

Avalon Marshes Heritage Walks: Glastonbury Tor to the Old Oaks Hills & Hedgerows



**One of a series of circular heritage walking routes in
the Avalon Marshes of Somerset.**

A moderate 3.5 mile (5.5 km) walk which takes in some fine views
from the top of the Tor, then visits the old oaks, Gog and Magog, and
some ancient hedgerows along Stone Down Lane.



- A** **Glastonbury Tor** is a natural hill formed from hard sandstone; prehistoric human activity has been discovered at the site but there are many unanswered questions about its significance and potentially man made terraces. Since Saxon times several buildings have been erected on the Tor including an original wooden church that was destroyed by an earthquake in 1275; the remains of the 14th century St Michael's tower still stands at the top of the Tor.
- B** It is possible that there has been a settlement at **Wick** since Roman times and maybe even before that; roman pottery sherds have been found within the area. The place name Wick is associated with, and probably derived from, the Latin word Vicus which meant neighbourhood in ancient Rome.
- C** **Gog and Magog** are two ancient oak trees which are thought to be over 2000 years old and they once formed part of an avenue of oaks that led up to the Tor. The names Gog and Magog appear in the Old Testament as well as the Qur'an and they sometimes represent individuals, peoples, and geographic regions
- D** **Norwood Park** was the largest of the Abbey deer parks and in 1535 was recorded to have 800 deer; there was an Abbot's residence called the Lodge that was built about 1480 by Abbot Selwood and part of it survives within Norwood Park Farm. Many of the lanes leading to Norwood are medieval or earlier and the Abbots of Glastonbury may well have walked them
- E** The remains of **Ponter's Ball** stand up to 3.5 metres high and 10 metres wide. It is possible that this linear earthwork began in either the Iron or Saxon age, but it is considered too easy to bypass to be a defensive structure and is generally considered to be a territorial boundary. The name Ponter's Ball could be a corruption of "pontis vallum" which is Latin and means "the bridge over the ditch."
- F** The hedgerows along **Stone Down Lane** are hundreds of years old; you can guess at their age using Hooper's rule, which estimates the approximate age of a hedge by counting the number of woody species per 30 yard (27m) stretch. The number of species is approximately equal to the age of the hedge in centuries. Local quarries around Glastonbury Tor produced Torr Burr, also known as rubble stone, which was only useful for building general rubble walls which would have then been rendered with lime mortar.
- G** **Chalice Well** is a chalybeate spring, also known as a ferruginous spring, which gains its legendary red waters from iron oxide deposits; throughout history people have visited the well to take the metallic tasting water for its reputed healing properties. **The White Spring** is a sweet tasting limewater spring which is full of calcium salts; it does not have the same distinctive red colour of Chalice Well but instead leaves a white deposit. It is also reputed to have healing properties and has been visited for this reason for centuries.

More information about this walk and others can be found at
www.avalonmarshes.org

Acknowledgements:

Special thanks to the many local volunteers who have been involved in the surveying of walking routes across the Avalon Marshes.

More routes can be found in 'Glastonbury Footpath Walks' (2003) by the Glastonbury Conservation Society available at local Tourist Information Centres.

Feedback:

If you would like to comment on this walk route, please contact us at:

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Specific footpath faults should be reported to Somerset County Council.

The Walk: Begins close to the Chalice Well in Chilkwell Street, but could also start from the various camp sites adjacent to the route. Parking and other facilities are available in Glastonbury town centre.

- 1 From Chilkwell Street turn left into Well House Lane and immediately right taking the steep climb up to the Tor.
- 2 Take the concrete path down on the south side of the tower (marked in red on the map), follow this to Stone Down Lane, turn right onto the road but beware of fast moving traffic
- 3 At the blind right-hand bend (signed Shepton/Glastonbury), turn left into the lane, marked as National Cycle Network 3.
- 4 About 250m further on take the gated permissive footpath on the left between two field gates (can be very muddy); at the end of the path turn right and follow the hedgerow downhill
- 5 As you come down the hill, look for the old oaks, Gog and Magog; when you reach the path alongside the camp site, you can make a quick detour by turning left to view the old oaks, otherwise turn right, and then cross Stone Down Lane again to follow the footpath through the fields (which again can be muddy)
- 6 Pause to spot Ponter's Ball in the distance; then turn right into the lane which passes Glastonbury Spring Water works.

- 7 Follow the lane until you reach the National Trust gate on the right; climb the stile and head to the right, around the base of the hill and keeping the hedgerow on your right.
- 8 Eventually you reach Stone Down Lane again; turn left and head uphill. From here, you can retrace your steps to the Tor, or follow Well House Lane down to the White Spring to the start point, but be mindful of passing vehicles.



THE AVALON MARSHES WALKERS' CODE

1. Keep to the right of way to avoid trespass (droves are not rights of way unless shown as such on the map). If the path is obstructed you should seek a reasonable route around the obstruction.
2. Leave gates and property as you find them.
3. Keep dogs under close control at all times, and on a lead around farm animals and wildlife. However, if cattle chase you and your dog, it is safer to let your dog off the lead.
4. Where the route takes you onto a road, make sure you can be seen by traffic and be especially careful when approaching blind bends, using the verge wherever possible.
5. The marshes can be very muddy at times, so always make sure you wear appropriate footwear and clothing.
6. Respect the local community and other people enjoying the countryside, and take your litter home.

