



STEP INTO THE COTSWOLDS WALK FIVE Ramsden



Points of interest

Ramsden Village

A picturesque village of stone-built cottages and houses lying in a shallow valley, Ramsden was once deep in the heart of the Wychwood Forest. The village was one of the first areas of the forest to be cleared for settlement and was situated adjacent to Akeman Street, the Roman road linking Cirencester and St Albans. The name 'Ramsden' is thought to derive from the Old English meaning 'wild garlic valley'.

Wychwood Forest

At the time of the Domesday Book in 1086, the Royal Forest of Wychwood covered much of what is now West Oxfordshire. In 1854 an Act of Parliament was passed to clear the forest for agricultural land. In a period of only 18 months, thousands of trees were cut down and areas of woodland and heath were cleared, leaving only the present rump of woodland around Cornbury Park to the north east of Leafield. In 1997 the Wychwood Project was established to raise awareness of the history and identity of the area, and to work with local communities to restore its rich patchwork of landscapes and habitats within the forest boundaries.

Little Garden Wood

Originally planted by Lady Reilly, the wood was donated to the Woodland Trust in 1982 and since 2007, it has been managed by The Little Garden Wood Ltd. The aim of this group is to restore the wood as an amenity that the village can enjoy; this is being achieved through an ongoing programme of restoration, maintenance and improvement.

St James' Church

The church was built in 1872, from designs of A W Blomfield, well known for his work in building and restoring churches, and in particular as the architect of the great nave at London's Southwark Cathedral.



The Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

The Cotswolds is considered by many people to be one of the most beautiful areas of England – the quintessential English landscape. It is also a very special area: one of only 38 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales, it is protected by Government as being of great value to the nation. This ensures the very features that attract people are there for future generations to enjoy.

The natural qualities of the AONB are unique. Limestone gives the Cotswolds its distinctive, unified appearance, visible everywhere in buildings, walls, towns and villages, which subtly blend with their surroundings.

The Cotswolds is a place of immense diversity: rolling landscapes with breathtaking views and open skies contrast with intimate valleys, villages and pastures. Ancient beech woodlands, rare flora and limestone grasslands alternate with broad swathes of arable fields. Pre-historic hill forts are found close to the fine craftsmanship of manor houses and stone cottages.

'Step into the Cotswolds' & the Cotswolds Conservation Board

This walk, and others in the series, has been funded through money raised by the 'Step into the Cotswolds' Visitor Payback Scheme, where visitors make voluntary donations to local access and conservation projects.

The scheme is run by the Cotswolds Conservation Board in partnership with West Oxfordshire District Council and supported by Oxfordshire County Council's Countryside Service. The scheme has also been supported financially by the European Community West Oxfordshire Network Leader+ 2000-2006 programme and the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment and the Waste Recycling Group through the Landfill Communities Fund. For more information about the Visitor Payback Scheme, the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the work of the Cotswolds Conservation Board contact:

Cotswolds Conservation Board

Fosse Way
Northleach
Gloucestershire GL54 3JH
Tel: 01451 862000, Fax: 01451 862001
Email: info@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk
Website: www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk



Summary

A circular walk of 1.75 miles, starting and finishing in Ramsden village centre and exploring the surrounding countryside along the way.

This walk is part of a visitor payback scheme called 'Step into the Cotswolds' and has these waymarkers along the route.

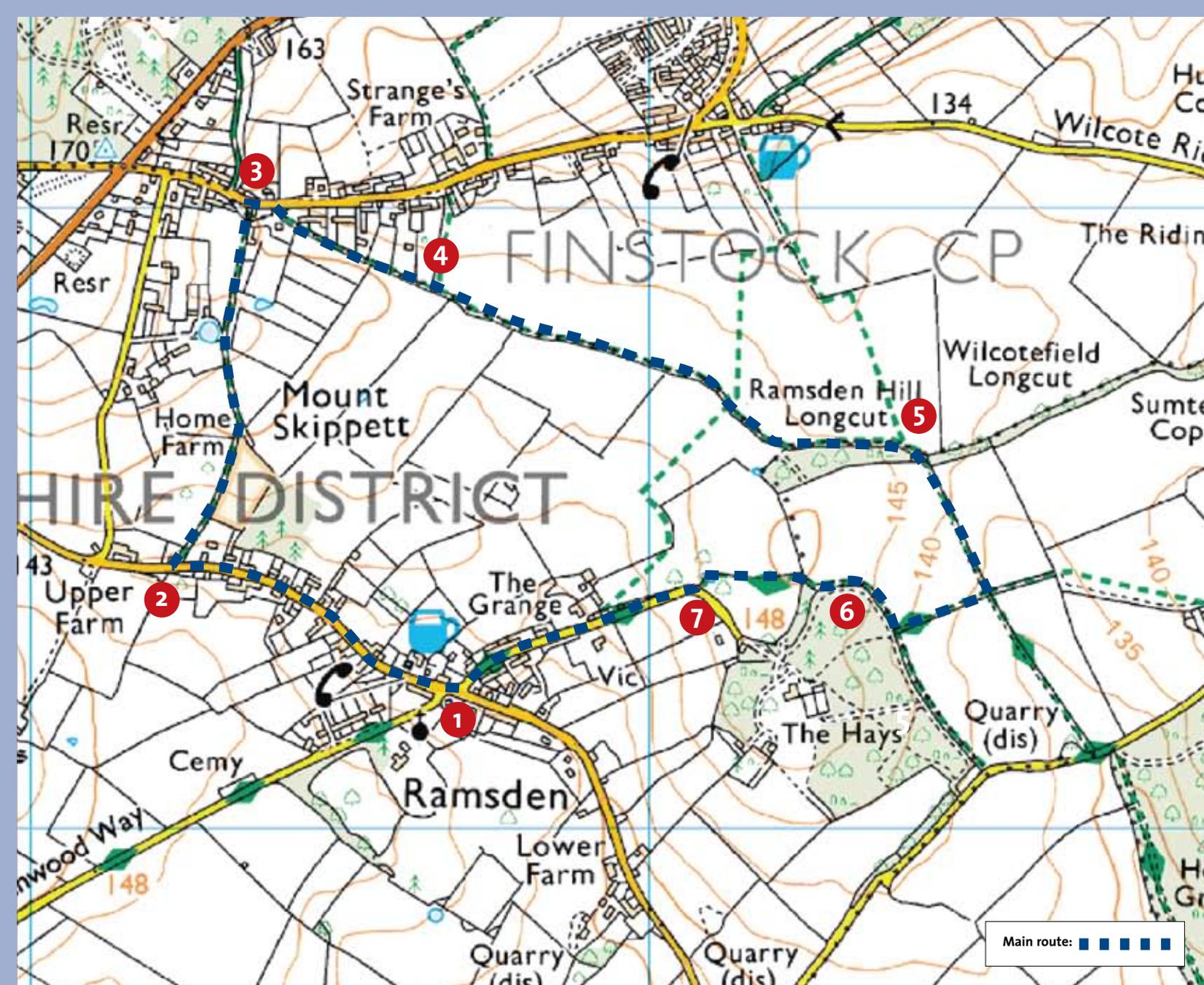


Walk Information

Start/End Point:	Ramsden memorial, village centre
Grid Reference:	SP356153
Distance:	1.75 miles (2.8 km)
Terrain:	Mainly gentle and undulating
Parking:	On street and off road by the church (except during service times)
Public Transport:	Details of bus services can be found in the 'Explore the Cotswolds by Public Transport' leaflets available from the Cotswolds Conservation Board (Tel: 01451 862000). You can download the leaflets from: www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk . They are also available at most Tourist Information Centres and libraries.
Public Toilets:	None
Refreshments:	'The Royal Oak' Public House, Ramsden



Photographs © Nick Turner. Design: www.touchmedia.uk.net



© Crown copyright - All rights reserved (100040971) 2010.



Route Description

- 1** Starting at the Ramsden Memorial in the centre of the village facing 'The Royal Oak' Public House, walk left along the High Street past the Memorial Hall and continue heading towards the outskirts of the village. After approximately 500m, leave the roadway and turn right on to the public footpath, a narrow track bordered on both sides by stone walls.
- 2** The track, with its gentle upward gradient, takes you towards the hill known as Mount Skippet. After about 100m, pass a gate on the right leading to 'Little Garden Wood'. Continue along the track, walking up the hill. You will soon reach a footpath branch; bear left, taking the wire-fenced footpath. The terrain is slightly steeper now. A little further along, pause to take a look at the pond off to your left.
- 3** Continuing along the footpath, you will soon reach a gate which leads into a field. Cross the field along its right hand edge. The footpath at the end takes you out of the field, past a building with a very low roof (take care passing it) and onto the upper end of Finstock High Street. Turn right, walking down the street for 50m and turn right again along a public footpath. Note that the sign for the footpath is set back from the roadway.

- 4** Proceed along this footpath, which for the first 250m or so, takes you past the rear of properties on the southern side of Finstock. You will pass through four gates, installed by the Cotswolds Voluntary Wardens. As you go through the fourth, the footpath branches; take the branch that continues along the right hand side of the field. Enjoy the open views to your left of the Evenlode valley and the Wychwood Forest.
- 5** After about 800m, as the field boundary that you are following bears to the right, watch out for a gap in the trees/shrubs. There you will find a waymark post. Follow the waymark arrow pointing to your right; this will take you through the gap and into a large field.
- 6** Follow the footpath across the field towards a large tree in its centre. Then take the signposted footpath to the left. Keep on this footpath, ignoring a footpath branch to the right. Instead, keep straight on, past the end of a hedgerow on your left, and generally following the direction of the overhead telephone cables that cross the field. These will lead you to a metal gate on the far side of the field.

- 7** Go through the gap by that metal gate and turn right heading down a tarmac road, past The Grange and stone cottages. After 300m, you are back in Ramsden village centre.



This walk is part of a visitor payback scheme called 'Step into the Cotswolds' and has these waymarkers along the route. →

