

JUBILEE WALK MILES WITHOUT STILES

King's Stanley to Ebley Mill

A series of Cotswolds walks to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012



See how the Stroud canal is being renewed for the 21st century. Walk across fields and take the towpath past locks, mills, and handsome new waterside housing. There's birdlife too.

Distance: 5.8 km/3½ miles, 35m down at the start and up at the end, otherwise level.

Time: 2 hours

Start: King's Stanley (near Stroud) playing fields free car park near the King's Head. SO 812/035
The number 14 bus stops nearby. The King's Head inn also has a coffee shop and there are shops in the village.

Route:

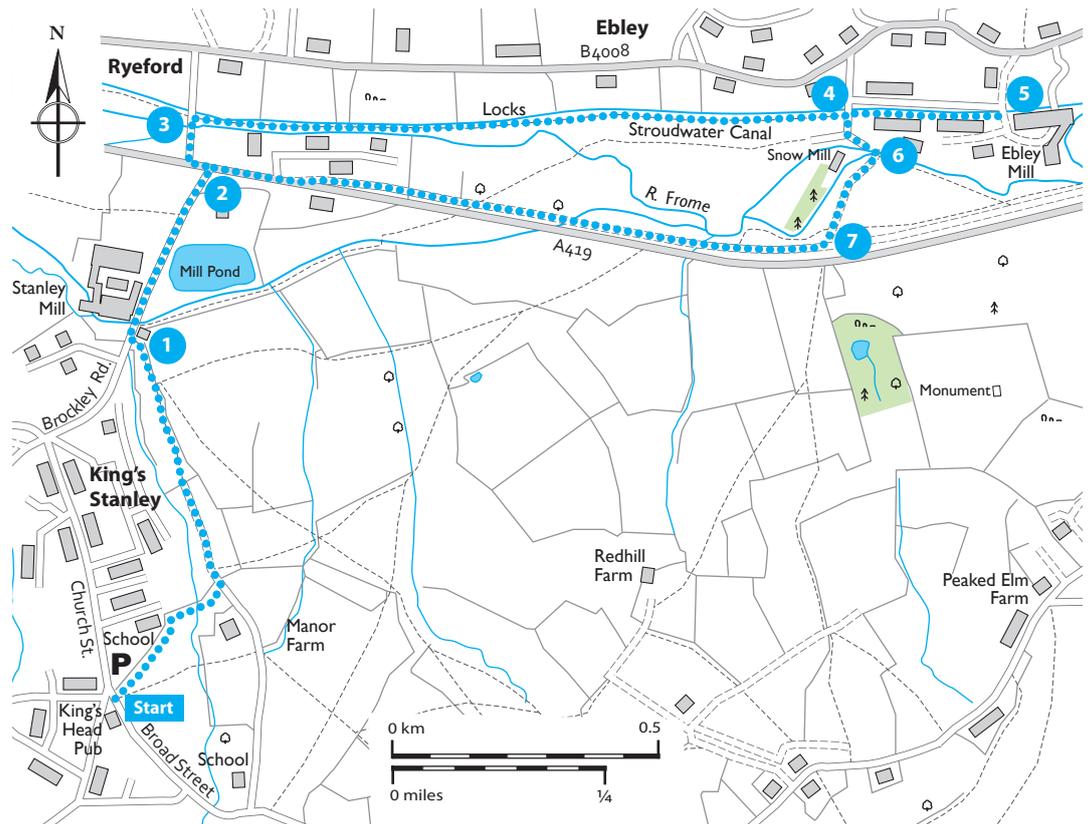
With the pavilion and ballgames court on your left, walk along the edge of the playing field towards the left-hand floodlight pole. To the right of the pole a waymark post leads you down 20 steep wooden steps to cross a footbridge.

Turn left to head down the steps, over the footbridge and uphill. At the next gate, turn left through a gate to join the Cotswold Way.

Go uphill and bear left, ignoring a gate on your left labelled 'Cafe, shops'. At the next gate turn left following the Cotswold Way signs that will guide you all the way to the canal.

Cross a grassy field chewed up by horses (good view of Stanley Mill chimney ahead) down to a gate onto the road by Old Brook House **1**.

(Alternatively, from the war memorial opposite the King's Head take Church



Street and Brockley Road (traffic) down to Old Brook House **1**.

Cross the road, turn right and continue along the Cotswold Way, past Stanley Mill, to the pedestrian controlled traffic lights across the busy A419 road at Ryeford **2**.

Cross the road and turn left up a ramp into Ryeford Road and walk uphill to the canal bridge **3**.

Turn right down the slope onto the towpath. Follow the towpath past the swingbridge and double locks to Oil Mills Bridge **4**.

Continue to the next bridge **5**, leaving the towpath to follow the road right to inspect Ebley Mill. Return to the towpath and back to the old Oil Mills Bridge **4**.

Leave the towpath and follow the road to the right, turning left before "Snow Mill" onto a footpath and right across a footbridge **6** by a sluice and through a kissing gate.

Turn right to follow "Lane's Siding" footpath by the River Frome and across the water meadow to a kissing gate onto the old railway line **7** (If the meadow is

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waterlogged you can keep you feet dry by returning to the canal, turning left onto the towpath and going back the way you came).

This is now a tarmac cycle track beside the A419. Turn right and follow the cycle track through the Community Orchard to the second set of traffic lights at Ryeford **2**.

Turn left across the A419 and return towards King's Stanley. After the mill, cross the road **1** to retrace your steps via the Cotswold Way.

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Life returns to a derelict waterway

Stroudwater Canal is being restored. For now it is just a long pond, of great historical interest, finding a new use for old mills and a pleasant setting for new houses. The canal is full of wildlife: kingfishers, swans, herons, egrets, moorhens and coots. And wildflowers have attracted a range of butterflies.



Stanley Mill, mentioned in the Domesday Book, is still a cloth mill. There'll be new houses here, but cloth production will continue.



This double lock lies on the boundary of two parishes, so the address of the lock keeper's cottage was "Nowhere, Ryeford, Glos." Restoration of this stretch will be completed by installing new gates.



The Quay development was designed to fit in with the canal era. Some buildings are restored, others are new.

Why this snowflake at an old oil mill?



Because it is now a snow mill, where they make artificial snow for Harry Potter and other films. See the notice on the towpath. The grounds of the mill are designed to attract wildlife.



Ebley Mill

A local steam train called the Dudbridge Donkey ran for 100 years from Stonehouse to Nailsworth on the track you take after point 7. It has long since stopped running. But the name lives on, thanks to a Nailsworth brewery.

