

ROUTE 3: Monarch's Way

*Around Kingley Vale, in the footsteps of King Charles II
and into the fields of Stoughton Valley.*

8 miles | allow 4 hours | steep climbs

1. Cross the road outside the Horse & Groom and turn left. Continue along the pavement and turn right onto Stoke Road. Past the houses on the left and opposite the flint cottages dated 1700 turn into Stoke Woods and follow the footpath north. Turn right at the first turning and then straight on at the bridleway crossroads.

2. Upon reaching the exit onto the road turn left and left again over to Kingley Vale car park (take care on the road). Go through the gate at the far end of the car park and follow the track. You will soon see the wooded slope of Kingley Vale Nature Reserve ahead of you. After $\frac{3}{4}$ mile you will arrive at a gate on the edge of the reserve.

3. Outside the gated entrance to Kingley Vale Nature Reserve, turn right and continue to follow the bridleway skirting the edge of the reserve until you reach a crossroads. Turn left to follow the path with a gentle uphill climb. Continue north as the path becomes a little steeper. At the top of Bow Hill, continue straight on for approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ mile until you reach a crossing where several paths meet.

4. Turn left onto Monarch's Way and enjoy a short section of the escape route taken by King Charles II in 1651 after being defeated in the Battle of Worcester. You will enjoy open fields of Stoughton Valley as you descend through the farmyard. At the end of the path, turn left onto Stoughton Road.

5. Follow the road through the village. The Hare and Hounds is a nice place to stop for a rest and St Mary's Church, built in the eleventh century and mentioned in the Domesday book, is worth a visit.

6. Keeping St Mary's on your right, continue along the road. After 200 yards there is a turning on your left between the houses. Follow the bridleway sign. The path begins with a gentle uphill climb, after 400 yards there is a memorial to a Polish fighter pilot. Continuing on this path a steep climb is rewarded by spectacular views.

7. Continue on this path following the edge of the field and keeping the woods on your left. As the hill starts to slope downwards, keep to the left at the end of the field and follow the path through the yews of Kingley Vale. When you get to the bottom turn left at the corner of the reserve and then right to return to the Kingley Vale car park and retrace your earlier steps back to the Horse & Groom.

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