

Ross on Wye Walkers are Welcome

Bridstow Walk

A circular and mostly flat stile-free walk, crossing the River Wye at Wilton using footpaths and lanes to Bridstow Church. Includes a loop around Wilton Castle. Views to Ross, May Hill, Penyard Hill and Chase Hill.

Start: Wilton Road, Ross on Wye, HR9 6AQ

Parking: Park at the Wilton Road public car park.

Grid Ref: SO 592240.

Maps: OS map; Explorer 189

Distance: 4 miles. Allow 2 hours. **Grade:** Leisurely, no stiles, Can be muddy in places after heavy rain.

Toilets: Public toilets on Wye Street, close to the river, next to the bandstand.



Wilton Castle is privately owned, so cannot be explored.

1. From the car park cross the road and turn left to cross Wilton Bridge, *built in 1597. The six-arched red sandstone bridge was completed in 1600 and was a toll bridge linking Wilton to Ross-on-Wye. Note the interesting pillar sundial, built in 1712.*



Just after the bridge, take the signed public footpath on the right onto the riverbank.

Continue for a few yards to go over a footbridge to the right. At the end of the footbridge go through a kissing gate and turn sharp left keeping the ruined castle walls on the left to reach another footbridge.

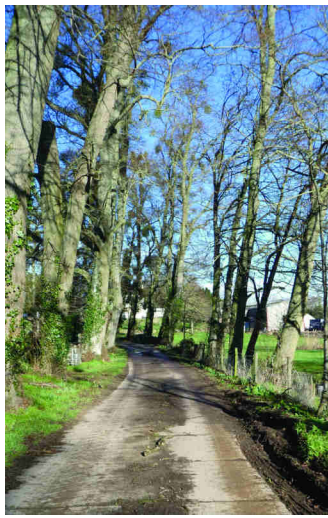
3. Cross the footbridge and continue uphill parallel with the castle walls to meet a metal kissing gate on the left. Go through the gate onto a footpath, keeping the hedge on the left until meeting the entrance gates for the Castle. Cross over the Castle drive, through a metal kissing gate into the grounds of The Bridge House. Keeping the retaining wall for the houses on the right, walk towards Bridge House and through the car park to Wilton Road.



2. Keep to the left and pass through a wooden gate adjacent to the grounds of Wilton Castle. *Wilton Castle is a 12th-century Norman castle built on a site that commanded views of two roads and the river and was one of many that served to police the Anglo-Welsh border. The castle was finally destroyed in 1642 when it was set on fire during the English Civil War, a period that saw skirmishes and sieges locally at Goodrich Castle, Ruardyn Castle and Raglan Castle.*



4. Turn right and head to Wilton Roundabout and the A40. Cross the A40 via the Toucan Crossing turn right and after a few yards enter Benhall Lane on the left. Walk along Benhall Lane, bearing left away from the dual carriageway, and continue to Benhall Farm. Proceed along the concrete drive to the farm and through the farmyard to the fields above the farm.



5. Follow the footpath uphill along the right-hand side of the dividing fence between two fields. The footpath leaves the line of the fence (which bears slightly left) and continues uphill across the field to a metal pedestrian gate at the top of the hill. Good views of all the hills surrounding Ross. Continue down the hill across a second field through a metal kissing gate and continue straight to a large metal field gate onto the road. Turn right onto the road and after 200 yards reach a T-junction.

6. Turn left at the junction to follow the road, passing several houses on the right and continuing downhill and then up and passing small housing estates at Ashe Green and Claytons on the left. At the bottom of the hill the lane turns sharp right to meet the Hoarwithy Road at Pool Mill.

7. Turn left onto the Hoarwithy Road, go over Pool Mill Bridge and just after the bus stop turn left through a metal kissing gate. Continue along this footpath to Bridstow Church and cross the road into the churchyard. The 14th-century church is believed to stand on the site of an original wattle and daub Welsh church and later an 11th-century Norman church.



St Mary's Bridstow was founded in the 12th Century. The tower dates from the late 14th century and is the only part which is original, the rest of the church having been rebuilt in 1862. The chancel arch, the east window and two arches built into the north wall of the chancel were recycled from the earlier building.

8. Pass through Bridstow churchyard to a wooden kissing gate and into a field and continue through a pedestrian gate to a metal gate giving access to the Benhall Farm drive. Turn right and retrace your steps along Benhall Lane and over the Toucan Crossing to Ross on Wye. On reaching waypoint 4 the direct route along the pavement back to the car park can be followed or the path around the Wilton Castle loop retraced by turning left into the car park of The Bridge House.



