

4. A Walk in the Golden Valley

Where

Chalford Valley Playing Field – Oldhills Wood (optional) – Bakers Mill – Thames and Severn Canal – Chalford High Street – Chalford Valley Playing Field

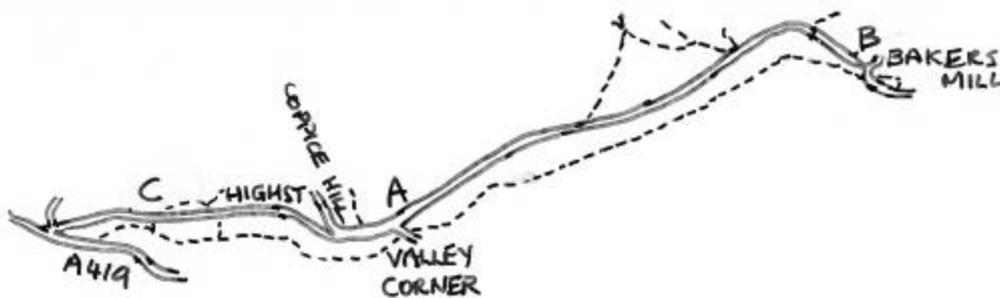
Length

About 2½ miles or shorter

About the walk

This is a level walk in the Golden Valley beyond Chalford High Street of about 2½ miles with one stile.

The route



A Begin at Valley Corner. With the playing field on your right and a steeply sloping wood on your left, walk along the road, which is usually very quiet. The wood on your left will have widely differing colours as there is a mixture of trees; I recognised hazel, yew, beech, oak and field maple but you will probably notice far more. You pass an apple orchard on your right.

[Here there is a chance to go into Oldhills Wood, wonderful at all times of the year; but the paths are very steep and so turn this into a more adventurous walk. Or ignore the bracketed section and have a level walk.]

Just before a house on your right, you can go up steep steps on your left into the wood of towering beeches and your opportunity to kick through the leaves. The path is steep and there will be a steep downhill to follow. Young knees are an advantage but, failing those, a stick and some caution will do.

At a junction of tracks, bear right. At a T junction, turn left. There is a huge hollow to your right; is this the remains of an old quarry?

When you reach the kissing gate ahead of you, turn right, without going through the gate.

Soon you reach a fence ahead with an ankle high log to hop over. Turn right, downhill, steeply at first.

Keep straight on, ignoring a left turn. You catch a glimpse of Strawberry Banks through the trees to your left. A track comes in from the right. You keep straight ahead. It becomes quite steep again.

Reaching the road through an opening in the fence, turn left.]

Continuing along the road, there is an informative notice board on the left and then you pass a well, also on your left.

B You come to Baker's Mill ahead, now a private house. At the road T junction, turn right, signposted to Frampton Mansell. The road you are on crosses a bridge and turns left. You will immediately see a red bin on your left and a footpath sign. You take this footpath and for a few yards you will be on the Thames and Severn path and the Wysis Way. Go down the steps and cross the bridge, which can be slippery.

Turn left on the path and carefully negotiate the rocky steps which take you under the road bridge you have just crossed.

You are now on the canal towpath and there is ample evidence of the structures which were required to keep the canal functioning. The first one you see is one of the locks. If you would like to know more about the engineering and industrial history of the Thames and Severn Canal, you can contact the Cotswold Canals Trust, which has some very interesting publications. **Please be aware that there are steep drops into the lock chambers of the canal and keep your children and dogs safe.**

Soon you pass a mile stone on the right, which has the mileage information missing – how has this happened? You later pass another sign which tells us that Wallbridge is 5 miles and Inglesham, where the canal reaches the River Thames, is 23¾ miles.

You reach a road. For Valley Corner turn right.

Or stay on the path, which takes you under the road to continue your waterside walk. The canal is on your left, the River Frome on your right.

Ignore the first two right turns. At the right turn signed Chalford Community Shop, turn, and go through the Red Lion car park onto the High Street.

C Cross the High Street to the Community Shop.

You can continue along the High Street, with the shop on your left, to Valley Corner.

Route description by Tessa Wood, Stroud Rambling Club

