

9. Hills and Hillforts – Cam Long Down and Uley

The incredible variety of the Cotswold Way is once again explored by this stunning little walk. From woodland tracks to open hilltops, it leads you around the intriguing ancient history of Uley Bury to the more recent remains of a pestilent past. Even the few hillside climbs are rewarded by compass-wide views that spread out all around you back into the heart of the Cotswolds and across the Severn Estuary into Wales...

Distance:

4 miles (shorter route: 1½ miles)

Duration:

2½-3½ hours
(shorter: ¾-1½ hours)

Difficulty:

Moderate to difficult – Some stiles, steps and steep sections.

Public transport:

No. 20 bus from Stroud.
Visit www.traveline.org.uk or call 0871 200 2233.

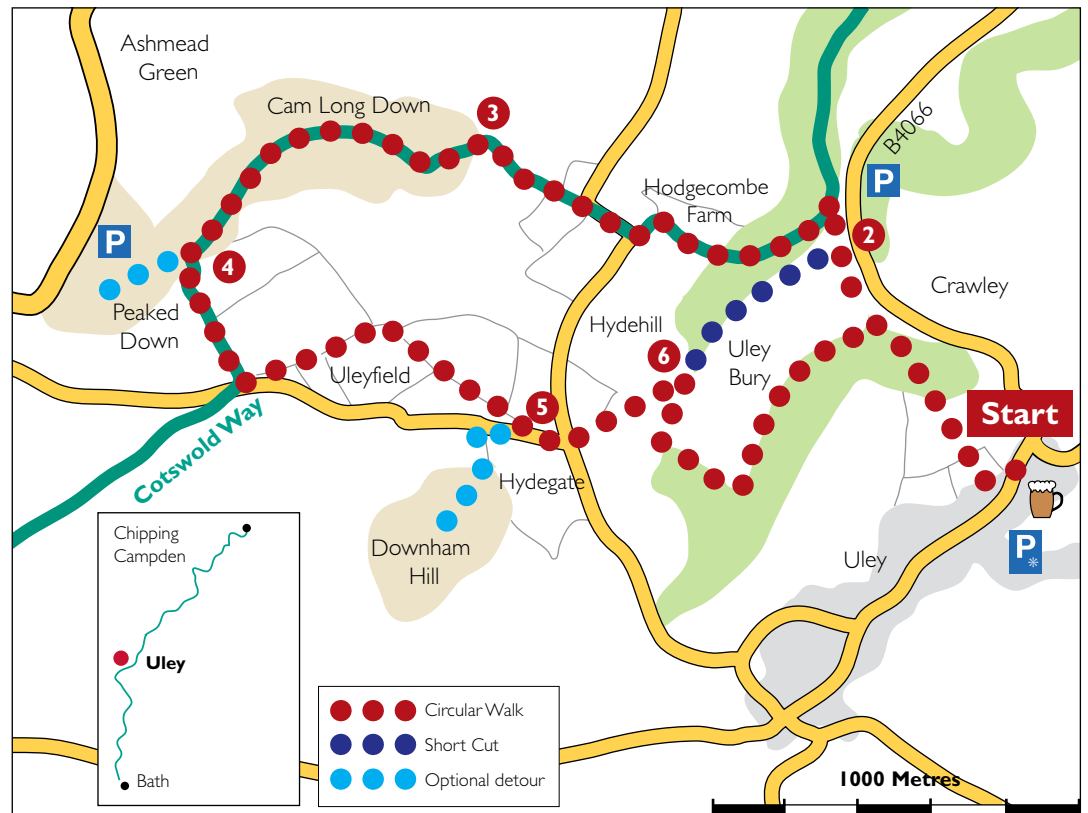
Start/Finish:

Grid reference SO792986
(OS Explorer sheet 167)
Postcode GL11 5SN.

Refreshments:

The Old Crown, Uley
(*parking available for customers only).

1 The walk begins next to the pub on the main road through Uley. Watching for traffic, cross the road and take the narrow footpath to the right of the church. Fork right in front of the first house and follow the path up towards the kissing gate. Enter into the fields and head for the lone fir tree on the edge of the woods to pick up the path towards the gate at the top. Head into the woods and continue straight up hill along the higher path, eventually emerging out at the foot of Uley Bury, an Iron Age hillfort with ramparts still standing the test of time two and a half millennia later. Ignoring the path to the left, head straight on up onto the ramparts, and continue round until you pass through a gate at the end.



2 For the shorter route, take the path on the left and continue round the hillfort until you meet up with the main route at point 6.

Take the larger path to the right down towards the road and turn left at the lay-by to pick up the Cotswold Way, turning left again to head down the path through the trees. After 250 yards, emerge out into the farmyard and follow the track straight ahead until you meet the road. Turn right, and at the next bend in the road follow the Cotswold Way over the stile and up towards the hill.

3 Towards the top, cross over a stile into the woods and take the path straight ahead, continuing up the switch-back path until you emerge out onto the top of Cam Long Down. Take a few minutes to catch your breath and spin slowly round to soak up the stunning 360° views, one of the finest in all the Cotswolds. Continue on along the top, and follow the path down the side of the hill until you

meet the six-way fingerpost in the shaded dell at the bottom.

4 For a very short detour to another breathtaking all-round view, follow the path marked 'viewpoint' straight ahead to the top of Cam Peak and then retrace your steps to rejoin the trail. Carry on down along the Cotswold Way, turning left through a kissing gate to head down along the edge of a field until you meet the road. Leaving the Cotswold Way behind, turn left along the road and ignoring the private drive, immediately left again up an access track. At the four-way junction at the end, turn right up a narrow path and continue on until you meet the road. *If this path is too muddy or overgrown, retrace your steps and take the road on to point 5.*

5 For another half-mile detour, turn right back down the road and through the first kissing gate on your left up the steep path to the top of Downham Hill - the perfect spot to look back around the high points of your walk.

Known locally as 'Smallpox Hill' it was also once the site of an isolation hospital, the eerie remains of which can still be seen. After retracing your steps to point 5, continue along the road until you reach the kennels at the T-junction. Take the path straight ahead, forking right after a short distance, and then take the steep steps up to the left. Carry on up this steep and narrow path, over a number of stiles, until you reach the hillfort at the top.

6 Turn right, and follow the path all the way around the ramparts until you reach the point where you entered the Bury nearly four miles before. Retrace your steps back downhill to the Old Crown where rest and reward await the weary walker.