

Swineford Circular

Distance: 5 miles

Walking Time: 2¹/₂ - 3 hours

GRADE: Moderate/Hard 4

7

Starting at Swineford Picnic Site on the A431 Bath to Bristol Road this walk ascends the Cotswolds Escarpment to offer stirring views of the surrounding landscape including the Avon Valley, Malverns and Brecon Beacons. The route passes through the unspoilt and peaceful villages of Upton Cheyney and North Stoke. A section of the route follows the Cotswold Way, a designated national trail extending from Chipping Campden in the north to Bath Abbey in the South. After following the escarpment edge around the Lansdown Plateau the walk descends the hillside to North Stoke and returns to the picnic site along an old Roman road.

Maps:

Explorer 155

Bristol & Bath
1:25 000 scale

Landranger 172

Bristol & Bath
1:50 000 scale

Grid Ref:

ST 692 693



PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

Bus

On Mondays to Saturdays the 332 Bristol to Bath service runs from Bristol Bus Station, with outward and return journeys at hourly intervals. On Sundays and Bank Holidays the 632 service operates along the same route at two hourly intervals. The 319 Cribbs Causeway to Bath service also passes through Swineford at hourly intervals on Mondays to Saturdays. The route goes via Parkway, Downend, Staple Hill, Kingswood and Bitton. There are no services on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Leave the bus just past the Swan Inn, Swineford. Ask the driver if you are unsure where to get off. Walk back past the pub and along the track sign posted to the picnic site.

We recommend you check your journey times by logging on to www.firstgroup.com or by calling the Traveline number below.

PUBLIC HOUSES/CAFES EN ROUTE

Swan Inn, Swineford Tel. 0117 932 4489

Upton Inn, Upton Cheyney Tel. 0117 932 3101

CREDITS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

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PLACES AND FEATURES OF INTEREST

Swineford

The village of Swineford developed near the point where a small tributary of the Avon crosses the old Roman road from Bath to Bristol. In the past the village has been known as Swinshed and Swynesheved. Legend has it that Swineford is where Prince Bladud herded his pigs across the river and the mud provided a cure for his leprosy and that of his pigs.

The picnic site has been created on the site of an old iron foundry, which was originally water powered. The watercourse for the foundry can still be seen in its channel in the south-east part of the site.

Hanging Hill

Most of the land below was part of Kingswood Chase, an old hunting Forest. The golf course and the buildings of Tracy Park are prominent to the right and, to the left, are the buildings of Coldharbour Farm near a clump of trees. Stones of an old burial chamber are in the field to the right. Running down from Wick is the Golden Valley - the valley of the River Boyd. There used to be two coalmines in this valley.



The Upton Inn, Upton Cheyney

Take the public footpath next to the house on the right. Follow the path up a rough track, through a bridlegate and uphill to the crest of Hanging Hill.

Go through the gate with the Woodland Trust notice on the left and descend the path to Marshfield Lane. Turn right and follow the road for 1200m.

Little Down - Iron Age Hill Fort

At the point where the walk leaves the Cotswold Way, if you look back higher along the track to the left, you will see one of the ramparts of the Iron Age Hill Fort on Little Down. This is a type of fort known as a promontory fort and it has a ditch only on the side bordering Lansdown Plateau. Due to the unfinished state of the ditch some authorities believe that the fort was never actually occupied.

North Stoke

'Stoke' means secondary settlement - usually of a religious nature. The Manor of North Stoke was given to Bath Abbey by King Kenulf of Mercia and remained their property until the dissolution of the monasteries when it reverted to the Crown and was split up. North Stoke church is well worth a visit.

Whilst resting after your climb take the opportunity to admire the panoramic views to the Malvern Hills and Brecon Beacons. Note the Ordnance Survey Triangulation Column, at 235m above sea level. From this point the walk joins the long distance Cotswold Way path.



View across to North Stoke

