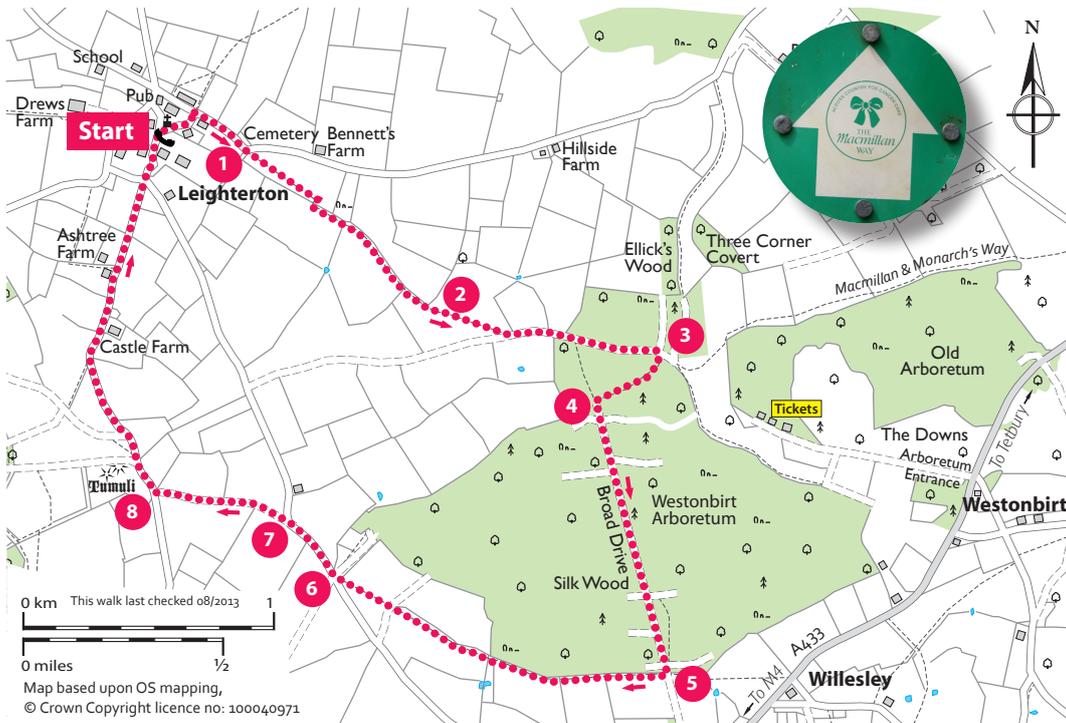


Walks With Stiles

Westonbirt Arboretum



This pleasant walk over Gloucestershire farmland includes a public path through the main drive of Silk Wood in the National Arboretum, which is worth a visit at any time of year.



Explorers please note

If you wish to explore off Broad Drive you should leave this route at **3**.

Walk along the valley to the Forestry Commission's ticket office and pay for access to the whole arboretum.

Better perhaps, come back another day to the main entrance on the A433 where there are displays, maps, parking, restaurant and toilets.

For further information visit: www.forestry.gov.uk/westonbirt

Distance: 7.8 km/4¾ miles with a gentle down and an up of 85m/278ft, and a few stone stiles.

Time: 2 hours (more if you dawdle in the arboretum).

Start: Leighterton, on a minor road signed from Westonbirt on the A433 3 miles SW of Tetbury. Park considerately in The Street, between the church and the bus stop. ST 824910 or satnav: GL8 8UY.

Refreshments: Royal Oak at Leighterton.

Route: With the church on your L take the narrow walled lane that winds past houses to a T-junction. Turn R along the lane out of the village past the cemetery.

Where the road turns L **1** go through a gate into the

field ahead and follow the path, which gradually curves towards the wall on the R. Go over the stone stile and carry on alongside the wall (now on your L) gently downhill over two more stone stiles.

Where the wall turns L **2** take a diagonal line to your L downhill across the grass (the path may be faint) leading to a wooden stile in the shallow valley. Walk ahead along the valley through a metal gate onto a wide woodland track. Carry on for 400m, and where the track bears L take the path ahead to a wide gate with a "Welcome to Westonbirt Arboretum" sign leading out to a grassy area **3**.

Go through the gate and immediately turn R over

a V-stile with steps. You'll see a green Macmillan Way sign. Bear R and climb into the woods on a winding path (sometimes faint) following the green signs. At a go-degree L-turn sign you drop down out of the wood, cross a track and go up the metalled drive opposite **4**.

This is Broad Drive, the showpiece of the arboretum, which slices through Silk Wood for 1,100m. Walk to the end (ignoring all L and R turns) and leave the wood through the gates ahead **5**.

Immediately turn R over a crumbly stone stile and follow the yellow arrows through a series of kissing gates in fields alongside the wood. You'll soon pass the telltale signs of a badgers' sett on the R. Do not disturb!

(If you meet some low wire fencing in the fields, you can cross safely by holding the blue plastic sleeve that protects you from the mild electric shock which keeps the cattle in place.)

After the third kissing gate, where the wood boundary turns R, go straight ahead over a low stone stile with a hedge on your R to reach another kissing gate. Cross the track and head across the field to a tall pine tree in the corner. It leads you onto a metalled road **6**.

Turn R and walk on the road for 250m. When it bears R **7** take the farm track on the L for 400m and then drop down to a quiet lane **8**, turn R and follow it for 1,500m to the village. Soon after the duck pond you're back at the start.

A tree isn't just for Christmas



The arboretum is at its busiest for the magnificent autumnal colours and again during the Christmas spectacular. But Westonbirt has much more to offer visitors throughout the year.

The 16,000 trees, native and imported, make a constantly changing spectacle; and spring brings a procession of wild flowers, magnolia, rhododendron and azalea.

There are 17 miles of paths where you can stroll on your own, join seasonal guided walks or just sit and take in the sights and sounds of Westonbirt.

Redwings and fieldfare visit in the winter, and nuthatches, tree-creepers, tawny owls and swallows nest in the trees and outbuildings. There's a special bird viewing area in the Old Arboretum.

Every month of the year Westonbirt offers a range of special events, concerts and other activities. You'll find them all in the action-packed calendar



Westonbirt opens at
9am to 5pm all year

Admission
from £3 to £10, depending on
what time of year you come
and how old you are.

Dogs are admitted in all areas
except the Old Arboretum.

Bored? We're never bored at Westonbirt!



The Forestry Commission offers special activities for youngsters during school holidays, like Big Bug Hunts, Tree Potions, Water World, Wooden Wonders, Trees for Time Travellers, and in late August TREEFEST— three days of woodcraft, displays, music and family fun.