

# Miles Without Stiles

## Brockhampton and Sevenhampton



A pleasant short walk in the upper Coln valley, with an optional extra loop to Sevenhampton church. The route is mostly on lanes and tracks, so good in all weather.

**Distance:** 5.5km/3 miles with an up and down of 130 m/430 ft.

Additional leg 1.6km/1 mile with an up and down of 24 m/80 ft

**Time:** 1½ hours plus optional leg 1 hour.

**Start:** Brockhampton, near Winchcombe: at the Craven Arms pub (park with permission) or on the roadside SP035/223

Refreshments and parking for customers at the Craven Arms

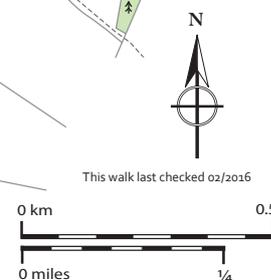
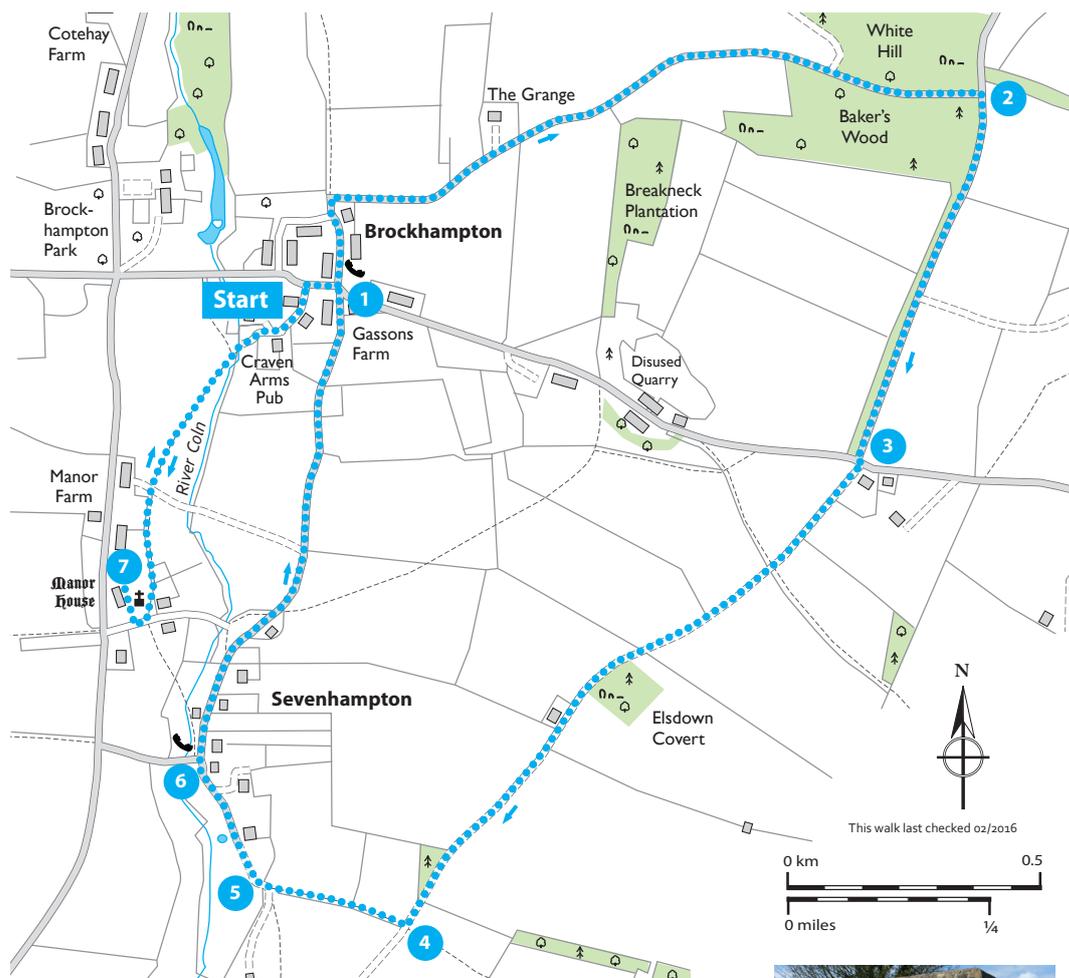
### Route:

From the pub take the lane back to the village road and turn right to reach the cross-roads with a phone box **1**.

Here turn left passing the village hall and follow the lane out of the village to a T-Junction **2** (signed Andoversford and Stow).

Turn right and walk up the road to another T-Junction **3** at the top of the hill. That's your climbing finished.

Cross the road and take the ancient drovers' track ahead. The views are extensive. After passing a barn conversion with a mouldering phone box (your half way point) the track descends and the surface gets rocky, worn by centuries of feet and hooves. After



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a small wood on the right look out for a bridleyway sign pointing right into a grass field **4**.

Take the grassy path downhill across three fields to meet a wide track **5**.

Follow the track downhill past houses to a road junction with a telephone box, overlooking a ford on the left **6**. Go straight ahead along the narrow lane with views of both

villages back to point **1**. Turn left and left again to your start point.

**The optional extra:** From the pub turn left down the lane past the old brewery, onto a path beside a small stream that soon crosses the River Coln. Beyond the bridge the grass can be waterlogged after rain so take care.



Now bear left across the grass, rising gently roughly in line with overhead cables towards a farm. There may be chickens.

Go through two gates, into the churchyard and round to the front of the church **7**. After visiting the church you go back the way you came.

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### An ancient track that became a Salt Way



Today you will be walking on part of an old British track used for many years by men and horses carrying salt from Droitwich in Worcestershire across the

Cotswolds to Lechlade and the River Thames for transport by boat to London.

For thousands of years before fridges were invented salt's great value was to preserve meat. It was even used as a currency to pay for goods or services. The Romans called it "salaria," a word that became "salary" in English.

In many countries salt was taxed, like tobacco. The salt tax was dropped in Britain 100 years ago, but stayed in force in France and Italy until after World War 2. You will still see S signs outside some Italian shops that were licensed to sell salt and tobacco.

But the road you walk is also part of a network of old highways used by nomads, drovers and carriers since prehistoric times.

The very word "highway" is a reminder that, in the millennia before turnpikes and tarmac, travellers found safety and better footing on the hills and away from the marshes and dangerous woodlands in the valley.



*A Sevenhampton resident cheerfully takes on the job of rebuilding the dry stone wall outside her house.*



*If you can manage one stile, this sign at point 6 offers a pretty path back to the start via the church.*



### The Black Death and a memorial to Goldie

Like so many English Norman churches, Saint Mary's has grown over the centuries. The original Norman church is now the nave, and in the early 1400s the chancel was added and an east window inserted. The tower was built in 1497 with a bequest of 100 shillings from a wool merchant John Camber, who is buried here.

During the Black Death those who died were buried on the north side of the church, and the north door and windows were blocked up against possible infection.

In 1995 a new memorial window added a homely touch to the church's stained glass.

