

Winchcombe to Belas Knap Long Barrow

OS Landranger Map 163
Grid ref: SP025285
Distance: 5.5 miles (8.8km)
Time: 2 - 2.75 hours
Difficulty: Moderate
Start: Back Lane car-park (charges apply)

Leave Back Lane car park via the far corner access into Cowl Lane. Turn right and follow the road to the High Street. Turn right and walk along Abbey Terrace until you are opposite Vineyard Street.

Carefully cross the road and continue down Vineyard Street, cross the bridge and shortly turn right through a gate waymarked the Cotswold Way. Follow the Cotswold Way straight across the field to another gate and continue for approx 450 metres until you reach a road, Corndean Lane (1). Turn left along the road for 300 metres and turn right through a gate waymarked Cotswold Way.

Follow the tarmac drive as it rises past the cricket pitch. Shortly after a horse dressage training area, go through the gate on your left and follow the Cotswold Way up the hill, noting the fine views back towards Winchcombe and beyond.

At the top of the field, pass through the gate and go down a short ramp to a T junction of minor roads (2). Here you can take a slightly shorter route to Belas Knap.

See 'Cotswold Way route to Belas Knap' at end of the route description.

Turn right along the lane, noticing the good view over the Isbourne valley to the hills north-west of Winchcombe. After approx 350 metres at a Y-junction of lanes, turn left and climb steadily along the lane through woods. You may be lucky enough to see deer lurking in the trees. The buildings of Hill Barn Farm come into view at the top of the lane. Carry on in the same direction past the farm along a gravel track for 300 metres then turn left to join the Cotswold Way (3).



Looking forward, you will see the smooth form of Belas Knap, an ancient long barrow.



Belas Knap Long Barrow

Go over the low stone wall and through a gate on the left, follow the Cotswold Way beside a stone wall to another gate. Go through and descend to the bottom where the path turns left to follow the field boundary beside a wood. (The right of way path follows the edges of the field: it does not cut diagonally across). Upon reaching a gate go through and descend on a sunken path through woods to a gate leading onto the road, signposted Winchcombe Way (4).

Turn right along the narrow road for approx 500 metres being careful of traffic. Ignore a path on the left before the top of the rise and continue to meet a track on the left waymarked Winchcombe Way (5).

Turn left down the gravel track, pass some cottages and bear left down the slope following the Winchcombe Way signs. Ignore the path leading right just after the cottages.

Continue down the track, passing to the right of Wadfield Farm, and join the narrow path between hedges to a stile entering a field F. There is a good view here towards Sudeley Castle and St Mary's Church. Go diagonally across the field to a stile on your right in the hedge, go over the stile and enter the next field. Turn left along the edge of the field for 100 metres and enter the next field.

The path goes diagonally across this field to a footbridge, continue diagonally across the second field to a gate. Go through and continue across the third field to join a lane. Turn left along the lane (the Old Brockhampton Road) and follow this until you reach the entrance to Sudeley Castle.



Winchcombe from Old Brockhampton Road

Keep left and follow the lane, (Vineyard Street) over the bridge and up the slope to Abbey Terrace.

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Turn right at the top, noticing the attractive Dent's Terrace on the right (originally alms houses) and retrace your footsteps to the car park.



Dents Terrace

Via Cotswold Way to Belas Knap

(From point B on the map is approx 0.5 mile (0.8km) shorter by following the Cotswold Way).

Cross the road, pass through the gate opposite and follow the Cotswold Way. After about 100 metres (4) turn right along the Cotswold Way and up a short steep section through a wood to a field. Go through the gate, turn left and follow the edge of field keeping the wood on your left, then turning right directly up the hill. (The right of way path follows the edges of the field: it does not cut diagonally across).

At the top go through a gate and turn left following the path beside the wall leading to a gate by Belas Knap. Notice the view over Sudeley Valley to your left. At the Neolithic site there are historical notes on the board.



To return, retrace your steps back to point (4) by the road. You have a choice here.

If you wish to take the quickest route back to Winchcombe, use the Cotswold Way as on your outward journey (start by turning left to the gate beside the T-junction and cross over to the gate, signposted Cotswold Way). Otherwise, follow the route notes from (4) (see first column) back to Winchcombe via the Sudeley valley.

Points of interest.

Belas Knap:

Belas Knap is a Neolithic chambered long barrow situated just below the crest of a prominent ridge with panoramic views over the surrounding countryside. The long barrow consists of a mound trapezoidal in plan and orientated north-south. It is about 55 metres in length, roughly 20 metres at its widest and between three and four metres tall.

Belas Knap owes much of its present character to a programme of restoration carried out by the Ministry of Works between 1929 and 1931. Prior to this the site was excavated in a series of excavations from 1863 and again in 1928.

Under the lintel stone of the 'false entrance' were the remains of five infants and an unusual round-headed adult, a type not normally found in Gloucestershire burials prior to 2200 BC. However dating of the Belas Knap human remains in 2000, placed them all between 4000 and 3700 BC.

Dents Terrace:

Almshouses built by the Dent family in 1865.

Vineyard Street:

Once also known as Duck Street. During excavation for the new bridge a stump of the towns ducking stool was found.

Cotswold Way

This is one of 15 National Trails, long distance walking routes through the best landscapes in England and Wales. The trail passes through Winchcombe on its route between Chipping Campden and Bath.

Cotswold Gateways

Cotswolds National Landscape has worked with local communities to create ten new Cotswold Gateways locations, from which people can follow walking and cycling routes to explore the surrounding countryside of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

It is part funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development



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