

# Miles Without Stiles

## Minchinhampton and Box

A walk on the common around an old market town, then a down-and-up through the village of Box. The last climb is steep, but there is a short cut.

**Distance:** 4.5 km /2.8 miles with an up and down of 83m/270 ft

**Time:** 2 hours

**Start:** Minchinhampton (near Stroud) free car park in Bell Lane, on left of the church and after the public toilets. SO872009

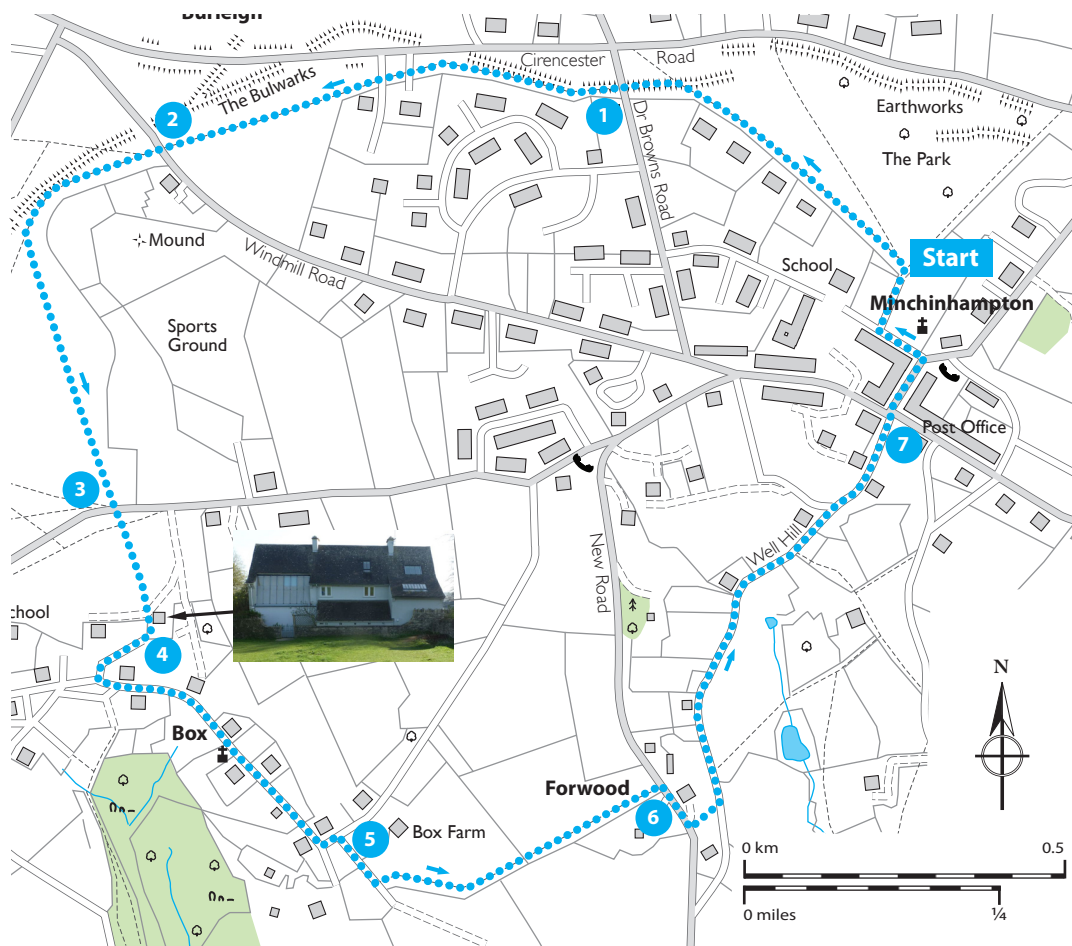
### Route:

With your back to the churchyard take the road alongside the common with houses on your left. When the road ends continue along the grass path until you reach a road. Cross the road **1** and carry on between the houses and the Iron Age bulwarks on the right. Keep alongside the wall as far as the last house (Westfield).

Where the wall turns left carry straight on, heading for a large house on the far side of Windmill Road **2**.

Cross the road in front of the house (Windmill Place), turn right and shortly left at Windmill Lodge to rejoin the common, with the wall on your left. Continue to follow the wall passing a stone stile to playing fields. Follow the line of the wall to two trees and a seat at a road **3**. (If you don't fancy a climb at the end of the walk turn left along the road for a short cut back into town. Mind the traffic.)

Otherwise cross the road and go ahead downhill on grass towards a row of houses. Your target is the



house on the left of the row with eight tall windows (see picture). It was the studio of a stained-glass artist, Edward Payne, whose work can be seen in the church of Saint Barnabas which you will soon pass.

Walk to the right hand corner of the house **4** where a stone squeeze stile takes you down a walled path through a second squeeze stile to a road where you turn left and soon reach the church (see more on page 2). After 200 metres follow the road left

and immediately first right **5** on a track signed "to Longfords."

In 100m turn left through a low kissing gate and follow the wall on your right through a series of kissing gates with views across to Gatcombe. After the last gate drop down to a metalled lane at Forwood **6**. Turn right and left and left again for a view of Minchinhampton on the hilltop ahead.

This walk last checked 07/2020  
Map based upon OS mapping,  
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Walk uphill on the lane. Once past the steepest section you follow the town pavement ahead to crossroads **7** and into the high street. At the war memorial turn left into Bell Lane and back to the car park.

See the next page for more details about the walk.

# Miles without Stiles Minchinhampton

## Bulwarks, bunkers and Box



The open common at Minchinhampton is the second largest in the Cotswolds (after Cleeve). It is pockmarked with a variety of earthworks, from Neolithic bulwarks and old quarries to golf bunkers. In the summer local commoners graze their cattle here.

The historic market town's narrow streets lead to a compact centre clustered around a pillared market house and the parish church of the Holy Trinity.

Clinging to the side of the Nailsworth valley, Box is a sunny terrace of farms, houses, cottages and the tiny church of Saint Barnabas, which is only 60 years old.

It replaced the old "tin tabernacle" which had served the parish for many years, and contains three noteworthy stained



glass windows, designed and made by a local artist, Edward Payne.



## Why Minchinhampton?

A good question, and the answer goes back to the Norman invasion of England in 1066. The Domesday Book records the place as "Hampton", Old English for a high village.

William the Conqueror's wife Queen Matilda, a devout Christian, gave the land to the nuns of an abbey in Normandy, whose Abbess thus became absentee landlord.

As a market town Minchinhampton soon grew and its citizens took to calling it the Nuns' Town. The Old English for nuns is "mynchen."

Minchinhampton stayed in ecclesiastic hands until Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries.



*Highland Cattle are a surprise as you climb the little hill into Minchinhampton*



## Why stiles?

They keep cattle and sheep in a field but allow long legged humans to go to and fro. Most stiles are wooden but some are not. Today you'll pass a stone stile (common in the Cotswolds) then two tall stones, known as a squeeze (or pinch) stile. They are not always easy to pass through.

