

Walk No 6

Wotton, Kingswood, Charfield, Huntingford, Damery (9½ miles)

Facing the old school hall (now Wotton Arts Centre) exit the Chipping Car Park at the bottom right hand corner passing between the old school buildings and number 10. Cross over Symn Lane and almost opposite follow a Public Footpath sign to Kingswood.

Continue along the grassy track with the school on the right, keeping close to the hedge on the left until a stile is reached just beyond the last building. Cross the stile and follow the path across the centre of the field, through a gap in the high hedge and then steeply down to the field boundary opposite. Cross a stile in the bottom right-hand corner and continue down towards farm buildings ahead, keeping close to the field boundary on the left. Cross the stile to the left of Hawpark Farm buildings (can be muddy) and walk straight ahead to a gate in the opposite hedge. Go through the gate and follow the path straight ahead in the direction of Kingswood Church tower. Pass over a stile and continue in the same direction on a farm track until this track becomes a road.

Join the road and keep straight ahead with a row of houses on the right. After crossing a bridge over the Little Avon River, turn right then keep straight ahead, soon passing, on the left, the end wall of a row of one-time weavers' cottages, until Kingswood Churchyard is reached. Continue through the Churchyard, keeping the Church on the right, until a road is reached. Follow this road to the right in front of the Church and down to the Abbey Gatehouse. Kingswood Abbey was founded by Cistercian Monks from Tintern in 1139, and its history was closely linked with the house of Berkeley. The abbey was built beside the stream, in what is now the centre of the village. The foundation was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1538. Of the old abbey nothing now remains apart from the gateway and a short length of wall. Newark Park (the 'new work') is said to have been built with materials from the Abbey.

Return to the front of the Church and continue up the road to the Dinneywicks Inn on the left. Immediately opposite, on the other side of the road, follow the Public Footpath sign (towards Charfield), soon crossing over a stile into a field. Walk straight ahead to a stile in a post and rail fence (can be muddy), then to a gate in the hedge opposite. Cross diagonally over the next field to a stile next to a metal gate, then continue through the next field parallel to the road to double stiles in the opposite hedge. After negotiating the stiles continue ahead down a gentle slope to a gate on the left of the remains of a small farm building. From here bear left to a stile near the far left corner of the field. Cross this and go straight over the farm road with Grange Farm on the left.

Now proceed down a slope to a field gate opposite, to the right of the remains of a low barn. After this gate keep straight ahead, with the low slope of Elbury Hill to the right, towards a single oak tree, until a footbridge is reached over the Little Avon River.

Cross this footbridge and, starting parallel with the left-hand fence (can be muddy), follow the path towards the nearest group of houses to the right of the farm buildings ahead. Climb a stile adjacent to the corner of a wall and follow the path alongside a house and garden to a further stile and the road. Turn right and keep on this road, with the railway line on the left, until the Railway Tavern is reached (serves real ale and food).

Turn left onto the main road, over the railway bridge and continue ahead as far as Charfield Church. Cross over the main road at the pedestrian crossing, turn left and walk a short distance to the bus shelter. Turn right, on a footpath at the side of the bus shelter, then alongside a school playing field. At the end of this path turn right onto a minor road, soon passing Poolfield Farm on the right. Tortworth Copse can be seen on the left. Continue over a cattle grid towards the Underwood Farm buildings. To the right of these buildings, before reaching some barns, cross over a stile on the right and walk diagonally across the length of the field, making for a stile near some willow trees. For a little over half the next field keep close to the hedge on the left, but when the hedge curves away to the left, cross over to the right alongside the Little Avon River, following its curves past the remains of an old footbridge to the present one which is sited further to the left, off the line of the marked footpath.

In the next field keep beside the river on the right until the end of Huntingford Mill grounds at a bridge and a stile. Do not cross these as Huntingford Mill is now a private residence. Turn 90 degrees left across the field to a low concrete bridge with metal railings. Cross this and turn right, walking towards a gap in the hedge ahead. Pass through this and walk the length of the field, keeping right. After passing through a gap at the far end, with the river on the right, keep on the track ahead for 75 metres. Turn right to cross a bridge with a gate at the other end.

After the gate turn left and, with the river on the left, continue down a very long field, passing a cottage on the right. Keep straight ahead and continue to where the field narrows and the river bank is reinforced with concrete. At the end of the next field cross a small bridge. After walking the length of the next field, cross a stile in the far corner, curve round to the left and pass by a gate onto the road near Damery Bridge. Turn right on the road and walk uphill.

At the road junction follow a lane through a gateway signposted Michaelwood Farm, crossing a cattle grid. Keep on the farm lane for about 500 metres, eventually passing under a railway bridge. Soon two roads from the farm join from the left. Take the unmetalled track straight on and climb a gradual incline (footpath signage is poor here and an OS map will be required for the next section). Just before the track ends, 50 metres beyond an electricity pylon, turn left through a gateway and make for a stile in front of the Katherine's Farm buildings ahead. After crossing this stile continue ahead to a gateway in front of a barn to the right of the house. Almost every clear signpost has been removed, which can be confusing. Cross the stile to the left of this gate and, skirting the farm buildings, continue route to the left through another gateway and across a farm track. Then follow another track opposite, beside a converted stone barn, with the Tyndale Monument in the distance.

Go past the cottage on the left, walking across the lawn to an area of woodland. Continue in the same direction down a conifer avenue, to pass through a small gate at the end of the field. Cross straight over to the iron gate opposite. Keep left in the next field and aim for a gap in the hedge approximately 75 metres right of the top left hand corner.

From this gap continue across the next field to the opposite hedge in the direction of the monument. Turn right and keep at the edge of the field alongside the hedge until two adjacent stiles are reached in a ditch by some oak trees at the corner of the field (take care as these can easily be missed). Cross the right-hand stile and keep near the left-hand hedge in the same direction until a stream is reached. Cross this and make for the field gate and the Daisy Farm buildings straight ahead, crossing a further stream on the way. Turn left onto the lane (Daisy Green Lane) passing in front of the farmhouse. A short distance ahead turn right onto the road and continue in the direction of Charfield and Kingswood.

Keep on the road past Howley Farmhouse on the left-hand side of the road. Before reaching the Golf Club on the right, go through a small metal gate on the left of the road at a Public Footpath sign (the gate is often partly hidden by foliage). Climb the field at an angle of 45 degrees to the right, passing between 2 telegraph poles which are close together. Bear right on the upper terrace and continue in the same direction until you reach a stile. Cross this and follow the path to the left between some cottages and turn left onto the road at the end of this path. Walk up the road for a few metres and then turn right into a driveway with a Public Footpath sign pointing towards Wotton.

Keep straight on between a stone cottage on the left and a brick cottage on the right and, after crossing a junction with the main drive to Ellencroft House, keep ahead in the same direction, passing through bollards, where the drive becomes a road. Continue along this road, with a row of cottages on the left and a walled field on the right with views down to the River Severn, until the next road junction.

Turn right and keep on this road, taking a right-angled bend to the left. A little further ahead, where the road ends in a cul-de-sac, turn right onto a narrow footpath at a 'No Cycling' sign, then left onto another road at the end of the footpath. Keep straight ahead until a turning on the left is reached. Follow this into the Dryleaze Estate. After a short distance turn right and follow the road straight down, ignoring a turning on the left, until the Wotton to Bristol road is reached. Cross this road carefully and turn right for a short distance before turning left into Symn Lane. Walk past the Fire Station on the right and take the second turning on the left to return to the Chipping Car Park.

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