

11. Old Sodbury - the Hill Fort and Church

From the delightful village of Old Sodbury, follow the Cotswold Way up to the serenity of a medieval church, around oak-fringed farmland and along shaded paths to the breath-taking outcrop of an iron-age hillfort. Views, history, peace and rest all combine to make this simple little stroll a wonderful taster of the southern Cotswolds.

Distance:

2½ miles

Duration:

1½ - 2 hours

Difficulty:

Easy – no stiles, moderate slopes

Public transport:

Cotswold Green No. 29 Stroud – Yate. Visit www.traveline.org.uk or call 0871 200 2233.

Start/Finish:

Grid reference ST 753815
(OS Explorer sheet 167)
postcode BS37 6LZ.

Refreshments:

The Dog Inn, Old Sodbury
(parking available for customers only)

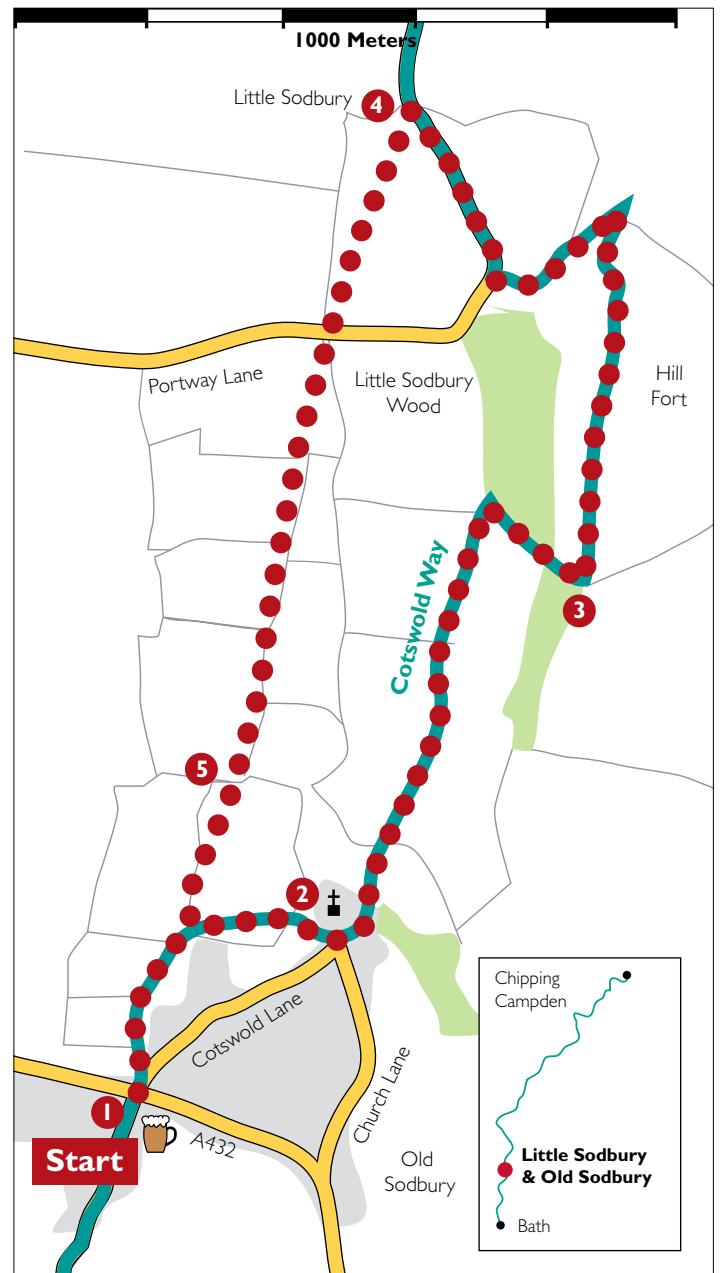
1 The ideal place to begin the walk is just opposite the Dog Inn on the main road through the village. Follow the Cotswold Way away from the road, between the houses and through a farmyard. Pass through the gate on the far side of the farmyard and head diagonally across the field towards a metal kissing gate. Turn right after the gate and head up towards the church looking down from the hill above you. After taking advantage of the bench at the top and the wonderful view over the village and far beyond, pass through the kissing gate into the calm of the

churchyard. This walker-friendly medieval church dates back to the 11th century and still provides year-round tranquillity and fascination for those with tired feet.

2 Head through the churchyard and pass through the lychgate to take the path opposite, up to the left of the village school. Continue up the path, through the kissing gate at the top and along a short fenced-in path. Pass through another gate along the bottom of a grassy slope, and take the kissing gate to the right of the majestic sycamore. Stay on the Cotswold Way around the edge of the next field, through the kissing gate at the end and take the shaded woodland path up to the right. After the path bends to the left at the top, a kissing gate gives way to the open wonder and winter views of Sodbury Camp.

3 Follow the path across the double ramparts of this fascinating bronze to Iron Age hill fort that has protected ancient tribes and Saxon armies, and even sheltered Edward IV before the decisive battle or the War of the Roses in 1471. Pass over the ramparts on the far side, and follow the path left through a kissing gate. Head down the shaded path as it forks left and bends back on itself towards an orchard at the bottom. Continue down through the orchard, and keeping a good ear out for traffic, turn right along the road at the end.

4 After 300 yards, leave the road and the Cotswold Way behind to take the kissing gate on your left and follow the path diagonally across the field. At the far corner pass through a kissing gate, across a small road and through a second gate into the next field. Pass



through a field gate and follow the path along the hedge line, over a little gated footbridge, across another field and over a second footbridge.

5 Continue across the bottom of the last field, with the village church welcoming you back from the top of the hill on your left. Rejoin the Cotswold Way at the kissing gate you left two miles before, and

retrace your steps back towards the warm and welcoming Dog Inn - the perfect end to the perfect little stroll...