

## Walk No 4

### Wotton, Coombe, The Ridings, Waterley Bottom (4½ miles)

This walk starts from the Parish Church.

Walk away from the town on the Stroud road and take the second right (Valley Road). At the end of this road, by the stream, go ahead on the footpath – the Cotswold Way – which follows the waterway to a lane. Here turn left then, in less than 100 metres, turn right beside a garden towards a group of cottages. This track becomes a path and leads into a field. Turn left up the side of the field to a stile onto a lane close to its junction with the main road. Turn right up this road, taking care as there is no pavement, for 200 metres. Opposite Coombe Lodge cross a stile on the left and walk up the field, aiming at a telegraph post 45° right. At the top of the field follow the wall to the right until you reach a stile. This gives access to an old track which has been worn down to the rock in the past by packhorses. To the right is a hillside beside the track which is never grazed, and is therefore rich in wildflowers. Turn left and follow the track to some farm buildings beside a road.

Turn right and walk past the entrance of Upper Rushmire Farm, on the left. In another 100 metres climb a stile on the left and go straight across a narrow field to a hedge gap under an oak tree. Beyond this turn right and keep to the left of the field. Cross a fence in the far left corner, then go ahead in the same direction across the next field. On reaching a hedge, keep to the right of it and in the far left-hand corner of the field cross a stile.

In the next field keep left until the far left-hand corner, then go down a bank and over a stile. Aim diagonally across the next field to the right-hand of two adjacent gates. Follow the track to a cottage, beside which are the ruins of what was once a church, now an overgrown mound and a cross. This area is The Ridings, where there was a mansion at one time.

Take the rather overgrown path to the right of the church cross and follow it down through the wood for 100 metres to join a track. Turn left and follow the track for 250 metres to the middle of a clearing. In the centre of this turn right off the track onto a path going downhill at 30° from the track. Continue downhill in this direction, crossing over a wider track near a horse barrier. Eventually the path becomes a sunken track, crosses a gate and continues downhill between hedges. This leads to a gate at the top of a steep bank where steps go down to a farm track. Turn left and follow the track to join a tarmac lane. Turn left. One hundred metres beyond a bungalow cross a stile half hidden in the hedge on the left. Walk diagonally up the next field aiming for an isolated tree. On reaching this continue in the same direction to a galvanised tank, adjacent to a gate, towards the top corner of the field. Go through this and turn left. Follow the left-hand hedge to cross a bank where a hedge has been removed and continue until you see a stile on the left in an overgrown hedge gap. Climb this to reach a farm track, then turn right to a lane.

Turn left and climb the quiet lane for 1 kilometre to a road junction. Cross the stile beside a gate immediately opposite. Walk ahead on the track for 200 metres then, just before you reach the open hillside, fork right where a wire fence begins, on a path which leads down through a beech wood. Keep right at the next fork where the path becomes steeper. Descend the steps at the bottom, cross the stile beside a pair of houses, then follow more steps leading down into Adey's Lane. Turn left down this quiet lane for 350 metres. Just beyond Under-the-Hill House take an open path on the right in front of the old Bearpacker's Almshouses. This leads to the main road and the Parish Church where the walk started.

