

Winchcombe Walkers are Welcome

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Walk Number 11

Sudeley, Kenelm and Monk's Hole

A circular walk past Sudeley Castle, St Kenelm's Well up to the Salt Way before returning via the Gloucestershire Way with airy views.

Distance: 4.75 miles/ 7.7 km

Duration 2.75 hours

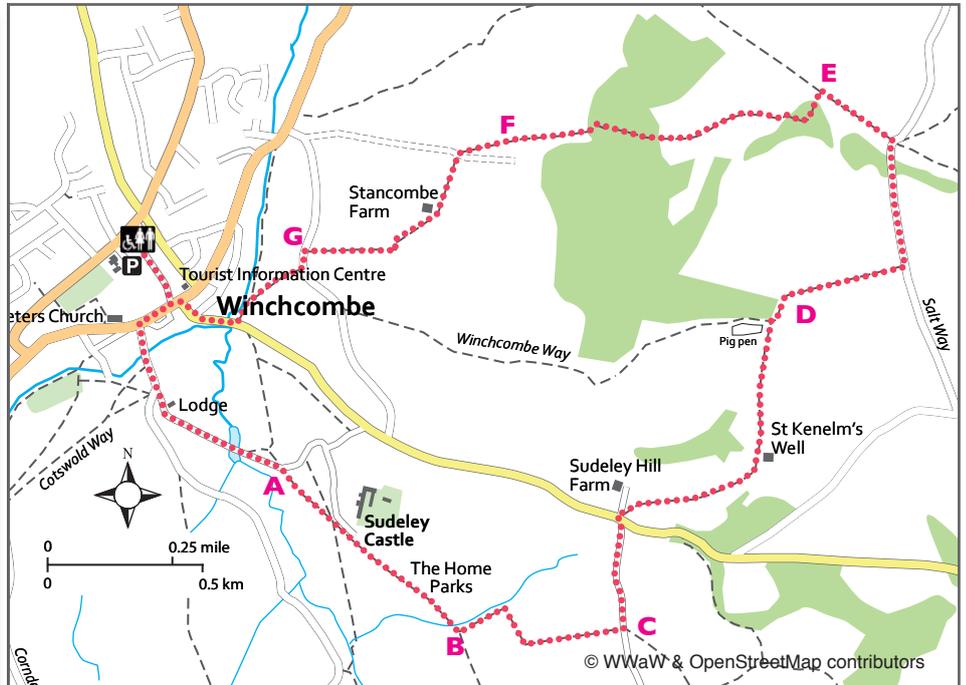
Difficulty: Strenuous

Start/finish: Back Lane car park, Winchcombe. (Grid ref: SP 025285)
£1 all day. Toilets 20p in car park.

OS maps: Outdoor Leisure 45,
Landranger 163

Refreshments: Winchcombe

Ascent: 735 feet/224 metres



Leave Back Lane car park via the far corner access into Cowl Lane. Turn right and follow the road to the High Street.

Turn right and after approx 60 metres turn left into Vineyard Street. Cross the River Isbourne, head up the slope and where the road bends to the right, keep straight ahead to enter the grounds of Sudeley Castle, passing the castellated Almsbury Lodge on your left.

Follow the main driveway, crossing the lake by the bridge and continue gently uphill to a gate on your right **A**. Go through keeping the play area on your left and head for a metal kissing gate.

Go through the kissing gate and ahead of you the path splits. Take the left hand path heading for the far left hand corner of the field (The Home Parks). Go through a

kissing gate and turn left **B**. In 20 metres pass through a kissing gate and walk ahead with trees and a farm track to your left.

In 200 metres follow the field boundary to the right and again after a further 200 metres turn left through a kissing gate to walk gently uphill towards a house.

At the top **C** turn left onto a tarmac lane and follow to a T-junction. Carefully cross and turn left to the track leading to Sudeley Hill Farm. Here turn sharp right through a kissing gate and walk up the field and over a stile. Keep ahead and meet a track; bear left and pass the stone building housing St Kenelm's Well.

Continue ahead to climb a stile by a metal gate, then head uphill towards a gate on the horizon to the right of woodland and a pig pen. Go up to the field gate with stone steps on the left hand side **D**. Enter the next field and continue along the track ahead. The countryside changes from pastureland to open arable fields and the gradient levels out.

Follow the track keeping the drystone wall on your right until you reach a lane (Salt Way). Turn left (following the Winchcombe Way sign and follow the lane to Little Farmcote Farm; continue along the gated lane

(if you are lucky you might have a view of the Stanway fountain ahead) and 25 metres after the gate on the left is a path by a field gate. Turn left through the gate and you will follow the Gloucestershire Way back to Winchcombe.

Cross the field to the kissing gate, go through and across the next field to another kissing gate with glorious views looking towards Toddington, the Malverns and Winchcombe railway station below.

Continue ahead and go through a field gate **E** before turning left up a short steep slope a stile. Cross and continue up to another stile in a wood. Follow the path through the trees before it starts to descend down some steep steps to another stile.

Cross the stile to leave the scrubby area and follow the right hand field boundary to the far side of the long field and look for a gate on your right. Go through and turn left to follow the path down to some trees. (there is a fine view of the Malvern Hills from here). Continue down through the trees and take care as the path can be slippery in places.

At the bottom of the slope bear left and join a track which eventually leads to a field gate and radio mast. Before you reach the



Sudeley Castle

gate as the track turns left **F** fork right down to a kissing gate in some trees. Go through and follow the path to a kissing gate; go through the paddock to meet a kissing gate by a lane.

Turn right and then immediate left to go through another kissing gate to cross the field to the far side with a large sign 'PATH'. Go through the kissing gate and turn right towards another large sign 'PATH' and head to the left of the farm buildings to leave the field via a kissing gate slightly hidden from view in the corner.

Go through and turn right to follow the fence on your right before striking out across the field in the same direction to a kissing gate on the far side.

Go through and take care emerging from the hedgerow to join a lane (Rushley Lane), **G** turn left to shortly meet a kissing gate on your right. Turn right and cross the field (ridge and furrow) diagonally to the far left hand side to meet a kissing gate beside a building. Go through the kissing gate, along the path between properties to emerge in Castle Street.

Turn right and follow the road up to the meet the High Street. To return to the carpark turn left and shortly cross the road to enter Cowl Lane leading to the car park.

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Sudeley Castle

The castle has a well documented history and is a 15th century rebuild on the site of a 12th century castle.

St Kenelm's Well

This conduit house has a two foot deep well fed by a spring associated with most of the country's most interesting saint.

In the 11th century the story of the saint is told. It relates that King Kenulf, King of Mercia and founder of Winchcombe Abbey (in 789 A.D) had an heir Kenelm. His half sister Quenride was jealous of her brother and being ambitious murdered him and had his body hidden in Clent, North Worcestershire. The Clent monks removed this body and carried it to Winchcombe. Where the funeral cortège rested miraculous springs arose. Of these springs, only the two remain, that at Clent and here, the last resting place. The monks of Winchcombe claimed the body and established a pilgrimage place, the spring being part of this pilgrimage.



Salt Way

These ancient routes radiated from Droitwich in varying directions and the salt ways predated Roman roads and drovers routes.

A route for the distribution of salt is believed to have been from Worcester via Toddington, Hailes and Winchcombe on through Lechlade and on to the coast in Hampshire, Winchcombe was very much a crossroads for trading routes.

The Latin word *salarium* linked salt and Roman soldiers. The *salarium* paid to Roman soldiers has defined a form of work-for-hire ever since in the Western world, and gave rise to such expressions as "being worth one's salt".

Monks Hole

One winter with snow falling, a monk from Winchcombe was visiting his brethren at Hailes. On his return journey as darkness fell he reached the summit of the hill. Snow had driven into the hollows and hidden all trace of a path, the monk fell into one of the snow drifts, never to rise again. He was not found until the snow had melted.

Ridge and Furrow

In the Middle Ages each strip was managed by one small family, within large common fields, and the location of the ploughing was the same each year. The movement of soil year after year gradually built the centre of the strip up into a ridge, leaving a dip, or "furrow" between each ridge.

Traditional ploughs turn the soil over in one direction, to the right. This means that the plough cannot return along the same furrow. The ridge and furrows you see today are evidence the land became grassland and has not been ploughed since.