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15. Hailes and Beckbury Camp

This scenic walk combined with history takes you from Hayles Fruit Farm where there are refreshments and the opportunity to pick fruit in season or purchase items from the farm shop.

Ascend the escarpment along a track originally built by Cistercian monks before heading towards Beckbury Camp where little is known about the monument.

The fields you pass through are mainly pasture, unchanged for decades.

Distance:
3.5 miles or 5.6 km.

Duration:
2¼ hrs

Difficulty:
Moderate, some steep sections and two stiles.

Public transport:
No. 606 (Cheltenham - Chipping Campden) Bus stop 1 mile from start or 0.5 miles to point 4. (Visit www.travelinesw.com).

Start/Finish:
Grid reference SP 053/298 (OS Explorer sheet OL45)
Postcode GL54 5PB

Refreshments:
Hayles Fruit Farm Tearoom.

Parking
Hayles Fruit Farm - £2.50 fee redeemable against farmshop or tearoom purchase, payable at shop. Please ensure you comply otherwise future walkers could lose this facility.

Leave via the entrance to the fruit farm and follow the lane back to the bend in the road. Turn right up the Cotswold Way following the bridleway along the stone track. You reach a Cotswold Way finger post pointing to your left. **1** Go through the gate and follow the path across the field to a field gate in the far top corner. Continue

across the next field, through another field gate and follow the path towards a group of trees on the skyline by Beckbury Camp.

Beckbury Camp monument sits on the edge of a hillfort with two sides defined by the natural escarpment. A C19 limestone built monument is also known as 'Cromwell's Seat' which allegedly marks the spot where Thomas Cromwell watched Hailes Abbey burn following the dissolution.

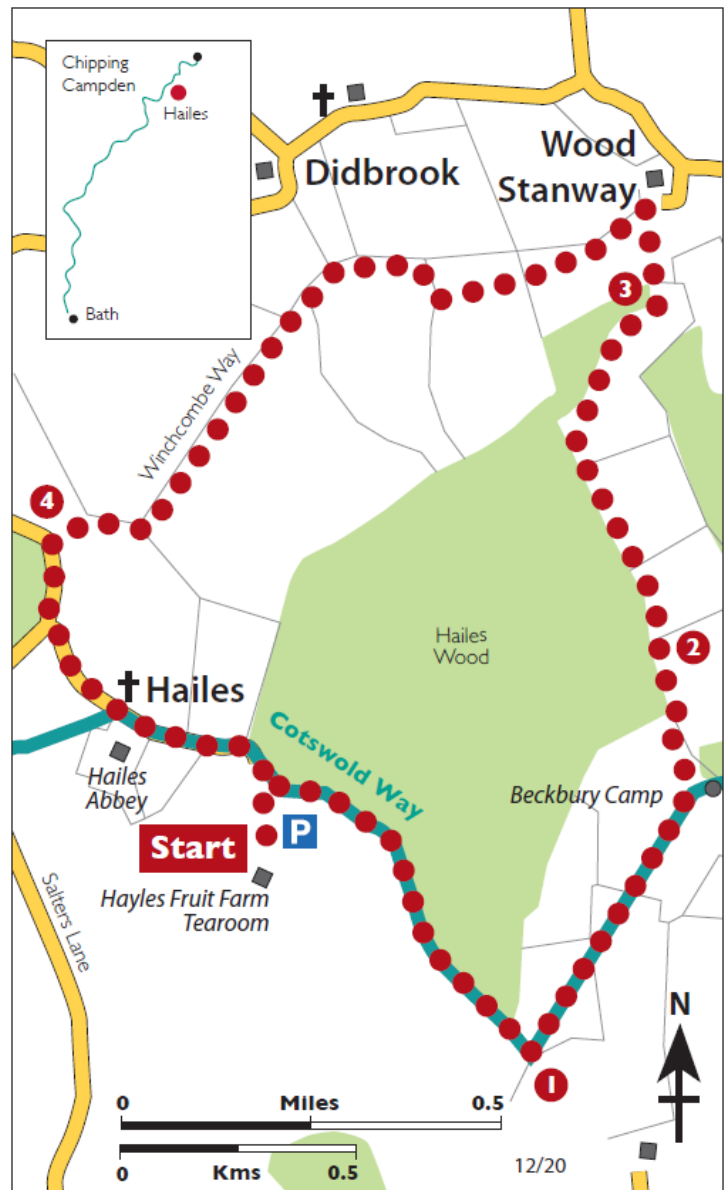
To visit the memorial follow the path up through the trees before retracing your footsteps to the waymarker post. (There is no more ascent now).

Alternatively, just before the path steeply climbs through the trees, turn left by the waymarker post and follow the fence line above you on the right to the end of the field where a stile is situated in the right hand corner. **2**

Cross the stile and turn left, to follow the wood on your left down to a stile. Cross and follow the edge of the wood through two fields to another stile. Continue following the edge of the wood to the bottom where the path bears left to reach a field gate and gate. The hamlet of Wood Stanway is ahead of you. **3**

Continue down the field to the hedge line in front of you before turning left. Follow the Winchcombe Way path through a gate situated in the centre of the field before heading for a field gate on the opposite side of the field.

Go through the field gate and turn right to the corner of the field. Turn left and follow the right hand field boundary to the far side and pass through two wooden gates in quick succession. Continue straight ahead to follow the wide path until you reach a lane. **4**



Turn left and follow the lane to a T-junction. Turn left along the lane to Hailes church and the abbey opposite.

Hailes church on your left predates the abbey by half a century. This C12 church contains C13 wall paintings and was used as a place of worship for visitors and pilgrims to the abbey. Commoners were not allowed to use the main church of Hailes Abbey. Note the decorative floor tiles which came from the Abbey after the Dissolution of the Monasteries

Hailes Abbey on the opposite side of the lane was founded in 1246 and given to the Cistercian order. Pilgrims would travel far to visit Hailes Abbey where it was alleged a phial of Christ's blood was held. (Scams were going on in the Middle Ages). On Christmas Eve 1539 the abbey closed when the monks signed the surrender deeds.

Continue ahead along the lane back to the fruit farm for some well earned refreshments.

Points of Interest



Hailes Abbey (Ruins)

A former Cistercian abbey, it was founded in 1246 as a daughter establishment of Beaulieu Abbey. The abbey was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1539. You can walk around the ruins, visit the small museum and buy hot/cold drinks in the shop.

[For more information visit: english-heritage.org.uk](http://english-heritage.org.uk) (opens in a new window)



The pilgrims who financed this imposing abbey came in search of the renowned relic, 'the Holy Blood of Hailes.' Allegedly a phial of Christ's own blood, this was denounced at the Reformation as actually being honey coloured with saffron.

Hailes Church

Is a small country chapel where you can view wall-paintings of saints, coats of arms and hunting scenes.

[For more information visit: Wasleys English Churches - Cotswolds](#) (opens in a new window)

Beckbury Camp

C19 limestone monument sits on the edge of a hillfort. Also known as 'Cromwell's Seat' it allegedly marks the spot where Thomas Cromwell watched Hailes Abbey burn following the dissolution.

The Cotswold Way National Trail is managed and maintained by Cotswolds National Landscape and the Cotswolds Voluntary Wardens
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk



Photo credits: Hailes Abbey Ruins (c) Jo Siobhan Bromley, August 2021