

Ansford and Cole (Set 1 No 2)

7 miles, 2 hours 35 minutes to 3 hours 20 minutes. Moderate.



This longer walk (a re-write of the old walks leaflet) visits the hamlets of Wyke, the edge of Ansford, and returns via Cole with splendid views off Ridge Hill. Combines well with lunch in Castle Cary (add 20 to 25 minutes to the total walking time). On very quiet roads, bridleways, and footpaths, with some mud and short steep sections, so moderate.

Start at Station Road car park

Turn right on leaving the car park and follow the road as it swings right onto Church Bridge. Cross the road, go up Patwell Street and left along the High Street. Turn up St Catherines Hill (first right). At the second small crossroads turn left downhill into Tolbury Lane. Just past Tolbury Farm turn right onto a track (a restricted byway) and follow it to reach a bridge by a ford.

2

Cross the bridge then a few metres further turn left along an enclosed and sometimes very muddy track (Huish Lane). Climb steeply and continue to follow the lane as it doglegs several times, levels out and enters more open country, becoming a farm track. After passing a barn on the left reach a junction with metal gates to the right. Go over the way-marked stile on the right and follow an indistinct footpath diagonally across the field, through a metal gate at the opposite corner, into a small farmyard. Turn left through the farmyard to a small crossroads. [To avoid cows in the field, instead take the permissive track to the right of the stile, pass barns on the left then turn left along the side of the barn to reach the crossroads.]

3

Go straight ahead ignoring the lanes to the left and right. Walk straight ahead past farm buildings and drop downhill to reach the main road. Turn right for a short distance, cross where safe to do so and then turn left onto lane clearly signposted to Castle Cary and Lower Wyke.

Follow this road (Wyke Road) gently downhill to cross the River Brue. Just after the river take the bridleway right onto a farm track. (The bridleway marker was missing in November 2021).

4

Continue along this bridleway through three fields, passing a ruinous barn on the right. Once through a gate into the fourth field leave the bridleway on a footpath diagonally left across the field (the direction is clearly waymarked on the gatepost) to reach a stile. Take great care crossing the Great Western Railway to another stile. Go directly across the next field to a further stile, then slightly right uphill towards a prominent tree next to a house. Continue to the top left corner of this field and find a stile in the corner (cunningly concealed by brambles). Cross this stile onto a lane and turn left to reach a crossroads. Walk straight ahead along a grassy bridleway, ignoring paths to right and left. Eventually

Please remember that all rights of way run over someone else's private property, and follow the [Countryside Code](#) at all times.

reach a T junction [turn right here for Castle Cary-see next paragraph]. Turn left along the bridleway and continue to reach a road.

[To visit Castle Cary, turn right at the T junction, and follow the bridleway till the main road is reached. (Note where the bridleway leaves the road, as it is easy to miss on the return). Turn right, then first left and follow the hill down into the centre of Castle Cary. Return by the same route to the T junction and continue along the bridleway to reach a road.]

5

Turn left on the road and take second waymarked footpath up steps on the right (clearly signed Cole and Leland trail). Go over the stile, along the short right-hand field-edge and through a gate. Turn left. From here the path meanders across the side of the hill just below the fence. Once a corner is rounded there is a glorious rural view up the valley to the east, with St Marys Church in Bruton in the distance and the Stourhead ridge beyond. In the last week of April and first week of May the Hadspen orchards below are a sea of pale pink apple blossom.

The path gradually gets less distinct, but the route is obvious, with the fence close by to the left. It drops gently downwards to a gate through into the orchards. Go through the gate and follow the rough track next to the hedge down the left-hand side of the orchard. Near the bottom watch for a sign to the left of the track, indicating where the path turns right downhill off the track, between the rows of apple trees. Go down through the orchard and across the brook. Turn left, go through a gate hidden in the bottom corner and diagonally across the field to the opposite corner, where a gate leads on to the road. Turn left and follow the road past houses and a farm, over the River Pitt and into Cole.

6

At the junction turn left between two houses, then immediately right into the private lane leading to Colestile (also known as Cole Style). The lane crosses the Brue by a narrow bridge. The landowners have established a permissive path through the field in front of Colestile which is more direct, easier to follow and altogether better than the 'official' route. Follow it if open, by turning right through the gate immediately after the bridge. Continue through the field with the River Brue to your right. [If the permissive route is closed walk up the drive to the house and take the stile into the field on your right]. The field narrows as the river and railway line gradually converge. Go under the railway.

7

Go through the gate and straight on up the hill ahead past a fine oak tree. The bridleway becomes indistinct. Scramble straight ahead up the steep muddy bank then turn right to go through a gate.

The bridleway continues high above the River Brue then drops very steeply down towards Gants Mill. This section can be slippery in the wet, with a significant drop to the right, so take great care here. Go through a gate and follow the bridleway through a second gate, a small wood, and a further gate into the grounds of Mill on the Brue Outdoor Activity Centre. Pass beneath the house, turn left up to a gate then right down the drive to reach the main road at West End. Cross the road and turn right, then left after crossing the river to follow Riverside Walk past houses, left to cross the river again then right along Lower Backway. Continue to reach Church Bridge and the out-going route.

Please remember that all rights of way run over someone else's private property, and follow the [Countryside Code](#) at all times.