

Winchcombe Walkers are Welcome

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Walk Number 7 Winchcombe to Toddington circular

A walk on rising and falling paths above the attractive Isbourne valley to Toddington; returning near the restored steam railway then via the Winchcombe Way. Opportunity to see public transport back from Toddington.

Distance: 9½ miles (15kms)

Duration: 4 hours

Difficulty: fairly level, with minor rises and falls; a few kissing gates and stiles

Start/finish: Abbey Terrace, Winchcombe; grid ref. SP 025282

OS maps : Outdoor Leisure 45
Landranger 150

Refreshments: Winchcombe (cafés, pubs)
Greet (station café)
Toddington (station café, pub)

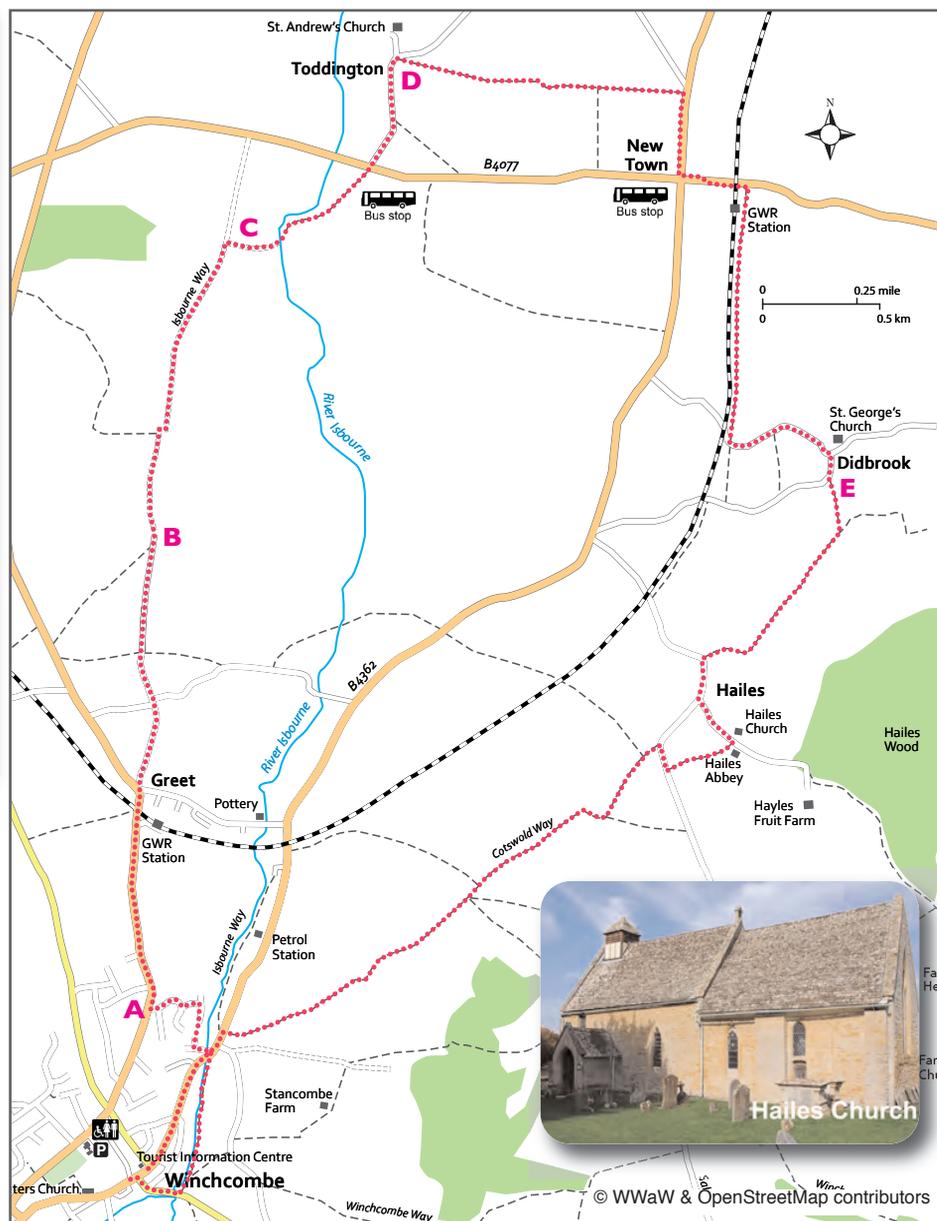
Ascent : 527 ft (160m) (minor gradients)

Standing on Abbey Terrace walk towards the shops and turn right into Castle Street, a steep hill leading down to the River Isbourne.

Cross the river and take the signposted Gloucestershire Way on the left. At the kissing gate, go straight ahead beside the river for about ½ mile, emerging on the Broadway Road. Turn left across the road bridge then, very soon, cross the road into Riverside, turning right into a cul de sac shortly afterwards.

Walk towards a large cedar tree then follow the path as it slopes to the right down to, then alongside, the river. The path bends to the left and ends at a group of houses. Keep in the same direction through Greenways to meet Greet Road near a red telephone kiosk **A**. Turn right and walk along Greet Road for about ½ mile past the medical centre, the senior school and Winchcombe station to a crossroads.

Carry on in the same direction into Market Lane and follow it through Greet. Ignore turnings to the left and right. After the turning to Grove View, the road becomes a track.



Follow this track as it rises gently towards some farm buildings **B**.

There are good views across the Isbourne Valley to the Cotswold escarpment, and you will see Toddington Church and Manor (wrapped in plastic) ahead.

Keep going in the same direction along the track, ignoring a footpath junction near another set of buildings. Approx 200 yards further on, cross the stile on the right. Go straight down the bank to a well defined farm track. Turn left downhill towards Toddington. Look out for a footpath sign pointing right at a T-junction of tracks.

C Turn right here and follow the path along the drive, then pass through the kissing gate on the left just before the house. Follow the line of the fence for a short distance then bear right towards the footbridge over the Isbourne.

Cross the bridge and take the obvious path about 30° left across the field towards the rightmost gate of a pair. Pass through this, then turn immediately left through a kissing gate. Follow the well-worn path across the field towards a white roadside direction post on the B4077 road.

Cross the B4077 road with care and walk

up Church Lane for about ¼ mile to a Y junction. Take the left fork to visit St Andrew's Church. Our walk takes the right fork. **D** Look for the path which ascends the bank on the right almost immediately. Take this path into a field then carry on in the same direction towards a barn to meet a concrete track (which can be very muddy in winter!).

Turn left along this track, passing a house on your left. Carry on in the same direction, through three gates, then climb a stile at the Broadway - Winchcombe road (B4632).

Turn right along the verge towards the roundabout at New Town. You may return to Winchcombe by bus (see note at the end) from the nearby Pheasant Inn, or from the stop on the road to Tewkesbury.

To continue the walk, turn left at the roundabout towards Stow. Walk along the right hand side of that road (B4077), passing the garden centre and the station entrance.

Cross the railway bridge, pass the houses on your right, then turn right at a footpath sign into a field. Bear slightly right and walk along by the railway through several fields for about ½ mile until you reach one of the lanes passing through Didbrook.

Turn left along this lane for about ¼ mile to the triangle of lanes in the centre of the village. You may divert here to St George's Church, a short distance to your left. The walk continues by turning right at the triangle. At the right hand bend a short distance ahead, go through a gate **E** and follow the direction of a footpath sign towards the right hand corner of the field. Turn right at the junction of paths here onto the Winchcombe Way.

Walk along the track, following it where it



View towards the Cotswold Escarpment

bends right to meet a road. Turn left along the road, and left again at a road junction to arrive in Hailes. There is a lot of historical interest around the church and the abbey.

Go past Hailes Church, and turn right just before the Abbey (signed Winchcombe Way / Cotswold Way). Cross the field and merge on a road (Salter's Lane). Turn right on Salter's Lane, shortly afterwards turning sharp left along a track (signed Cotswold Way) follow the Cotswold Way back to Winchcombe.

To reach the start point of this walk from the junction of Puckpit Lane and Broadway Road, simply walk over Isbourne road bridge and up Hailes Street.

Alternatively, you may retrace your outward route beside the river; look out for kingfishers – you may be lucky!

(The bus service is provided by Marchants Coaches. www.marchants-coaches.com).

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Points of interest

Winchcombe and Toddington stations are part of the volunteer-run Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway. Following the closure of the British Rail line in 1976, enthusiasts bought the trackbed, relaid the rails, and repaired rolling stock, locomotives and buildings. Regular steam and diesel-hauled trains run on the line. See www.gwsr.com for more information.

St Andrew's Church, Toddington, the third church on this site, was commissioned in the late 19th century by the third Lord Sudeley. The first Lord Sudeley and Lady Sudeley are sculpted inside the building on a Gothic altar tomb. Toddington Manor, owned by Damien Hurst, is nearby: its plastic wrapping has been in place since 2006.

St George's Church, Didbrook, was rebuilt in the late 15th century for the then Abbot of Hailes. It has a Perpendicular tower, while its interior was opened up in a restoration in the early 20th century. It has attractive stained glass.

Didbrook village has many medieval cruck cottages and Elizabethan buildings.

Hailes Church was built in the period 1139–51. Early English windows were added in the 13th century, along with the wall paintings. There is a medieval bestiary and some fine heraldic arms. The Abbey itself was founded in 1246 by Earl Cornwall in thanks for being saved from a shipwreck. It had a famous relic – a phial of, allegedly, Christ's blood. This attracted large numbers of pilgrims before the monastery was destroyed in 1539.