

Winchcombe Walkers are Welcome

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Walk Number 15

Dunn's Hill and Monk's Hole Walk

A circular walk from Winchcombe up to the Salt Way.

Distance: 4 miles /6.4kms

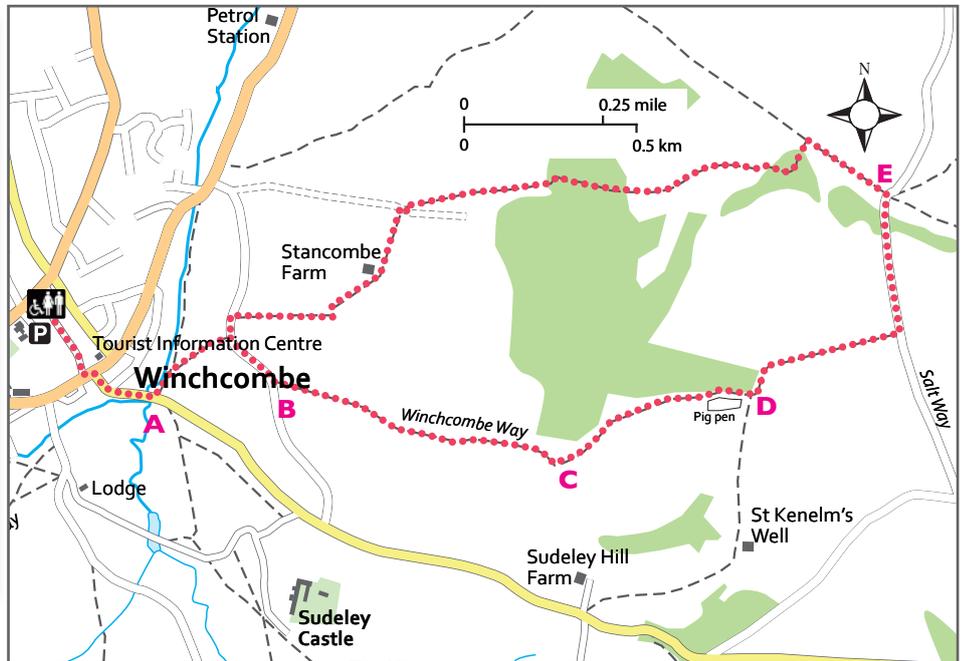
Duration: 2 hours

Difficulty: Strenuous - follow the Winchcombe Way out and return via the Gloucestershire Way.

Start/finish: Back Lane car park - £1.00 all day Toilets 20p in car park.

Refreshments: Winchcombe

Ascent: 700 feet/215 metres



Park in Back Lane car park and exit via the steps signposted Town Centre. Turn left at the High Street and shortly after, carefully cross the road and enter Castle Street beside the White Hart pub. Follow the pavement down, across the bridge over the River Isbourne and shortly after turn left between some cottages signposted the Isbourne Way **A**.

At the end go through the gate and bear 45° right across the ridge and furrow field to a gate in the far corner.

Turn right onto lane (Rushley Lane) and after approx 250 metres meet a footpath on your left signposted Winchcombe Way **B**. Cross the field, heading for the telegraph pole and on to a footbridge in the hedgerow. Cross and bear left to a kissing gate; continue in the same direction across the next field towards a yellow marker by a gap in the hedgerow. Go through the gap and bear left towards another yellow marker by a fence and follow the fence up to meet a stile.

Here the gradient starts to steepen, continue uphill keeping near the fence on your left and towards a waymarked post situated where the ground levels off. Here is a good place to take a rest and admire the views along the Sudeley Valley, Cleeve Common and Winchcombe nestling in the valley below.



Continue ahead for approx 50 metres and turn left over a stile **C** and continue walking uphill beside the fence on your left to a plantation of trees. Go through the gap, then over a stile and the path bears right. Soon a pig pen appears ahead, you are heading for a yellow marker on the left hand side of the pen.

Follow the way markers to a stile, cross and continue beside the pen, containing Gloucester Old Spot pigs, over two more stiles. After the third stile the path turns left up a track to a 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 **E**. 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 before turning left up a short steep slope





Views looking back near the Salt Way

to 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 gate as the track turns left, 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), turn left to shortly meet a kissing gate on your right, passed through on your outward journey.

Go through and bear left towards the houses and back along the path to Castle Street. Turn right and follow the road back into the centre of Winchcombe.

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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.