

# Hell of the Ashdown



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Cycling UK's Partnerships Manager and a keen road cyclist

**Route name:** Hell of the Ashdown  
**Start/finish:** Westerham Brewery, Westerham, Kent  
**Maps:** OS Landrangers 198 (Tunbridge Wells & East Grinstead) and 188 (Maidstone & The Weald)  
**Ride length:** 93.29km (58 miles)  
**Climbing:** 1,674 metres  
**Bike type:** Road bike (lower gearing recommended)  
**Ride level:** Experienced  
**GPX file:** [cyclinguk.org/weekender-hell-of-ashdown](http://cyclinguk.org/weekender-hell-of-ashdown)

01

## Toys Hill

A steady opening test up the densely wooded Greensand Ridge, Toys Hill encourages restraint rather than bravado. Long enough to sting at 1.8 miles, it is consistent enough to ride at tempo, with an average gradient of 6%. Toys Hill sets the pattern for the day, so pace it sensibly. There is plenty more to come.

02

## Hever Castle

The route passes close to Hever Castle, childhood home of Anne Boleyn – Henry VIII's second wife. Tudor brickwork and manicured grounds contrast with the steep, narrow lanes nearby. It's a brief historical interlude before the gradients reassert themselves. If you're riding the route casually, you could pay a visit. There are bike racks at the entrance.

03

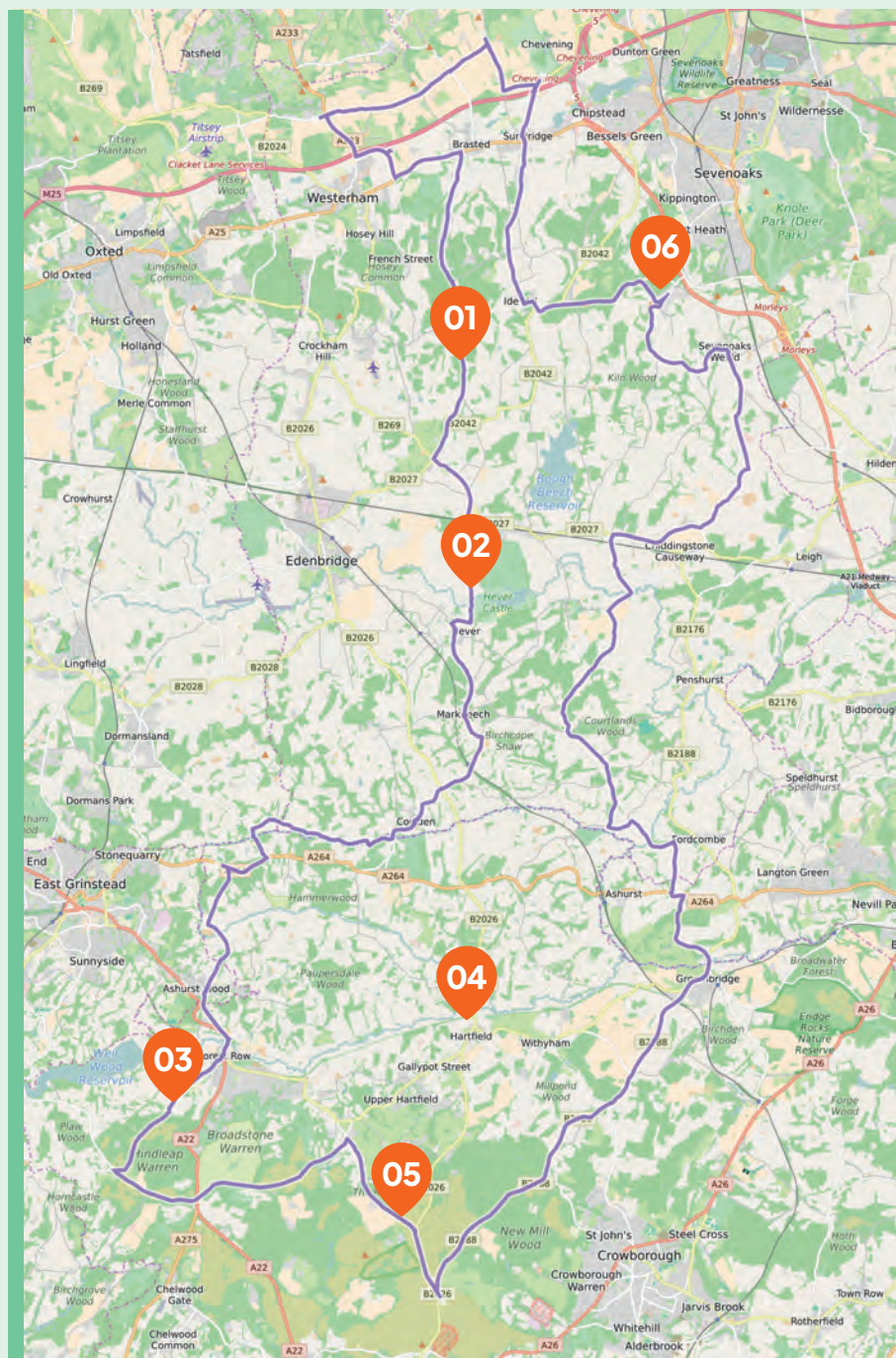
## Priory Road

Leaving Forest Row, a village ranked as Britain's third poshest by Country Living magazine, Priory Road is a short climb that's enclosed by woodland. It ramps up quickly, with a gradient that feels steeper than the route profile suggests. Smooth, seated climbing pays dividends.

04

## Hartfield detour

If you're riding the route independently and want a short diversion before tackling Kidd's Hill, head to Hartfield. While it means more climbing,



Map: OpenStreetMaps, created with inkatlas.com. Photos: Flamme Rouge Events

you're rewarded with expansive views towards the South Downs. Pooh Corner, a tearoom, gift shop and museum celebrating AA Milne's fictional bear, is a good place to refuel. Honey optional.

05

## Kidd's Hill

Known locally as The Wall, Kidd's Hill starts from Coleman's Hatch and heads straight uphill, with no hairpins to hide what's ahead. It builds in stages, which makes rhythm difficult to find. It isn't excessively

long, but has a maximum gradient of 16%. It demands steady pacing and sensible gearing.

06

## Bayley's Hill

Arriving later in the loop, just after Sevenoaks Weald, Bayley's Hill tests whatever reserves you have left. It twists between hedgerows that mask its summit, so it feels longer than the official length of 1.3km. If you have the energy to look up, the views over your shoulder are well worth it.