

Wychwood Walks

A Walk with a View

To reach the start of this walk drive to Church Westcote. You can park in a large lay-by opposite the church. There are two versions of this walk; you can opt for the shorter version which is 2.5 miles long with 13 stiles; or the longer which is 4 miles and even more stiles! Start by walking along the



verge towards Nether Westcote, across a grassy area of common land where a silver jubilee seat is placed for you to sit and admire the view across the Evenlode Valley. Not much time for rest though as you still have all those stiles to tackle!

Watch for the Yellow Arrow

The next clearly marked stretch takes you across several fields at the back of the houses, to finish up in Nether Westcote. Here you keep going straight on past the New Inn. The road takes a sharp right turn and you have to look out for a bridle path on the left. It would be very easy to finish up on the campsite so keep a lookout for the wooden finger post. This looks like a well-defined path but don't be fooled. The actual path is parallel and in the field so you have to watch out for the yellow arrow, the path then more or less follows the edge of the field. This walk is right on the county boundary and just in Gloucestershire. It is a great path because there are no ploughed fields to trudge through and the lack of pesticides means there is a wealth of hedgerow plants at all times of the year. As the

ground levels out you rejoin the hedged track for a while then break away when it turns sharp right. At this point you can choose the well defined longer path or the shorter option.

A Shorter Way

The shorter option can be difficult to find. There is no clear

path, a dearth of markers and a proliferation of deer tracks. Sometimes you can be rewarded for your efforts by seeing a herd of deer quietly grazing. Given good visibility you can pick out on the far side of the field an almost concealed stile. From there the path is fairly obvious and the good news is the stiles are being replaced by Cotswold Warden style kissing gates. Eventually you arrive in Church Westcote where you can speculate about which property is owned by Kate Winslet!

The Longer Path

The longer version carries on along the valley bottom until you come to Westcote Brook. The blue waymark signs indicate a bridleway section of the Oxfordshire Way. Continue along this as far as Gawcombe and from here the Oxfordshire Way leads you to bustling Bourton. If you take a footpath to the left just before you get to the farm buildings, and follow the ridge, there are wonderful views back to Church Westcote.

Ros Wilson