton All Saints Church, an atmospherically dark, small, medieval edifice with thick stone walls, a large wooden porch and a veteran yew growing over graves.

3 - Kingsland

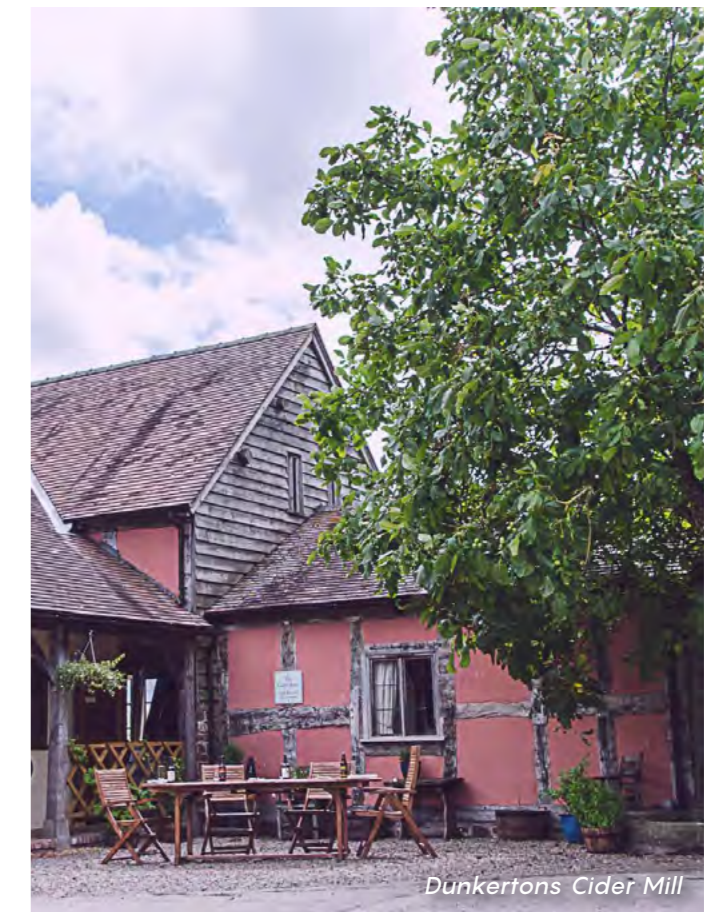
Continue southwest, past half-timbered Gilberts Cottage and Carpenters Cottage, traversing a low stone bridge over the Lugg to reach Kingsland. Among the Black & White houses along the sprawling main street you'll find two enticing pubs - The Corners Inn and The Angel, with low beams, tempting food, an open fire and a beer garden. You'll also find Kingsland Stores and Tea Rooms (01568 708201), serving toasties, cakes and other homemade goodies. Across the road and beyond a wide green studded with handy benches, looms the Church of St Michael's and All Saints, its high barrel-vaulted chancel roof ornately decorated.

4 - Eardisland

Take the backroads south and west of Kingsland to reach arguably the prettiest of the settlements: Eardisland, with its gaggle of photogenic cottages straddling the River Arrow and millrace. As you enter the village, the 14th-century Yeoman's hall known as Staick House is on your right, opposite a shady riverside picnic area. Cross the bridge, guarded by a red-brick Georgian dovecote - now a community shop - to find atmospheric eating options: Rita's Tearooms (01544 388064), with a pleasant garden and an astonishingly large menu of home-cooked hot and cold meals, and The Cross Inn, a homely pub with exposed beams, B&B rooms and locally sourced food. Alongside the pub, beyond reputedly the oldest AA box in the country, follow the path past the tree-tufted, moated castle mound to the Church of St Mary the Virgin, its nave at least eight centuries old.

5 - Pembridge

Return to the dovecote and turn left between river and millrace, following the lane for three miles beneath mistletoe-baubled oaks to Pembridge, just beyond a riverside picnic spot and conservation area. Cyclist-friendly Pembridge Café (01544 388922) serves fresh-baked goodies, soups, sandwiches, cakes and - on weekend evenings - hand-stretched pizzas. Opposite, the Old Chapel Gallery is packed with high-quality works by British (many local) artists and craftspeople. A path alongside Ye Olde Steppes Village Shop (01544 388506) leads to the remarkable detached 13th-century wooden belltower and St Mary's Church, a huge and fascinating edifice with remnants of medieval wall paintings and a quarter of effigy tombs - spot the leonine dogs (or canine lions) warming the ladies' feet. Stop for a drink at the cosy, ironically named 17th-century New Inn (01544 388427), offering local ales and game-rich fare. The Market Hall behind is more ancient still - one of several village structures, including Duppa's Almshouses, that are some five centuries old.



6 - Dunkertons Cider Mill & The Cider Barn

Pedal south past the Market Hall and through the hamlet of Lower Bearwood into the heart of cider country. Dunkerton's Cider Shop soon appears on your left; though the cider mill no longer operates here, pick up cider and perry from the rustic shop on Fridays and Saturdays. The 450-year-old Cider Barn is now a sophisticated but friendly café-bar and restaurant with a wonderfully warm ambience, open for weekend lunches.

Black & White Villages Trail

Cycling Route

7 - Luntley Court & around

Half a mile farther south, 17th-century Luntley Court is a picture-book example of a Black & White Herefordshire manor house, opposite its wood-framed dovecote dating from the same period. Take the right fork, signed for Bearwood and winding gently uphill through orchards for far-reaching views in all directions. Continue to Weston where, on a gentle right-hand bend, the dinky fairytale 16th-century Tank House appears, Sour Brook tinkling around its sculpture-studded garden. Turn west to pass the unusual green corrugated metal St Mary's Church Moorcot and climb to Holme Marsh, enjoying spectacular vistas right across to Lyonshall Church.

8 - Almeley

Carefully cross the A480 and swoosh downhill, with views now stretching west towards Hergest Ridge and the Brecon Beacons, past Almeley Wootton's Black & White Quaker Meeting House. Continue more steeply down to Almeley and The Bells Inn, a deli, café and pub with excellent coffee, south-facing benches and a small beer garden. Just beyond, the red-stone tower and grey body of St Mary's Church looms, its huge metal-studded door creaking open to reveal a wooden ceiling painted with Tudor roses. Turn right to pass lovely Manor Cottage and Almeley's picturesque 16th-century timber and red-brick manor house.



Cycle & Tandem Hire

Check out Wheely Wonderful Cycling for organised holidays, bike hire, and maps, or try a ride on a retro tandem with It Takes 2 to Tandem.

9 - Eardisley

It's a long, mostly downhill ride to Eardisley and the New Strand, a combination café-bookshop-post office-pub with a large garden and a huge selection of maps and books on local walks and history. Continue past the Tram Inn (now sadly closed) for a little loop around Little Welson and Hurstway Common to admire the venerable, gnarled Eardisley Oak. At Eardisley's southern edge, the elaborate memorials of Church of Saint Mary Magdalene are graced with length odes to the dead. Spot the gravestone of Thomas Bev... (eroded), blacksmith of Woodseaves, exclaiming that: "*My Sledge and Hammer lie declin'd / My Bellows have quite lost their Wind / My Fire's extinct my forge decay'd / My Vices in the Dust all lay'd*". Also remarkable is the 12th-century font carved with a great lion and two battling warriors like errant extras from the Bayeux Tapestry.



10 - Weobley

Tackle the long uphill back to Almeley and continue via spectacular valley views to Woonton, another cluster of attractive old houses. Veer right on the A480 then quickly left to traverse rolling backroads and reach the A4112, following it briefly east to the turning for Weobley — one of the largest, most attractive and best-provisioned of the Black & White Villages. Hop between interpretation boards to follow the Heritage Trail for morsels of historical insight, ducking into the russet-stone church, with its tall, slender spire, and exploring the remains of the 13th-century ring-and-bailey fortifications. For lunch on the go, try The Green Bean Café (01544 318865) for excellent coffee, toasties, cream teas and fish chowder. Ye Olde Salutation Inn is an ideal base for a night or longer, with bike-friendly accommodation and hearty, locally sourced food. Across the road, Jules Café-Bar Restaurant serves more sophisticated mod-Brit cuisine plus lighter lunches and beers from the on-site Weobley Brewery Co.

11 - Dilwyn

Heading east past Castle House, the main road veers to the right past The Throne, an impressive early 15th-century house named as a nod to its most famous guest, King Charles I, who overnights in 1645. Peer along Hereford Road to admire the Old Grammar School, a lovely double-gabled early 17th-century building, but continue east between orchards for the 2.5-mile ride to Dilwyn. Here, the 17th-century Crown Inn faces a triangular green lined with Black & White cottages; this friendly, properly pubby pub has a spacious beer garden and serves ciabattas and cooked fare. Enter the church of St Mary's via its imposing porch to admire the effigy tomb of an unnamed medieval knight.

It's a seven-mile stretch east along mostly quiet, undulating backroads to Leominster — gird your loins for the final haul up through Newtown to Ryelands before your triumphant descent to the station.



HEREFORDSHIRE

A Visit Herefordshire Cycle Route.
February 2022

BLACK & WHITE

VILLAGES TRAIL

PLACES TO STAY

Rest your head in country pubs and friendly B&Bs, full details available at

visitherefordshire.co.uk/black-white

There are numerous self-catering cottages in the area, many of which are Black & White, see visitherefordshire.co.uk/stay to find your favourite.

AROUND LEOMINSTER

- 1 - Grove Farm (Kimbolton), 01568 613425
- 2 - Wall End Farm B&B (Monkland), 07824 638333
- 3 - The Riverside (Aymestrey), 01568 708 440
- 4 - Winsley Park Farm B&B (Hope under Dinmore), 07794419659

KINGSLAND

- 5 - The Corners Inn, 01568 708385

EARDISLAND

- 6 - The Cross Inn, 01544 329300

PEMBRIDGE

- 7 - Lowe Farm B&B, 01544 388395

KINGTON & AROUND

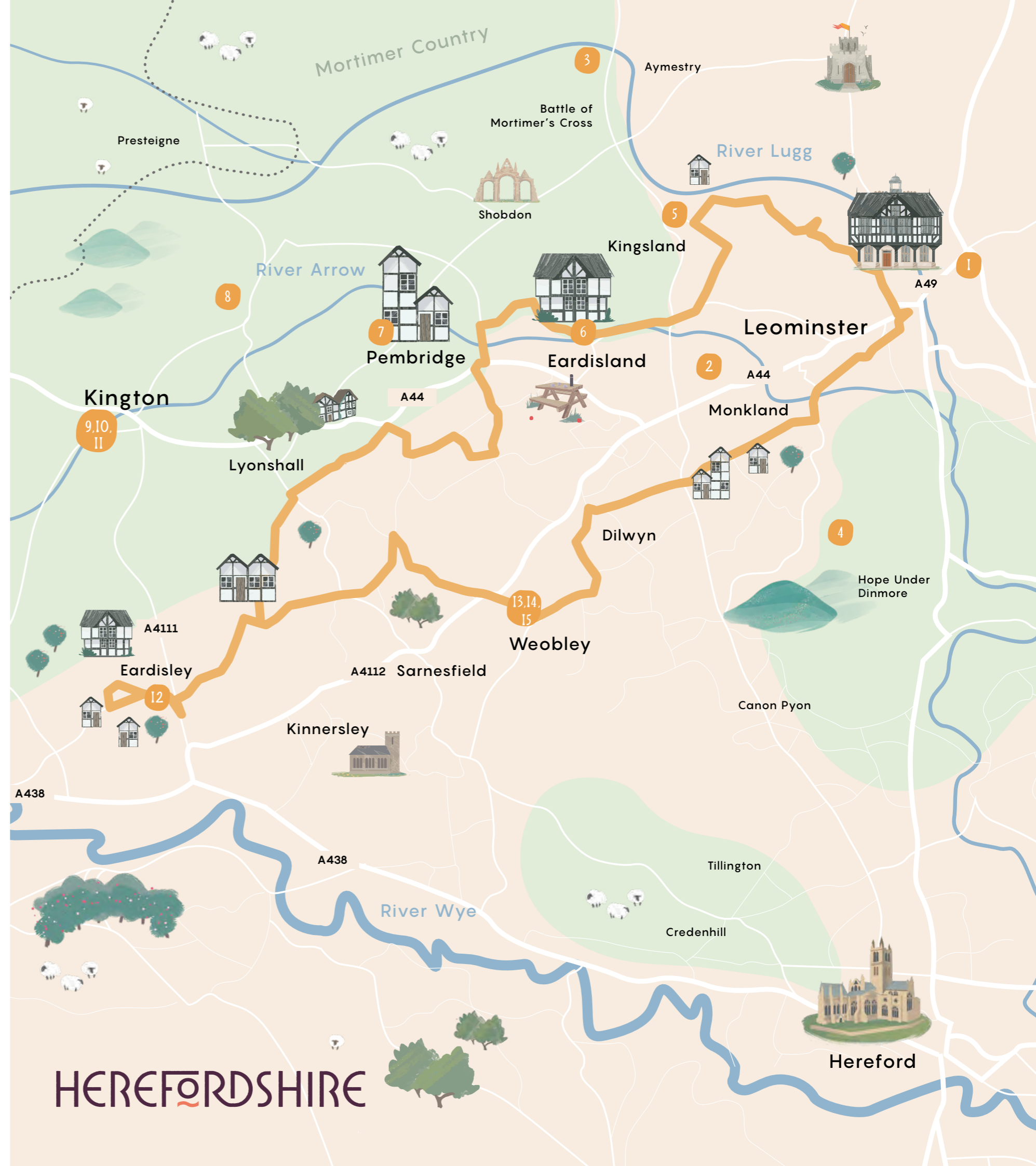
- 8 - The Stagg at Titley, (Titley), 01544 230221
- 9 - Burton Hotel, 01544 230323
- 10 - The Swan Hotel, 01544 239433
- 11 - The Royal Oak, 01544 231864

EARDISLEY

- 12 - Arboyne House B&B, 01544 327 058

WEOBLEY

- 13 - Ye Olde Salutation Inn, 01544 318 443
- 14 - Mellington House B&B, 01544 318 537
- 15 - The Gables Guest House, 01544 318228



HEREFORDSHIRE

