

**23. A walk without stile** (approx. 7 miles, 3 hours, steep slopes, varied terrain, livestock)

Start at the rear of King's Stanley car park and walk along **Bubble Lane**.

Cross **Bath Road** to a kissing gate into a cow pasture. Bear left around houses to a footbridge over a brook to **Woodside Lane**. The footpath goes between the last two houses to a stile which is due to be replaced by a kissing gate.

Turn right and follow the lane past Marsh lane, Woodside Cottage and Blackbird Cottage. Beyond the end of the tarmac, look for steps on the left going up a short steep slope to a kissing gate for the Cotswold Way.

Here there is a choice:

1. Turn right and follow the Cotswold Way for a stile-free walk to **Coaley Peak Picnic Site** and Woodchester park, returning along the permissive bridlepath.
2. Continue up the steps. At the top step turn left and follow a clear track to rejoin the Cotswold Way for a stile-free walk to **Selsley Common**.
3. At the top step bear right up a short steep slope to the permissive bridleway. Turn left for a stile-free walk to **Selsley Common**. You are very close to the **glider club**. Cross the B4066 with care to use their **café**.

At Coaley Peak and Selsley Common there is often an ice-cream van in summer.

On reaching Selsley Common there are many meandering cow tracks. A line of seats guides you towards Selsley Church. The **topograph** is worth a look by "the Toots"

Bear left downhill towards **Selsley Church** to find a signpost and gate onto the road. Walk past the church along Pooles Lane, passing **Stanley Park** into New Road. At the signpost take the squeeze-stile left into a sheep pasture and follow waymarkers downhill towards Ebley Mill. Look for a kissing gate and cross the **A419** at the pedestrian controlled traffic lights. **Sainsburys** is a short distance away to the right.

Now you have 2 choices:

**a)** A signpost directs you left onto the **cycle track**. A noisy, but pleasant, stile-free, all-weather walk which takes you to **Ryeford**, past old varieties of fruit trees in our community orchard.

**b)** Continue 200 yards along the cycle track to the kissing gate (2). Turn right along Lane's Siding, a former railway line, to the river and cross the bridge into an area of new houses. Continue up Bridge Road, past **Snow Mill** to a T-junction with **Stroudwater Canal** at Oil Mills Bridge.

From here you can see how worthwhile it is to restore the canal with fine examples of our industrial heritage. Snow Business International Ltd. makes artificial snow for films like "Harry Potter", but in this restored corn and oil mill SBI has transformed a ruin into a really attractive area with sculptures and improvements for wildlife. To the right of the bridge is Bridge House, which shows the wealth of former mill owners. If you peep over the red brick wall of Holly Tree House or Bridge House you can see an unusual circular weir. It is worth walking to **Ebley Mill** to see really fine redevelopment of houses and the mill. Behind the mill is a pleasant garden with seats and a weir where there is often a kingfisher.

Follow the **towpath** left, where the **restored canal** creates a really attractive easy walk to **Nowhere Locks** and on to **Ryeford Road bridge**. Turn left, cross the **A419** at the lights, and continue towards King's Stanley.

Pass **Stanley Mill** and go over the bridge. On the left, pass **Old Brook House** onto the **Cotswolds Way**. Go through 3 kissing gates across a horse pasture. Pass through another gate by a leylandii hedge around **Manor Farm**. You can divert right to return across the footbridge and playing fields to the car park, or continue around the farm, right along Pigg (Peck) Street, past the Puggis Field and school to the main road. Turn right for **King's Stanley** and "**the King's Head**".

# 23b. A walk without stile

