

SHAW CUM DONNINGTON

PARISH WALKS

Website: shawcumdonnington.org.uk

WALK 1 DONNINGTON CASTLE TO BAGNOR

3 miles 2 hrs. Easy.

Free parking at Donnington Castle car park.



With your back to the Donnington Castle car park and the castle in front of you, follow the public footpath sign to the left with the castle up to your right, through Castle Wood. You come out of the woodland and take the footpath to the left along the edge of the golf course down to a turning to the right where you cross the bridge over the A34.

At the end of the bridge turn left along the tarmac path which ends at a kissing gate taking you into Bagnor village. Turn right along the

path and continue past the Blackbird Pub until you come to a footpath sign just before the bridge. Turn right here, following the path between two houses.

(If you have time it is worth a 15 minute diversion to look around the grounds of the very beautiful Watermill Theatre which is signposted and 5 minutes' walk away.)

Through the kissing gate continue gently uphill through the open fields to the bench at the top of the path with sweeping views over the Lambourn Valley. Then go through another kissing gate into a small copse. Turn left onto the path through the trees which takes you to Ashpiece Copse and to the Snelsmore Common Country Park.

Just before a wooden fence there is a green footpath sign with a kissing gate on your right. Go through the gate and follow the path through the woods, keeping the wire fence on your left. This is a very pretty part of the walk as the path winds gradually upwards through the woods to another kissing gate. Go through the gate leaving the woods behind you. Follow the grassy track straight onto a public bridleway.

Turn right and continue over open high ground with fields on the left and the golf course on your right. The bridleway turns into a tarmac track and you can see the bypass ahead of you. Follow the path as it takes you down to a footpath over the bypass. As you cross you can see the bridge you crossed earlier in the walk on your right.

Continue straight on, up a short steep slope. Turn right passing the old barn on your left, with Donnington Castle directly in front of you. Continue straight on to a farm gate and walk towards the castle. A swing gate on the right

takes you into surrounds of Donnington Castle where a path heads down the steep slope to the car park.

Donnington Castle is a 14th Century ruined castle overlooking the Lambourn Valley in an important strategic position commanding the crossing of major north-south and east-west routes

In the Civil War Charles I in 1643 dispatched Sir John Boys, with 200 foot soldiers, 25 cavalry and sufficient cannon to resist a siege, to take possession of Donnington from the



Parliamentarian John Packer. Between 1644 and 1646 the castle was attacked many times, twice being relieved by the king in person. Only when the Royalist cause appeared hopeless did Boys surrender to the

Parliamentarian troops, after first obtaining the king's permission to do so. [English Heritage]

Donnington Pubs:

The Three Horseshoes 01635 569007
The Castle 01635 40615

Bagnor Pub

Blackbird 01635 40638

WALK 2 CEMETERY THROUGH FIELDS TO ASHMORE GREEN AND BACK

3.2 miles, 2 hours-ish. Easy



Start at the top of the left-hand branch of Highwood Close, just where it turns from a road into a path.

Then walk down the close to the main road (Long Lane). Turn left onto Long Lane, past the black wrought iron gates of the cemetery on your right, then turn right at the Public Footpath sign at the top of the cemetery, down the narrow footpath.

This emerges onto the end of Pear Tree Lane. Turn left and carry on until you see a

ramshackle house on the right. Take the narrow mud track to the left of the gate to this house. Follow this path past the side of the house until you come to the stile. Over the stile continue on the footpath with Messenger Wood on your right to the top right-hand corner of the first field. When the woods finish you enter an open field and walk up the middle on an increasing incline towards the stile/gate visible at the top of the mound ahead of you. Over the stile carry on along the fenced path which brings you onto Stony Lane.

Turn left along Stony Lane past the sign for Ashmore Green and on until you see The Sun in the Wood pub. This is a good pub with garden, charming playground, free reading glasses (!) and food at reasonable prices.

A few yards past the pub, at the edge of the small woods on your left, turn left at the Public Footpath sign down a rather overgrown path, over the stile and continue along with Weavers Woods on your left and open fields to the right until you come to a wooden bridge and public footpath sign.

Cross the bridge into a field and follow the clear path opposite the bridge through tall corn (in the summer), past a right of way sign on a wooden post where you follow the path as it bears round to the left. You come to a metal gate on your left and a Public Footpath sign pointing to the right. Follow this sign onto a track bounded by a barbed wire fence on its left. This turns into a tarmac track which takes you to the main road (Long Lane).

Turn left onto Long Lane and past a few houses until you see on your right attached to a telegraph pole a sign to Stable Cottage. Red

Farm House and public footpath. Take this path past wooden gates on your right and through the fields, looking to 11 o'clock you can see Red Farm House.

Walk towards Red Farm House with Smiths Row Copse visible to your right. As you approach the entrance to Red Farm House follow the path round to the left and opposite the wooden gate you see a small gate with a Bridleway sign. Turn left through this small gate and continue keeping to the right with views over Newbury ahead of you. Looking to your left past the main road is Mousefield Farm with Mousefield Copse behind it and a phone mast to the left of the farm.

After two fields, as you come to the end of the hedge, you see a Public Right of Way sign on a wooden post. Take the path to the right of this post through the trees into an open field. Continue with the hedgerow on the right, following the path as it continues through woody bushes on either side and past a dilapidated concrete bunker on the left. This then joins a wider track with barn conversion Walnut Cottage on the right.

Continue down this track until you come to the top of Highwood Close where your car is parked.

Pub:

The Sun in the Wood 01635 42377