



Winchcombe & Belas Knap

A varied walk, taking in pre-historic Belas Knap, part of the Windrush Way and Sudeley Castle - marriage venue to the stars !

Essential Facts

- Route distance: 13.5 km (8.5 miles)
- Approximate time: 4 hours
- Approx. total ascent: 180 metres
- Start point Grid Ref: SP 023 284
- GPS Ref: SP 02391 28458
- Recommended O.S. Map: Explorer OL45
- Toughness Rating: Cotswolds 1

Please see the notes on Toughness Ratings at the end of this report

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CHALLENGE ?**

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THE ROUTE

The starting point of the walk is the car park behind Winchcombe Town Library, off Back Lane. With your back to the toilet block, **S**, cross the car park to the far left-hand corner, descend the short flight of steps and turn right along Cowl Lane to the end. Turn right again along High Street. As you proceed through the town, this street name changes frequently – Church St, Gloucester St and finally Cheltenham Road.

As you reach the end of the built-up area, opposite the hospital, cross over and bear left off the main road (ignore Corngreaves Lane) and go through the gate ahead into the field. Take the left-hand footpath option & go through another gate to join a footpath that has the sound (if not the sight) of the River Isbourne on your left and a fence on your right. Follow the gently undulating path and ignore all stiles and turns off the route. The path joins a tree-shaded track, which is now followed ahead and leads through a hive of activity known as Postlip Mill. The route signs reassure you.

When the route is directly underneath the overhead transmission line, **A**, ignore the fork leading uphill to the right – despite the instruction on the notice! Instead, turn sharp left down a track “To Corngreaves Farm” that skirts a field. The route leaves but soon returns towards the pylons and passes derelict farm buildings on your left. Go through the gate ahead and – immediately - turn right along a track that does pass beneath the pylons and then follows their line uphill.

Cross the stile in the top right corner in the trees ahead and turn right down the lane. Follow the bend left to reach a paddock and stables on your right. Go through the wooden gate, beside the private drive, and walk down the path. The route continues through a delightful plantation of beech trees that offers shade, peaceful enjoyment and no GPS signal! However, the path is wide and obvious. Soon, you will be forced by a ‘Private’ notice to turn right and then left to continue your journey.

The route continues uphill and as you reach the top to pass some gorse bushes, turn left through a gate. You are now on the Cotswold Way. Go ahead to the ruined Wontley Farm where you turn left up a stony track. Continue for 800m (about 12 mins) until a footpath to Belas Knap veers off right. Already the ancient burial mound can be seen – our direction of approach provides the most impressive view!

After inspecting the ancient burial chamber, leave Belas Knap by one of the two gates (either will do!) near the information panel at **B**. On leaving the wood (lovely views over Winchcombe and ahead of the Malvern Hills) the path bends right and descends. Keep the wall on your right and, further down, follow the line of the wood left to a gate and path that issues onto a lane. *

Turn right and walk carefully along the lane for 400m until a turning with a ‘Private Road – Footpath only’ sign is reached.

Follow the track around the front of Humblebee Cottages, **C**, and, at a double metal gate, go through and immediately turn left with a fence on your left. Proceed down through another gate to reach Newmeadow Farm. Turn right along a track marked ‘No Vehicles’. After 10 minutes, turn left by a sign indicating the Windrush Way and go along the grass path.

Maintain the same heading, passing through a series of fields. Follow the waymarked route right to cross the bridge at **D**, over Beesmoor Brook after which immediately squeeze through a kissing gate left and go up the rise ahead.



Belas Knap



Sudeley Castle



A Fine View
Near Winchcombe

Follow the line of posts with the green and white Windrush Way symbol towards Sudeley Castle. If you do not wish to visit the castle, maintain the same direction as far as you can go to where the line of trees converge and the path emerges on to a road beside Sudeley Castle Cottages. Turn left along the road (Castle Street) to cross the bridge over the river. At the top of Castle Street, turn left and then cross to Cowl Lane in order to return to the car park, **S**.

Refreshment

Juri's Olde Bakery Tea Shoppe High Street, Winchcombe Tel: 01242 602469 Light lunches and afternoon teas	The Old Tea House Traditional Tea Shop 6 Halles Street, Winchcombe Tel: 01242 604363 Breakfasts, snack lunches and afternoon teas. Walkers welcome.
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Choice of various pubs and restaurants in Winchcombe town centre

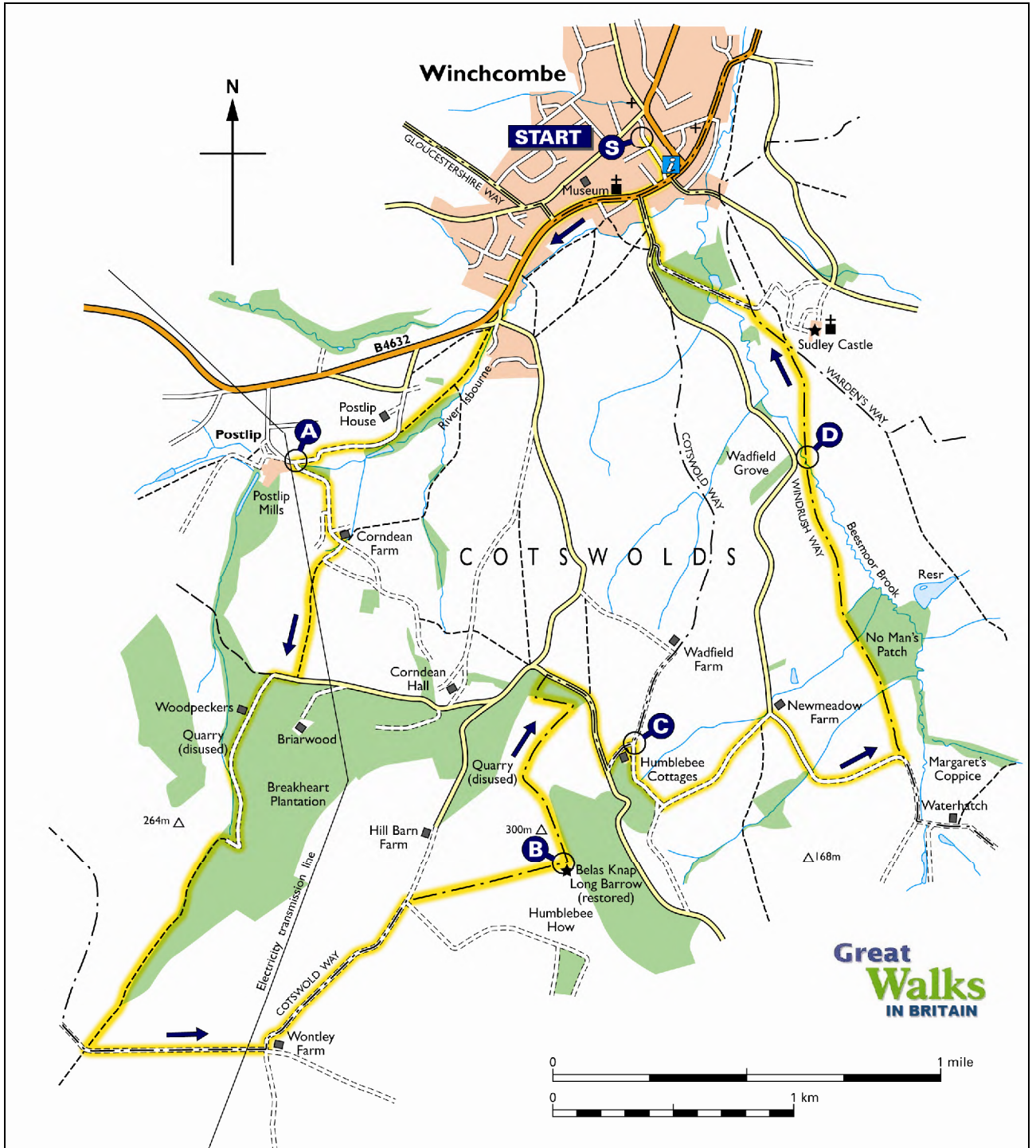
LOCAL INFO

Belas Knap is one of the best preserved and restored of more than seventy long barrows in the Cotswolds. The tomb was probably constructed around 3000BC and would have been used for burials until the chambers were deliberately sealed. Belas Knap Long Barrow, to give it its full title, stands on a hilltop more than 950ft (290m) above sea level. The name is probably derived from Old English *bel*, a beacon and *cnaepp*, a hilltop.

Sudeley Castle, situated less than a mile from the town, is set in 1,500 acres of hills and landscaped parkland. Over the centuries, Sudeley Castle has been associated with kings, queens, princesses and a certain film star! Catherine Parr, who had the good fortune to outlive her husband Henry VIII, came to live and die here. Two future queens of England – the then Princess Elizabeth and Lady Jane Grey – spent much time with Catherine at Sudeley Castle. In 2007, the castle was the setting for the wedding of film star Elizabeth Hurley and Sorry we've forgotten the groom's name already. How cruel memory can be.

WINCHCOMBE & BELAS KNAP G.P.S. WAYPOINTS

WAYPOINT NAME	MAP REF	CO-ORDINATES	ELEVATION: Metres
WIN S	S	SP 02391 28458	92
WIN A	A	SP 00954 27094	114
WIN B	B	SP 02080 25463	294
WIN C	C	SP 02352 25937	198
WIN D	D	SP 02909 27856	100



MAP LEGEND					
	Great Walks route		Church with tower		Spot height - metres
	M6 Motorway		Church with spire		Information centre
	A23 Main road		Other place of worship		Parking
	B2116 Secondary road		Cathedral / Abbey		Public convenience
	Minor road		Building		Public house
	Other road		Built up area		Picnic site
	Track		Woodland		Camp site
	Footpath		Sand, shingle or mud		Major tourist feature
	Bridleway		Water feature		Other tourist feature
	National trail				
	Railway				

Safety First

Safety should always be your first priority in planning and undertaking a walk, whether on your own or leading a group. Please read these Safety First and Walking Our Routes notes.

Lead a group of other walkers only if you have leadership and navigational experience adequate for the 'worst case' conditions which may be encountered on the particular walk, bearing in mind the terrain, possible weather and navigational demands.

Weigh up the capabilities of your party, in terms of fitness and walking speed. Adjust your time expectations accordingly.

Ensure all your party are adequately clothed for the weather and conditions. Footwear is particularly important. Clothing must protect against cold, wet or strong sun according to the time of year.

Emergencies are quite rare, but it is essential to think ahead about what to do if someone in your party sustains an injury. Will you have a First Aid kit? Is there a qualified First Aider in the party? How could help be summoned in a serious eventuality?

Refreshment, particularly water, can be vital. Dehydration in hot summer conditions can be rapid, and frequent intake of fluids is essential.

On tougher walks it is a good idea to tell someone where you are planning to go – and when you expect to be back. Remember - mobile phones often lose reception in mountainous or isolated areas.

All our walks use legitimate routes: Public Rights of Way, Public Footpaths, Bridleways, Permissive Paths, Access Land, Byways and Roads.

Road walking calls for particular care. When there is no defined footpath or verge wide enough for safe walking it is usually best to walk on the right – facing oncoming traffic. An exception may be a tight bend, where walkers would be more visible on the left.

Occasionally you may find a public footpath blocked or unuseable. It is perfectly in order to take the shortest available diversion without damaging crops, perhaps around a field margin.

It is courteous to close gates after passing through, sometimes even if the gate was open when you arrived – particularly if it is obvious livestock may escape.

Mutual respect for farm animals is to be encouraged! Don't frighten or annoy them, but equally don't put your party members in danger or discomfort. You certainly wouldn't be the first walkers to go round the outside of a field of frisky bullocks.

Dogs should always be kept on a lead anywhere near farm animals, and under close supervision elsewhere in the countryside.

Walking Our Routes

Our walks are designed to be negotiated using the route directions in conjunction with the map section provided. We suggest walkers also take the Ordnance Survey Explorer or Outdoor Leisure map recommended for each walk.

On mountain, moorland and open heathland walks it is **ESSENTIAL** to have navigational expertise and tools, including the recommended Ordnance Survey map(s).

Take care to observe any cautions in the route description; exposed paths, areas liable to flooding etc.

Consider conditions before setting off. Will heavy rain have made a water meadow impassable? Will frost or snow make a path slippery?

When navigating the route look for clues to confirm you are in the right place. Are map features where you would expect on the ground? Are features mentioned in the text where expected? If you suspect you may have taken a wrong turn, take action sooner rather than later. It is better to re-trace to a known point rather than carry on regardless with the possibility of becoming increasingly confused.

All our routes are carefully checked before publication, but features can change on the ground – sometimes surprisingly quickly. Footpaths may be re-routed, buildings can appear or change significantly and these days pub names seem to change frequently.

The approximate time given for each walk is based on an average walking speed of 2.5 miles per hour (4 km/hour), plus an allowance for ascent, descent and any difficult terrain.

Total ascent is the approximate total ascent over the whole walk.

GPS users can enter in the waypoints provided in each of our walk reports. It is important to read our guide **Introducing GPS for Walkers**, available as a PDF file from the Great Walks in Britain web site.

Remember that GPS is a great navigational tool, but only one of those available to the navigator. Never dispense with conventional map and compass – and the training and skills to use them, especially on mountain, moorland or open heathland walks.

TOUGHNESS RATINGS

All our **Cotswolds** routes can be undertaken by reasonably fit walkers able to utilise our map segments, together with the route guidance notes. Always consider recent and forecast weather.

Each walk has been allocated a **Toughness Rating**:

1. Easier walks with modest ascent and generally on well defined paths. There may be stiles or narrow gateways to negotiate.
2. Routes which are more demanding. They may include more ascent and possibly paths which are looser or more difficult underfoot.
3. More strenuous walks with some steep sections, higher paths or places which may be wet and boggy.
4. The most demanding walks in this edition. There may be prolonged steep ascents. Conditions may be challenging underfoot.

Toughness Ratings are allocated in the context of the terrain in the edition area. For example a walk rated as demanding in Cambridgeshire may be equivalent to an easier or moderate route on Dartmoor,