

Village Links in Action

A Series of walks through Nether Stowey and neighbouring parishes

Aisholt and Pepperhill Farm Circular



Aisholt Common

11. Turn into the drive of the farm; almost immediately, turn right into a small grassy area signed "H" and then turn immediately left through a metal kissing-gate by an information board. Head up and over the grassy knoll ahead with the farm buildings on your left to reach a metal kissing-gate and stock gate. Cross the area of parkland to another gate ahead and slightly to your right, across the drive to the gate-house; climb steeply uphill to reach a large oak tree with a welcome seat carved from a fallen log. (Pause here to take a breather or even a snack).
12. Continue through the waymarked gate at the top of the hill. (Note the fine views towards Brent Knoll and the Mendips) and then, after a few yards, turn left through a waymarked kissing-gate into woodland. Follow the direction of the waymark as closely as possible as the path is indistinct; you will shortly come to a glade with mature chestnut and oak trees; turn left on the far side of this glade so the glade is on your left and wend your way carefully through rhododendron bushes and mature trees to reach a kissing-gate on the far side of the wood. (If you deviate from this route, there are several fox earths which provide a trap for the unwary!)
13. Go through another metal gate ahead to cross parkland, perhaps pausing to ascend the "throne" carved from an oak stump, to a track (Quantock Lodge will be ahead to your right) where you turn left and downhill.
14. Keep going ahead on this track (ignore a right turn), through a metal gate, up a gentle slope to another area of woodland where you turn right; go through the gate and follow a grassy track above Pepperhill Farm below on your left, across pasture which follows the contours of the hill. (There are more fine views here across the eastern slopes of the Quantocks towards Glastonbury Tor and beyond).
15. You reach a gate leading into forest, leaving Pepperhill land behind; a clear engineered track (another driveway once belonging to Quantock Lodge) continues to follow the contours of the hill above Cockercombe until you descend to a road where you turn left.
16. Go downhill to the junction, turn left again; the Forestry Office Car Park is just down on your right.

The details of this walk were correct at the time of publication but may be subject to minor changes particularly when walking over open ground or farmland. If you do have any problems or feel the directions could be clearer, please contact:- Elisabeth Woolcock on 01278 733293 or any member of Nether Stowey Parish Footpath Group

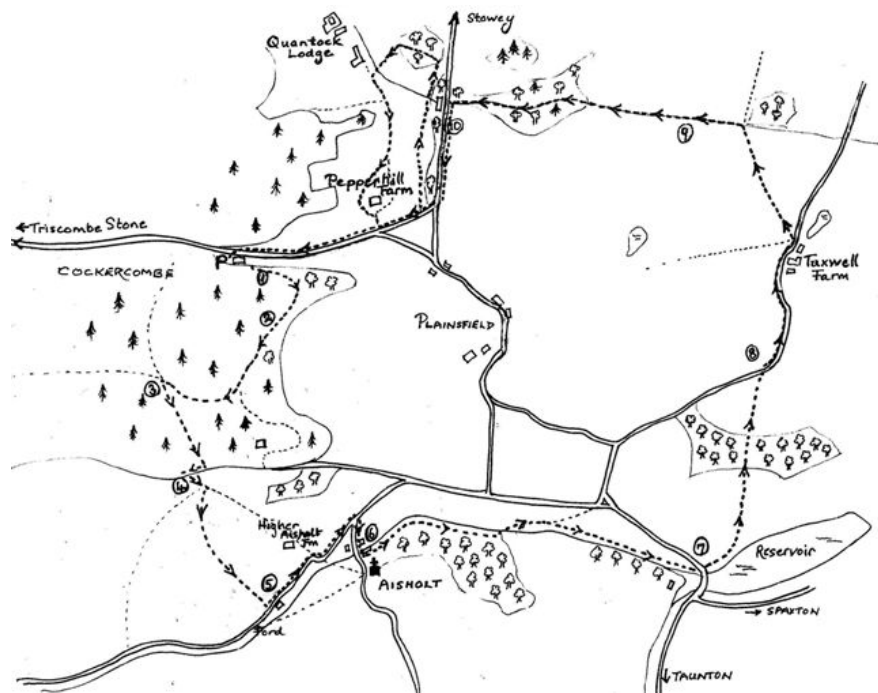
The Nether Stowey Parish Footpath Group thanks The Ramblers' Association (Sedgemoor Group) for their assistance with the funding of this project.

Length: 5.5 miles or 9 kms approx

Start: Forestry Office Car Park at Cockercombe: Grid Ref: ST 188366

Time: Allow at least three hours for this walk; more if you take a picnic.

Map: OS Explorer 140—Quantock Hills and Bridgwater



The section through Aisholt Wood can be very muddy in winter and the stream there can quickly rise above ankle height after heavy rain. Farm stock will be encountered on the walk. There are three ascents, some stiles and a short section of road walking. There is a picnic table under the trees near the Forestry Office.

1. Do not go along the road at Cockercombe, but take the broad track which leaves the back of the car park; this curves around to the right and ascends between new mixed tree plantings.
2. Continue upwards on the stony track into mature forest. (Ignore a track to your left.) Continue ahead to reach a small field or clearing in the forest where you bear right to continue to ascend along a clear timber track between conifer plantations to reach a crossroads of tracks
3. Turn left onto a broad, level track in deciduous woodland and continue ahead to meet a T-junction of tracks in front of a boundary bank below which is another track. Turn right, keeping the bank with its beech trees on your immediate left and gently ascend about 100 yards until you find a gap in the bank; go through with care onto the track below and go through the waymarked gates. You are now on Aisholt Common

4. Turn left immediately onto another broad track in front of a set of fire-beaters and, in another few yards, leave this track (which strikes off to your right) to take a grassy path through bracken; continue steeply downhill, through a stock gate, past a house on your left to reach a lane.
5. Turn left along the lane and then right at the next junction, signposted Aisholt, and descend to enter this ancient hamlet. Turn left along a waymarked bridleway immediately beyond the white-washed thatched cottage, "The Old School House". (To visit the historic church at Aisholt, simply continue up the lane for a short distance and the church is on your left; retrace your steps to resume the walk.)
6. Continue along the bridleway at the back of the cottage with a stream on your left to enter woodland and pass the two entrances to Aisholt Wood Nature Reserve, now owned by Somerset Wildlife Trust; cross the stream, go ahead for a few yards, then take the right fork in the track to traverse an engineered route, rising above the small valley below. (In times gone by, this was a turnpike linking Spaxton and Aisholt.) Continue through a gate to a road in front of the western end of Hawkridge Reservoir.
7. Cross the road to take the right of way immediately opposite; go through the gate and ascend the field with the fence on your left; go through a gateway into a second field, keeping the hedge on your left to reach a metal gate with a 'dodgy' latch; ignore the yellow footpath sign; instead, follow the blue bridleway waymark through the belt of woodland into open country with fine views ahead to the Bristol Channel and to Quantock Lodge on your left. Gently descend to a lane.
8. Turn right onto the lane and turn left downhill at the next junction; follow this past converted barn buildings on your right to Tuxwell Farm. Opposite the farm's main drive, turn left off the lane through a gate onto pasture; follow the direction indicated by the fingerpost across the field to another, waymarked gate, and bear right gently downhill to a gate and stile. Turn left onto a broad avenue of lime trees. (This drive once connected Quantock Lodge with Spaxton and Bridgwater.)
9. Continue along the drive for a good quarter of a mile until you come to a waymarked kissing-gate on your left; go through, and follow the field edge on your right to the first of two gaps ahead; go through a second kissing-gate and over a plank bridge to head straight across the pasture to a third kissing-gate by a standard oak tree; bear right to head for a fourth kissing-gate to join the road where you turn left.
10. Continue with care for a short distance along the road and turn right in the direction of Cockercombe. The drive to Pepperhill Farm is a short distance down on your right. (From here, you could simply return to the car by continuing along the lane, but an interesting finish to the walk takes you along the Countryside Stewardship Trail through Pepperhill organic farm.