



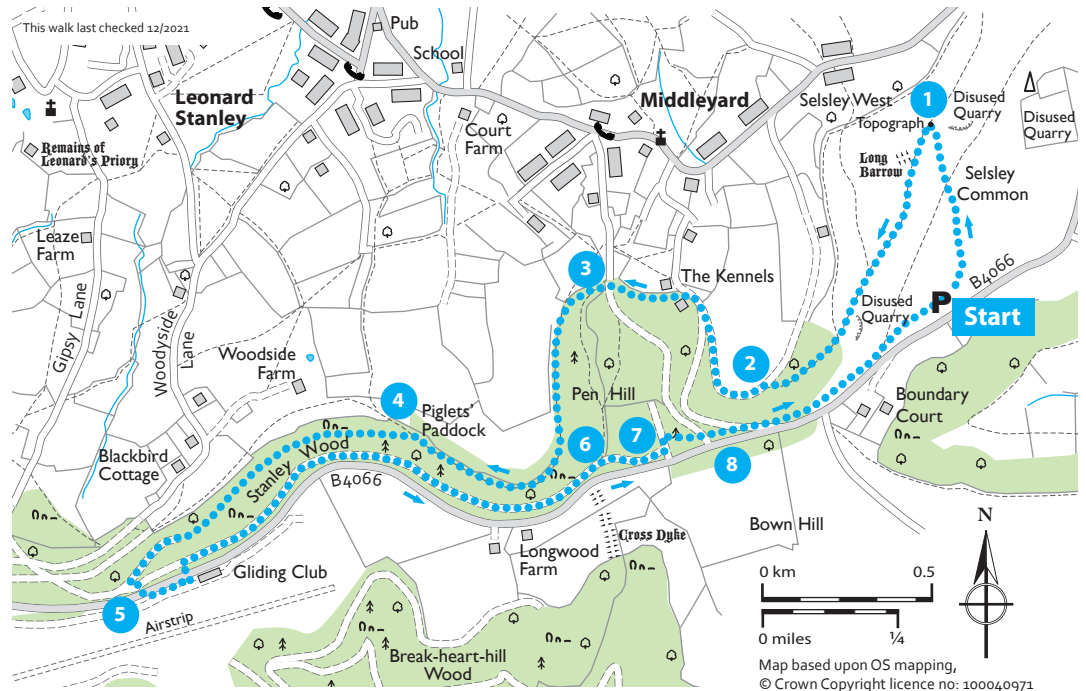
Enjoy panoramic views from the common then walk through woodland on clearly marked tracks. There are several ups and downs, bluebells in spring, and colourful autumn trees.

Distance: 7 km / 4 miles with an up and down of 250 m/820 ft. Choose a clear day to enjoy the views from Selsley Common and make route-finding easier.

Time: 2½ hours

Start: Selsley Common (near Stroud) Walk from any of the small parking areas alongside the B4066 above Selsley SO 828026. Or come on the Number 14 bus.

Refreshments: Giuseppe's Gourmet café at the Gliding Club midway through the walk or the Bell Inn, Selsley.



Route:

From the chosen car park, with your back to the road walk across the common to the highest point, the long barrow of Toots and the topograph alongside it **1**. Several tracks (including the Cotswold Way, with waymark posts) lead to the Toots so once it is in view, walk towards it.

Enjoy the view then follow the Cotswold Way into the woods via a kissing gate below Jackdaw Quarry. At the bottom of a slope turn left along the edge of the wood **2**.

Continue along the Cotswold Way for one mile, using a signpost towards Coaley Peak to guide you up some steps **3**. (Ignore the Cotswold Way signs to the right going downhill to Middleyard at Penn Lane).

Just before the piglets' paddock **4** look for a Woodland Trust signpost indicating an "alternative stile-free footpath to Coaley Peak". Turn left here and follow a footpath uphill. Here you look down onto a stiled section of the Cotswold Way as it passes through a cattle pasture. The footpath becomes a broad track and turns uphill steeply to join a permissive bridleway **5**.

At the bridleway, turn right and soon turn left to cross the road and into the Gliding Club entrance for Giuseppe's Gourmet café (closed Monday & Tuesday).

Cross the road and return to the bridleway, turn right, and follow it towards Selsley Common. The bridleway remains close



to the road all the way and crosses three broad tracks. Each is offset for safety.

At **6** bear right and don't follow the track going downhill.

At the gravel drive **7** for the Penn Wood Scout Centre turn left then almost immediately right.

At the drive with the "Beechwood Cottage" sign **8**, continue across the tarmac and onward past Selsley Gulley to a gate by the cattle grid onto Selsley Common. Cross the Common to return to your 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.



Selsley Common: Toots to Teashop

Off the common and into the trees

Selsley Common is a joy, with its wealth of wild flowers and butterflies. It is very popular with walkers, joggers, hang gliders, paragliders, and model aeroplane aviators.

The Toots is a Neolithic long barrow dating from about 3,500 BC. The Victorians dug out its centre, giving us a Two-Toot common. During World War 2 the high common was ploughed up, but since then it has been managed entirely by grazing cattle.

The Toots and the topograph offer a superb viewpoint, down the Severn, across to Wales and the Malverns. The Cotswold Way offers a picturesque alternative route between Coaley Peak and the Stroud valley via Penn Wood and the Toots.



Cotswold woodland old and new

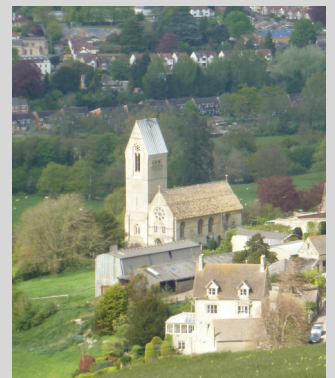


Penn Wood is now owned and managed by the Woodland Trust, apart from a small area owned by the Scouts. You may meet Cubs and Scouts learning about woodland environment.

On your return look for the permissive footpath signs. In contrast to the ancient woodland this area was clear-felled, so the flora is quite different. There are signs of deer and badger activity along the way.

Selsley Church

The church is Victorian, but alpine in setting and style. Inside there is a great gallery of English pre-Raphaelite stained glass. All the group were involved, Burne-Jones, Madox Brown, Rossetti, Webb and of course William Morris, who got the job from his friend the architect G.F. Bodley. Well worth driving down to see after the walk.



Beware of the piglets



Walking through the old woodland you'll soon pass Piglets' Paddock.

The piglets are Gloucester Old Spot and Saddleback, and a regular source of entertainment.

Officially their job is to convert scrub into pasture.

Unofficially they are happily training walkers to feed them titbits in return for a peaceful passage along the Cotswold Way.

If you think that piglets can't count, try taking three titbits from your pocket, but feeding them only two.