

Explore by car



Rosebank Cottage



Sheepscombe

Painswick, the 'Queen of the Cotswolds' is well known and a must for the visitor, but an enjoyable stroll around this very attractive village can be followed by a short tour of a few of the lovely local villages in the 'Undiscovered Cotswolds'. They are situated in two steep sided valleys in an area of narrow lanes and unspoiled beauty. The narrow lanes are not suitable for large vehicles.

On leaving the Rococo Garden head downhill into the centre of Painswick where you can find a car park beyond the churchyard. Painswick is famous for its beautiful Church of St Mary's and the churchyard reputedly containing ninety-nine yew trees (the devil, it is said, will not permit one hundred). It has the oldest building in the country housing an active Post Office, the oldest Bowling Green and two fine Inns amongst its many attractions. It is a delight to stroll around the elegant and charming narrow streets. It is a village of tradition and once a year children gather in a circle around the church and join hands and sing a traditional hymn during the annual 'Clypping' ceremony. The children are rewarded with a Painswick bun and a coin after the ceremony. Traditionally the reward was 'Puppy Dog Pie', a pie in which a china dog supported the pastry. The origins of 'Puppy Dog Pie' are varied, but most are based upon a story of a group of people from Stroud visiting the village and their host having no meat for them, slaughtered his dog for the pie filling. This led to the surrounding villages adopting the derogatory Painswick 'Bow-Wows' to refer to its inhabitants.

On leaving the car park, turn immediately left down Stamages lane and follow the signs for Bull's Cross. At the crossroads turn right at Slad. Parking in the village is restricted mainly to the area either side of the Woolpack Inn. Slad is famous as the village in which the poet and author Laurie Lee spent his early years and readers of the book 'Cider with Rosie' will be familiar with the Woolpack, the old school opposite and his childhood home (Rosebank Cottage). In the book, life in the village and of his family just after the First World War is portrayed with warmth and humour and captures the atmosphere of this beautiful valley.

On leaving Slad return to Bull's Cross, the site years ago of the local gibbet. According to legend this small area of heathland is haunted by the ghostly apparition of an old stagecoach following a fatal accident at this spot. *Take the road signposted Sheepscombe and fine views open out across the valley. After one mile take the left fork down into this lovely little village.* It is difficult to imagine that during the 19c this village had a reputation for drunkenness and "riotous behaviour". It had eight unlicensed "Ale Houses" for its thirsty inhabitants who were mostly employed in local cloth manufacture. The building of a church here in 1825 and the later creation of a Sunday school helped to restore the peacefulness of today. It now possesses one charming Inn "The Butcher's Arms".

200 yards beyond the Butcher's Arms, take the right turn to Cranham and the right fork some half a mile further on. This route takes you through narrow lanes and follows the scenic Painswick Valley emerging at Cranham church. At the village of Cranham the road cuts across the ancient pasture of the Common and a short stroll up the footpath affords beautiful views of the surrounding countryside. The village has one Inn, "the Black Horse," which serves good food and ale.

Turn left at the junction of the road heading down through the village and follow to emerge on the A46 two miles north of Painswick.

