

9. Hills and Hillforts - Cam Long Down and Uley

The incredible variety of the Cotswold Way is once again explored by this stunning little walk. From woodland tracks to open hilltops, it leads you around the intriguing ancient history of Uley Bury to the more recent remains of a pestilent past. The hillside climbs are rewarded by compass-wide views that spread out all around you back into the heart of the Cotswolds and across the Severn Estuary into Wales...

Distance:

4 miles or 6.5km

Duration:

2½ - 3½ hours

Difficulty:

Moderate to difficult, some stiles, steps and steep sections.

Public transport:

Service from Stroud & Dursley. (Visit www.travelinesw.com).

Start/Finish:

Grid reference SO 792/986
(OS Explorer sheet 167)
Postcode GL11 5SN

Refreshments:

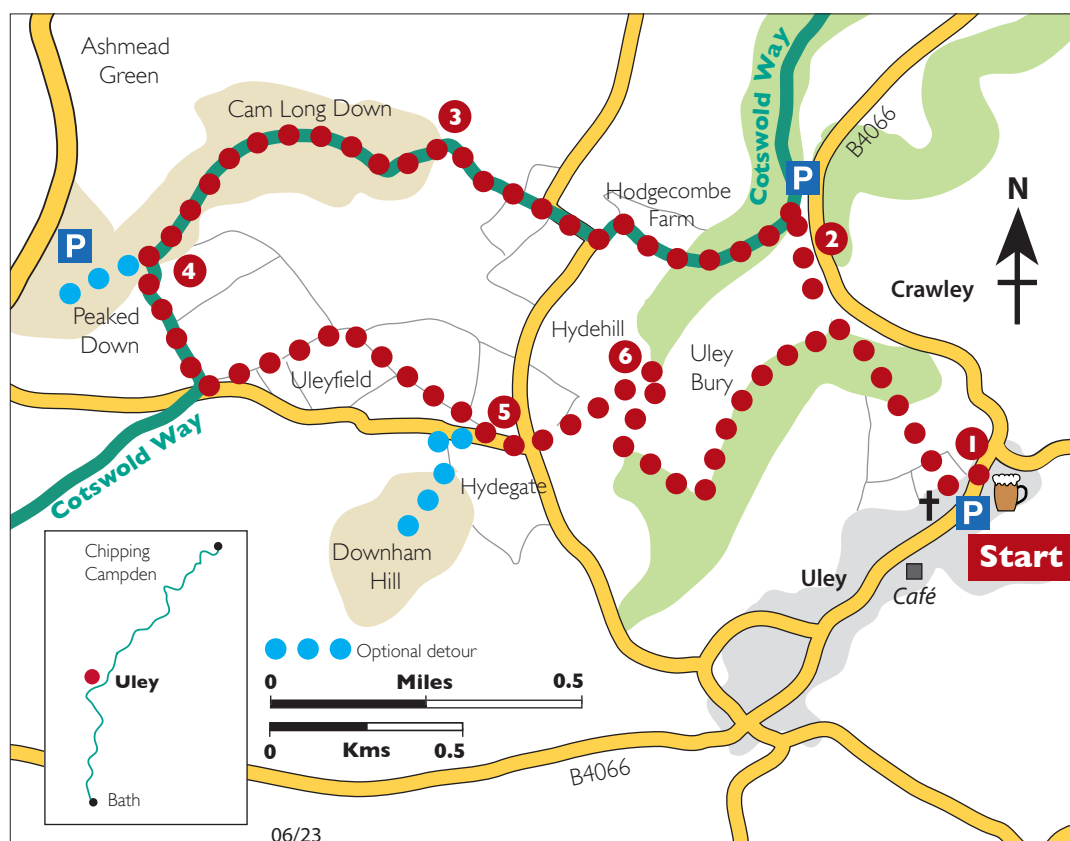
The Old Crown, Uley - Check opening hours. The Vestry Café at the Prema Arts Centre (Wed to Sat).

Parking

Park considerately on street.

1 The walk begins next to the Old Crown pub on the main road through Uley. Watching for traffic, cross the road and take the narrow footpath to the right of the church. Fork right in front of the first house and follow the path up towards the kissing gate. Enter into the fields and head for the lone fir tree on the edge of the woods to pick up the path towards the gate at the top.

Go through the gate and head into the woods and continue straight up hill along the higher path, eventually emerging out at the foot of Uley Bury, an Iron Age hillfort with ramparts still standing the test of time two and a half millennia later.



Ignoring the path to the left, head straight on up onto the ramparts, and continue ahead until you pass through a gate at the end.

2 Take the wider path to the right down towards the road and turn immediately left at the lay-by to pick up the Cotswold Way, through a gate, bearing left again to head down the path through the trees. After 250 metres, emerge out into the farmyard and follow the track straight ahead until you meet the road. Turn right, and at the next bend in the road follow the Cotswold Way over the stile and up towards the hill.

3 Towards the top, cross over a stile into the woods and take the path straight ahead, continuing uphill on a switch-back path until you emerge out onto the top of Cam Long Down. After approx. 200 metres, when the stunning all round views open up, take a few minutes to catch your breath and enjoy one of the finest viewpoints in the Cotswolds. Continue on along the top, and follow the path down the

side of the hill until you reach the shaded dell at the bottom.

4 For a very short detour to another breathtaking all-round view, follow the path straight ahead to the top of Cam Peak and then retrace your steps to rejoin the trail. Turn down along the Cotswold Way, turning left through a kissing gate to head down along the edge of a field until you meet the road.

Leaving the Cotswold Way behind, turn left along the road and ignoring the private drive, immediately left again up an access track. At the four-way junction where the track bears left, turn right up a narrow bridleway and continue on until you meet the road. *If this path is too muddy or overgrown, retrace your steps and take the road on to point 5.*

5 For another half-mile (0.8km) detour, turn right back down the road and through the first kissing gate on your left up the steep path to the top of Downham Hill - the perfect spot to look back around the high points of your walk.

Known locally as 'Smallpox Hill' it was also once the site of an isolation hospital, the eerie remains of which can still be seen. After retracing your steps to point 5, continue along the road until you reach the kennels at the T-junction.

Take the path straight ahead, forking right after a short distance, and then take the steep steps up to the left. Carry on up this steep and narrow path, up some more steps and over three stiles, until you reach the hillfort at the top.

6 Turn right, and follow the path all the way around the ramparts, taking in the fabulous views of Downham Hill, Cam Peak, Cam Long Down and Uley village as you go, until you reach the point where you entered the Bury nearly four miles before.

Retrace your steps back downhill to the church where options for rest and refreshments await the weary walker at the Old Crown pub or the Café at the Prema Arts Centre.