

Little Cotswold Walks



Holy Brook Valley



RR Gordon

A series of short, circular walks around the Cotswolds
Following the Holy Brook Valley from Whiteway to The Daneway

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Book 12. Holy Brook Valley 2021 Edition
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Introduction

Inaccessible and impenetrable, the Holy Brook Valley is the last great unexplored territory in what I call the Perfect Triangle (the area of the Cotswolds which has Birdlip, Stroud and Cirencester as its corners).

Why is it undiscovered, except by the more intrepid ramblers? For the simple reason that there are no settlements in the valley, which means there are no quaint villages to attract daytrippers, no pubs (sorry!) - and not really anywhere to park. In fact, there is only one road which cuts across the valley along the half dozen miles of its length.

There are a couple of hamlets lurking on the fringes of Holy Brook Valley: Througham (pronounced *Thruffam*) and Wishanger (which starts with *Wish* not *Wiss*) at the northern end and Waterlane at the southern end – but have you heard of any of these places? Unlikely unless you live nearby.

However, the Holy Brook Valley is very interesting: in places wide & expansive and in other sections it is a collection of rambling, criss-crossing headlands and ridges.

Each walk has been hand-crafted by me, my wife Nicky and our dog Daisy. Our combined objectives were:

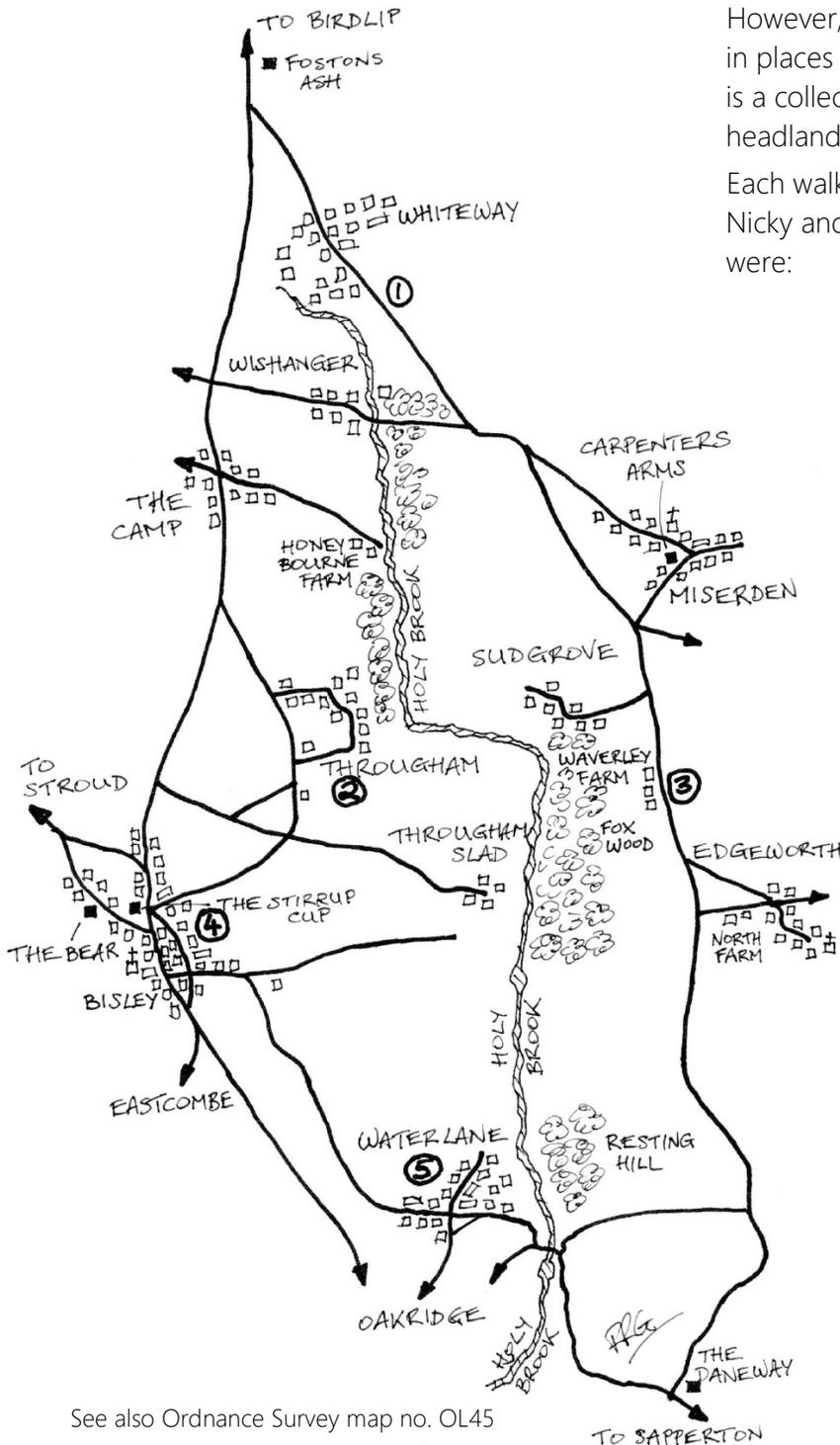
Circular walks: we've tried to come up with circular (ish) walks, but there might be some interesting side paths which we've suggested and sometimes these require returning by the same route. We aim for an hour but sometimes they end up as a couple of hours.

Some exercise for Daisy: uppermost in Daisy's mind was her desire that each walk should contain a stretch where she could be off the lead. For longer walks, I'm also aware that Daisy will need a drink so a stream, lake, horse trough is a very useful landmark on the walk.

Daisy absolutely insists that we regularly re-trace the walks in case anything has changed, but if you spot any errors then please let me know – we will both be mortified and will correct the error immediately and re-publish on www.rrgordon.com

Rod Gordon

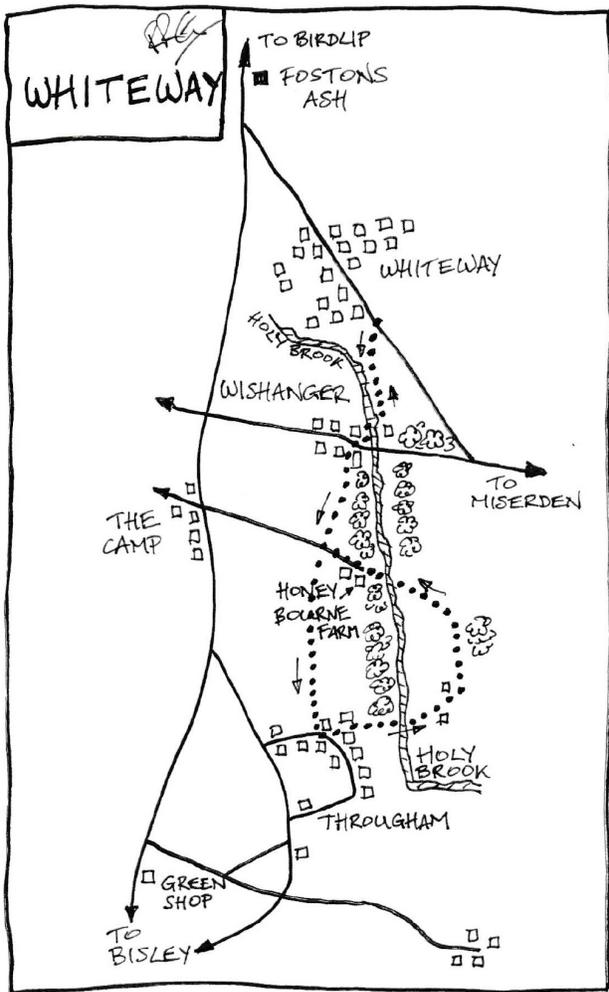
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See also Ordnance Survey map no. OL45

1. Whiteway

Rod's Rating	 <p>The closest walk to the source of Holy Brook at the northern end of the valley. This walk starts in a low, shallow valley and then leads to the edge of Throughham before looping back around.</p>
Daisy's Rating	 <p>Daisy liked this walk but now that she's getting a bit older there were a couple of stiles which she found tricky.</p>
Parking & Pub	<p>As mentioned in the Introduction, parking is difficult for all of these walks. Park wherever you can in the village of Whiteway (GL6 7ER) and then follow 'Start' instructions below.</p> <p>Whiteway is just one mile from Miserden so after the walk you could pop to:</p> <p>The Nursery at Miserden, Stroud GL6 7JA which has a lovely café http://www.miserdennursery.co.uk/ Open Tues – Sun 10-5</p> <p>The Carpenters Arms, Miserden, Stroud GL6 7JA http://www.thecarps-miserden.co.uk/</p> <p>Also, the friendly Miserden Village Shop & Post Office provides hot refreshments, snacks and drinks. https://miserdenstores.co.uk/</p>
How long did it take?	2 hours 3.8 miles/6 km 200m up/down



THE WALK - In summary:

From Whiteway to Wishanger; then along the western side of the valley to Throughham; then down into the valley and back along the eastern side – and finally returning along the first part of the walk from Wishanger to Whiteway

THE WALK - In detail:

> Start at the following point:

As you exit Whiteway in the direction of Miserden, ie going downhill, **turn right** at a Public Footpath sign which is a few yards before the 30mph/national speed limit sign next to a big tree. Walk along the right edge of the field, the houses of Whiteway on your right, over the hedge

- > Go over a rise in the field and down the other side; in the next dip, go over the fence on the **right** marked by Public Footpath sign (un-hook the interesting contraption & slide back the top bar of the fence); you are right beside Holy Brook!
- > Follow the path next to the wire fence, up and over the rise (ie diverging from stream briefly)
- > Go down slope back towards stream and then bear left heading towards a huge barn (Wishanger Manor)
- > Go to the right of the barn and out along farm drive
- > Turn right onto road (you are now in Wishanger)
- > Turn left just after the first house on the left (Yew Tree Cottage) at a public footpath sign; go up the track between the gardens and then up the right side of a field
- > At the farm buildings at the top of the rise the footpath diverges; do not turn right; you should go straight on, ie to the left of the farm buildings
- > Climb over the stone stile, go straight across the tarmac road and over a wooden stile (this road leads from The Camp to Honeycombe Farm - you will walk past the farmhouse later on the return leg)
- > Walk straight ahead along the left side of a field; the Holy Brook Valley is to your left
- > Go over a small wooden stile, turn right, walk 20 yards and then turn left to walk along the left side of another field; you are heading in the direction of Throughham and you should be able to see a couple of houses in the distance; the Holy Brook Valley is still to your left
- > Go down a small dip and up the other side, wiggle right then left, and then climb over another wooden stile & walk along left side of a field, trees on your left
- > Climb over another wooden stile and go straight across a field heading for a farmhouse on the edge of Throughham on the far side
- > Go through a metal 5 bar gate into the farmyard, turn right and go through two more metal gates, alongside a barn on your right and out through a final metal gate
- > Turn left onto a tarmac road (this is the road that loops through Throughham)
- > Walk slightly downhill and where the road bends to the right, you should fork left down a track; this is a tricky little spot where you could go wrong; there is no footpath sign because this track is shown on the OS map as an Other Route of Public Access (ie a former livestock herding track which can be used by the public)
- > Follow this track all the way down to the bottom of the valley; it is a sunken track with high banks on either side with trees & bushes; if it has recently been raining there will be water running down middle
- > Ignore Public Footpath sign to the right near the bottom of the valley
- > Go across bottom of the valley, crossing Holy Brook and go through a metal six bar gate
- > Bear left just after the gate and follow the track on the left-hand side of a rough grassy field; just before the gate at the top make sure you turn around and look at the view
- > Go through metal gate & continue straight ahead; still climbing but less steeply than before and the Holy Brook Valley is to your left
- > Watch out for a public footpath on your left and right as the path starts to flatten out; ignore the footpath on the right which heads into the woods, but turn left through a Cotswold stone wall and walk across a field to a row of trees (nice view of Throughham to left)
- > Follow the row trees, along left edge of field
- > Go through an old wooden gate and continue straight ahead, slightly downhill to the corner of a neighbouring field and then follow the edge of that field along a farm track to a metal 6 bar gate (valley still to your left)
- > Go through the gate and **turn left** to follow stony track down into the valley
- > Go through the farmyard with the grand Honeycombe farmhouse on your left and walk up the tarmac road which heads to The Camp
- > After 200-300 yards **turn right** over the stone stile which you used earlier
- > You are now re-tracing your steps, past the barns, down to Wishanger, turn right onto the road, turn left into Wishanger Manor at cattle grid, to the left of the barns, across the stream and up the rise, follow the metal fence, over the stile and back along the left edge of field

Any problems with these directions? Please email me at rod@rrgordon.com (also if you liked the walk!)

SOMETHING INTERESTING: The source of Holy Brook is near Hill Top Farm on the western side of Whiteway. You can get to Hill Top Farm (on foot) by exiting Whiteway in the direction of Fostons Ash & Birdlip and, on the edge of the village, there is a Public Footpath sign on the left. This footpath simply cuts across to the main road to Bisley, but halfway along is Hill Top Farm.

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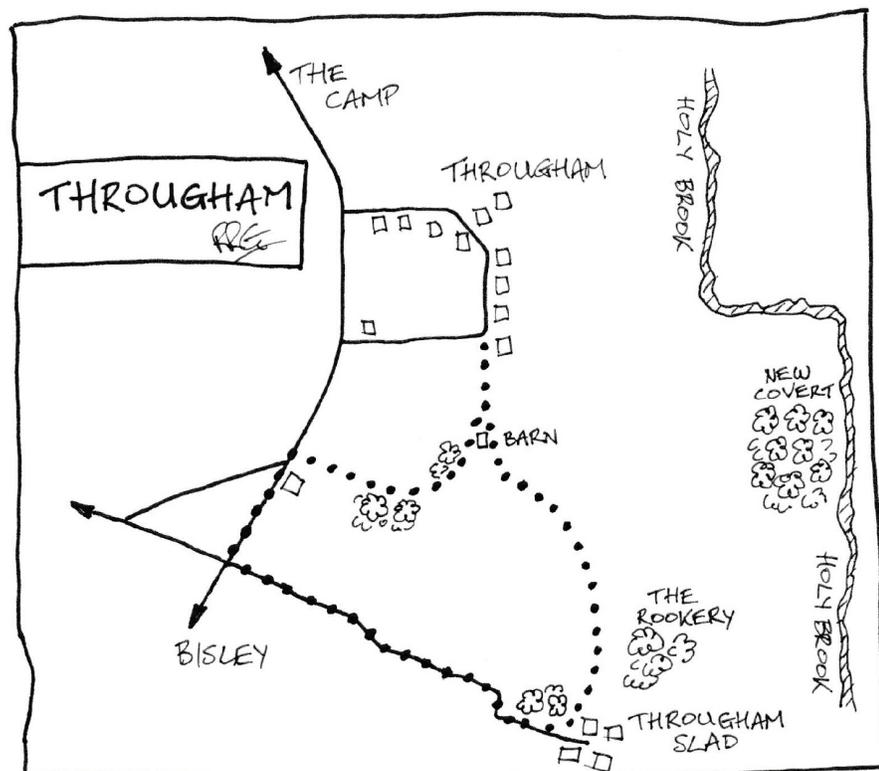
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2. Throughham (The Foggy Walk)

<p>Rod's Rating</p>	<p></p> <p>We refer to this walk as The Foggy Walk as the first time we did it, it was so foggy we could hardly see the wall on our left, let alone the valley beyond. We did it again a few days later – and lo & behold there are stunning views over the Holy Brook Valley. NB one of the few walks in our part of the Cotswolds which don't include a very steep hill! Relatively flat-ish. Relatively!</p>
<p>Daisy's Rating</p>	<p></p> <p>In the past Daisy would give every walk five stars, but she has decided to be a bit more judicious with her scoring nowadays. There was a section of road and whilst it was extremely quiet (max on car each time we walk it), we thought it best to put her on the lead.</p>
<p>Parking</p>	<p>GL6 7HG should get you to Throughham. The road through the village forms a square off the country lane which forks off the main road from The Camp. There aren't many places to park but I parked at the south-east corner of the square, near Throughham Court. This is at the bottom of the second left (if coming from The Camp direction, or first right if coming from Bisley way). I parked on a small stony patch of ground on the side of the road.</p>
<p>Pub</p>	<p>Nearest for snacks and hot drinks is the Green Shop just outside Bisley https://www.greenshop.co.uk/</p> <p>The nearest pub is probably in Bisley ...The Stirrup Cup, Cheltenham Road, Bisley GL6 7BL 01452 770007 www.stirrupcupbisley.co.uk</p> <p>or The George Stores, Bisley GL6 7BP has great cream teas and breakfasts as well as snacks https://www.bisleyvillage.com/george-stores-cafeacute.html</p>
<p>How long did it take?</p>	<p>1 hour 15 mins 2.8 miles/4.5 km 99 m up/down</p>

THE WALK - In summary:

Leave Throughham along a farm track, then turn right and right again along a very quiet country lane to return in the direction of the village.



THE WALK - In detail:

> As per the parking above, the walk starts at the south-east corner of Throughham. With Throughham Court on your left, walk up to where the road bends to the right (to return to the main road), but instead you should continue straight ahead along a farm track. *This is marked on the OS map as an "Other Route of Public Access" which is an old track along which farmers were allowed to drive animals to market. There is a gate on the right which is marked "PRIVATE – NO ACCESS" and, a short distance further, a house on the left whose sign claims you will be fined 40 shillings for not shutting the gate! Holy Brook Valley is to your left.*

> Jink left and right past a stone barn, still following the farm track (but remember this barn!)

> Go slightly downhill, slightly left, past a snapped off telegraph pole;

Holy Brook Valley is still to your left.

> Go past Public Footpath signs to the left and right, still following the farm track

> When you reach a house (Throughham Slad Manor *NB. link to Walk 4 here.*), **turn right** to walk up the tarmac drive - going past Jones Slad Farm on left after a short distance – follow this road all the way to a crossroads (about a mile);

> On reaching the crossroads (with "Unsuitable for Motor Vehicles" to left) you should **turn right** and walk past Throughham Fields Cottage

> Just past the cottage (and a junction), **turn right** following a Restricted Byway sign thru a wooden gate

> Walk along right edge of field

> Go through a wooden five-bar gate and continue straight ahead through rough ground, with a cotswold stone wall on your right. On exiting the woodland go through a small wooden gate back into the main field

> Go through gateway (no gate!), continue straight ahead on right edge of field

> At the far corner of the field, **turn left** to walk along the bottom of the field past a trough

> Go through wooden 5-bar gate and continue straight ahead through trees/bushes, between two walls

> Go through wooden 5-bar gate (at the stone barn from earlier) and continue straight ahead (ie left)

> Follow the farm track back to the start

Any problems with these directions? Please email me at rod@rrgordon.com (also if you liked the walk!)

SOMETHING INTERESTING:

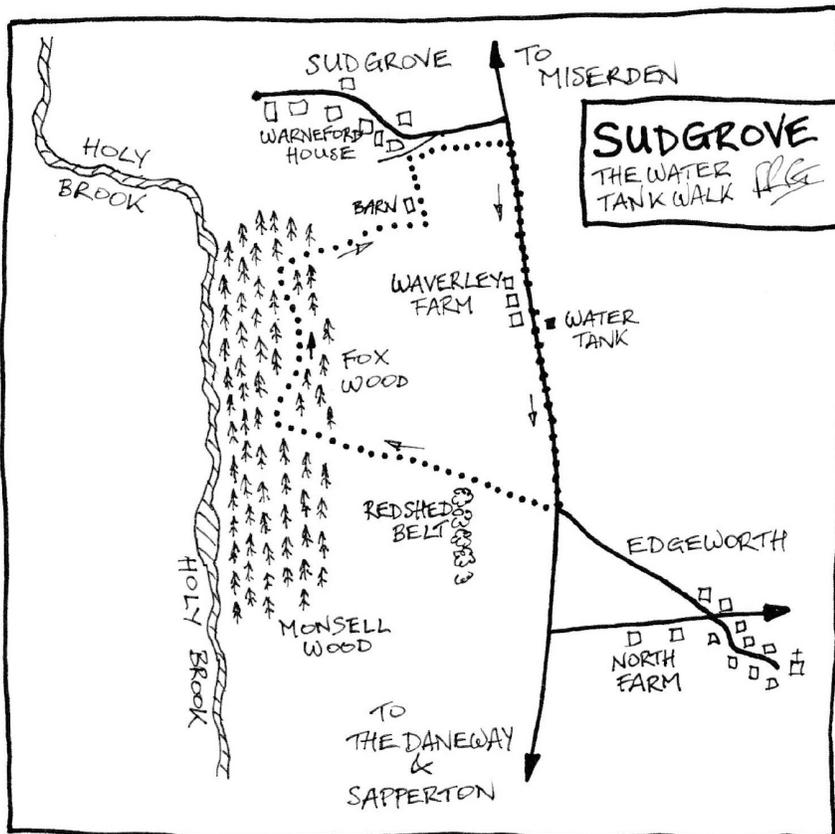
Mike Oldfield, who recorded Tubular Bells, lived at Throughham Slad Manor in the seventies (where he had a recording studio) - and before that it belonged to the Cadbury family (as in chocolate!).

Throughham Court Gardens are well worth a visit. Originally developed by Norman Jewson in the 1930s as an Arts & Crafts garden, the property has been significantly developed since 2000 by the present owners Christine Facer Hoffman FLS a scientist, landscape architect, product designer, horticulturist, author and freelance lecturer. Christine previously had a career as world renowned haematologist before becoming a landscape designer specialising in contemporary conceptual design. The garden contains sculptures, art work and landscaping themed around scientific principles and theories – and has featured in TV programmes and many magazines and newspapers.

The gardens are open only to pre-booked groups. Contact the owners on the web site www.christinefacer.com

3. Sudgrove (The Water Tank Walk)

<p>Rod's Rating</p>	 <p>My favourite walk in this booklet. Ordinarily I wouldn't give five stars if it didn't finish at a nice pub, but a new rating system applies in this booklet!</p> <p>I like this walk as it feels like different terrain, walking through forestry tracks. It is somehow reminiscent of the countryside around Loch Lomond ... maybe ...</p>
<p>Daisy's Rating</p>	 <p>Daisy also liked the wide, open terrain and was able to range far and wide. She said it didn't remind her of Loch Lomond and I was being delirious.</p>
<p>Parking</p>	<p>As mentioned in the Introduction, parking is tricky for all of these walks. Go through Whiteway, heading south in direction of Edgeworth along Dane Lane. Park anywhere between the Sudgrove turning and the Edgeworth turning. My favourite parking spot is on the left opposite Waverley Grange, just before a large water tank. The postcode GL6 7JE should get you there.</p>
<p>Pub</p>	<p>The walk is just a mile from Miserden so after the walk you could pop to:</p> <p>The Nursery at Miserden, Stroud GL6 7JA which has a lovely café http://www.miserdennursery.co.uk/ Open Tues – Sun 10-5</p> <p>The Carpenters Arms, Miserden, Birdlip, Gloucs GL6 7JA http://www.thecarps-miserden.co.uk/</p> <p>Also, the friendly Miserden Village Shop & Post Office provides hot refreshments, snacks and drinks https://miserdenstores.co.uk/</p>
<p>How long did it take?</p>	<p>1 hour 2.5 miles/4 km 60m up/down</p>



WALK IN SUMMARY:

Head south along the road towards Edgeworth.

Turn right to head into Holy Brook valley and loop back north towards the Sudgrove spur of the valley.

NB. Part of the walk is along a road. Can't be helped. Anyway it's a pretty quiet road.

THE WALK - In detail:

> Walk south along the road (Dane Lane) from Miserden towards Edgeworth. Ten yards before the left turn to Edgeworth, you should **turn right** over a stile to the left of a double wooden farm gate.

In summer it looks like this:



> Walk along the left edge of a huge, flat field
> At the end of the field, continue straight ahead through a large gap into the next field; follow farm track on left edge, heading slightly downhill
> At the end of the field, continue straight ahead, still following the farm track as it goes downhill more steeply; the track is lined by trees

You are now heading down into Holy Brook Valley, but will only go a third of the way down and then skirt along the eastern side through Fox Wood up to the Sudgrove spur.

> At the bottom of the descent on the farm track, ignore the Public Footpath off to the left (but that's an interesting route for another day!); instead you should go straight on and then follow the farm track around the bend to the right

> At a fork in the farm track (both marked by Public Footpath signs) you should take the **right fork** slightly uphill

> Go past pheasant pens on left then right (I hope they're still there!); Holy Brook Valley extends away to your left with Througham on the far side

> Go around a bend to the right and you will see Warneford House ahead of you across the Sudgrove spur of the valley; it is a large house with 3 gables and ornate gardens

> Ignore the Permissive Path which heads straight ahead and down in the direction of Warneford House, but you should continue to follow the farm track around to your right (heading for a big barn at the top of the hill)

> Follow the farm track uphill up a shallow cutting in the land

> At the top where the track opens out into a field, **turn sharp left** over a large stone stile (or go around it and through a makeshift gate); follow the left edge of the field up past the big barn heading to Sudgrove

> On reaching a fence (and the farm driveway), climb over the stile into a small field – and then follow the public footpath that goes up the middle of an avenue of trees, parallel to the farm driveway through two low gates

> Climb over the stile and **turn right** onto the road (Dane Lane) and continue back to the car which should be parked on the left opposite Waverley Grange

Any problems with these directions? Please email me at rod@rrgordon.com (also if you liked the walk!)

SOMETHING INTERESTING:

Frank Mansell, the Cotswold war poet, wrote a poem of remembrance, "The Holy Brook"

He will not walk again by Severn tide, nor see a distant silver in the sun.

He will not dream again on Slad hillside, above the inns where Cotswold lads have fun.

He will not know again the joys of home, the loving welcome and the warmth of kin.

He will not see the black edged letter come to break the heart he was most cherished in.

He died in war and men forget his name,

All that he was is vanished into night.

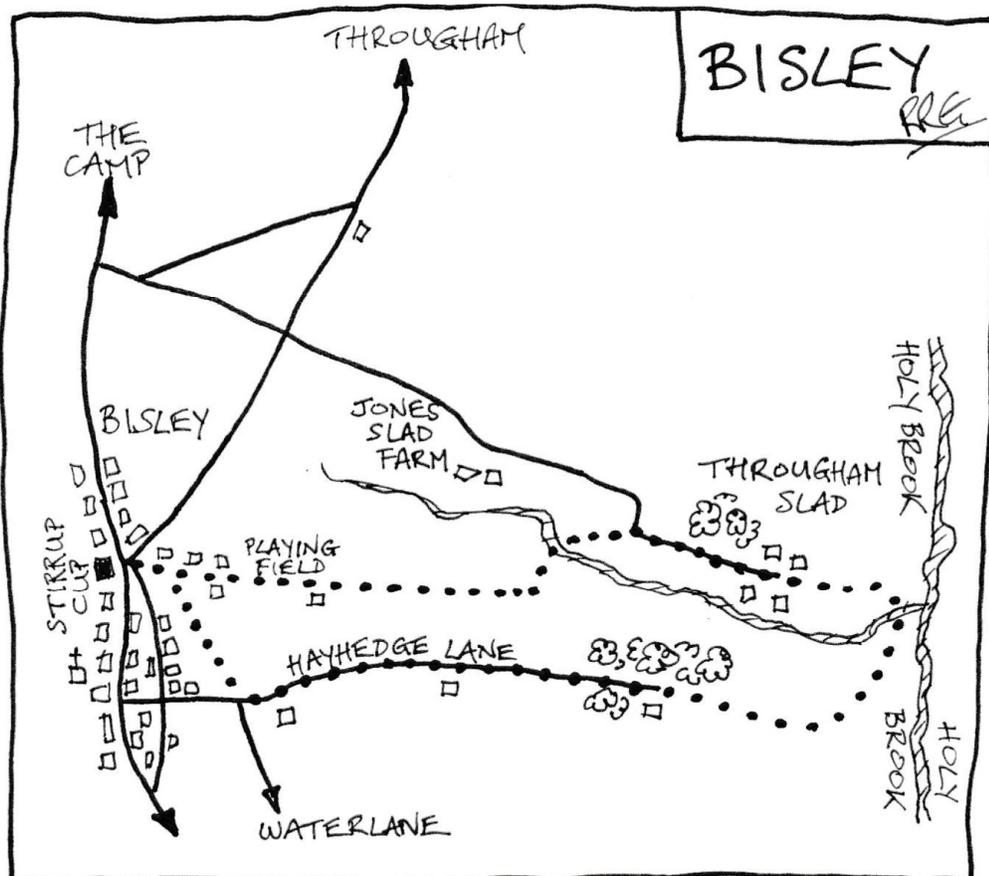
The brook still flows newborn and yet the same,

Out of the womb of Cotswold to the light.

The poem was also set to music by Jonny Coppin and you can hear it sung by folk singer Phil Beer at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86HSeU_wf3M

4. Bisley / Throughham Slad

<p>Rod's Rating</p>	<p>  Five stars all round for this walk. It starts with wide open vistas as you leave Bisley and, when you dive down into the valley, the rolling, criss-crossing hillocks near the house with the clock are a sumptuous work of art. </p>
<p>Daisy's Rating</p>	<p>  Plenty of time off the lead for Daisy and she was able to roam down into two valleys – with a stream at the bottom of each for a quick drink and a bath </p>
<p>Parking & Pub</p>	<p> The Stirrup Cup, Cheltenham Road, Bisley GL6 7BL 01452 770007 www.stirrupcupbisley.co.uk or The George Stores, Bisley GL6 7BP 01452 771203 has great cream teas and breakfasts as well as snacks https://www.bisleyvillage.com/george-stores-cafeacute.html Also excellent for snacks and hot drinks is the Green Shop just outside Bisley https://www.greenshop.co.uk/ </p>
<p>How long did it take?</p>	<p>1 hour 30 mins 3.3 miles/5.3 km 130 up/down</p>



THE WALK - In summary:

Down into a spur of the Holy Brook Valley, up the other side – and then down into the main valley and back up again

THE WALK - In detail:

- > With The Stirrup Cup pub behind you head across the road to Van der Breen Street. Follow this tarmac road to its end and go straight ahead as the road becomes a farm track.
- > Pass a barn on your right
- > At the end of the field continue straight on with a Cotswold stone wall on the right and the valley ahead of you. Jones Slad Farm is ahead to your left
- > At a metal seven bar gate go straight on and bend right slightly
- > Just before the next metal gate **turn left** down into a side valley with a hedge to your right
- > Go all the way down to a stream at the bottom with a wall/fence on right
- > Go over the stream & thru a wooden gate
- > Head straight up between some small trees keeping a Cotswold stone wall on your left
- > Veer away to the **right** and head diagonally right up the hillside to the top
- > At wooden gate continue diagonally uphill
- > At a metal gate on the left join onto a path and continue diagonally uphill following some telegraph poles
- > At a metal six bar gate ahead and to the left **turn right** onto the road heading downhill into the valley
- > Ignore the Private sign (which is aimed at cars) and continue along road which is an

Other Route of Public Access> Go straight on between the houses (Througham Slad Manor) and continue downhill following a stone track

- > As you near the bottom of the valley go past a barn on the right (marked Leominster Construction)
- > **Turn right** at a house with a clock on its roof and follow a wide stone farm track. You are now in the Holy Brook valley
- > Go through a metal gate at a cattlegrid and head uphill
- > Go through another cattlegrid and gate and head up a tarmac road passing a house (with a wooden veranda)
- > Ignore Public Footpath sign left at the drive for Lower Battlescombe and ignore Public Footpath sign right into woods and then ignore Public Footpath left just past entrance to Battlescombe Farm
- > Pass Hay Hedge Farm on left
- > Just after a junction (Waterlane 1, Sapperton 3) and a metal gate **turn right** down a farm track
- > **Bear left** just before a barn and continue along the track passing a house on the right
- > Go through a kissing gate across the field to another kissing gate
- > **Turn left** onto the road a continue back to the Stirrup Cup

Any problems with these directions? Please email me at rod@rrgordon.com (also if you liked the walk!)

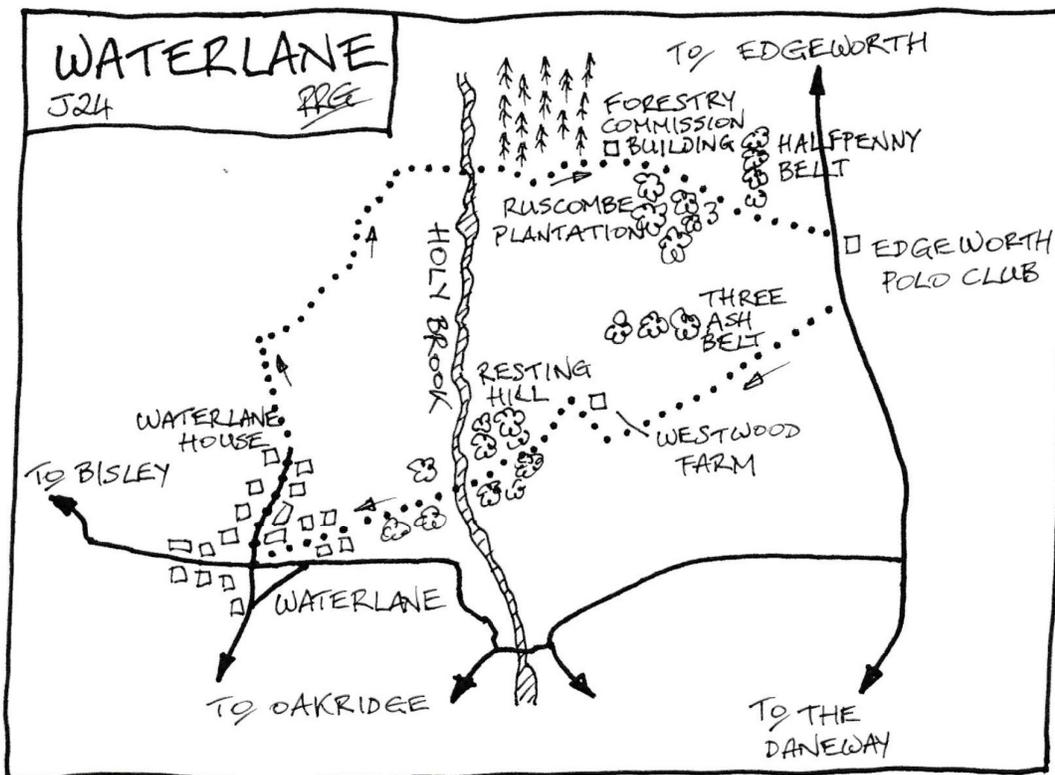
SOMETHING INTERESTING:

Most popular in the late 18th and 19th century, antique silver stirrup cups are a form of drinking vessel which were presented to riders on horseback prior to leaving or arriving home from a hunt; this happened whilst their feet remained in their stirrups.

Early stirrup cups were essentially wine glasses without a base, as however their popularity grew silver stirrup cups were crafted in shapes that were relevant to the hunt, such as a hound or fox head. The rim of a stirrup cup would often be engraved with a motto or inscription from the hunt to commemorate the event.

5. Waterlane (J24)

<p>Rod's Rating (actually Jamie's Rating!)</p>	 <p>We refer to this walk as J24 because we first did it on our son Jamie's 24th birthday. He described the section where we walked down a stream (which should have been a path!) near the bottom of the valley as "the coolest part of all of your walks, Dad". That's a definite five stars then!</p>
<p>Daisy's Rating</p>	 <p>Daisy agreed it was amongst the coolest, and she does like to walk along stream beds anyway. A wide range of terrain made the walk enjoyable for her, but there were 2 stiles which were difficult to negotiate.</p>
<p>Parking</p>	<p>Park wherever you can in Waterlane! Sorry, that's the best I can do. GL6 7PJ will get you to the centre of Waterlane. The walk then starts from the noticeboard at the crossroads in the centre of the village, by a sign which says Bisley 1½, Stroud 5, Sapperton 2, Ciren 7 - and the Butchers Arms at Oakridge Lynch is just ¾ mile away.</p>
<p>Pub</p>	<p>The Butchers Arms is probably the nearest; 18th century building with stone walls & oak beamed ceilings. Oakridge Lynch, Stroud, Glos, GL6 7NZ http://www.butchersarmsoakridge.com</p>
<p>How long did it take?</p>	<p>2 hour 15 minutes 4.5miles/ 7 km 185m of up/down</p>



THE WALK - In summary:
Starting in Waterlane, walk north and then east in a clockwise direction; the walk takes you down into the Holy Brook Valley and up the other side – then along the top for a little way before coming down and up again

THE WALK - In detail:

- Starting with the village noticeboard behind you, walk down a lane marked 'Dead End' (to the left of a house called The Crown)

- Continue out past Silver Birches, Field House and the rather grand entrance to Waterlane House

- Bear **left** at an old barn with corrugated roof and follow Restricted Byway sign uphill on a farm track

- At a fork in farm track, go **right/downhill**; the Holy Brook valley appears to right after a short distance

- At the end of the farm track go over a stile and down across a field heading in the direction of a house in the distance;

NB this is house with clock from Walk 4! At gate at bottom of field you can turn left to connect to Walk 4 but we're now going down to the valley floor ...

- At gate at bottom of field, **turn right** to go down a wide track (sometimes a stream in winter!) and cross the Holy Brook at the bottom of the valley. Continue up the other side – up, up, up!

- Ignore gates on the left and right until you go past a Forestry Commission barn on your left; then after 100 yards ...

- **Turn right** at a Public Bridleway sign by a double metal gate into trees (Ruscombe Plantation)

- Continue out of the other side of the trees and walk alongside the edge of the field with trees on the right

- Continue along the edge of the field and through a gate on the next line of trees (Halfpenny Belt) and along the right-hand edge of the next field

- At the gate, **turn right** onto the road (Dane Lane)

- Opposite Edgeworth Polo Club entrance **turn right** at a Public Footpath sign. Follow the tarmac drive (to Westwood Farm, not signed)

- Where the drive turns 90 degrees right, go straight on through a wooden gate

- Go down the hill towards some telegraph wires then **turn right** to follow telegraph wires

- Go over stile, still following telegraph wires

- Go past some farm buildings (Westwood Farm) above and to your right and over another stile into some trees

- **Turn left** onto a stone farm track and continue downhill through the trees (this is Forestry Commission land – an area known as Resting Hill)

- Continue downhill, forking left, following first a metal fence and then an old tumbledown Cotswold stone wall on the left

- Go straight across a farmtrack and downhill on a footpath through the woods heading for the bottom of the valley

- Kink slightly **left** at a Public Footpath sign on top of a tree stump, go down past a big old tree with lots of carvings

- Cross Holy Brook stream at the bottom of the valley and go **right and up** (not left)

This is another beautiful part of the Holy Brook Valley, where it meanders through some delightful woods – a good place for a picnic?

- Go over stile at top, barbed wire fence on right with a grand house visible through the trees (Watercombe House)

- Go over a stile at entrance to Watercombe House and up the tarmac drive

- Go up past Valley Cottage and some other cottages to the noticeboard at the top

Any problems with these directions? Please email me at rod@rrgordon.com (also if you liked the walk!)

Download the other walks booklets in the series from www.rrgordon.com

RR Gordon is the best-selling author of **Gull Rock**
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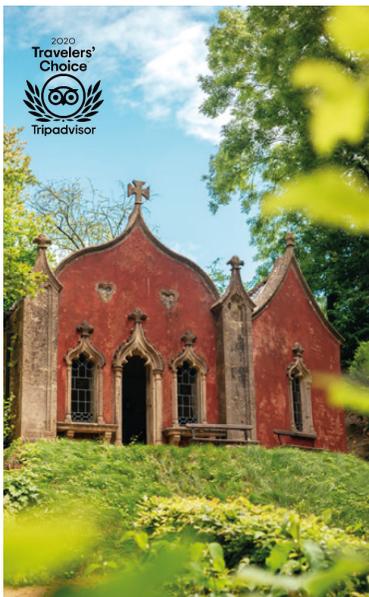
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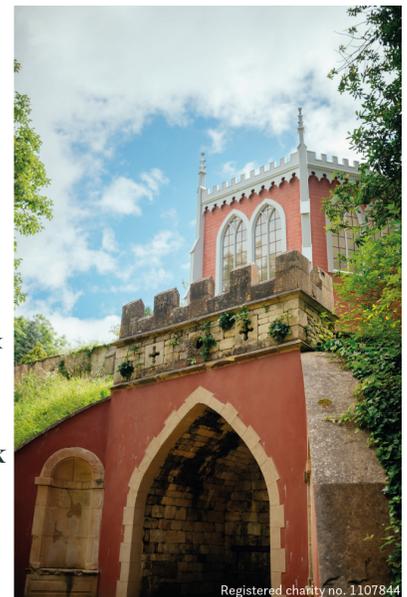
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