This walk was featured in 2016 and 2019 on ITV series ‘Best walks with a View’ presented by Julia Bradbury. Best walked in clear weather.

Distance: 7.5 miles/12 kms
Duration: 3.5 to 4.5 hours
Difficulty: Several sections of ascent, woods, remote countryside and open expanse of common land.

Start: Back Lane car park, Winchcombe (Grid Ref: 023/284) £1 all day. Toilets 20p in car park.

Finish: Opposite The Rising Sun Hotel, Cleeve Hill.
Refreshments: The Rising Sun Hotel and Winchcombe
An ascent: 1,509 feet/460 metres
Descent: 1,007 feet/307 metres

This walk needs to be planned in conjunction with the Stagecoach W bus timetable available at: www.stagecoachbus.com No Sunday service.

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 after approx 100 metres turn left into Vineyard Street. Cross the River Isbourne, head up the slope and follow the lane as it bends to the right, by the entrance to Sudeley Castle. If you wish to visit Sudeley Castle follow the driveway. (In the programme Julia visited the castle and heard how Emma Dent loved walking).

Follow the lane for approx 300 metres and take the footpath on the right through a metal gate signposted the ‘Winchcombe Way’ A. Walk diagonally across the field past a telegraph pole and go down a gentle slope to a gate in the hedgerow. Go through, cross a footbridge and continue diagonally across the next field to the far corner. Cross the track and go over a footbridge to enter the next field. Bear right and diagonally cross the field to the far corner.

Cross the footbridge and head gently uphill following the right hand field boundary until you reach a footbridge and stile on your right in the hedgerow. Turn right to cross the stile and then turn left to head uphill following the fence to meet a stile. Cross the stile and follow the path enclosed by a hedge and fence to emerge in an open field with farm building ahead (Wadfield Farm) on your right. Follow the path ahead along the edge of the field to join a stony track, keep straight on.

Follow the track as it bears left and heads uphill towards some cottages nesting in front of a wood. The track splits; take the right hand track past the cottages up to a lane B. Turn right and follow the lane for approx 450 metres, be careful of any livestock.

Follow the track as it bears left and heads uphill following the right hand field boundary until you reach a footbridge and stile on your right in the hedgerow. Turn right to cross the stile and then turn left to head uphill following the fence to meet a stile. Cross the stile and follow the path enclosed by a hedge and fence to emerge in an open field with farm building ahead (Wadfield Farm) on your right. Follow the path ahead along the edge of the field to join a stony track, keep straight on.

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traffic on this narrow lane until you arrive at a parking area for Belas Knap on your right.

Turn left and go through a gate by a sign for Belas Knap and walk up a sunken path through woodland to a gate. You are now on the Cotswold Way (CW). Go through and turn left to follow the field boundary around two sides of the field (there is an unofficial path diagonally across the field but this is not a right of way) to meet another gate. Here there are lovely elevated views of Sudeley Castle and the escarpment.

Go through the gate and continue slightly left following the left hand field boundary to the edge of a wood. Follow the path beside the wood to arrive at the right hand gate of two gates. Go through and turn right to a wall with steps, to access Belas Knap Long Barrow. After visiting the barrow leave via the stone stile on the opposite side and follow the path beside the right hand field boundary to the far side of the field to meet a track.

Turn left along the track for approx 500 metres to a gate on your right, signposted (CW) C. Turn right through the gate and follow the left hand field boundary to another gate by a wood. Go through and follow the footpath downhill which is steep in places.

Eventually you arrive at another gate; go through and continue along the path straight ahead through the wood (where Julia listened to the raindrops) and up beside a house to reach a gate by a track. Continue straight ahead along the track for 150 metres to a bend D; here turn left through a gate (CW) and across a paddock to another gate. Follow the path downhill to meet a bridge spanning a brook.

Cross the bridge and go through the gate to follow the left hand field boundary straight ahead for approx 250 metres towards a track and cattle sheds. By the track, look for a gate on your left and go through, turn right to follow the track towards Postlip Farm.

If there are pens across the farmyard there is an alternative path on your left by the top of the bank which skirts around the yard to re-enter the track further along.

Follow the lane straight ahead as it descends towards cottages with a great view of Postlip Hall ahead. Before the bridge turn left through a gate (CW) E and follow the high stone wall on your right to a gate. Go through and cross the track, through another gate and follow the wall past a stable to a field gate.

Go through and continue on the CW beside the wall, past a spring issuing water out of the hillside, and up to a gate. Go through and follow the path (CW) onto Cleeve Common to meet a wide grassy track. Bear right and follow the increasingly stony track up to a junction of tracks in front of a metal field gate F. Do not go through the gate but leave the (CW) and turn sharp left to follow the grassy track uphill with a stone wall approx 25m on your right.

After approx 400 metres the wall turns right; continue straight on (do not bear right towards the main golf course) along the grassy track uphill past a seat on your left and shortly you will be walking parallel to a golf fairway. Continue in a straight direction to arrive at a stony track with a building to your right G.

At point G turn right along the stony track for 40m and turn left along a track before the building and running beside a fairway, taking care not to interfere with golfers. Follow the track up to the far end of the gorse bushes before bearing right around the 9th tee of the golf course to an obsolete OS trig station and a topograpgh. Continue to a bench ahead. Here follow the Cotswold Way markers down the hillside, where the CW turns right, continue downhill towards a bench, heading for houses on the edge of the common. Just before the bench you meet a sunken track. Turn right and follow the track as it bends down towards a castellated building and exit the common via a gate next to a cattle grid.

Follow Rising Sun Lane to meet the main road, B4632. The Rising Sun Hotel is on your right. (Julia sat in the front garden with her pint of beer overlooking the Malvern Hills). The bus stop for the Mon-Sat ‘W’ service to Winchcombe is opposite The Rising Sun Hotel. Bus details can be found at: www.stagecoachbus.com (We suggest using the Prestbury outward from Cheltenham timetable to plan your return). A more detailed timetable can be found at www.travelinesw.com

**Points of interest.**

**Sudeley Castle**

Much of the castle was built in the reign of Henry V and later added to by Sir Thomas Seymour who married Katherine Parr after the death of Henry VIII. During the English Civil War Sudeley finally capitulated to Cromwell’s forces and was left in ruins. Katherine Parr the sixth wife of King Henry VIII is buried in the chapel and contains her marble tomb. During the Victorian period much of the castle was restored by the Dent family. The castle has newly opened castle rooms and extensive exhibitions for visitors.

**Belas Knap**

A Neolithic Long Barrow, Belas Knap is one of the finest neolithic long barrows in Gloucestershire, situated on Cleeve Hill. Built about 3000 B.C. the barrow is approximately 178 feet long and 60 feet wide, and nearly 14 feet in height. It is a chambered barrow with a false entrance at the larger northern end.

**Cleeve Common**

There are spectacular views across the Severn Vale to the Forest of Dean, Malvern Hills and the Black Mountains in Wales. Also, site of an Iron Age hillfort, the common is an extensive area of unimproved limestone grassland on the Cotswold escarpment, most of it a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The original walk can be found at The Outdoor Guide.

www.theoutdoorguide.co.uk.

Please note our walk is slightly longer as it takes you to the pub and bus stop.

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