



Walks in South Oxfordshire

Wittenham Clumps from Dorchester on Thames

A walk full of historical interest and spectacular views, starting from Dorchester on Thames, crossing the river to Wittenham Clumps and back via a farm shop and cafe. If you prefer, you can also do this walk starting from Wittenham Clumps car park.

Useful Information

- 5 miles / 8km circular (retracing some parts of the route)
- Start point and parking: Dorchester-on-Thames Bridge End free parking and toilets. OX10 7JT (Free).

Or Wittenham Clumps free parking, Sires Hill, Little Wittenham OX14 4QZ (note it is a small car park & can be busy).
- What3words:
Dorchester:///tributes.servants.ducks -
Wittenham:///covertly.according.animal
- OS Explorer Maps: 170
- Public Transport: Dorchester is on the bus route Wallingford to/from Oxford.
- Mostly rough ground, a number of gates and one steep hill. Can be very muddy and river prone to flooding after extensive rain. Livestock may be present.
- Refreshments: Number of pubs in Dorchester, plus the Museum Tea Room (Apr-Sep), and the Snug Café and farm shop on-route - [Snug @ Bishop's Court Farm, Dorchester on Thames, Oxfordshire](#). The Plough at Long Wittenham.
- GPX: file available to download from our website

Route Directions

- 1) Walk along Bridge End (past the toilets). Opposite St Birius church walk down Wittenham Lane and footpath (signposted to the river). At the end of the lane take the path signed Thames Path.
- 2) At the end of the fence/hedge line turn right (sign posted Snug café and farm shop). On your left are mounds known as Dyke Hills, once an Iron Age settlement. Continue along this path between hedges until you reach a metal gate onto an open field. Go through the gate, keep the fence close to your left as you head for the bridge over the river.
- 3) Go over the bridge and the next two bridges to reach St Peters Church - which is well worth a look, see points of interest below. Go through a gate opposite St Peter's and take the right path up the hill to the top of Wittenham Clumps.
- 4) At the top of this hill, called Round Hill, there are spectacular views of Berkshire and Oxfordshire, and a viewing plaque pointing out places of interest in the distance. Walk 180 degrees of Round Hill in a clockwise direction. When you can see the other clump, walk down and up to it. This is Castle Hill and was the site of an iron age hill fort. Keeping the woods on

your left, walk around the top until you reach a large stone boulder (the back of the boulder has the 'Poem Tree' transcribed from graffiti on a beech tree).

- 5) Turn right and follow the path down the hill. Go through a metal gate at the bottom of the hill through trees to the edge of a field. Follow the left edge of the field to an open metal gate on your left and turn left. Head down the hill and halfway up the opposite hill to take a gravel track on your right. The gravel track meanders through woodland and at a T junction of paths turn left. Go through a wooden gate which leads to Church Common.
- 6) Walk diagonally across the field back towards St Peters Church. Go through the gate, turn right and retrace your steps along the track and across the three bridges over the River Thames. As you exit the third bridge turn sharp left down to the river. Turn right along the river to Day's lock.
- 7) From the lock turn right across the field to rejoin the path you came along earlier. Follow signs to the Snug café and farm shop.
- 8) When you are ready, follow the track from the café to the road. Turn right and walk through the village back to the parking at Bridge End. You may wish to detour to see the impressive Abbey, see points of interest below.

Points of Interest

- Dorchester Abbey is a significant historic building, having been a place of worship, witness and pilgrimage for more than a millennium. It has a unique C13th sculptural stained glass Jesse Window, an C11th lead font and C14th wall paintings. A Museum and Tea Room is open from April to September. Tours available [Dorchester Abbey \(dorchester-abbey.org.uk\)](http://dorchester-abbey.org.uk)
- St Peter's Church original tower dates back to 14th Century with the impressive private Grade II listed building next door. The church was extensively rebuilt in 1862 by Rector John Hilliard. The interior features a carved oak pulpit dated to 1634. The oldest historic feature is the font, which dates to the 15th century. For more information, see [Little Wittenham, St Peter's Church, History & Photos \(britainexpress.com\)](http://britainexpress.com)
- Earth Trust - For 40 years Earth Trust has been providing and championing accessible natural green space and running inspiring, award-winning programs to help people connect with nature and the environment. [Explore Earth Trust - Earth Trust](http://earthtrust.org.uk)
- Wittenham Clumps are made up of Round Hill and Castle Hill where the most dominant feature is an old age hill fort. The clump of beech trees that crown the hills which, dating back at least 300 years, are the oldest known planted hilltop beeches in England. [The story of the Wittenham Clumps - Earth Trust](http://earthtrust.org.uk)
- Throughout his career as an artist, Paul Nash (1889-1946) had a special affinity for The Wittenham Clumps. [The Paul Nash and the Wittenham Clumps Website \(nashclumps.org\)](http://nashclumps.org)



Map

