



THE PAINSWICK

Views, History & The Cotswold Way

Sheescombe, Coopers Hill and Painswick Beacon

10 miles (16km) - 4 to 5 hours

Moderate all day walk.

Leave via the front of the hotel, turn L onto the lane and L again up the hill past the **Golden Heart**. At the T junction turn R, past the Royal Oak and then R (**Vicarage Street**) down the hill. Go down the hill continuing straight on, the road will start up a slight rise and then bends around to the R. After this bend take the track on the R close to **Museum Cottage**. Follow the track a short distance, after a stand of 12 pines on the R; take the footpath on the R immediately after the trees.

Follow the path down the hill across the field (East) to meet a stream. Follow then cross the stream by the gate and then bear R. Follow the track and then a vague path across the field to a stile (North East). Cross the stile and then turn R onto the track. Continue in the same direction past a cottage. Go through a gate and follow the hedge on the R. The path slopes down to cross a **bridge over the stream**. Go through the gate and turn R, cross another stream and go through the gate.

You are now on the **WYSIS Way** for a short distance. Head off across the field (South East) to a gate. From the gate go straight on (East) over the field. Towards the end of the field you will see a **hedge** on your R. At the end of the hedge go through a gate on the R and follow the path up the slope. You pass a **pond** on your L and then follow the path up to the farm. At the track turn L at **Pyll House**. Follow the track down to a gate on the L. You will need to press a button to open the gate! Pass the parking area, through a small gate and then straight on along the path. Go through another gate and down the hill, continuing in the same direction. The path runs between a hedge and a fence. At the end cross a stile and turn L to follow the hedge down to the stream. Cross the stream, go over a **stile** and then straight up the field. Bear R by the electricity post heading towards some vague steps and a gate. Go up the steps and through two gates, and turn R up to a T junction. This is **Sheepscombe village**.

Turn R onto the road and then L after 30m.



WYSIS Way is a long distance path which connects the **Thames Way** to the **Offa's Dyke National Trail** near Monmouth. If you have the time and energy to follow the trails stay straight on for London or turn around for North Wales.

Pyll House has been known as Pill House and Pull House. This was originally a farmhouse and is dated back to 1701.

Sheepscombe is a typical Cotswold village which was first recorded in 1260. Cloth making started in the C17 and for many years was the mainstay of the economy. Many of the village properties were built during this period. The last mill closed in 1839 and since then the village has returned to a peaceful rural idyll.

If you pass the **Butchers Arms** you have missed the turning. Follow the minor road up the hill, after **Steepways** follow the rough track to the L. Continue uphill through the woods, out onto the **common**. Go straight up the hill following a slightly sunken track (North East).

There is an excellent view of **Painswick** at this point. Continue on up to meet another track. At this junction turn L, just off the track is Jennifer's bench, with the opportunity to sit down and enjoy the view over **Sheepscombe**.

Head off along the track (West and then bearing round to North). Pass through a gateway into **Lord and Ladies Wood**. Follow the track through the woods which continues on up the hill. Follow the blue **bridleway signs**. Bear L where you meet a track and then almost immediately R to continue along a track which follows a wall on the R. Walk along this track (North) with the wall on your R and the woods on your left to cross over **Saltridge Hill**. Where four tracks meet turn R and continue to follow the wall on your R.

At the end of the woods pass through a **gate** and into a field. Continue in the same direction (North East) with a wall/fence on your L. The hill in the distance to the North West is **High Brotheridge**; the trees hide much of the **Iron Age camp**. At the end of the field go through a gateway (could be muddy) and follow a hedge on the L to the next gate. From the gate head across the field (North) toward a gate— there is a **tree** to the L of the **stile**. Go through the gate and continue down the hill in the same direction (North). There are posts with waymarks to indicate the route of the path. At the end of the field turn R cross over the **stream** on a track then turn sharp L up the hill and through a gate. Follow this track up through the woods and eventually out onto **Cranham Common**.

Continue in the same direction (West) and you will eventually drop down towards some houses and a track where you turn R. Go straight across the road junction (signed to Scout HQ and Village Hall) and follow the road until just after the 30mph sign. Take the track which bears L and continuing to follow the track in the same direction, pass the backs of houses, and the 'Black Horse' onto a road. This is the village of **Cranham**.

Cross the road to follow a **Public Footpath** (signposted). Go down the path past the houses to the stream. Cross on 'rustic' stepping stones—take care here—and head up the hill. Bear L on a narrow path (North West) which meets a wider track.

Go straight and continue in the same direction (North) following a muddy track through the woods. You'll pass a **bicycle painted on a tree** and the correct track continues North eventually starting to rise up the hill.

Lord and Ladies Wood is managed by the National Trust and is part of the **Beechwoods National Nature Reserve (NNR)**. These woods are amongst the most diverse and species rich of their type. The woods were traditionally managed to supply timber, firewood and charcoal from as early as the C12.

Cranham Common is also a NNR. The commons have been preserved through their value to the community as grazing land. The grazing suppresses the dominant grass which has made these commons amongst the richest habitats for wild flowers and butterflies in England.

Cranham has been home to **Gustav Holst** and **George Orwell**. **Henry VIII** and **Ann Boleyn** are said to have hunted in the local woods.

Where another track joins just continue in the same direction. The path steepens as you approach the road, you may hear traffic. At the road turn L and then at the corner cross the road to **Buckhurst Gate**.

From **Buckhurst Gate**, take the track to the left (not along the fence) and follow around to the R and through a gate. Turn L and follow the track which runs along the edge of the woods (West). The track goes slightly uphill to **Coopers Hill Nature Reserve** (West). Pass the notice board and continue in the same direction, the track descends slightly and a view over Gloucester opens up. Keep to the edge of the woods and pass through a 'squeeze' stile and follow a muddy path down the hill, fields on the L and woods on the R. At the end you will meet a track—this is the **Cotswold Way**. Here you will pick up the **National Trail markers**, wooden posts with the acorn logo.

Unless you follow the diversion to **Painswick Beacon** the rest of the route back to **Painswick** is on the **Cotswold Way**. As this trail is comprehensively signed and way marked these route notes will only identify significant features.

From the path down from Cooper's Hill turn L onto the Cotswold Way. Follow the track down to a gate and then turn L. The path runs through the woods with several ups and downs. After a steep climb you arrive at **High Brotheridge Iron Age Camp**.

The path follows the edge of the earthworks (on the L) for a short distance then the Cotswold Way bears R to go down through the woods. At the road turn R and follow the road to the junction, cross over (fast traffic, take care) and then follow the trail signs into the woods. Go through the **woods** on tracks and a short road section and then the trail passes onto **Painswick Golf Course**. The Cotswold way goes straight on across the Golf Course, please be aware of golfers.

Painswick Beacon for an excellent view of the **Severn Vale** can be seen on the R. To climb the short distance to the top of the Beacon turn off the trail to the R when you are close to the Beacon and make your way to the top following the numerous small paths. From the top of the Beacon follow the path running south to re-join the **Cotswold Way**.

Follow the path downhill alongside a fairway, turn L on a road and then R to pass close by the **Catbrain Quarry**. The quarry works are on your R. The path follows a very pleasant woodland path down through the trees, then back across the golf course and past the cemetery. Shortly you meet a road, follow this to the T junction, turn L at the end and this will take you back into **Painswick**. At the end of the one-way section of **Gloucester Street**, cross the main **Cheltenham Road** and then R; R; L and R back to **Kemps Lane** and The Painswick.

Coopers Hill Nature Reserve is an ancient woodland that was recorded as far back as 1086 in the Domesday Book. At that time it was part of the holdings of the monks of Gloucester Abbey. The annual Cheese Rolling races are held at the far side of these woods.

Like much of the **Cotswold Way** this part of the **National Trail** follows the Cotswold escarpment. Here the views are over **Gloucester**. This 106 mile long route is one of 15 National Trails which are seen as being the 'gold standard' in British footpaths.

High Brotheridge Iron Age Camp. Includes banks and ditches from a settlement dating from about 700BC to 100AD. The site was a defensive structure with mounds indicating a guarded entrance. However in peaceful times it was probably used as a stock enclosure.