

History and Nature You'll See on the Walks

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Manor Houses and Country Parks



William Juxon (1582–1663), the man that Charles I chose to attend to him on the scaffold and give him the last rites before his execution, retired to **Little Compton Manor** in 1649 after losing his post as Bishop of London. Whilst in residence he remodelled the south of the manor providing the symmetrical facade seen today. He was later elected the 77th Archbishop of Canterbury.



Chastleton House built between 1607 and 1612 by Walter Jones, a lawyer, was occupied by the family for almost 400 years. In 1940s Mrs Irene Winmore–Jones told visitors “We lost our money in the war”, meaning the English Civil War (1625–1649)! The family suffered for their resolute loyalty to the Stuart dynasty and as a result this unique house has survived in a time warp largely through lack of money.

Our walks through the Cotswolds will take us past these and other manor houses and there will be time to stop, to look and to discuss the history further

Civil War Battlefields



The Battle of Edgehill was the first major encounter of the English Civil War. It took place on 23 October, 1642 with approximately 12,000 men on each side. An estimated 1500 men were killed with many more wounded. Both sides claimed victory, the parliamentarians maintained they had won a tactical advantage on the field but following the battle the Royalists were free to continue their march to London unhindered.



The site of the Battle of Stow where on 21 March 1646, the last Royalist army of 3000 troops, under Sir Jacob Astley, met the Parliamentarians led by Colonel Thomas Morgan in battle on the slopes of the hill north of Stow-on-the-Wold. The Royalists retreated to the market square in Stow for the bloody defeat. With it the last hopes of the Royalist cause were shattered. Charles I surrendered a year later, on May 5th 1645 near Newark.

We will walk over the Civil War battlefields, noting the positions of each army and following their progress to the final conclusions

Honey Coloured Cotswold Stone



The characteristic honey coloured Cotswold limestone used in building is quarried locally from deposits laid down in the Jurassic era (140 to 200 Million years ago). The stone has been for construction from the stone age until today for burial chambers, manor houses, cottages, fields walls and for cities such as Oxford and Cheltenham.



During the Jurassic, when dinosaurs roamed the land, Britain was located at latitude 30°–40°N beneath a shallow tropical sea. Something like Bermuda is today.

On our walks through the Cotswold landscape we will see how this beautiful mellow stone characterises the area.

Roman Remains



Roman roads were one of the most important legacies that the Romans left for us and they are still obvious today all over the British Landscape.

Starting in 43AD they pushed their way relentlessly over thousands of miles of country along the most direct routes, slicing their way through natural features as they went. By exception, the roads passed around obstacles such as hills, to avoid the extra effort needed by heavy wagons to negotiate the rise.

The Romanised Britons (43–410AD) would have practiced a hybrid religion with local and Roman gods and goddesses.



Sulus Minerva for example was the patron goddess of the thermal springs in Bath. The Britons lived with the physical symbols of their religion, such as statues and portable altars around them and, as water sources were sacred to the Britons, a water shrine such as this would have had a guardian spirit.

On our walks through the Cotswolds we will walk along Roman roads and visit the sites of luxurious Romano-British villas.

Prehistoric Monuments



The King's Men Stone Circle, at Little Rollright, is thought to be a ceremonial place built from

large natural limestone boulders quarried within 500m of the site during the Stone Age about 2500–2000 BC.

The circle is steeped in folk law, and the story goes that a pretender to the English throne and his army were marching over the Cotswolds when they met a witch, who addressed the would be King:

*Seven long strides thou shalt take, and
If Long Compton thou canst see
King Edward of England thou be*

The King strode forward, but on his seventh stride the ground rose up in a long mound obscuring the view of the village far below. The witch then turned them all into stone, with the King overlooking Long Compton and his men in the stone circle nearby.

The Cotswolds is rich in prehistoric sites and on our walks we will see what remains of Iron Age hill forts, Bronze Age round barrows, Neolithic long barrows and standing stones.

Woodlands and Limestone Grasslands



Limestone grassland and Beech woodland today make up a small proportion of the Cotswold area and are considered to be the most important habitats to conserve.

Limestone grassland is maintained by traditional farming systems where sheep graze pastures that are rich in wild flowers, including several types of orchid, in the spring and summer.



Beech woodland is mainly found on the escarpment in the west and south of the Cotswolds. In the spring, before the leaves unfurl, the ground is carpeted with bluebells and other wild flowers of ancient woodland.

We will enjoy the beautiful colours and shapes of the wild flowers in the spring and summer, the seasonal tints of the autumn leaves and the majestic architecture of the mature trees throughout the year.
