

My Favourite Walk – No. 6

A walk to Winterhead Hill

Now this is not only a favourite walk of mine, it is also the walk that I do most often. In my case I start from my home in Sandford and walk up through Sandford Woods and down to the Uplands Path and so on to Uplands Cottages. On the way back I follow the Strawberry Line to Sandford and home. However, parking considerations make it more sensible to start in Winscombe and then follow the Strawberry Line to pick up the route at Uplands Cottages.



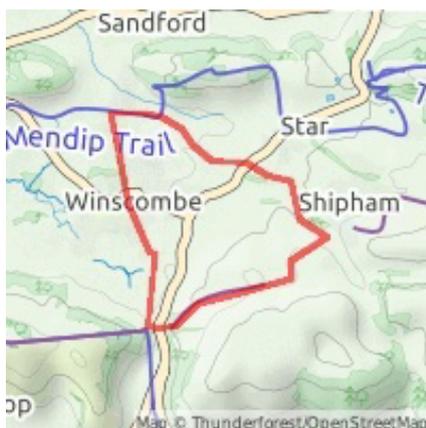
START: Park the car in Winscombe Recreation Ground, off The Lynch. Then start by taking the Strawberry Line from the Recreation Ground towards the village of Sandford. This is a pleasant walk along the old railway track through Winscombe Station and on towards the Cemetery. (If you are walking with children who haven't been to Winscombe Station some fun can be had guessing the historical dates embedded in the platform). After leaving the Station the path runs straight for some way before it follows a slight dip to the left in order to accommodate the fact that householders had acquired part of the train track for a short distance. At the point where the path begins to descend to rejoin the old track line take the left-hand fork and go straight on and cross on the railway bridge into Ilex Lane.

UPLANDS COTTAGES: Continue up to the junction with Sandford Road, before crossing the road and entering Shipham Lane. Walk up Shipham Lane for about 400 yards when you will pass the entrance to Uplands Cottages as the lane bears to the right. Continue to follow the lane for a further 300 yards until you see a stone stile on the right.

FOOTPATH AND DROVE: The right of way is from the stile up the left-hand side of the field until you meet a wooden stile in the hedge which leads you into a small drove. An easier alternative is to enter the drove from the lane (about 15/20 yards further on from the stone stile) and walk up the drove

to the gate into the next field. Go through the gate and follow the path up the left-hand side of the field to a stile at the top left corner of the field. Go over the stile and follow the path which then becomes a lane and meets the main Bristol A38 road. Take care to secure dogs and children before crossing the road as traffic is usually quite fast at this point.

WINTERHEAD FARM: Cross the road with care and enter the lane opposite. Follow this to Wintrath and then on to Winterhead Farm, which is straight ahead when you meet a crossing path at Winterhead House. As you go forward a stream crosses the path, although it is usually very shallow, and the path itself leads up a delightful little stretch beside the stream. If you do this walk in very wet weather the stream can flood parts of the path, particularly at the stile into the field ahead. Springs sometimes occur in the field and the water runs under the stile to join the stream.



WEST MENDIP WAY: Cross the stile and go ahead up the field. You will see a natural path worn into the slope, leading left and upwards to the corner of a small wood. Continue another 100 yards, following the line of the wood on your left to the top corner of the field. Once you reach the gap in the hedge go through and turn right to follow along the line of the hedge. You are now walking a stretch of the West Mendip Way which you will follow to Kings Wood. This path along the south-facing hedge is very popular with blackberry pickers in late summer. Continue along this path on Winterhead Hill, going over a stone stile and across the field ahead to another wooden stile. Go over the stile and turn left to follow the lane to Winscombe Drove.

WINSCOMBE DROVE: Turn right on the Drove and follow this until it meets the old Saxon road on Shute Shelve. This is quite a long stretch of about a mile. When the Drove suddenly drops into a double right/left bend you are about 400 yards from the junction at Shute Shelve. When you reach this junction the path turns sharply right and the surface is "improved" for motor vehicles. However, this new surface is slippery when wet and loose stones abound. Again, please keep dogs and children under control as you descend to the A38. Traffic islands make safely crossing the road much easier, and once on the other side a new permissive path through the woods has

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- Length: 8.020 km / 5.01 mi
- Dog Friendly: Yes
- Date Published: 17th January 2016
- Difficulty: Medium
- Rating: Unrated
- Surface: Average
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created a safe route to meet the road at Kings Wood Car Park.

SLADER'S LEIGH: Here you leave the West Mendip Way (which crosses the road to go up through the woods and onto Wavering Down on its route to Uphill). Turn right into Yadley Lane and walk down the lane for 100 yards to Slader's Leigh. This is the Mendip Society's Local Nature Reserve and in June it usually has a wonderful display of orchids. The permissive path runs down the right-hand side of the meadow and is usually clearly marked by the feet of its many users. Leave the Reserve by the gate at the bottom, making sure it is closed behind you, and follow the path which shortly leads you on to the Strawberry Line. Another 5 minutes or so will bring you back to the Recreation Ground from where you started.

Note: In the rare event that Slader's Leigh has been closed to save it from damage in poor weather conditions, continuing down Yadley Lane will bypass Slader's Leigh and a footpath on the right-hand side will take you across to the Strawberry Line.