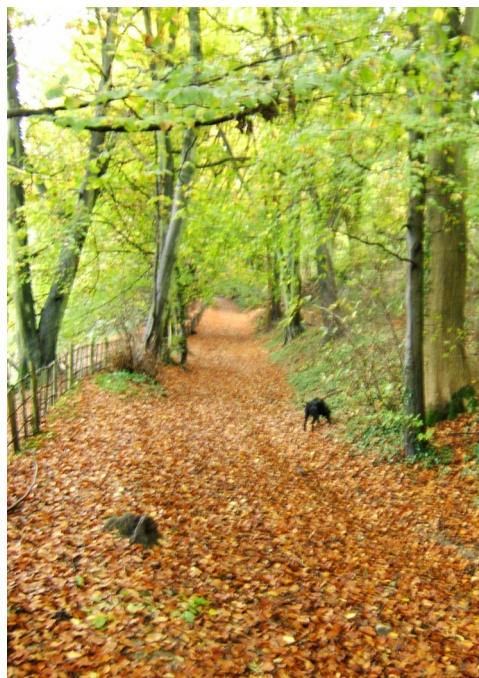


With your back to the village hall, cross the road, go left and then take the bridle path on the right sign-posted



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 towards the Club House of Stinchcombe Golf Course where it is rumoured that Hugh Grant has played 18 holes.

In spring and summer the grassland here is a profusion of wild flowers including clover, yellow rattle, birdsfoot trefoil and pyramid orchids. Skylarks also nest here.

After approximately 5 minutes join the tarmac road to the Golf Club car park (**A**). 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 bridlepath 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 onto a road. You can see your next hills, Cam Peak and Cam Long Down, in front of you. Follow the road down the hill and past the Old Spot pub (you will be passing it again on your return), to the traffic lights. Turn right into the pedestrianised town of Dursley.

At the Market Hall (**B**), cross at the pedestrian crossing and walk down Long Street passing the church of St James on your right. Near the bottom of the street, look out for a plaque on the wall of a white house to a local inventor Michael Pedersen.



At the bottom of this road, turn right with The Priory on your left. Keep to the left of the row of houses and peek through the iron gate at the Bowls Green and folly. Go between two gate posts following signs to the Cotswold Way.

Near the top of the rise, just before a big cedar tree on your right (**C**), go through the kissing gate on the left side of the track into a field. Follow the Cotswold Way sign towards Cam Long Down. Continue through two more kissing gates.

Ahead of you, on your right, you will see Downham Hill, whose row of trees on the top make it quite distinctive. The hollows on the summit are the remains of a fourteenth century isolation hospital giving rise to the local name of 'Smallpox Hill'. Uneven ground on the north flank of the hill is associated with medieval rabbit breeding, known as warrening.

At the third gate, bear left diagonally down the hill with a stream on your right and through another kissing gate marked Cotswold Way. Keep the stream on your right across the next field to another kissing gate and along a narrow path to a tarmac road. (**D**). Here you have a choice which depends on the season and weather. See the instructions in italics on the last page for an alternative route in summer or in dry weather. However, this is not passable if it's wet or in winter and, at these times, you should follow the main directions.

Turn right, ignoring the Cotswold Way signpost, and continue along the road which winds gently uphill for about 1 kilometre/0.6 mile to a T-junction by some noisy kennels. Near the end of the road, there is a kissing gate on



your right leading up to Downham Hill and you may wish to make a detour here. As you approach the T junction, notice Uley Bury in front of you. There are remains of a hill fort on top and, if you wish, you can walk to it up the bridleway ahead and then retrace your steps.

Turn left at the T junction, signposted Coaley, and follow the road for ½ kilometre/ ½ mile. Here, the road bends sharply left and you follow it for a further 100 metres. Leave the road as it turns sharply right and cross the stile by the blue-grey corrugated barn on your right into the field. **(E)** Turn right here and follow the signs to Cotswold Way and Dursley.

Climb to the top of Cam Long Down, turning back every now and again to admire the views of Uley Bury. Cross two stiles and zig zag through the trees to the top. Once on top of Cam Long Down, walk along the top keeping generally to the right edge. There are spectacular views – e.g. of the Arlingham Bend in the River Severn, Dursley and Stinchcombe Hill to the south, and north to Stroud and Cheltenham and the Malverns on a clear day.

Drop off the hill onto a man made track which goes in the direction of Dursley with the monument to William Tyndale behind on the hill at North Nibley. At the bottom of the hill follow the signs up Cam Peak to the 360° viewpoint on top **(F)**. Continue in the same direction down the very steep track to meet a concrete driveway. Cross the driveway and continue along a signed path opposite through a gate and onto the road. When you reach the road, turn left. When the road

forks, turn left again into Drake Lane, signposted Dursley. Pass the entrance to Cam House School on your right and later The Firs on your left. Immediately after The Firs, take the footpath on your left. Follow this path to a stile. Climb over it and turn right immediately. Cross the next stile into another field for a short way to a gate on your right by farm buildings. **(G)**

Cross a stile and go to the right hand corner of the field with a red brick house on your right. Go through the kissing gate to the left of the house and follow the track downhill. Go through the kissing gate at the bottom of the track to meet the path you came up from Dursley. Continue straight ahead with the Bowling Green on your right.

Retrace your steps from before, up Long Street to the Market Hall **(B)** and along the High Street. Go left at the traffic lights with the bus station on your right and pass The Old Spot on your right. Retrace your steps back up Stinchcombe Hill, across the top and pick up the bridle path which will take you back down the Hill to the village hall car park.

D Turn right ignoring the Cotswold Way sign. Cross a stream and take the first turning left, sign posted to Coldharbour Farm, first along a tarmac road and then a stoney track with the stream now on your left. Where the track bends to the left, go right over a little bridge with metal handrail and bear immediately left to follow the stream. This is impassable in winter or if there has been heavy rain. At the end of the track, go over a stile into the field and walk right along the boundary to a signpost in front of a blue corrugated barn **(E)**. Turn left here and follow the signs to the Cotswold Way and Dursley. You are now rejoining the main route – see instructions above – before climbing to the top of Cam Long Down.



Stinchcombe

One of a series of rambles in and around the village

Generally straightforward walking along field and woodland paths. There are four climbs, one of which is quite steep. There are fine views from each hill and on a clear day you should be able to see The Malverns to the North and Sugarloaf and the Black Mountains to the West.

If you want a slightly shorter walk, you can drive to the car park in May Lane in Dursley, across from the Old Spot pub, and start the walk there. Alternatively, walk from Stinchcombe and take the bus back from Dursley. Buses leave from the bus station between the Library and The 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 and the 309 service runs every two hours to Wotton and stops by the Village Hall. Ring 01934 620122 to find out the times of the buses.

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)



THE THREE HILLS 6