

Cheddar Valley Railway Walk - Winscombe Circular

Distance: 7 miles
Walking Time : 4 hours
GRADE: Hard 4

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This walk follows the Cheddar Valley Railway Walk to Axbridge before striking north to the top of Callow Hill, returning to Winscombe via Shipham. The walk involves one substantial climb and affords magnificent views across the Bristol Channel and Somerset Levels. The railway tunnel is a significant feature and it is worth taking a torch to look at the rock features that lie within.

Maps:

Explorer 141

Cheddar Gorge and Mendips Hills West
1:25 000 scale

Landranger 182

Weston-Super-Mare
1:50 000 scale

Grid Ref:

ST 421 576



PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

Take the First bus service 121 (Bristol to Weston-Super-Mare) to Winscombe and get off at Browns Corner. Ask the driver if you are unsure of the location. This service operates every hour from Monday to Saturday and every two hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

For return journeys to Bristol use the above bus services from Browns Corner.

For further information contact First by either logging on at www.firstgroup.com or telephone Traveline on 0870 608 2608 for bus and train journey details.

PUBLIC HOUSES/CAFES EN ROUTE

Miners Arms, Shipham 01934 842146

The Penscot Hotel, Shipham 01934 844750

PUBLIC TOILETS EN ROUTE

Millennium Green, Winscombe

CREDITS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

This walk is dedicated in memory of Douglas Kidder. The walk is adapted from one described in 'Cheddar Valley Railway Walk'; by Douglas and Amanda Brading, Ex Libris Press, £5.95.

A Strawberry Line cycle leaflet is available from Tourist Information Centres at Weston-super-Mare (01934 888800) and Cheddar (01934 744071).

PLACES AND FEATURES OF INTEREST

Cheddar Valley Railway

Authorization to construct a railway from Yatton to Wells was obtained from Parliament on July 4th 1864. The Bristol and Exeter Railway Company finally opened the line on August 3rd, 1869. The continuation to Wells was opened in 1870. In November 1875 the line was converted to a narrower standard gauge and on 1st June 1876 the Bristol and Exeter Railway Company became part of Great Western Railway.

The line proved to be a commercial success and original stations of wooden construction were soon replaced by buildings of Mendip stone. A variety of goods were carried on the line including stone from quarries, coal, animal foodstuffs, dairy products, livestock and potatoes. Strawberry growers in Cheddar and neighbouring parishes used the railway to such extent that it became known as the 'Strawberry Line'.

As road transport became more dominant in the 1950's traffic of all types diminished on the Yatton to Cheddar line. As a result of the Beeching report all normal passenger and freight trains were discontinued in 1963. The sustained effort of the Cheddar Valley Railway Walk Society has ensured that the line is now preserved and managed as a walkway and cycleway.



Go left along Shipham Lane and cross the busy Sandford Road to Ilex Lane where you cross the bridge over the railway cutting. Turn immediately left through an opening to the footpath above the cutting. This continues to the Railway Walk and the former Winscombe Station, now Millennium Green. Go down the ramp to the main road and turn left to Browns Corner for your bus.



Millennium Green Sculpture

Continue through the square and past the Miner's Arms, turning left down Comrade Avenue and onto a path through two stiles, down to Winterhead. Take access lane and continue past an avenue of Scots Pine, cross A38 at Paddington House, turn right using pavement after 150yds, turn left down track. This leads to open field, keep the hedge on your right, cross field onto old track then immediately left into field.



The Miner's Arms Shipham

Just above you on the right is the house 'Wintrath', once the home of E F Knight, author of many books on the Mendips.

Refreshments are available at the Penscot Hotel and the Miners Arms in the square.

Get off the bus in Winscombe (Brown's Corner). At the crossroads, take the A371 down to the railway bridge, at the toilets. Turn right to Millennium Green and go up the ramp to the old station. Here, turn left and go over the road bridge and follow the Railway Walk along the old railway track and into the tunnel. There are picnic tables to your right.

Before the farm buildings go through a gate on the right into a field walking uphill to a stone stile. Cross and keep hedgerow on your left. Go steeply down steps across stream by bridge and up to stile on to Shipham Road. Turn right for 30 yards cross road and turn left to join raised pavement into Shipham village.

Soon the path crosses the A38 via a pedestrian island and continues for a short distance. At the junction with the side road turn left to Axbridge by-pass. Cross at a safe point and turn left up a verge 50 yards to a signed footpath. Turn right and go over a stile, following the grass track with views to Brent Knoll, Axbridge Reservoir and Glastonbury.

Cross the drove over a stone stile and head towards woodland going steeply down a ravine. Continue down over a stile on to Winscombe Drove. Turn right for 150yds and take track leading to Shipham.

At the end of the track cross over the stile on the right, follow the fence downhill and then left through a gate. Follow the road past homes of Hillside. Take steep road uphill just before the bypass. The road levels and changes to a gravel track. Go through a stile and continue on the track.

At footpath junction follow signed path straight up hillslope keeping the wall on your right. Cross the wall by the stile and continue uphill. Good panoramic views over Somerset levels when you reach the grassland. Over a stile at the top keeping the fence on your left, cross next stile and field diagonally to the right.

From the top of the hill and for most of the way to Shipham on a clear day you have magnificent views across the Bristol Channel seeing, according to the particular vantage point, the Islands of Steephholm and Flatholm, the Welsh hills and the Second Severn Bridge.

