

Miles Without Stiles Charlbury



In this pleasant walk, discover the attractive Cotswold town of Charlbury with its narrow streets and outlying countryside containing ancient saltways, old stone quarries and woodland.

Distance: 8 kilometres/
5 miles (2½ hours) with ups
and downs of 83m or 272ft

Start: Spendlove Centre,
Charlbury SP 357/195 or in
'The Slade' at ❶ to avoid a
low (60cm) stone stile.

Route:

On leaving the car park, cross the road to the open green area, an ancient venue for archery. Take the right-hand street named Playing Close - leading to Poole's Lane. At the bottom of the hill, just beyond Sandford Rise there is a waymarked footpath . ❶

Halfway along this is an ancient, low, stone slab. At the end of the path cross the road (The Slade) to another waymarked footpath just to the right of Blenheim Farm House along a lane called Brewer's Bottom. ❷ The path goes gently uphill through a 'squeeze belly' beside a gate into a small nature reserve.

After passing through a gate at the top of this, continue on the path but note the Centenary Woodland - a community project - on your left. This has several paths for public use.

Continue uphill on a wooded path for a further 500 metres

until this path emerges into a field. Carry on for a few metres to the left when you meet a bridleway where you turn right. Continue straight ahead on the bridleway noting the Town Quarry on your left, a source of Cotswold stone.

Follow the bridleway for almost one mile (1.6km) until you meet a wide track. Turn left here and follow this good track as it winds to meet another track. This is one of the ancient Salt Ways. Turn left here to pass Ditchley Park Farm. ❸

After 500 metres you will pass the entrance gates to Ditchley Park ❹, which was home for 350 years to the Lees and Dillons and was bought and restored by Ronald and Nancy Tree in 1932. The gardens were then redesigned by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe. The present house dates from 1722.

Continue on the Saltway for approx 500 metres and take the wide bridleway on your left ❺ which after a short distance runs alongside woodland known as Pintle Stripe.

The bridleway (Hundley Way) continues for a further mile (1.6km) with pleasant views on the right across Clarke's Bottom.

After passing some houses on your left, Hundley Way joins Enstone Road. Continue down this (over a cross roads) to return to the Spendlove Centre which will be on your right. (Or turn left if you are parked in The Slade).

