

Explore Archaeology & History

Broadway Circular Walk



4 mile route (3 hours)
5 1/2 mile route (5 hours)

Ridge and furrow, a common feature of Fish Hill

BROADWAY VILLAGE HISTORY

This walk covers Broadway's earliest history. The first archaeological evidence for people using this area goes back to the Late Mesolithic, around 8000BC.

Broadway village was established during the early medieval period and had grown into a thriving market town by the 13th century. Declining fortunes over the next few centuries were later reversed by the 17th century turnpike roads and cloth trade. Most of Broadway High Street that you see today was built during the 16th–18th centuries, with several notable buildings surviving from the 14th century.

This leaflet was produced by Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service and funded by Worcestershire County Council Divisional Fund, Wychavon Chairman's Charity, Cotswold Conservation Board, Farncombe Hotel and Morris & Brown. If you have any feedback, please contact: info@cotswoldsaoanb.org.uk

Thank you to our sponsors for making this leaflet freely available:



© Morris & Brown Café



© Farncombe Estate

8. There is currently a closed footpath that is due to be re-routed. Please be aware that the only current route to pass the archaeological sites below involves two roads without footpaths. You can either continue on, or turn right and walk up to the High Street to end your walk. If you are carrying on, cross the road and continue down the path opposite, into the field beyond. Cross the stream and carry straight on to West End Lane. Turn right and stop at the site entrance immediately on your right.

An excavation in 2016-17 of this flood alleviation field revealed evidence of Mesolithic hunter-gatherers, Bronze Age activity, a series of large rectangular Iron Age enclosures and the edge of a Roman settlement. A display of finds from here will go on display in Broadway Museum.



An Early Bronze Age beaker found during the excavations in 2016

9. Continue along the lane until it ends at the Cheltenham Road (B4632). Turn right and walk until you reach houses on both sides, taking care of any traffic.

The area to the north-west (left) of the main road was excavated during the 1940s, which uncovered occupation dating from the Bronze Age to pre-Conquest Anglo-Saxon era. This area lies along the Badsey Brook as well, although on the opposite bank to the recent excavation - the brook was the lifeblood of Broadway's ancient past.

Just as we separate village from countryside, to the many communities who have inhabited this landscape over time, the hills and plain below probably held different meanings and uses.

10. At the T junction turn right to reach the High Street and Tudor House (Broadway Museum & Art Gallery).

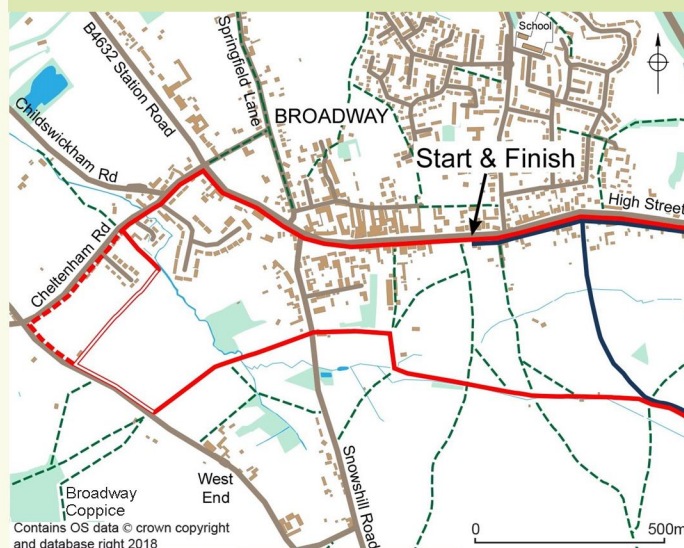
Tudor House is the site of one of England's earliest purpose built coaching inns, The Angel, on the Ludlow to London route.

6. Continue down the hill, crossing straight over two ridge and furrow (bumpy) fields before reaching a gap in an old hedge line with a waymarker signing several paths. For the blue (shorter) route follow the Cotswold Way slightly right towards the village; for the red (longer) route head slightly left to a track leaving the field at the bottom left hand corner. Keep straight on in this direction for several fields until a path branches off right, towards a stone bridge over the stream.

You are crossing the Badsey Brook, a tributary of the River Avon. The brook is a key reason why so much archaeology is found in Broadway, as people have lived along these banks for millennia. The stream not only provides fresh water and fish – it is also an ancient highway, much faster to navigate than overland.

7. Once across the stream walk straight on for some 100m, until you reach a path turning left through a gate. Take this path and, avoiding the footpath immediately on your right, carry straight on to the junction with Snowhill Road.

Next to you is St Michael's Church. The chapel and church you see today are 17th and 19th century respectively. However, it's thought that Broadway formed over 1/2 mile south of today's centre around a much earlier church, possibly predating the Norman Conquest. That church may have been less visible in the landscape than St Michael's, as early churches tended to have modest towers, if at all.



Contains OS data © crown copyright and database right 2018

WALK INFORMATION

Blue route — 4 miles

Red route — 5 1/2 miles

Please take care during the walk, particularly crossing roads and during wet weather when the paths will be slippery.

You may encounter livestock in some fields, please shut gates behind you and keep dogs on the lead in these fields. We hope you enjoy the walk!

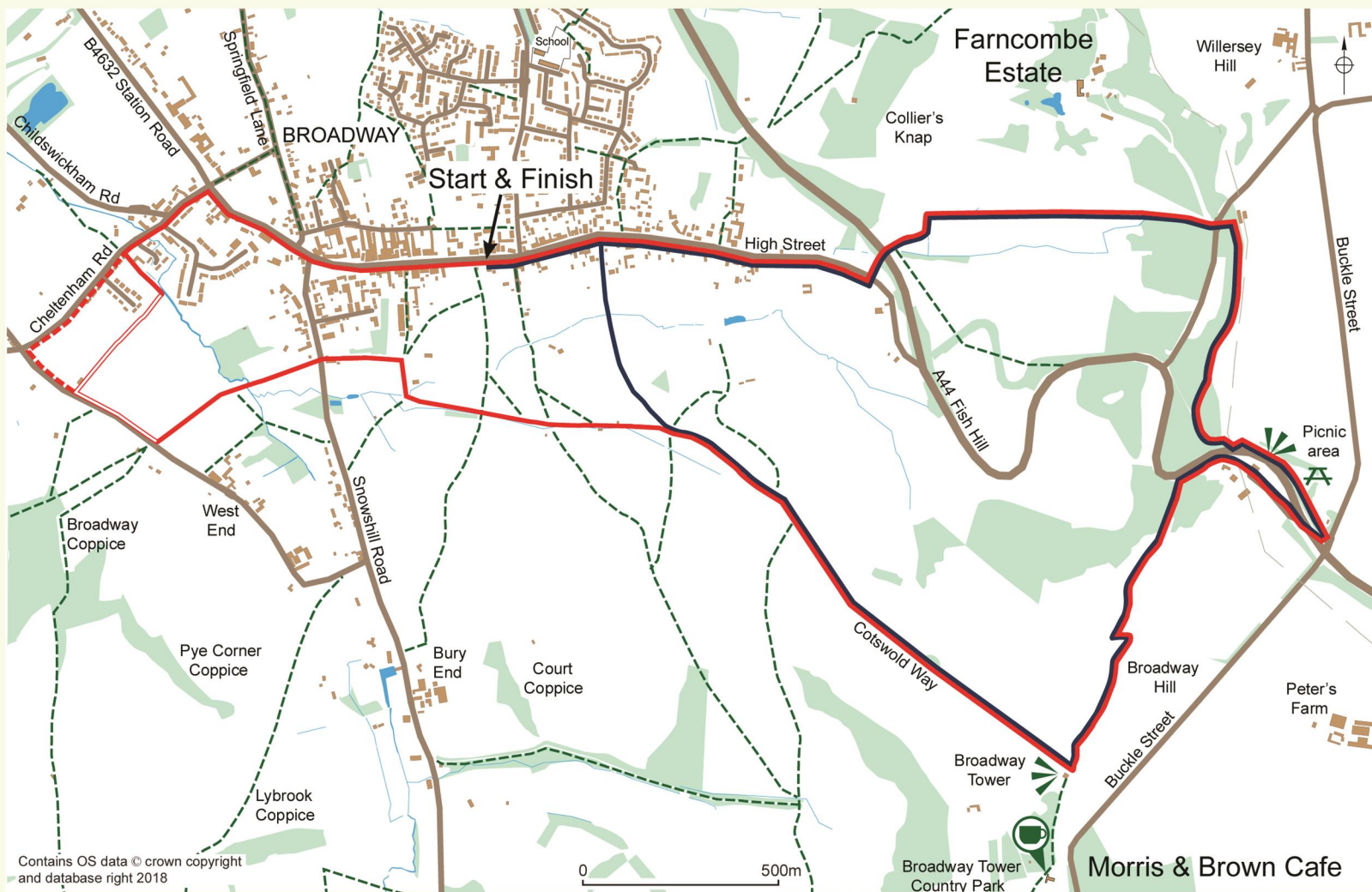
1. Turn right out of the museum (Tudor House) and walk up the High Street, continuing beyond the mini roundabout to a turning circle. A short way beyond take the footpath to the left, through a yard and under the A44. Follow the track straight on, signposted to Chipping Campden, as it curves up the hill. After about 200m the footpath branches off on the right and then runs almost straight and uphill through fields.

Long ridges and dips cross the fields you're walking and over to the right. These earthworks are the remains of medieval ploughing, known as ridge and furrow. Even steep hillsides were ploughed as the medieval population expanded and demanded more food, but many such fields were abandoned following the Black Death of 1348-9. The remnant earthworks now provide valuable drained, drier ground for animals.



© Mike Glyde

Aerial photo of Iron Age enclosure cropmarks south of the Badsey Brook—this site was excavated in 2016-17 (see section 8)



Contains OS data © crown copyright and database right 2018

2. After several fields the footpath meets the Farncombe Estate Road at a junction. Cross the road, bearing slightly left, and climb up a steep path through the woods. The footpath turns right and levels off along the side of the hill, before becoming mixed with a tangle of small paths - keep walking in the same general direction.

Deep hollows in this recently wooded area are the scars of post-medieval quarrying. Stone quarried from here probably built much of the Broadway village you still see today.

3. When you get near to the edge of the woods and the A44, look for a path up the hill that will bring you out of the trees to a viewpoint and the Fish Hill picnic site. Stop when you reach the marked viewing point.

North of the viewpoint, on the hill line edge, lies a Neolithic long barrow that contained the remains of ancestors buried 5000 years ago. Over 2000 years later, an Iron Age community chose the same spot to build a defensive hillfort settlement, which probably fell out of use just before the Romans built Ryknild Street alongside it – the straight road to your east, Buckle Street, still lies along this ancient route.

Behind the viewpoint lay an Anglo-Saxon cemetery, discovered and excavated during quarrying in the 1950s. Five of the eight 5th- 6th century burials contained grave goods, typically weapons and jewellery, and all were adults under the age of 40 – disease and infection often made life much shorter then.

- Proposed new footpath
- Alternative route (see step 8)
- Footpath
- Viewpoint
- Morris & Brown Café
- Picnic area & public toilets

4. Continue to a picnic site (with good public facilities), and turn right to join the Cotswold Way. The Way leads across the A44, then turns right for about 50m before bearing slightly left past the entrance to the former quarry and Old Fish Inn. Follow the Cotswold Way markers through the wood and across the scarp towards Broadway Tower and Morris & Brown Café, just beyond.

There are several earthen banks and drystone walls amongst the trees. These forgotten land boundaries were built in the last few hundred years, but may follow older divisions. As you emerge from the trees, the deep grooves are again post-medieval quarrying scars.

5. The Cotswold Way turns sharply right by a gate to Broadway Tower and continues straight down the hill, through four fields to a viewpoint with several benches.

Stop and look out at a landscape shaped during the last Ice Age. Turn back the clock and imagine the scattered settlements shrinking in size, hearth smoke curling up as the land becomes gradually more wooded. Down by the stream that runs past Broadway were once clusters of Bronze Age, then Iron Age and Roman houses and farmsteads. Since the Mesolithic 10,000 years ago, this has always been a good place to live. Look across to Bredon Hill where Iron Age people also surveyed this land from their hillfort, over 2000 years ago.