

HAWKESBURY & HORTON

HISTORY WALK

A 6 mile/9.6 km (3 hour) walk from Hawkesbury Upton with fine views and detailed notes on the historic features of the parishes such as Hawkesbury and Horton Churches, The Somerset Monument, Horton Court, 'The Roman Camp' and much else besides.

OS Explorer Map167
Thornbury, Dursley & Yate



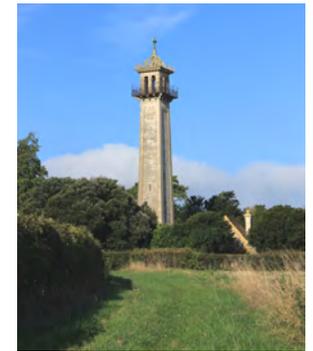
History inspired walk in Hawkesbury and Horton parishes

This 6 mile (9.6 km) walk includes some outstanding Cotswold and Severn Vale views as well as passing by many historic features and associations in the parishes of both Hawkesbury and Horton. It starts from Hawkesbury Village Hall car park (honesty box for contributions), but, before you turn right out of the car park, look at the large house on the left. Formerly a doctor's surgery, this was, for a time, Hawkesbury's Vicarage



In past times this provided a watering place for cattle and sheep being driven along Bath Lane (originally a principal route to Bath and part of the ancient Ridgeway)

Staying on the right hand side of the road, and just after the junction with Starveall Lane, pass through the kissing gate into a field. Follow the permissive path along the hedge which runs parallel to the main road until you arrive at the large monument tower.



Hawkesbury Monument, properly known as The Somerset Monument, was completed in 1846 on the site of the earlier bowling green dating from 1669. It was erected to commemorate General Lord Robert Edward Henry Somerset who died in 1842; he was a member of the Beaufort family of Badminton, and a campaigner with Wellington in the Napoleonic wars. At Waterloo he was in command of the Household Cavalry Brigade, which distinguished itself not less by its stern and patient endurance of the

Having turned right out of the car park continue on the pavement for 550yds (500m) until you see the ancient Drover's Pool on the left hand side of the road.



enemy's fire than by its celebrated charge on the cuirassiers of Milhaud's corps. The brigadier was particularly mentioned in Wellington's despatches, and received the thanks of parliament, as well as the Maria-Theresa and other much-prized foreign orders. He died a general and G.C.B. in 1842. The monument, Grade II listed, is a slightly tapering square stone tower approximately 100 feet/30 metres high with an entrance on the north-east side. It is hoped that one day it will be made safe again for public access.*

Go through the kissing gate and immediately left through another kissing gate and up to the road where you turn right and cross over before descending the steep hill (14% gradient signed to Wickwar).



The route now takes us left down Coldchange Hill which is immediately opposite the tower. Earlier names for this hill include Tytherlie Hill (1622) and Titterleyes Ash (1669). Maybe now called Coldchange due to the change in temperature as you ascend the hill!

As you descend the hill after 325yds (300m) views to the left are glimpsed through the hedges and the trees.



After a further 430yds (400m) turn left through the gate opposite the cottage and opposite the turning to Hillesley/Alderley and proceed along old Hawkesbury Road. This lane runs between hedges at first and then through a gate into open countryside.

This huge pastoral amphitheatre of banks and ridges is known as The Sands or The Great Sands. Each of Hawkesbury's several tithings had two open or common fields in which medieval tenants held strips of land within furlongs (the longest stretch a team of oxen could plough before coming to a rest). On slopes the plough ridges tended to form the curved terraces which are clearly seen in this relict landscape. On the hill slopes these terraces were known as 'lynches' or 'lynchets'. The soil, although not a true sand, is more friable than that of the clay vale or the stony plateau and the name was probably descriptive.

At the far end of the track across The Sands (just before the exit gate) there is a sign indicating an optional permissive route to the top of The Knoll.



An interesting diversion for the energetic is to climb the steep-sided Knoll which has been used since pre-historic times for ritual and celebratory occasions. The view from the Knoll opens out over the Severn Vale. Towards the south-west the expanse of Lower Woods can be seen beyond segments of Inglestone and Hawkesbury commons, whilst to the north the scarp edge continues around, sheltering Hillesley, Alderley and Wotton-under-Edge.



Back at track level again, to the right is a pond which is the remnant of a mediaeval series of fishponds. The farm beyond the pond is Court Farm

and it was from here that offenders in past times might be 'frog-marched' (our guess!) along Frog Lane to the top of Gallows Hill which was on the elevated area at the top of Coldchange Hill. The right of maintaining a private gallows (and of hanging thereon those felons caught & tried in their jurisdiction) was often granted to Lords of the Manor. In the 'hundred of 'Grimbaldesesse' these included Hawkesbury, Horton, Wickwar, & Alderley.

Pass through the gate at the end of The Sands and immediately in front of you is St Mary's Church. But before entering the churchyard, walk along the road to the left a little way and you will see in the field on your left two large walnut trees (there were three and a small replacement can be seen to their left).



This field was the site of Hawkesbury Manor House. Abandonment of the manor house was soon after 1770 when Amelia, the wife of Sir Charles Jenkinson, died, soon after the birth of their first and only son, later Lord Liverpool, prime minister 1812-1821.

The only pictorial evidence so far discovered of the manor house site is of the doorway between the manor house and church as a sketch and also in an early photograph, probably taken around 1900, and again in a painting from 1885.

However there is another sad tale which may or may not be related to the final abandonment of the Manor House and runs thus.

The Paston - Jenkinson legend described in 1845 by one R.W. Huntley runs as follows:

“A melancholy accident is said to have occurred there something more than a century ago, in consequence of which the family deserted it, and it has subsequently been taken down. Sir Robert Jenkinson, then in possession of Hawkesbury, learnt that his favourite daughter had admitted the addresses of Mr Paston, lord of the adjoining parish of Horton, who was a strict communicant of the Church of Rome, and a warm adherent of the royal line of Stuart, while Sir Robert was a firm supporter of the House of Hanover, and a determined Protestant: he therefore took the earliest occasion, when Mr Paston visited at Hawkesbury, of dismissing him as a suitor, and forbidding him his house. The young lover, on leaving the place, cast a look towards the building and perceived the lady at an upper window;

he kissed his hand as a parting salute; when she, leaning forward to return it, fell together with a part of the window, which was extremely ancient, into the court-yard below, and perished in the sight of her father, who was also a witness of the catastrophe.”

Having mused on this sad story, retrace your steps and have a look at Church Farm House (1506) on your right.



Today, church houses might be considered the forgotten buildings of architectural, church and parish history. Few remain in recognizable form, those that do being mainly in the West Country, particularly in Devon and Somerset. In other cases surviving examples may go unrecognised for what they once were. Gloucestershire had its fair share of church houses and one of the best still to survive is that at Hawkesbury Church Farm.

For a period of about two hundred years from the mid 15th to the early 17thC the most important building in a

community after the parish church was the church house. It provided a venue for those secular events and entertainments which, by the middle of the 15thC, were considered by church authorities inappropriate for the nave of the church.

Responsibility for maintaining the fabric of the nave fell on the parishioners and traditionally money for this had been raised by holding the so-called Church Ales within the church or churchyard. These were great occasions of eating, drinking and merry-making when parishioners would gather, often with visitors from neighbouring parishes, to spend their money.

As a result of the growing disapproval by the church hierarchy it became necessary for parishioners to find a ‘place of their own’; so church houses came into being. Most church houses were built with a large upper room open to the rafters, often having a separate entrance with an external staircase.

The fireplace for baking, and the brewing areas, would be downstairs. In addition the Hawkesbury church house also stored corn & grain to be sold for church funds and ‘tymbre & other necessaries’ things for repairing the church fabric. It also served, when necessary, as a ‘dwelling house for

the pore men of the seid p’ishe’. A multi-purpose building.

Time now to visit The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, tranquilly located beneath the historic Knoll and one of the highlights of this walk.

It’s worth taking a walk around the old graveyard and (if it is open) at the beautiful simple interior of the church.



The present St. Mary's Church, of Norman origins, was built on the site of an earlier Saxon church which probably had a thatched roof and consisted of a single stone built hall with outbuildings to house the clergy. One of its illustrious incumbents was Wulfstan who was born around 1008 and who eventually became prior of Worcester Cathedral. He was canonized in 1203 and his remains were reinterred in Worcester Cathedral in the presence of King Henry III. He allegedly became a vegetarian after over-indulging on a well-fattened goose and is noted for

his attempts to stop the slave trade between Britain and Ireland. Most of the more elaborate memorial tablets in the church are to members of the Jenkinson family who were Lords Of the Manor from 1618 until recently.

The present church consists of a chancel with a south chapel, a nave with south aisle, a tower to the west, north and south porches with chambers over both porches. From east to west the length is 120 feet (36.5m) with a width of 70 feet (21.3m) including the two porches.

It was described by Arthur Mee in his book on Gloucestershire as “The churchyard filled with hoary altar tombs, the fine topiary hedge of clipped yews, which encompassed them on three sides and is shaped into 34 arches, the old vicarage with its many gables, and the farm buildings about it, make a memorable group”.

Wulfstan and the Roasted Goose

The duration of Wulfstan's stay at Hawkesbury is uncertain, but in William of Malmesbury's Vita Wulfstani, written in about 1125, is related the incident of a roasting goose:

“Bishop Brihtheah, as I have told you, had advanced him [Wulfstan] from minor orders to the priesthood, and thereon had committed to him the church of Hawkesbury. Wulfstan was then barely come to manhood, yet he did not give thought to the pleasures of the world as a

young man might. Meanwhile he did not altogether eschew savoury meats, and one day he ordered a goose to be roasted.

The fowl was spitted and roasting, carefully tended by the scullion. In the heat of the fire the dripping began to run from it. Some of the servants were putting hot coals under. Some were making ready the sauce. The savoury smell made their mouths run with water; they could not refrain from saying how good it was. Even Wulfstan was ensnared, and his soul melted in delight, as it were foretasting the goose.

And now the table was all but laid, when he and his steward were called forth from the house on a business which came untimely but could not be delayed. So he went empty away, and began to find fault in his lust of a moment. How weak was the flesh that could so be tempted to evil. The pleasure passed quickly away: the sin remained. He exacted from himself this penalty: that he should pay for the inordinate desire of one hour by perpetual abstinence. He made a vow, and kept it, that he would never again eat that kind of food.”

After leaving Hawkesbury, Wulfstan returns to Worcester, later becoming schoolmaster, precentor, sacristan, prior, and eventually bishop.

Turn left out of the churchyard, (or, if not visiting the church, turn right along the

road) with Church Farm House on your right to the junction (220 yds, 200 m).

At this point you may wish to take a short (175yds/150m) deviation by following the road bearing right at the junction to have a look at Pound Farm on the left and Court Farm on the right. The big ash tree on the right by the entrance to Court Farm is the site of the old pound (for ‘empounding’ straying animals). Court Farm as the name implies was where wrongdoers were tried and, if sufficiently heinous a crime (like stealing a sheep!), the accused was taken along Frog Lane to Gallows Hill.



If you have taken this detour, return to the junction and turn right, signposted to Horton, (a left turn if you have omitted the deviation!). We now have a stretch of minor road walking but there are good views of the Cotswold escarpment to the left and of open fields and Hawkesbury Common and Lower Woods Nature Reserve to the right The road dips and twists for 0.6

miles (1km) until you arrive at Upper Chalkley Farm on the right.



There are still some remnants of medieval fish ponds here and you can glimpse one next to the road just after the farmhouse.

Fishponds, designed for the breeding and stocking of fresh-water fish, were a normal feature of most manorial estates during the Middle Ages, like dovecotes and rabbit warrens they seem to have been a manorial privilege and an important status symbol providing a readily obtainable alternative to red meat for the lord's dining table during Lent and other times.

Privately owned, they were usually sited close to the domestic buildings of the manor where there was suitable drainage. Most fishponds were of simple construction, consisting of two or three small rectangular flat-bottomed basins formed by damming an existing watercourse. A series of sluices would have controlled the flow

of water from the supplying stream to the individual ponds. Sometimes, as at Upper Chalkley, an additional leat was built which would have carried floodwater around the ponds.

Continue for a further 975 yds (900m) until you arrive at Horton Church and Horton Court. The attractive façade of Horton Court has been used in a number of films including Poldark and Wolf Hall. It has been recently renovated by the National Trust and the Norman Hall, Tudor Ambulatory and much of the gardens are now open to the public at certain times. (it is well worth a visit so check <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/place-pages/180/pages/opening-times-calendar> for opening times)

Horton Court which is a Grade I listed building includes a rare 12th Century Norman Hall and the hall in the main house has been dated to between 1482 and 1519 by analysing tree rings in the timbers.



The house was rebuilt by Rev. William Knight in about 1521 and still contains a 1520s fireplace, a survivor from the period when the house underwent significant development.

Between 1519 and 1521 Rev. Knight (who was later sent to Rome by Henry VIII to negotiate his divorce from Catherine of Aragon) expanded the house, adding a new well-glazed east façade, but also incorporating much of the original historic buildings, which have left Horton Court with a mix of styles and periods.

The final development of the house came in the early 1920s when the owner - restoring the house which had lain empty during World War I - built inward into the courtyard, making some parts of the house quite dark.

Horton Court was bought in 1937 by Hilda Wills, a daughter of the Bristol tobacco family, who donated it to the National Trust in 1946.

The Anglican church of St James the Elder is also a Grade I listed building,



originally built in the twelfth century and rebuilt in the fourteenth century, with alterations in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and restorations in 1865.

Now continue along the road for a 325yds/300m **ignoring the first kissing gate** on the left (marked 'Monarch's Way/ Court To Fort') until you reach a gate and stile with footpath sign on the left.



Pass over this stile and bear slightly left up the hill a short distance to the kissing gate marked 'Cotswold Way/ Court To Fort' leading into a wooded area.



A short zig-zag up the path through the trees takes you to a kissing gate at the top. Follow along the field edge on the right with extensive and

outstanding views across the Severn Vale. After 215yds/200m or so the path leads into the National Trust managed area of Horton Camp.



The earthworks are known locally as 'The Roman Camp' but is really an Iron Age hillfort. It covers 4.4 hectares on the edge of the escarpment, which forms a natural defence. The remainder of the area is surrounded by a double rampart and ditches rising to 4m. The outer rampart is less sharp than the inner, and appears either to be unfinished, or to have been deliberately demolished.

The Camp has another significant historical connection in that 1471 saw Edward IV driven into exile in Flanders, and Henry VI resumes the throne.

Edward IV returns and defeats Lancastrian forces at Barnet; meanwhile Margaret, wife of Henry VI, raises forces in the south-west and marches to Bristol. In response,

Edward advances to Malmesbury, and on Thursday 2nd May passes through Sherston and Badminton, and occupies the Roman camp. The opposing armies finally meet at Tewkesbury, where Margaret's forces are defeated. Henry VI is later murdered in the Tower of London and Edward is restored.

After viewing the earthworks, you could make a short diversion to the interesting Millennium Owl and Swallow Tower and view from afar the attractive gardens and Widdenhill House (originally gutted by fire in 1928) plus splendid views.



Pass through the kissing gate at the far side of the earthworks and take a look at the tower and view before retracing your steps to the earthworks.



The way-marked route at the right hand edge of the mounds is stepped and very steep. Take the easier route diagonally up the ridge and down the other side. Exit the Camp by the kissing gate in the right hand corner of the field. Turn left along the road known as Highfield Lane



You are now on the high plateau and views from here are extensive across the Severn Vale. You can see both Severn Bridges and the mountains of South Wales.

Continue along Highfield Lane for about 450yds (415m) up the incline to the corner where the lane bears left and take the **footpath on the left steeply down through the trees way-marked Monarch's Way.**



Continue down this attractive path for about 300yds (275m) to a path junction where you turn right.



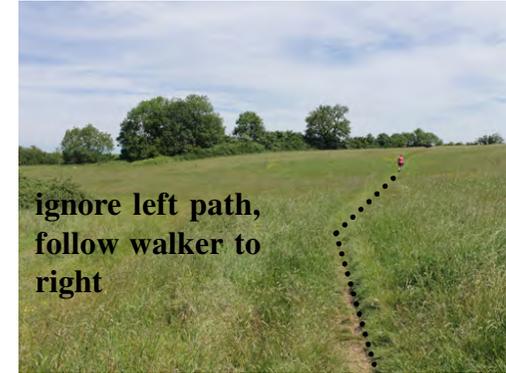
This is now the Cotswold Way which we follow for most of the remainder of the walk. The large beeches in this part of the wood are ancient and spectacular and the garlic flowers in spring are equally so.



The path leaves the wood through a kissing gate with a commemorative plaque on the post naming the wood "Jane's Magic Wood". A well deserved epithet!



Follow Cotswold Way signs through attractive open countryside for about 350 yards (320m) where the path bears right (**ignore left path**) and heads diagonally across the open field.



Turn left along the path running next to the hedgeline and parallel to the road for about 600 yds (540m)

This is now both the Cotswold Way and the Monarch's Way, the latter so named in memory of the escape route of Charles II and his supporters who allegedly passed through Hawkesbury parish.

It is reported that: 'after the battle of Worcester, on 3rd September 1651, many of the fleeing Royalist troops passed this way, and that the skeleton of a Highlander, still clutching his claymore, had been found in Lower Woods, and that quantities of arms of the period, some richly wrought, have been discovered in the thatch of old houses'. This refers to events in the Civil War (1643-51).

The Monarch's Way/Cotswold Way now joins the yellow dust track known as Bath Lane (bridle way sign) where you turn left along the track.



Stay on this yellow track until you see footpath signs in the hedge on the left. **Ignore these but shortly after this, turn right along the clear track running along the right hand side of the next hedge** (you will have passed two right hand hedges running at right angles to the track before this).



This leads you through a kissing gate into the sports field. Go diagonally left across the field to the right of the pavilion and through the small grove of trees to another kissing gate where you turn left.

This leads you into the car park of The Beaufort Arms (which is well worth a visit as is The Fox Inn across the road to the right!), turn left and cross over the road to return to the Village Hall.

Walk devised by Gef Lucena

Photos: Gef & Genny Lucena

Map: Terry Truebody

Route description checker: Liz Howard

The Hawkesbury Upton Rights of Way Group would like to dedicate this walk to the memory of the late Jill Martin who provided the historical notes,

Also thanks to Barrie Hope and the Hawkesbury Historical Society for additional information and assistance

The Hawkesbury Upton Rights of Way Group has published a booklet of 10 local walks which is available in printed form from local outlets or downloadable from the village website as below.

<http://www.hawkesburyupton.com/index.html> (see rights of way section for downloadable versions of our **10 Walks Around Hawkesbury**)

