

CHEDDAR to BRIDGWATER: - 29 MILES

Somerset Levels, Polden Hills and Villages

Leaving the cross in a southerly direction by Church Street, you will come to a church on your right. Continue for a few yards and then go over Cheddar Bridge (take care on this very dangerous bend). Once over the bridge, turn left on to a lane which, after a short distance dwindles into a footpath. At the top, enter a field and go up, keeping close to the right hand boundary, until you come to a stile on the right. Go over **and continue in the same direction with the boundary on the left on reaching a gate go into the next field bearing slightly left to a lane. Turn right go up the lane a short distance then bear left at Bradley Cross Farm. Take track on the right of the house (you will now follow the West Mendip Way for approx one mile) continue up this track. Go through a gate and past a house on your right. At this point look back at Cheddar and its lake. This is a well defined bridle track. After a while it will take a left hand bend and continue up hill.**

After approx half a mile of climbing mainly through oak and hawthorn you come to a farm on your right but continue roughly in the same direction. Once at the very top go through a gate into a field you leave the main track here and head over this field heading slightly right to a gate. Once through the gate turn right for approx 100 yards then turn left up a track between hawthorn bushes. This is **Draycott Sleights Nature Reserve** carry on following a line of beech on the right. You eventually come to a lane cross over the stile opposite, bear right for a few yards the path then swings left, continue with the boundary on the right.

At the corner cut over the field to a stile into **Rodney Stoke Nature Reserve**. You then descend down a well defined track (extremely slippery when wet) and come out into a field. Head towards a house bearing slightly right. Go over a stile at the right of the house in the corner then continue down a small track to a lane, turn right to **Rodney Stoke** at the **main road turn left**. Take great care; this is an extremely busy road, which seems short of footpaths. Carry on another half mile through the village, up the hill until you reach a signpost to **Priddy**. Take this small road on the left where there is some relief from the traffic, Perhaps one day there will be a top ridge path, which avoids the main road.



Go along the road for a short distance, then round a right hand bend. Continue up for approximately 300 yards, then just past a gate on the right go over a stile, head up the field to where it forms a small neck, and over another stile. Continue in a fairly straight line, going over a series of fields and stiles. On your right the scenery is more open.

Glastonbury Tor can be seen in the distance. The small fields and meadows along here are delightful, and some very pleasant views surround them. Eventually, you will go over your last stile on this bearing - nearly all of them are made of fine Mendip stone - and you can see the village of **Westbury-sub-Mendip**. The path swings right; go down to the bottom of the field, where there is a stile which leads on to a lane. Turn left, then at the bottom of the lane turn right. Here you can see the Village Cross and the Church behind it. Accommodation should be available in the village. You are now on that busy road again, but thankfully not for long. Turn left; the **Westbury Inn** is on the left and soon after that on the right is Station Road. Go down here.

Continue over a bridge and a disused railway line, then turn left through some farm buildings. A few hundred yards further on turn left again at a junction. After another hundred yards, ignore the turning on the left and carry on until the lane runs out. You will come to some gates. Take the one straight ahead. Follow the track around to the right and take a gate further on. Keeping fairly close to the right hand boundary, cross the next field over to a footbridge in the corner. Once over the footbridge, go through a gap on your right, turn left and walk down by the hedge. Go over another footbridge and continue down

the next field with the rhyne on your left. At the end of this field, pass through a gate near the corner, turn right and follow the rhyne down on your right for approximately **150** yards until you are close to a line of **willow trees on the right**. Then take a diagonal path off to the left across the field to another, larger, footbridge. Once over, you will find yourself on a road. Turn left and continue, passing a farm on the right, until you come to a bridge on the left. Don't cross it - bear right, go up here approximately 50 yards and then, on a bend, go **over stile** on the right.

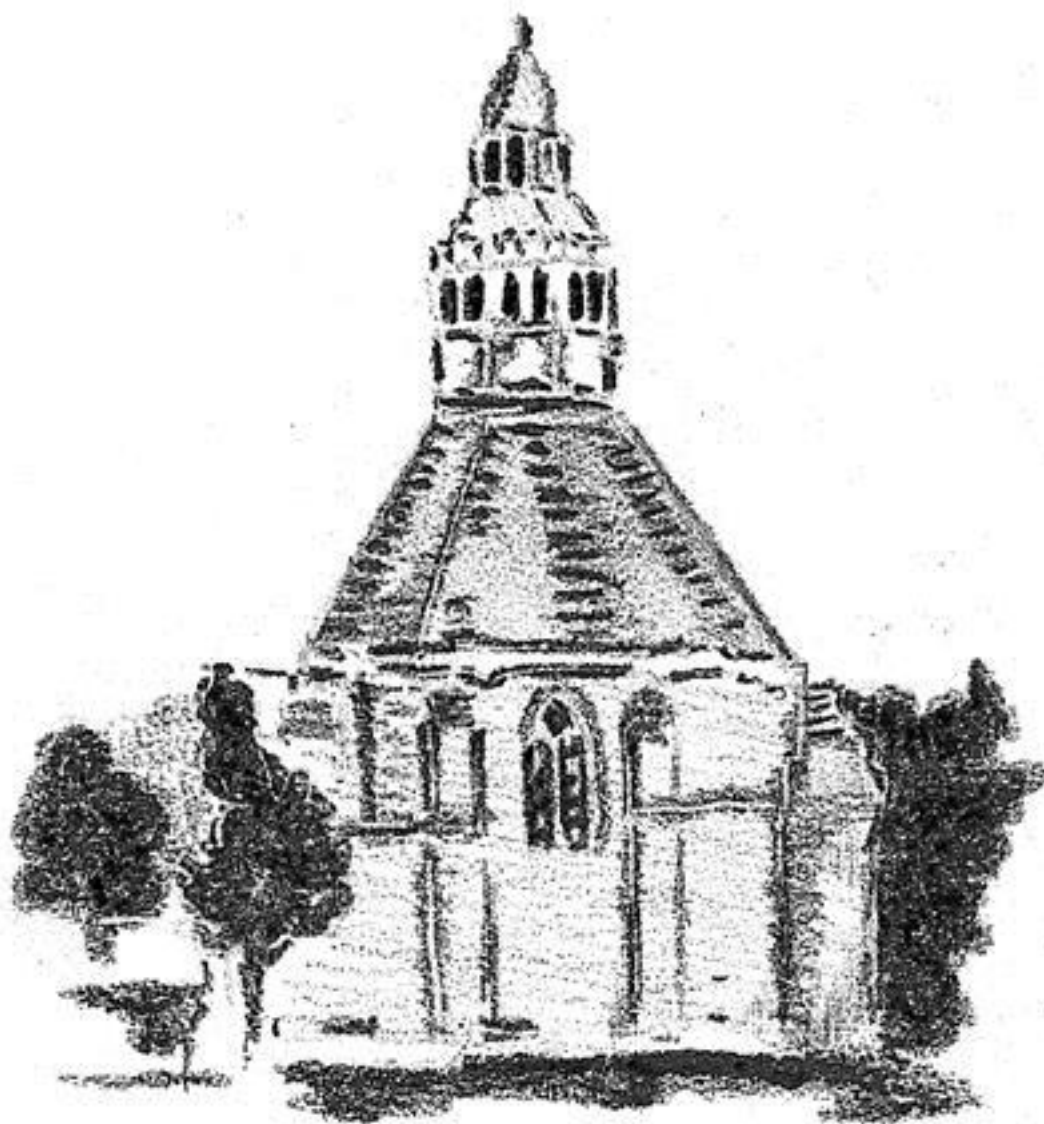
Walk up this field. Continue in roughly the same direction. Drop down the hill, where you will see a **stile** near the left-hand corner of the field. Go **over stile** into a track between two hedges and continue on down, and eventually take a right hand turn. Go on along here for a short distance, arriving at **a lane**. Turn left and walk straight to the main road; this is the village of **Henton**. **The Inn at Henton is now closed**.

Turn left on the main road (take care). A short way down this road enter a field on the right. Walk to the top of the hill, heading for the far left-hand corner of the field. Go over a stile, then straight ahead for a short distance and cross the stile in the corner. Walk in the same direction, keeping the hedge on your left, go through a gate and come out on to a major track, and then turn right. A little way down you will come to a **stile** on your left **prior to a sharp right hand turn go over this and make your way** to the bottom of the field, keeping reasonably close to the left-hand boundary **where you cross a lane over a pair of stiles**. **Continue up 2 fields keeping fairly close to the rhyne on your left. Then go over a stile near a stone bridge and come out on to a road**. Turn right. At the next junction bear left for **Godney**. A short way down here, go over a footbridge on the left, crossing the rhyne into the field.

Turn immediately right, go through a gate and continue along the field keeping close to the rhyne, which is on your right. Carrying on up here, go through two more gates, and eventually pass under some power lines. A little further on there is a footbridge on the right. Cross over, and then bear left, keeping close to the hedge on your left. At the end of the field go through a gate and on to the road. Do not turn left - go straight ahead. You are now coming to the village of **Godney**.

Turn left over the bridge, which is signposted to **Glastonbury**, pass Godney House on the left and continue along the road to Godney Farm. There are not many connecting rights of way over the levels, so it's going to be a bit of a trudge along the droves. However, there is an abundance of wildlife, sedges and willows, so make the most of it.

At Godney Farm the road bears left. As you carry straight on, the various plant life according to the season is worth noting. In early summer it is lined with yellow iris, patches of marsh marigold, and later purple loosestrife. You will go through an avenue of pollarded willows.



Continuing down, you will come to a bridge and a left-hand turn, which are approximately one and a half miles from Godney Farm. This is called Great Withy Drove. Go up here, then further on pass a stone bridge on the left. The road winds, and gives relief from the long straight stretches. Take the first turning on the right. At the bottom of this Drove, take a left-hand turn, go up the road a few yards and then turn right. After a short while, bear to your right and go under a road. Immediately after this, go up some steps on the right, then **a few yards left**, take a path on your right and continue. You will pass playing fields on your left. At the end of the playing fields the track heads off to the left. This will take you up into the town. At the top of the track go through a housing estate, then turn right down a short road to the main road. At this point turn left. At the end of this road is the Cross, in the heart of **Glastonbury**. There is plenty to see here, accommodation and refreshments. Or carry on to Street Hostel. If so, don't forget to stock up with food, breakfast and evening meal, etc., as at the time of writing Street is a self-catering hostel (check on this when booking).

To continue, bear right, along Market Place, take the **Shepton Mallet** road and go past the Abbey Gardens on the left. **Visit St Margaret's Chapel and Almshouses in Magdalene Close**. After a short while you will reach a roundabout. Turn right on the main road and go down here for about 400 yards. After the last house on the left there is a kissing gate; pass through it into the meadowland. Go diagonally right up Wearyall Hill, then walk along the

ridge at the top. Look back; **the Tor** is quite impressive from here. Continue along this ridge, enjoying the distant views around you. As you descend, **go through a gate** **Street** can be seen to the left, and the slopes of the **Polden Hills**, which you will be going along later. When you finally get to the end of this grassy ridge, pass through a stile in the left-hand corner, turn right on to the road and follow it down to the main road. Turn left, go across the River Brue up to the next major junction; at this point keep left and head for **Street**. A little further on there is another junction. Bear right here into High Street and the town centre.

Continue up here, passing **Clarks' Shoe Museum** on the right. Carry on through the shopping centre, past the Crispin Hall and Leigh Road, **Approx 200 yards further on you come to Vestry Road on the left take this** continue past a park on the right, and straight over into Oriel Road. At the end of this road there is Hecks Farmhouse Cider, Fine Cider Makers since 1840. Go straight ahead into Ivythorne Road. **After a quarter of a mile the road bends to the left; at this point bear right up a road called Middle Brooks maybe** signed. A few hundred yards up this road, turn off on the left into Gooselade. Go to the bottom of this short road, and turn right, and almost immediately left, and then **through a gate** into a field. Continue straight across the field to the far right hand corner, **go over a stile then** carry on up the footpath to the top of the next field, where you will go **through a gate** and into a lane. Turn right and walk down **approx** a hundred yards, then a track on the left will go straight up to the Youth Hostel. (If you are not staying at the hostel, continue on the lane a little further, then a bridleway on the left will go up a hill, then turn right on a footpath which connects with the route from the Hostel).

If you stopped, leave the hostel on the opposite side to where you came in and turn immediately right. The walk has now changed direction - whereas you were coming south to this point, you are now heading west. Continue along this path; walking on a small ridge known as the **Polden Hills**. Go to the very end; the path will eventually run out and meet the road. Cross the road (take care) and join another path, continuing in the same direction. Eventually this path reaches a **gateway**.

Go through, and out into more open country. Up till now the views have been obstructed by growth. There is a viewpoint at the top of **Walton Hill**, which will give bearings to prominent landmarks. Continue in the same direction until you come to a converted windmill. Go past it on the right hand side and descend a slope, keeping **fairly** close to the hedge on your left, then bear hard left around the mill, away from the road, and drop down to a stile in the right hand corner. This area of ground displays pyramidal orchids, thyme and rockrose in summer, with many species of butterfly amongst them. Go over the stile and drop down a few yards to a prominent track. Turn left, and continue descending between two hedges, coming to a minor road. Turn right and go uphill for approximately a quarter of a mile, then take a hard left hand turn on to a lane and drop down for a short distance. The lane will then swing right. Carry on and go over a stile at the side of a gate. On reaching the farm buildings, keep to the right of them and go **over a stile** into a field. Follow the left-hand boundary. A bit further on it will bend right. Continue uphill for a short way, then go over a well concealed **gate** on the left, into the trees. You will soon emerge into a meadow, another good wildflower habitat. Continue along the left hand boundary until you reach a gate on the left. Go through and carry on for a short distance, up a grassy track, then drop down to another farm. Wind your way through the buildings (possibly way marked) and you will find yourself on a well- formed track. Continue into a field. Keep the boundary on your right. At the end of the field go through a gate, under some power lines, to the gate opposite, back on a well defined track.

Further on, enter Redlands Farm. Pick your way through the buildings (possibly way marked) and find yourself in a lane going in the same direction. Soon the lane bears around to the right, with an orchard on the left. At the end of the orchard, go over a footbridge into a paddock, cross the paddock **to the gate opposite** and on to the road (take care). Turn left into the village of **Pedwell**, where there should be accommodation if required.

If you wish to carry on, go down the road about one hundred yards and then take a more minor road on the right called Pedwell Hill. Continue up here - **a converted** Methodist Church is on your left. **100** yards past the church, take the footpath on the left. Carry on, keeping to the right hand boundary, then pass through a gate into a field. Continue in a straight line, going **through a gate** near a dog-leg in the hedge, across a field and **through** a further **gate**, after which bear slightly to the left and through a gate on to a lane. Turn left, and after approximately 80 yards down the lane go **through a gate** on the right. This is fairly well concealed, so keep an eye open for it. Walk down this next field, keeping close to the hedge on the right, then go over a stile and footbridge and into the next field. Keep close to the left hand boundary and **towards the end of the field bear left down a neck in the field and go through a gate in the corner, then** down a track, and you will find yourself on the main road again. This is the village of **Greinton**. Turn right on the road, which soon bears left, marked **Taunton**. Ignore this, and take the minor road straight ahead marked to **Moorlynch**. After a short while go round a left hand bend, then at a junction bear right and continue down the lane for half a mile towards **Moorlynch**.

Once in **Moorlynch**, if required, you may find accommodation. There is an inn called the **Ring of Bells**. The road takes a right hand swing up the hill, but you go straight ahead along the lane (**Pit Hill Lane**). You can take a well worthwhile diversion by continuing around the right hand bend up the hill for a quarter of a mile to visit the church, which is on your left. There are good views from the churchyard. On leaving the church to the south side, in the far right hand corner there is a gate into the field. Go through, follow the field down, keeping close to the left hand boundary, then over a stile and you will find yourself back on the original lane. Turn right and continue.

A little way along, a track goes off to the left. Ignore this, and keep to the top one. **After a further 260 yards ignore a track to the left: keep straight ahead.** You are starting to climb a little, which will get you off the low country and give a better view. On a clear day the **Quantocks** can be seen, which you will be making for once through **Bridgwater**. This is a pleasant track, and you can make good progress, but it can be muddy at times. Carry on for a while in the same direction. At the end of this track, (about one and a half miles from **Moorlynch**) is the village of **Sutton Mallet**. The track will lead on to a road. Go straight ahead to the church-**which is well worth a visit supported by the Churches Conservation Trust**. Turn right, then after a short distance turn left on to the road marked "**Chedzoy**". Continue up here for about a quarter of a mile until you come to a left hand bend in the road. The next bit is a little tricky. You can make a choice here. On the bend, go into the field on your right. Walk up a little way and go over a footbridge on the right (head diagonally left towards the end of the ridge on your right). **From here you can see the next footbridge: head for this and from there you can see the footbridge by the road.**

However, if you are a little unsure about this, continue on the road; this will eventually turn right and arrive at the same point. If you have taken a bearing, you will cross over another bridge. Continue on the same bearing; it will come to a rhyne. **Go over the footbridge onto the road then** turn right. After a few yards the road bends left. You will

soon come to a signpost to **Stawell**. Ignore this and carry on for half a mile to the **Kings Sedgmoor Drain**

Once you cross the bridge over the drain, follow the winding little road for approximately three quarters of a mile to the village of **Chedzoy**. Be careful of the blind corners. The church is on your right; it is well worth a visit; the pews are especially fine.

At the church, the road takes a left hand swing. Continue for about half a mile out of **Chedzoy** towards **Weston Zoyland**, then the road will turn left. Ignore this and take the track ahead. Passing Fishers Farm, continue along this track in a straight line. Go through a gateway, and carry straight on, not diverting. Soon you will go under a set of power lines. The path now takes a sharp left hand bend. **Just around the bend go over the footbridge on the right, then follow the boundary straight ahead.** Go through a gap into the next field and follow the left hand boundary down in the same direction, passing under another set of power lines. At the end of this field, go **through a gate** on the left, then cross a footbridge to your right, and go straight ahead over the **M5** footbridge.

Go over a small footbridge into a field. Continue **around the** field, making for a stile in the left hand corner, on to a road. Turn left and make your way up to a major junction (on the **A372**, Weston Zoyland road). Turn right and carry on along this road for approximately one mile. It will cross a railway line, then bend around to the right, meeting another road. You are very close to **Bridgwater Railway Station**, but don't catch the train home. There's a lot of beautiful country to come.

