

MENDIP RING LEG 2.b. KEINTON MANDEVILLE – SUTTON. 8 MILES.

Start Point Grid Ref. ST552309

1. As you emerge from Cotton's Lane onto the B3153 take the lane opposite (Babcary Lane) follow this until you reach the A37 cross over this busy road into Westover Lane, pass two paths on your right at the next junction turn left then follow the Macmillan way to the right, take the next turn left following this path all the way back to reach the B3153, turn right along the road taking the next turn on the left into East Lydford.
2. Continue to the bottom of the road and into the footpath, follow the path round to the right over the stream to follow the river on your left cross over the bridge, turn right and follow the river through five fields, once in the fifth field go half left aiming for the dogleg in the hedge on your right follow this to reach a gate, go through this following an enclosed path round the farm and down the drive to reach the road.
3. Turn left along the road, where the road bends to the left you will find a barrier across a track on your right, turn right through this and follow the track until you reach a wood, through the gate on your left then follow the edge of the wood across the field to reach another track, turn left, cross the next field to a gate at the bottom through this turn right and follow this path over Boulter's Bridge and onto the concrete farm track follow this out to a road, continue straight ahead through the hamlet of Sutton until you reach the A371

Points of Historical Interest

SECTION 1

Down Babcary Lane and before the footbridge over the railway line, the walk is joined for a short distance by the Macmillan Way West which was opened in 2001. The original Macmillan Way opened in 1999 and is a 290 mile coast-to-coast path from Boston in Lincolnshire to Abbotsbury in Dorset. It is an independent organisation supporting Cancer Relief.

The track continues over the Great Western Railway line. The advent of the railways from the mid-19th century saw the beginning of the end for the Turnpike Trusts. This link between Castle Cary and Charlton Mackrell ran through the south of Lydford parish. It was opened in 1906 and closed in 1962.

The Fosse Way was the major road established by the Romans soon after the invasion in 43. Initially used for the movement of troops, the road ran from Exeter to Lincoln.

From Westover Lane, turning north, the first stretch of this track presently called Lydford Lane, was called Cross Keys or West Field Drove in 1838. Rubbery Farm to the right of the track takes its name from Rowborough, a common pasture field. There were buildings on the site before 1688.

Toy Farm is a recent name. The father of the present owner bought the property in 1953. Having only one chicken and one sow at the time, it suited his sense of humour to call his new home 'Toy Farm'.

East Lydford is the original Lydford village. This earliest settlement may have been deserted because of flooding from the river Brue. Church Farm, Manor Farm and Home Farm are all in Church Lane, as are the Old Rectory and the Old School House. West Lane, so called in 1544, runs west from Church Lane to the Fosse Way. In 1086 Glastonbury Abbey held the Manor. In 1443 it became part of the Duchy of Cornwall (Leg 6). The name Waldegrave (Legs 7 & 8) appears in the 16th century. East and West Lydford were amalgamated in 1933.

The church of St Mary the Virgin is through an unmarked gate next to the parish notice boards on the left in Church Lane. It has been privately owned since 1993. Consecrated in 1866, it was designed by Benjamin Ferrey in a 14th century style. The tablets with Latin inscriptions in the church wall are not antiquities; the clergyman responsible for the building work brought them back illicitly from a holiday in Rome. The church was last used for regular worship in 1987. It is now a Grade II Listed building At Risk. It is designated as a "dangerous structure".

On the right at the top of Church Lane are the remains of the medieval church of St Peter. Part of the tumbled churchyard wall and a few scattered gravestones mark the site.

SECTION 2

The walk follows below the line of Eastfield Lane, probably the northern boundary of the medieval east field of the village. This clay vale which continues to the north of Lamyatt Beacon (Leg 3) is predominately a dairy farming area particularly associated with that other Somerset staple, Cheddar Cheese.

SECTION 3

Near Wake's Covert the walk joins the Monarchs Way, a long distance route of 610 miles from the Midlands, which follows the escape route of Charles II after the Battle of Worcester in 1651. This path, still a proper road in 1884, follows on to Sutton where the Monarch's Way turns south towards Castle Cary and the coast.

N B Charles, unable to escape from Charmouth, turned east along the coast and eventually left England from Shoreham in Sussex.

Bolter's Bridge is a Scheduled Monument and appears in the Somerset Historic Environment Record as follows 'Footbridge spanning River Alham. Of medieval origin. Random laid lias rubble. Four segmental-pointed archways, rough hewn voissiors, slab impostes; no parapets. Narrow cobbled causeway. Three cutwaters upstream; short section of splayed rubble wall to north-east corner supporting the bank. Appears virtually unaltered'.

In the fields on the right, below Lower Sutton Farm, is an archaeological site. Described as a Roman settlement, a small excavation in the 1970's revealed building debris and pottery dating from the Romano-British period through to the medieval. It is now a Scheduled Monument.

Approaching Sutton the light coloured wedge shaped building at 1.00 o'clock is a pet food processing factory at Castle Cary. Looking back from the rising ground, the Tor is still visible. To the north is the mast of the Mendip Transmitter above Wells.

Sutton is a shrunken village; the Day and Masters map of 1803 shows it as considerably larger than it is today.

In Sutton there is a Victorian letter box in the barn wall to the right.