

Walks around Tetbury



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Hare and Hounds

Down quiet country lanes to an old coaching inn and Highrove

Distance: 9.7 km (6 miles)

Walking time: 3.5 hrs

Starts and finishes at the Market Hall

Grade A/B on a scale where A is easy,
and D is difficult.

Description

Distance: 9.7 km (6 miles)

A circular walk that can be used in conjunction with Walk 7 to become a 14.4 km (9 mile) walk, the joining point coming just before point 4.

Starting from the Market Hall turn down Church Street, towards the tall church. Pass the Tourist Information Centre on your right and just after you pass the church take the turning on the right ① (West Street). Keeping right at the fork, pass a house named "The Old Pub" (the Prince of Wales) and continue to the end of the street, turn left down the hill to cross the ford ② (often dry) and carry on up the opposite hill (Cutwell). After about 300 metres the road curves sharply to the left - turn right here into Longfurlong Lane (here you are walking along part of the Monarchs Way long distance footpath). Continue along this lane for 800 metres, passing beyond the houses and out into the open country. When the lane curves quite sharply to the right continue straight ahead, past the "No Through Road" sign where if you're fortunate you may be able to catch a glimpse to your left above the trees of a Welsh griffon atop a tall pedestal within the grounds of Highgrove. ③ Continue until you reach a lodge house. Please be aware that no entry is permitted onto Highgrove land to the left. Go through the gate to the side of the cattle grid and then through a second gate on to the rough driveway.

Very soon the drive inclines to the right, ④ but the Right of Way you should follow goes roughly straight ahead across pasture to a gate in a wire fence. Pass through the gate into the field beyond, cross diagonally to another gate in the right-hand corner. Carry on through another gate to pass a pond in a spinney on your left and continue in approx. the same direction to cross the driveway to a large house which can be seen to the right ⑤ (Elmstree House). Cross the pasture towards a wooden stile in a wire fence, cross the stile and make for the opposite field boundary at a point where an old stone stile adjoins a "hunting jump". ⑥

Pass through the next field keeping the hedge on the left and leave it through a gap in a wall and a strip of rough ground to emerge on a broad green ride. Go on for about 150 metres and then look for an old stone stile at a right angle to another hunting jump. Go over this stile and then diagonally left across the field to a stone stile. Carry on in roughly the same direction across the next field to a wooden stile. Once over the stile, turn right (keeping the field boundary to your right) to the gate leading into a green lane. Follow this, through two gates, to another gate at the end of the lane where you'll see a crossroads. Here you can if you wish ⑦ join the circular walk of Westonbirt Arboretum (Walk leaflet 7)

Taking care, turn immediately left and continue to the Tetbury - Bath road with the Hare and Hounds Hotel ⑧ on your right. With caution, cross the main road and take the road opposite, keeping to the grass verge on the left; on your right you will see the old Westonbirt stables and kennels. ⑨ After about 200 metres you will reach a stone house (an old forge) on the left and you should turn left down a lane (signposted bridleway) by the side of the house. Pass through a gate to a stable yard and continue along the lane; just after it curves to the right, turn left past an open barn and a practice polo ground on your left. Keeping to the lane carry on though a gate for approx. 1 km past a barn to your right (note: this lane ⑩ can sometimes be very muddy) to emerge onto the main (Tetbury – Bath) road. ⑪

Turn right and, as there is no pavement, proceed with extreme care on the right-hand side along the road for about 300 metres until just after the Doughton village sign you can cross to the pavement on the other side at the entrance to the Street Farm Workshops (this is also the entrance to Highgrove). ⑫ After about 200 metres, when the road begins to bear left, you will see a footpath finger post on the other side of the road. Again taking care, cross over and, ignoring the footpath sign pointing right, go left down the lane parallel to the main road. When this lane bears right you should continue straight ahead through a yard, pass a tithe barn on your left and an impressive manor house (Doughton Manor) ⑬ to the end of its garden wall. Here the track divides and you should take the right hand track, with a fence on the right. Continue, passing through a metal gate into the next field and on along the track with the hedge on your left to pass through a gateway into the next field. Through another gate and then immediately turn left to go through a gate and cross the field diagonally; after approx. fifteen metres you should be able to see the spire of Tetbury Church; carry on towards it.

Leave the field by the stone stile, ⑭ turn left and after a few metres you will rejoin the main road. Carefully cross over and turn right for about 50 metres; look out for a footpath sign on the left and cross over a stone stile into a spinney. Cross the bridge by a pond to reach a wooden stile; cross this stile into the field beyond. Keep the field boundary on the left to reach an old stone shelter where you should turn left and then immediately right. Continue along the edge of the field (to the left of a hedge) to a wooden bridge and then through a spinney to the wooden stile into a meadow. Cross the field to a stone stile in the right-hand corner by a bungalow into the lane (Longfurlong Lane). Turn right and follow the road back to a T-junction where you should turn left into Cutwell. Once again cross the ford, go up the hill and turn right into West Street and back into Tetbury.

POINTS OF INTEREST

① CUTWELL FORD

This alternative route to the steep hill into Tetbury from Bath crossed the small tributary of the River Avon (Tetbury Branch) at Cutwell. The first bridge was built in 1622. Once the new Bath Road bridge was built (1775), the Cutwell crossing diminished in importance.

② HIGHGROVE - grade II listed building

John Paul acquired this land and in 1798 built a fine "modern" residence. In 1818 the family consolidated their estate by buying Doughton Manor (see G); the two properties remained in one ownership throughout the 19th Century. Now the country home of TRH The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, the Georgian house was remodelled by Prince Charles with neo-classical additions in 1987; its gardens are open to the public by prior booking.

③ ELMSTREE HOUSE - grade II listed building

Built by trustees for William Brookes, a minor, in 1844 on an 518 ha estate (dating from the 12th century). An additional range was added in 1900 by Col. Francis Henry. The south and east sides show remnants of 19th century pleasure-gardens with terraces and a small lake.

④ THE HARE AND HOUNDS HOTEL

This was rebuilt for George Holford (see E) in 1854 on the site of an earlier coaching inn on the Bath – Cirencester road. It was extended in 1928 by building a 25-bedroom hotel onto the original inn. A local blacksmith had his forge at the inn for many years. There is still a mounting block, from the days of stage coaches and travel on horseback.

⑤ WESTONBIRT STABLES & KENNELS - grade II listed building

Owned by the Holford family from 1665 until 1926, the Elizabethan manor was replaced with a Georgian house; Robert Stayner Holford, who inherited it in 1839, replaced that house between 1863 and 1870 with the present mansion, now a girls' school. He laid out the grounds with many specimen trees - now the National Arboretum. The kennels housed the hounds for hunting; the stables are now used as classrooms.

⑥ THE OLD TETBURY - BATH ROAD

This was realigned to its current position by Sir Robert Holford (owner of Westonbirt House) so as to preserve the peaceful character of his estate. He also remodelled the gardens and relocated the villagers.

⑦ DOUGHTON MANOR- grade I listed building

Built by Richard Talboys in 1641 on the site of a medieval hall, and occupied by tenant farmers, it thus remained "unimproved". It was divided from Highgrove in 1860. The tithe barn (grade II listed) standing west of the house probably dates from the 16th century. The manor House has been made into a comfortable home by its present owners who have been careful to keep it completely true to its period.