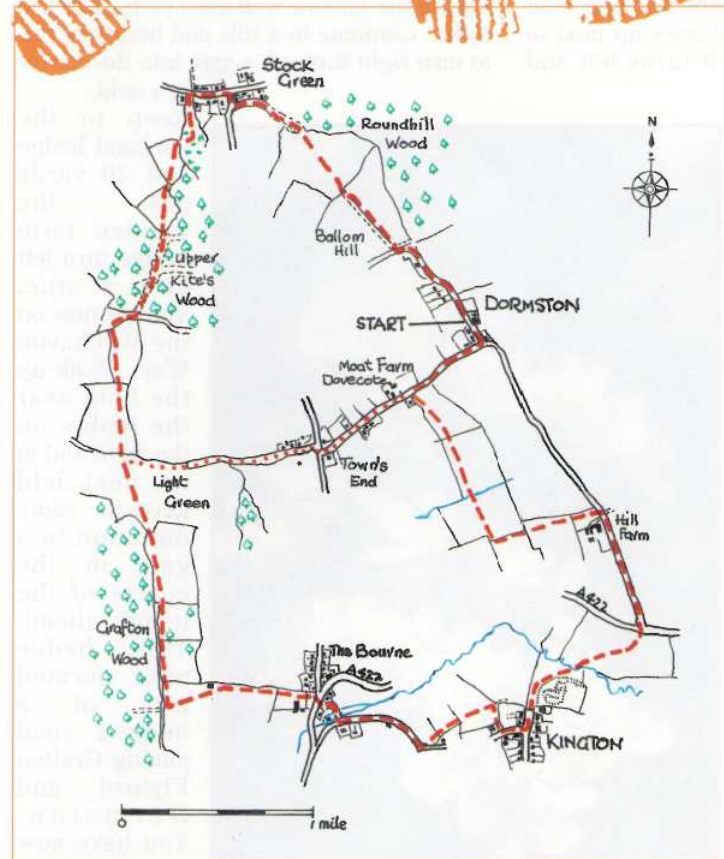


WALK 6 DORMSTON



The route of this walk takes in two neighbouring villages, each with a distinctive church, the one with a half-timbered tower and the other with a half-timbered bell-turret. The walk passes through varied terrain and a short section coincides with the Wychavon Way. There is an optional shorter route which is three miles instead of six.

Map reference of start SO 987 576

5½ miles 3 miles

OS Maps:

*Landranger 150
Pathfinder 996
(SO 85/95)*

Dormston is a small scattered hamlet 2 miles west of Inkberrow. It is best reached from the A422 Inkberrow to Worcester road, either along a lane signposted Dormston about 1 ½ miles from Inkberrow or off a road signposted with a brown sign at 'The Bourne', 2 ½ miles from Inkberrow. In Dormston follow the signs to the church along a 'No through road'.

The church at Dormston is interesting for its timber-framed west tower which has very heavy bracing beams on the inside. The amount of timber used in building is an indication of the prolific woodland in the vicinity. Even so, a considerable number of mature trees would have been used to build this tower, and even more to build one of the large houses seen on this walk.

To begin the walk, go along the road which soon becomes a track and just past Orchard Cottage turns a sharp left. A few yards past the corner look for a stile on the right. Beyond here, the right of way goes through a gap on the right of the field you have just passed and goes up next to the hedge. At the top it turns left and comes back into the field. It then turns right through a gap at the end hedge, which can be seen from the stile you crossed at the bottom of the field. Bear slightly right onto the field and from the brow of the hill you will see the bottom right corner. Go down here and enter the wood. Follow the path round to the left and continue out to the road next to a small chapel. Turn right, and then left at the 'T' junction.

Opposite the last house on the right turn left on to a wide track. Continue ahead, keeping as near as possible to the right-hand side of some rough ground. Pass the first entrance to the field on the right, almost opposite a solitary tree, and in a short distance turn right through the hedge into the corner of a field. Turn left up to a small gate in the far corner and go in the next field. Bear left to a field gate in an angle of the wood. A few yards further takes you to a clearing in the wood where you bear right. Go down the ride and when another ride joins from the left, keep the same direction. Ignore the narrow well-used path off to the right. Continue to a stile and hedges track to turn right through a gate into the corner of a field.

Keep to the left-hand hedge and 20 yards past the wooden farm bridge turn left over a stile. You are now on the Wychavon Way. Walk up the field near the hedge on the right, and in the next field keep the same direction to a gate in the centre of the

hedge ahead. This hedge once formed part of a hedged road joining Grafton Flyford and Dormston. You have now completed two miles.

Should you need to abort the walk, from this gate turn left along the edge of the field until you reach a track between hedges. This will guide you back to Town's End – where Dormston, which was once a much larger village, used to end. Follow the signpost back to the church.

To continue the walk, bear left across the field to a stile at the left-hand side of Grafton Wood. Walk on, keeping the wood on the right, for ½ mile to rise up to a large field with a solitary tree on the highest point. On reaching a set of jumping rails at the end of a ride on the edge of the wood, turn left and go towards an old cow shed in the hedge on the left. Half-way across the field there is a fine view. On the right is Bredon and to its left the Cotswolds in the distance, then the hill above Rous Lench with the Lenches beyond. From the cow shed go, with the hedge on the left, down to the road.

Cross with care to the signposted, hedges path on the opposite side of the main road. When you get to the garden of the converted mill, turn left between the fences and go round to a bridge over the mill stream. Keep

straight ahead to a bridge over the Piddle Brook and at the lane turn left. Walk along the lane for ¼ mile to a sharp left-hand bend. Here, go over a stile in the metal fence and follow the edge of the field go ahead to a stile in the hedge. Continue in the same line in the next field to a gateway. Turn right before the gateway to a stile in the corner of the field and so out to the lane. Turn left in Kington.

At the 'T' junction turn left past the church of St James with its timber-framed bell-turret. It stands on a stone base of the 14th century and is probably contemporary with it, though the close studding would generally be ascribed to a later date. Continue along the road to a metal gate. In the field beyond is the end of the village which was abandoned a long time ago. The earthworks here show where there was once a large farm with its outbuildings, situated in a bend in the road. Usually such earthworks are levelled and ploughed and then it is only with difficulty that the sudden ending of the main village street, within a few yards of the church, can be explained.

Walk on down the medieval road – can you picture the peasant bringing his cattle up here in the evening, home from the meadows? Until the end of the 18th century most farms were in the villages. It was not until the common open fields were enclosed that the farms moved out, leaving the highly desirable old houses now seen along many village streets. When the old road bears right you keep ahead to a footbridge near the corner of the field. In the next field bear right over the brow of the hill to a gate. Cross the road and go up the lane opposite.

Just past Hill Farm House turn left over a stile. From the field there is a fine view of the Malvern. Go down the field to another stile, then keep ahead for two more fields and in the far corner, turn right through a gate. Continue ahead, ignoring the gate on the left, across the field and over a farm bridge. Go up to a gate at the top of the hill and in the next field bear slightly left to the corner, where there is a gate on to the lane. Here turn right, looking out for the sign to the church, to get back to the start of the walk. But if you wish to see Moat Farm, make a diversion to the left for 50 yards. Dated 1663, this is an unusual house as it has three gables on the front and one on each short side. It has also retained its tile weatherings which protect the wattle and daub panels. Most timber houses had weatherings until the last century. Contemporary with the house, there is also a dovecote, which is best seen from a few yards further along the road.