With your back to the village hall, cross the road, go left and then take the bridleway on the right, sign-posted Stinchcombe Hill. It is rumoured that this track was the old London Road which ran from Berkeley Castle near the River Severn all the way to Berkeley Square in London.

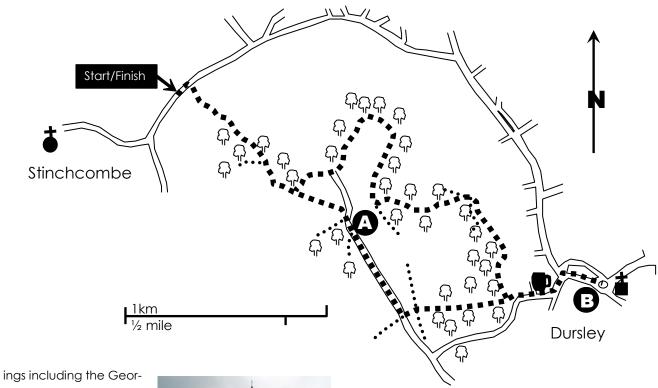
Once in the open, at the top of the hill, the path bears to the left and then straight on over the top of the Hill across the golf course to join a tarmac road (A). It is said locally that Hugh Grant has played 18 holes on this course.

Continue along the road in the same direction towards the Club House in the distance on the left. There are fine views over the Vale and of the monument to William Tyndale on neighbouring Nibley Hill. In spring and summer the grassland is a profusion of wild flowers including clover, yellow rattle, birdsfoot trefoil and pyramid orchids. Skylarks also nest here.

When you reach the Golf Club car park, ignore signs to the Cotswold Way and walk half left to the corner of the car park and the bridleway signpost. Take this path, crossing a small paved lane. It leads down between houses and through woodland.

The path falls increasingly steeply. Near the bottom, you will come to a small hut overgrown with ivy where the path bends to the left and then right again to join Hill Road. You can see Cam Peak and Cam Long Down in front of you. Follow the road down the hill and past the Old Spot pub to the traffic lights. Turn right into pedestrianised Parsonage Street and take a few moments to look at the town.

Dursley was made a borough in 1471 and developed as a wool manufacturing centre, with seven mills in the town by the 19th century. It has some fine old build-



ings including the Georgian Market House (B), built in 1738 by the Est-court family, whose Coat of Arms are found on the south side. The Market House once served as a cheese



and butter market but is now the Town Hall.

The parish church of St.James the Great, across the road from the Market House, is a 13th-century church that was added to and altered in the 14th and 15th-centuries. It is worth exploring the alleys around the church. At the lower end of Silver Street, look out for the Broadwell, a natural spring that gurgles into life and forms a tributary to the River Ewelme.

The old Weavers' House on Castle Street, re-named Jacob's House, is now part of the Heritage Centre which has interesting exhibitions about Dursley's past.

A walk down Long Street gives a fine view of the Priory and, on a white house on the right hand side of the street, you will see a plaque to Mikael Pedersen, inventor of the Dursley Pedersen Safety Bicycle. Newer buildings in the town include the swimming pool on Castle Street and the library on May Lane.

When you are ready to return to Stinchcombe, retrace your steps past the Library and The Old Spot and walk

back on the road up the hill. As the road bends sharp left, re-enter the woods, following the Cotswold Way signs straight ahead, and then diagonally left.



For the woodland walk, turn right and follow the path around the head of the valley. When you come to the top of a flight of steps, continue on, bearing right along the main path as it rises and falls. Carry straight on, ignoring the path going off to your left.

When you reach a Tjunction of paths, turn left and start climbing again. Go straight ahead past a path coming in from the left. Carry on straight up even though the path becomes a bit less obvious.

As you get to the top of the hill, the path bears right before reaching another path. Turn right here and then shortly after, go left and over or around the stile. (The fence is no longer there.) Follow the path as it gradually bears left and then meanders along just below the brow of the hill. In a while, you will pass buildings on your left, used by the Golf Club to store equipment.

Immediately past the buildings, you will meet a path going up and down the hill. Turn left and exit the woodland onto the golf course. Turn right and follow the Cotswold Way, keeping the wood on your right. (If you prefer, you can stay in the wood on paths running parallel to the edge of the golf course.)

You now walk around the perimeter of the golf course for approximately 1 ½ kilometres/ 1 mile until descending the bridleway back to the village hall. You will be following Cotswold Way signs for most of the way until

you reach the bridleway. They will take you mainly around the edge of the golf course but also occasionally back into the woods for a short distance. As you skirt the edge of the golf course, you will have increasingly fine views.

Just past a single bench overlooking Dursley, the path forks. You can continue to follow the Cotswold Way by going right or you can stay closer to the golf course by taking the left fork and following the 'Circular Walk' signs. If you follow the Circular Walk, you will soon come to a point where there is a left fork onto the golf course. Don't take this - carry straight on, staying in the woods.

The Circular Walk and Cotswold Way routes come together when you reach a large open area. Carry on past two benches, though you may want to linger for a few minutes to enjoy the view over The Avenue in Stinchcombe and the River Severn and hills beyond. Continue following the Cotswold Way signs through the top of a spinney, turning left at the T junction by a small wooden building and then right. Go past a stone house, keeping the stone wall and wood on your right.

As you reach the path you initially took across the golf course, bear right. You will soon come to the top of the bridleway you climbed after leaving the village hall car park. Stop following the Cotswold Way markers and make your way back down the bridleway. Before you do, however, notice the stone on your left which is said to be a very old mounting block – used, it is rumoured, by Richard II on his way to Berkeley Castle.





## Stinchcombe

## One of a series of rambles in and around the village



This pleasant walk takes you over the top of Stinchcombe Hill and down through woodland into the old pedestrianised market town of Dursley. The return walk is also mainly through woodland. The walking is fairly easy underfoot though there are a number of hills to climb or descend. The walk is possible for dogs.

You may be walking to Dursley to shop, swim or lunch. So, if you prefer, you can take a bus back to Stinchcombe by going to the bus station between the Library and Old Spot on May Lane. At the time of writing, the 210 service to Cam & Dursley station runs approximately hourly and stops at the Yew Tree pub, whilst the 309 service to Wotton runs every two hours and stops by the Village Hall. Ring 0871 2002233 to find out exact times. There are public toilets in May Lane across from The Old Spot pub.

**Start:** Stinchcombe Village Hall

**Refreshments:** Various cafes and pubs in Dursley including The Old Spot pub (CAMRA Pub of the Year)













