Winscombe and the East Well (2¹/₂ miles: Fairly easy)

Allow 1–2 hours. Mostly level. Muddy after rain; Eastwell Lane floods in very wet weather.

Follow steps 1–5 of the Crook Peak walk (below and right).

6 A guarter-mile beyond the recreation ground, a track (Fullers Lane) crosses the Strawberry Line between two barriers; turn right off the trail here. **7** Turn immediately left along another hedged track, Yadley Lane. 8 After a short distance, turn right at a junction of paths, continuing along the main track (now Eastwell Lane) 9 After a little under half a mile, pass the vigorous East Well spring in a ferny dell on your right, bearing left and shortly afterwards passing the entrance of a house called Coombe Valley, to emerge among the buildings of the old part of Winscombe village. 10 Turn left along the road up the hill. 11 Turn right along Church Lane, signposted to the Parish Church of St James. 12 After visiting the church, follow Church Lane downhill to a road junction in the middle of the village. 13 Follow a concrete track through a farmyard opposite, passing between farm buildings and then following a line of poplar trees. 14 In the corner of the field cross a footbridge over a stream. 15 Cross the next field to a ford over a stream in the hedge on your left (bypassable via a footbridge at the far end). 16 Turn left (north) parallel to the left-hand edge of the field to a stile and kissing gate. 17 Cross the next field (ignoring a gate opposite) and follow the right-hand hedge to a slab stile in the corner, continuing in the same direction with young trees on your right. 18 After another slab stile a narrow path leads over a small stream and between gardens out to the road. 19 Turn right and walk along the road (The Lynch) for 300 yards, looking out for a footpath sign on a telegraph pole indicating a path on the left between two houses. 20 Beyond the houses, cross a field to a slab stile and kissing gate leading into an open space newly planted with trees. 21 At the end of this area, turn right up steps onto the Strawberry Line. 22 Turn left over the bridge, then turn right off the trail past the toilets. 23 Turn left back to the Woodborough Inn.

Crook Peak (7¹/₂ miles: Fairly strenuous)

Allow 4 hours. A long climb and steep descent; muddy after rain.

1 From the front door of the Woodborough Inn, cross the road and walk down Woodborough Road between the Co-op on the left and Farrons Estate Agents on the right. 2 Just before the bridge, turn right past the public toilets onto the Strawberry Trail; turn left.

3 Cross the bridge and follow the trail for a guarter of a mile. 4 Pass under a road bridge (The Lynch). 5 Continue along the Trail, passing the Recreation Ground on your left. 6 Keep along the Strawberry Line as far as the Shute Shelve Tunnel. 7 Beyond the tunnel, continue through a cutting, then leave the trail along a signposted footpath on the right that doubles back to a track below the Kings Wood car park. 8 Turn left. 9 Follow an undulating bridleway that leads along the bottom of Kings Wood. 10 After climbing beside the mossy remains of a wall on the left, the path starts to descend through a scrubby area. 11 Ignore a path off to the right, but take the second right, where a path crosses from the left and divides either side of a bramble bush. 12 Follow this path as it climbs to the open hillside, with views to Glastonbury Tor and Brent Knoll, and then descends to a wall. 13 Follow the wall down a rocky section and bear right by a gate below a disused guarry. 14 Beyond the guarry, cross open fields; keep right at a junction of paths beyond a wooden kissing gate, aiming for the buildings of Bourton Farm. 15 Cross the lane below the farm and take the footpath opposite. **16** Bear right to a stile, then left along the bottom of the field to the second (a stile on the right gives access to Coral Cave, but the diversion is barely worth it). 17 Beyond a house, head half-left and continue along the bottom of a series of fields towards Compton Bishop (ignoring a footpath to the left over a stile in the hedge). 18 The last stile leads into a driveway, which you follow between houses before it bends left. 19 On meeting the road, walk up Church Lane, ignoring the turning to Coombe Lane. 20 Turn left at the church along Butts Batch and pass the Manor on your left. 21 Turn right into Vicarage Lane and when the road ends follow the track ahead as it curves left. 22 Keep left along the wall at a junction of paths, then turn right (uphill) at a fork. 23 At the top of the slope, turn sharp right through a gap in the fence with a National Trust waymark. 24 Climb the Razor ridge (which has a false summit) until you reach the rocky summit of Crook Peak. 25 Having admired the views, turn left along the lip of the rocks, then double back right to pass below the low cliff. 26 Head down the hill to a saddle with a crossing path, and continue along the broad ridge with a wall on your left. 27 Follow the wall as it bends right across a second saddle, also with a crossing path, then bear left uphill, still following the wall, climbing to the trig pillar on Wavering Down via a stone memorial bench (inscribed "Only a hill but all of life to me"). 28 Return to the wall and descend to Cross Plain. 29 Turn left through the farm and follow the entrance drive down to a crossing track (Barton Drove). **30** Take a few steps to the right and go through a kissing gate on the left. 31 Walk straight across the field, aiming just to the right of the scrubby area ahead. 32 Go through a gate and descend a steep, stepped path through the trees. 33 Exit the wood via a stile and walk down into the churchyard.

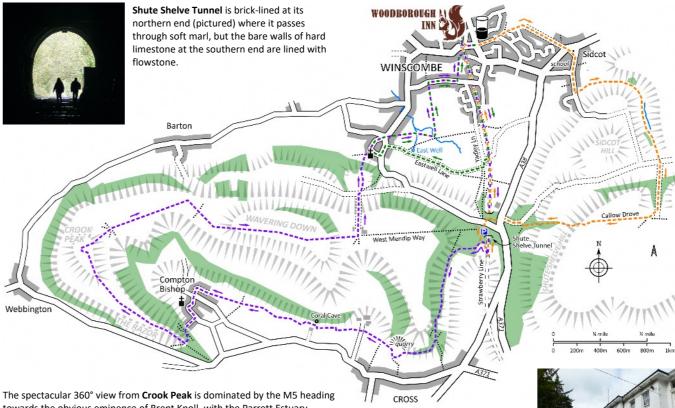
Follow steps 12 to 23 of the Winscombe and the East Well walk (left) to return to the Woodborough Inn.

Callow Drove & Shute Shelve Tunnel (4¼ miles: Moderate)

Allow 2–3 hours. One long climb and steep descent.

1 From the front door of the Woodborough Inn, turn left and left again into Hillyfields Way. 2 At the end of the road, follow the footpath ahead, to a kissing gate. **3** Follow the edge of the field ahead in the same direction, with gardens on your right. 4 In the corner, go through a gate and follow the track ahead to the road opposite Sidcot Arts Centre. 5 Turn left for a short distance then cross into Oakridge Lane. 6 Follow the lane through and past the buildings of Sidcot School. 7 Keep straight on at the junction with Fountain Lane, and pass Sidcot Farm on your right-hand side and Bird Rock Cottage on your left. 8 Just before the entrance to Oakridge Close on your right, go through a gateway on your left, indicated by a footpath sign on a telegraph post opposite. 9 Pass through a field gate and hand gate, then dogleg left and right to follow a hedge up the valley ahead of you. **10** Go through a metal gate and continue with the hedge on your right. 11 Beyond a similar gate, pass a small wood on your left, still following the bottom of the valley. 12 After a wooden gate, keep on with the stream on your left, passing below a hanging wood on the right. 13 On reaching an open field, cross straight across to a gate into a track (Winscombe Drove, followed by the West Mendip Way). 14 Cross the track and go over a stile opposite, next to a field gate. 15 Walk up the track along the side of the field to a gate into woodland. 16 Follow the track up the wooded combe. 17 On emerging into a field, bear half-right to a slab stile into the walled track of Callow Drove. 18 Turn right and follow the Drove, with views opening up to your right. 19 After a stile and gate by a National Trust sign for Shute Shelve, the track enters Access Land and starts to descend. 20 Ignore any tracks on your left to reach a gate and stile into a track, hedged on both sides, which continues to descend 21 Beyond a cottage on the right, join the drive and follow it out to the main road, opposite a petrol station. 22 Cross and turn left for a short distance. 23 At a bus stop by a road junction, turn right along a National Trust path through trees, which emerges opposite Kings Wood car park. 24 Walk through the car park and turn left by the cottage, along the wall. 25 A short distance beyond the end of the wall, take a path on the left which descends to meet the Strawberry Line. 26 Double back left through a deepening cutting which leads to the mouth of Shute Shelve Tunnel. 27 Beyond the tunnel, follow the trail for ¾ mile, en route passing Slader's Leigh Local Nature Reserve on your left and crossing a track, Fullers Lane, between barriers. 28 As you approach Winscombe, pass under a railway bridge and continue past the Recreation Ground on your right. 29 Cross the bridge over Woodborough Road, then turn right off the trail, by the public toilets. 30 Turn left up Woodborough Road back to the Woodborough Inn.







towards the obvious eminence of Brent Knoll, with the Parrett Estuary backed by the Quantocks and Exmoor beyond. To the west the island of Steepholm lurks beyond the ridge of Brean Down; to the north are Avonmouth and the outskirts of Bristol; looking east over Cheddar Reservoir is a glimpse of the Gorge; and to the south are the Somerset Levels, with Glastonbury Tor prominent in the south-east.



Sidcot School (right) is one of the few independent Quaker schools

in the country, and has its own

Friends' Meeting House

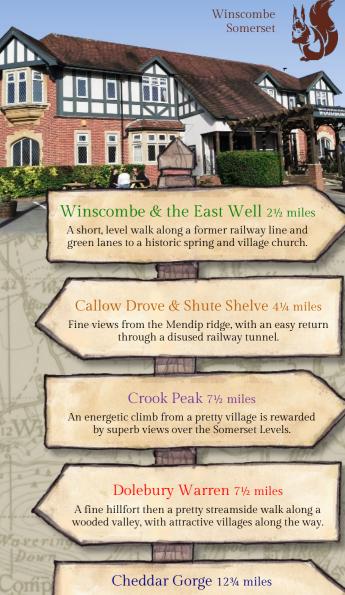


The village of Compton Bishop is dominated by the tower of St Andrew's Church, a Grade I listed building. The churchyards contains a medieval cross and inside the building is a finely carved stone pulpit described by one antiguarian as "one of the best in Somerset"



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Cheddar Gorge was formed by meltwater unable to enter the underlying caves during periods when they were blocked by permafrost.



Dolebury Warren 7¹/₂ miles: Strenuous

Allow 4 hours. Paths may be muddy after rain and there are a couple of moderate climbs and steep descents. The permitted path leaving Dolebury Warren hillfort runs sharply down rough steps beside a steep slope. There are several stiles to cross.

1 From the front door of the Woodborough Inn, cross the road and walk down Woodborough Road opposite, between the Co-op and Farrons Estate Agents. 2 Just before the former railway bridge, turn right and join the Strawberry Trail; turn right and pass the old platform of Winscombe Station. **3** After 600 yards, the trail bends left then right. Shortly afterwards, when the trail divides, take the left-hand path up to the road (Ilex Lane). 4 Turn right over the bridge and follow the lane to its crossroads with Sandford Lane. 5 Cross and turn left. After 300 vards, pass Wimblestone Road on the right, then cross the two ends of South Hill. 6 At the top of the hill, beyond a bus stop, turn right into Quarry Road, shortly passing three impressive limekilns on the left. 7 Beyond a car parking area, leave the metalled lane and join the bridleway on the left, which climbs gradually through the trees. 8 Pass the end of "Mike's Path" at a gate on the left, then keep left on the main path when another track departs through a barrier on the right. 9 The bridleway eventually levels off, and then passes a footpath on the left just before a gate into fields. **10** Follow the obvious track ahead, along the top of the field, to another gate, then continue to a pair of gates, where you take the hand-gate on the right. **11** Follow this narrower, hedged path, which bends right and left and then runs between fields for 600 vards before joining a farm track. 12 Continue to a junction with a Restricted Byway by some farm buildings, where you turn left. 13 Beyond the buildings, leave the track on a signposted footpath on the right, which shortly leads into a wood and then descends sharply through the trees down to the A38. 14 Cross the main road carefully and turn left along the pavement for a short distance, then turn right and follow a short, steep path with a railing down into Dolebury Bottom. 15 Turn right along the metalled lane. **16** Turn sharp left up a driveway past The Oak House and a series of further cottages, then at the top of the slope (Walnut House) turn right onto a path. 17 This leads shortly to the entrance to Dolebury Warren Nature Reserve. Go through the gate ahead and continue up the main path, which curves left towards the top of the slope and then bears right to a gap in the ramparts of the hillfort. **18** Follow the obvious grassy path up the centre of the fort, aiming for the highest point. Just before the top are the scant remains of the warrener's house. a remnant from the days when the hillfort was used to raise rabbits. 19 Turn right and follow the rampart downhill towards the southeastern corner of the hillfort. When you meet a crossing path, turn left into trees to a stile. 20 Emerge into open grassland again and after about 75 yards (before a fenced area on the right) turn right onto a narrow and fairly indistinct path that leads down through brambles

and scrub then curves right to a ladder stile over a fence, above a steep drop with outcropping limestone. 21 Turn left and follow the narrow path, which curves to the right and then descends steeply down steps. 22 Below the steps, follow the path right and down through trees and below a scree slope to an Avon Wildlife Trust stile leading into a bridleway at the bottom of the valley. 23 Turn left and follow the track for about 150 yards alongside a stream on your right. 24 At a junction with another valley on the right, turn right over concrete pipes. 24 Follow the footpath along the edge of the wood on the left-hand side of the valley, with a narrow field to your right, until you cross the side-stream. 25 Keep left at a fork and follow a fenced track past Apple Tree Cottage. 26 Continue along the streamside track to the foot of a metalled road, passing a ford on your left. 27 Continue past a couple more houses, keeping to the valley bottom and ignoring a rising track on the right. Notice a limekiln on the left at the end of one of the gardens. 28 After another house, pass the Forestry Commission sign for Rowberrow Warren and continue alongside the stream, passing a couple of small brick dams. The valley opens out slightly and then passes a waymark post reading "Public Bridleway to Blackdown" just before a covered reservoir at a junction. 29 Leave the stream here, turning sharp right up a path that leads obliquely out of the valley. 30 At the top, follow the road straight ahead, past a series of houses on the left, for half a mile to Shipham, with views to the Bristol Channel. 31 Pass the end of Deerleap on the left, then turn left at a grassy triangle into Barnpool, which cuts the corner (past Glovers Fold) to Hollow Road, where you turn left (past the junction with Top Road) and walk down to the village green and war memorial. 32 Turn left along the main road and pass the church then, just as the road begins to climb, cross into a narrow lane on the right above the churchyard wall. 33 Pass the Manor House on the right, then climb a stile by a gate into a field. 34 Follow the left-hand side of the field, then bear right to another stile in the far right-hand corner. 35 Continue through a patch of woodland and then follow a farm track to reach the lane in Winterhead. 36 Turn left towards a shallow ford, but before you reach it turn right through a gate in the wall. Cross between paddocks to another gate, beyond which you cross the metalled driveway to Winterhead Farm, continuing ahead on the waymarked footpath between fences. **37** A kissing gate leads into a field; follow the left-hand edge. After a gateway on the left, bear left to steps and a gate in the far left-hand corner of the field. **38** Turn right and pass through another gate and continue in the same direction (part of a cross-country course) past a house on the right. After another gate, cross a final field to a driveway leading out to the road in Sidcot. Turn right. **39** Walk between various school buildings out to the A38. 40 Cross and turn left along the pavement beside the main road, then turn right into Hillyfields. 41 Follow this rough road to its end, where a hand-gate leads into a field. 42 Pass a bench and follow the left-hand side of the field to a kissing gate in the far left-hand corner. 43 Follow a path past a primary school entrance and carry straight on to emerge at the end of Hillyfields Way. 44 Follow this residential road back to the Woodborough Inn.

Cheddar Gorge 12³/₄ miles: Strenuous

Allow 6–7 hours plus time for sightseeing. The paths in the vicinity of Cheddar Gorge are stony and there are unprotected cliff edges. Paths elsewhere may be muddy. Some road walking in the latter stages. Sheep, agats and cattle may be expected.

Follow steps 1–6 of the Crook Peak walk (overleaf).

7 Beyond the tunnel, continue along the Strawberry Line until you reach the A38. 8 Cross and rejoin the rail trail on the opposite site of the road. Follow it for guarter of a mile, with views over the Levels, until you meet another road. 9 Cross into the car park opposite and walk to the end where, beyond some boulders, a narrow path drops into the trees on your right descending past a shallow rock shelter to the road. 10 Turn left and walk down to a junction. 11 Turn left to a crossing point at the end of a railing, cross over both roads to a bus stop, then turn left. 12 Follow West Street past Compton House and then between pastel-painted cottages and past Axbridge Methodist Church to the dramatic King John's Hunting Lodge and the Square in the centre of Axbridge. 13 Cross the square and continue past the Town Hall along St Mary's Street (which becomes Cheddar Road). **14** After a little over half a mile, the road meets the A371 Axbridge bypass: turn right at a Strawberry Line sign and continue as before along the old railway, with glimpses of Cheddar Reservoir away to your right. **15** After a half-mile, ignore a crossing path (unless you wish to view the reservoir, in which case the path on the right provides the shortest approach). **16** After a further third of a mile on the Strawberry Trail, after some sports pitches, you pass under a road bridge on the outskirts of Cheddar. The path beyond runs between fences and round some right-angled bends before passing a builder's merchant and emerging into an industrial estate. **17** Walk out to the public road and turn left until you reach the main A371 road by a war memorial. 18 Turn right, passing Hanham Manor on the right, 19 Just before a telephone kiosk and public toilet, turn right along a tarmac path signposted "Football Club". This leads alongside the Kings of Wessex Academy, built on the site of an Anglo-Saxon palace and containing the substantial ruins of a medieval chapel. **20** After following the path left and right, turn left into a road (Parsons Pen) and walk along it to the parish church. 21 Turn left along Church Street to the market cross, where you turn right into Union Street. 22 Keep left at the junction with Redcliffe Street and continue past the Methodist Church on your left. 23 At a mini-roundabout, continue straight on past the Riverside Inn, signposted "Gorge & caves". 24 Having crossed the river, turn right and follow The Lippiatt uphill. (The walk ahead gives great views of Cheddar Gorge from above, but if you wish to explore the lower reaches of the gorge and visit the various attractions, carry straight on.)

25 After about 100 yards, turn left through a stone slab-stile and up steps between two houses onto a narrow path that bends right and left to emerge in a driveway. 26 Turn right and immediately left, then

turn off left onto a footpath by a red-arrowed "Gorge Walk" waymark. 27 The path winds uphill to the viewing tower; turn right, passing the top of the Jacob's Ladder steps and through a tall wooden kissing gate. **28** The path continues to climb fairly gradually, with glimpses into the gorge on the left in the vicinity of Pulpit Rock (though the views improve as you gain elevation and the trees thin out). You are likely to encounter one of Cheddar's resident feral goats in this area. 29 After the high point, the path continues to another tall kissing gate and beyond alternates between wooded and brackeny areas to a further gate. From here on it descends through trees (muddy and slippery at times) towards the road. **30** At a path junction, keep right until you reach the road by a lay-by. **31** Cross into Black Rock Nature Reserve. After a couple of hundred yards, ignore the Gorge Walk signposted to the left and continue up the valley, past a lime kiln and guarry. **32** When the valley divides, keep left (ignoring the Velvet Bottom path on the right). 33 A gate leads into Long Wood Nature Reserve; immediately beyond the reserve sign, take the path on the left, which climbs out of the valley. **34** At the top of the incline, go through a gate ahead of you and follow the left-hand side of the field beyond. **35** At the end of this long field, go through two gates either side of a track and continue in the same vein beyond to another gate. **36** When the wall on your left finally bends left, carry on in a straight line towards the left-hand of two farms visible in the distance. **37** Beyond a field gate, continue in the same direction, but now with a wall on your right. You meet the end of a track that leads past the buildings of Ashridge Farm to a road. **38** Turn right and follow the road for 400 yards to a road junction, with three prominent barrows in the field on the right. **39** Turn left towards Shipham. At Trot's Corner after half a mile, the road descends into Long Bottom. 40 At the bottom of the hill, ignore the track ahead and bear left along the road. After a further mile down the valley you meet the larger road between Shipham and Cheddar below a café and farm shop. **41** Cross into Winterhead Hill and follow the rough-surfaced road gently uphill. **42** After a wood on the right the track descends past a turning to Winterhead Hill Farm, visible on a hill to the right. Shortly afterwards, turn right off the track through a hand-gate and follow power lines across a field to the head of a small valley. 43 The path leads left of a small stream to a gate. 44 Continue down the valley with intermittent woodland to either side and through a further couple of gates, the second below a small wood to the right. **45** Follow the hedge on your left to a further gate, then a fence on the right. **46** Go through a hand-gate on your left and bear right through another and cross a grassy area to the road in Sidcot. 47 Turn right and walk through the village, keeping right at the junction with Fountain Lane.

Now follow steps **39–44** of the Dolebury Warren walk (*left*) to guide you back to the Woodborough Inn.



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