

10 miles: A walk without stiles (approx. 10 miles, steep slopes, steps, varied terrain, livestock)

Stage 1

Start at King's Stanley's free car park, opposite "**The King's Head**" pub.. Walk past "Yew Tree Stores" and the Co-op. and cross the road for Castle Street. Pass some fine old houses opposite Borough Close and when opposite Castle Mead, turn left into **Ash Lane** if you can cope with one step-over stile.

If so follow Ash Lane, past the "badger castle". Ignore a green kissing gate left and go through a grey kissing gate at the end of the track. Walk across pasture uphill and diagonally right through another kissing gate and a stile onto a lane below **Old Woodside Farm**. Turn right past houses to join **Woodside Lane**.

To avoid all stiles continue along Castle Street into **Woodside Lane**. Walk past Castle Farm to Woodside farm where there used to be a Methodist chapel, built to bring Christian values to "the rough and godless residents of Woodside Lane". Continue right past "Enfin" and "Blackbird Cottage". Beyond the end of the tarmac, look for unsignposted steps on the left going up a short steep slope to a kissing gate for the **Cotswold Way**.

Turn right and follow the Cotswold Way for a stile-free walk to **Coaley Peak Picnic Site** and Woodchester Park. Look for a way out onto the B4066 via a riders' gate. Ignore the impressive gate into Woodchester Park and look for a T-junction for the road to Nympsfield.

(You may prefer to continue on the Cotswold Way to extend the walk to include Coaley Peak Picnic Site. At Coaley Peak there is often an ice-cream van in summer. There is a topograph and superb views)

If you wish to shorten the walk you could turn back and follow the permissive bridleway to Selsley Common. Refreshment is available from the café at the Gliding Club or from "The Bell" public house.

On reaching Selsley Common there are many meandering cow tracks. A line of seats guides you towards Selsley Church. The **topograph** is worth a look by "the Toots"

Bear left downhill towards **Selsley Church** to find a signpost and gate onto the road. Walk past the church along Pooles Lane, passing **Stanley Park** into New Road. At the signpost take the squeeze-stile left into a sheep pasture and follow waymarkers downhill towards Ebley Mill. Look for a kissing gate and cross the **A419** at the pedestrian controlled traffic lights. **Sainsburys** is a short distance away to the right.

Stage 2

Follow the road towards Nympsfield and look for a sign left down a track to the carpark for **Woodchester Park**. In the carpark, find steps and a ramp down to a broad track. Turn right and follow the track through **Woodchester Park**. The National Trust provides leaflets on the Park with many colour-coded walks, which will fill a day. It is worth diverting to the kennels for a picnic, or to see the boathouse, the icehouse, and the views from the tower area. Wildflower meadows are being extended and the woods are especially rewarding when bluebells are in flower. The Mansion Trust organises tours of the mansion and bat surveys.

Follow the track downhill, past the mansion and lakes to leave the woods. Walk along Park Lane and St. Mary's Hill in **Inchbrook**. Cross the A46 with care, turn left, then right and go a short way up Giddynap Lane. Look right to join the former railway line, which is now a **cycle track**. Turn left on the cycle track towards **Cainscross**.*

By **Sainsburys** you meet the A419 to Stonehouse. Follow it to pedestrian controlled traffic lights and cross over. A signpost directs you left onto the **cycle track**. There are views of Ebley Mill.

Now you have 2 choices:

a). Follow the cycle track for a noisy, but pleasant, stile-free, all-weather walk which takes you to **Ryeford**, past old varieties of fruit trees planted as a community orchard.

b) Continue 200 yards along the cycle track to a kissing gate. Turn right along "Lane's Siding", a former railway line, to the river and cross the bridge into an area of new houses. Continue up Bridge Road, past **Snow Mill** to a T-junction with **Stroudwater Canal** at Oil Mills Bridge.

From here you can see how worthwhile it is to restore the canal with fine examples of our industrial heritage. Snow Business International Ltd. makes artificial snow for films like "Harry Potter", but in this restored corn and oil mill SBI has transformed a ruin into a really attractive area with sculptures and improvements for wildlife. To the right of the bridge is Bridge House, which shows the wealth of former mill owners. If you peep over the wall of Holly Tree House or Bridge House you can see an unusual circular weir.

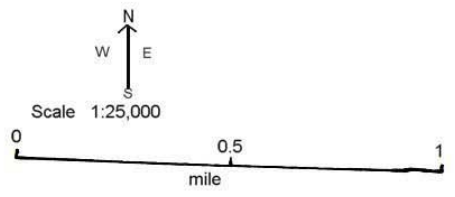
(It is worth diverting right and walking the towpath to **Ebley Mill** to see really fine redevelopment of houses and the mill. Behind the mill is a pleasant garden with seats and a weir where there is often a kingfisher.)

Follow the **towpath** left to Ryeford. The **restored canal** creates a really attractive easy walk to **Nowhere Locks** and on to **Ryeford Road bridge**. Turn left, cross the **A419** at the lights, and continue towards King's Stanley.

Pass **Stanley Mill** and go over the bridge. On the left, pass **Old Brook House** onto the **Cotswolds Way**. Go through 3 kissing gates across a horse pasture. Pass through another gate by a leylandii hedge around **Manor Farm**. You can divert right to return across the footbridge and playing fields to the car park, or continue around the farm, right along Pigg (Peck) Street, past the Puggis Field and school to the main road. Turn right for **King's Stanley** and "**the King's Head**".

* It might be preferred to leave the cycle track and go up the steps, through two kissing gates to "The Bell", a 17th Century pub with fine views. From "The Bell" cross to Bell Lane and follow the Cotswold Way to the A419 at the pedestrian-controlled lights.

There are more local walks available from "Yew Tree Stores" in King's Stanley.



CW...Cotswold Way
O...woods

10 miles Stile-Free Circuit

