

Walk 3: Cranham, Saltridge Hill and Upper Painswick Valley (Route map- page 2)

For this walk it is necessary to drive the short distance (4 miles) to the nearby village of Cranham. The walk is approx. 4 miles (allow 2 hours) Walking boots or shoes with good grips are recommended, for the paths can become slippery when wet.

This circular walk takes you through the village of Cranham across the Common and up to the beech woods of Saltridge Hill. The route then drops to the Upper Painswick Valley following the stream past old mills and the beautiful Tocknell's Court to return to Cranham.

From the Rococo Garden entrance turn right and drive downhill to join the A46. Turn left along the A46 and follow this road in the direction of Cheltenham. After passing the Royal William Inn, take the right fork signposted Cranham. Almost immediately take the next right fork to the village. There is parking on the left, immediately prior to the village.

Walk downhill into the village and take the first turning on the right to the Black Horse Inn. The lovely traditional 17c Black Horse Inn is recognised for its good food and ales. Opposite the Inn is Midwinter Cottage where Gustav Holst who was born in nearby Cheltenham wrote the well known Christmas Carol 'In the Bleak Midwinter'.

At the Inn turn right, walking uphill, to cross the car park and enter Cranham Common.

The Common, grazed traditionally, is a wildflower haven and is home to several species of orchid. Skylarks with their spring cascade of song also revel in this environment.

Follow the track uphill to join a lane bearing right. At a small crossroads take the track opposite and on reaching some houses take the bridleway left up over the common. Follow this route bearing right to descend through a wood and emerge in a field. Here turn right then left to follow signposts uphill. Continue through the gate to single gate at the top. Turn right along this bridleway which shortly is enclosed by a wall on the left and the beech woods of Saltridge Hill on the right. Within 200 yards where four tracks converge, take the right fork to follow diagonally downhill eventually emerging between fields on a lane. Continue left along the lane to a small crossroads and take the enclosed footpath opposite leading to a gate. Follow the path down over two fields and on reaching a barn turn left to descend to the footpath alongside Painswick Stream. Turn right and follow upstream over a footbridge and between an old mill pond and a cottage. Continue upstream to the lovely Tocknell's Court which made a perfect setting for the filming of one of Thomas Hardy's 'novels. Keep an eye on the stream for grey wagtails and dippers.

Continue upstream to cross the lane and pass to the left of Eddell's Mill.

The lane here is reputed to be haunted by the ghost of Eidel the Gloucester high church official who was murdered by the Saxons and buried on the hill above at Iddell's Tump. *Follow the footpath upstream over two footbridges. Cross a field and approaching a cottage cross the stream by a further footbridge. Head uphill emerging onto a lane over a stone stile at Mann's Court. At this point take the straight track almost opposite pausing as the footpath bears left.*

Here you will find a small plaque indicating 'Gladys' Leap'. This was a dedication to the local post lady who in order to reach the farm opposite would leap over the stream below complete with her postbag. Gladys lived in the village close to the Black Horse visiting the inn each day in her retirement and putting many a rambler to shame proudly relating the mileage she used to cover on her round. Gladys' Leap has now been officially recognised as a local landmark. *Continue along the track and on reaching a large house follow the signpost left. A narrow path uphill joins the lane to Brook Farm. Follow the lane up and emerge once more on the Common to retrace your steps back to your car.*

Walk 3: Cranham, Saltridge Hill and Upper Painswick Valley



Edzell's Mill



Cranham Common

