

Stinchcombe Heritage Walk

This is a 1¼ mile (2 km) circular route that includes many of Stinchcombe's listed buildings and other landmarks. Visit the [Our Virtual Village](#) pages on the Parish website for related articles – we're adding new material all the time.

The route uses public footpaths and roads, including some stretches without a pavement. There are some stiles and one fairly steep uphill section.

You are very welcome in our village, however, we kindly request that you:

- *respect the privacy of the occupants of private homes*
- *stick to the footpaths and keep dogs on leads to protect livestock*
- *leave no litter and clear up after your dog if you bring one*

Start and Finish: Village Hall Car Park

Nearest refreshments: Leaf & Ground 750 metres away on the B4060 towards Dursley

Public transport: Stagecoach No. 60 Dursley-Thornbury service stops by Village Hall

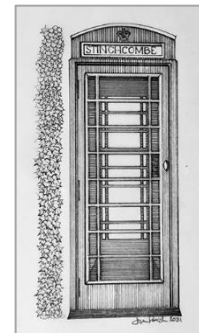


Stinchcombe Village Hall

In the car park take a moment to look at the **Village Hall (1)** which opened in 1955 after prolonged fundraising led by the formidable Miss Hooper, prompting some locals to nickname it Hooper's Hall. Thanks to the tireless efforts of committee members over the years, it has continued to be central to village life.

Leaving the car park by the right-hand exit, cross The Street and continue right to the disused K6 **telephone box (2)**, purchased by the Parish Council in 2017 and recently refurbished. On the back wall is a large-scale copy of the route map and leaflets for other local walks and cycle rides are available.

Re-cross the road and continue in the same direction to view **Combe House (3)** on your left.



Phone Box



Combe House

This former farmhouse, built in 1764, was associated with **Street Farm**, whose converted barn now bears that name. Street Farm was mixed arable and livestock and had walled gardens across the road, where the houses of Coombe Gardens now stand. Mid-C20 Coombe House was occupied by Lady Maria Bowlby, mother of the well-known child development psychologist, John Bowlby. It was frequently the venue for Berkeley Hunt meets in her day.

Next is **The Old Post Office (4)**, built end on to the road. The 1881 census first mentions its use as a post office. Sub-Postmaster Isaac Woodward and his wife Mary, who were there for decades, ran a grocer's shop on the same site. Young Thomas Fussell, who bought the business in 1924 using the savings of his postman father, was less successful and soon went bankrupt.



The Old Post Office

Continue walking past attractively converted farm buildings and a restored farmhouse. There were once at least thirteen farms in Stinchcombe. Nearing the post box, you are opposite the driveway of **Melksham Court (5)** of which there will be a distant view later.



Melksham Court

There has been a house on the site since the time of David de Melkesham, Vicar of Berkeley 1349-1368. The Tyndale family lived there for centuries and it was possibly the birthplace of William Tyndale, translator of the Bible into English, martyred in 1536. The present house was built after the English Civil War - local folklore says that Thomas Tyndale watched from a yew tree as his home was burnt down by Royalist soldiers in 1645. A more

recent occupant was businessman Sir Maxwell Joseph, founder of the Grand Metropolitan hotel group. Persistent rumours that actor Hugh Grant briefly owned Melksham Court turned out to be untrue.

The next driveway affords a view of **Court Barn (6)**, skilfully converted by the current occupants who bought it back in 1985. They believe it is likely to be considerably older than C18 as stated in the listing, although modifications characteristic of that period are certainly in evidence. It was originally the barn of adjacent **Lampport Court (7)** but later belonged to Melksham Court. In Maxwell Joseph's time greenhouses at the rear of the property, within the walled garden, were used to grow flowers for the tables in his Grand Metropolitan hotels and restaurants.



Court Barn



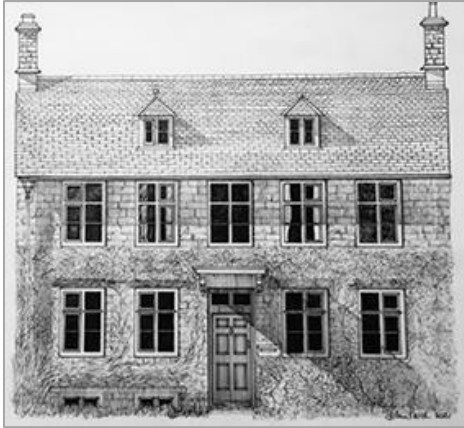
Lampport Court

Lampport Court's present name reflects ownership of the original house by the Lampport family, the last of whom died in the reign of Edward III. Centuries later, the present house was the main residence of the Mabbett family and known as Eaves or Eve's Court. By the late 1960s, it was being used as staff accommodation by Maxwell Joseph. He was persuaded to sell the dilapidated house to the Heard family, who restored and cherished it, as have subsequent owners.

Next to Lampport Court are semi-detached C17 **Overend Cottage** and **Overend House (8)**, which may incorporate a former stable block. The C18 & C19 gate piers, steps and gates at Overend House have their own listing. These properties were owned by the Morse family until Captain Morse emigrated to New Zealand in the 1890s. They were bought at auction by James Nicholls, then tenant of Melksham Court, in 1901.



Overend Cottage & Overend House



Malt House

Reaching the corner, you see the late C17 **Malt House (9)**. There is evidence of it being a working malthouse in the second half of the 18th century. It is claimed that it was also an alehouse before the arrival of the Prevost family, who were strong supporters of the Temperance movement. The house was often home to more than one family and in 1939 no fewer than 16 people with four different surnames were living there.

The lane descending to the right has had various names, the oddest of which is Novering Lane. On the deeds of residents, it is Stinchcombe Lane but is usually referred to as Church Lane.

Cross the lane to take the public footpath through the side gate of **Piers Court (10)**.

This impressive late C18 Palladian-style house incorporates an older, probably C16 house. The name is believed to come from successive owners of an even earlier house, all called Piers de Stintescombe.

Piers Court was the home of author Evelyn Waugh from 1937 to 1956 but rented out to a Catholic girls' school during WWII. The redoubtable Doris Gadsden started the Bengad Welsh Pony Stud at Piers Court in the 1960s and at its height there were hundreds of ponies on the surrounding fields. The last three left to a good local home in 2020.



Piers Court

Continue on the drive, crossing a cattle grid, until you reach a low wooden footpath marker indicating the start of a well-trodden path heading roughly north-west across the grass. Soon reach a stile with a dog gate, to the right of a strip of woodland. Carry on downhill, passing through a double gateway.

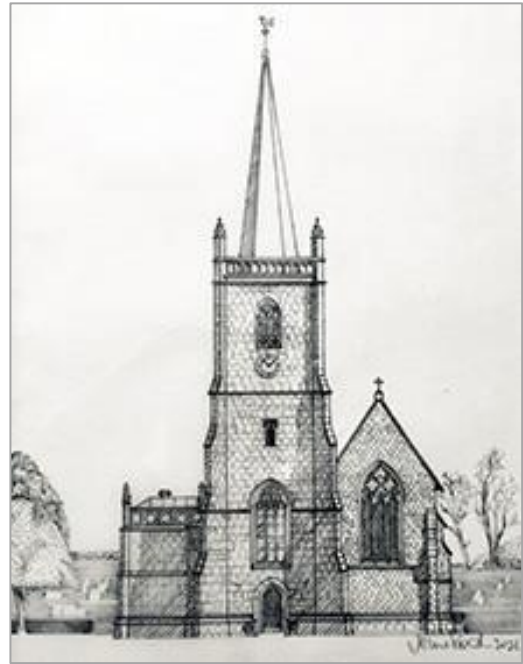


Church Cottage

St Cyr's Church (12) soon comes into view, but just before reaching the church you pass the back of **Church Cottage (11)**. Stonemason Walter Woodward lived there in the 1880s, conveniently placed for his work one would think. He and his wife, Louisa, later had no fewer than seven sons serving in WWI.

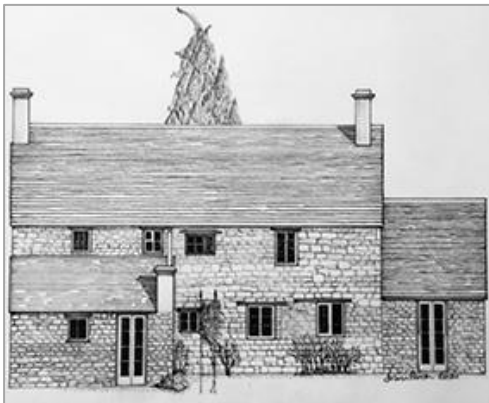
Enter the churchyard by the gate and stone steps. If you have time, take a look around - an excellent guidebook is on sale inside. A chapel in Stinchcombe is first mentioned in 1156, however, the oldest stonework still standing is the porch and parts of the tower, dating back to C14. The rest was rebuilt in the mid-1850s by a leading ecclesiastical architect of the day, J L Pearson. The work was largely funded by the incumbent the Venerable Sir George Prevost Bart. and his friend and brother-in-law, Rev. Isaac Williams, whose homes will be mentioned later.

One of the History Society's first projects was the photographing of all the monuments in the churchyard and the recording of all legible inscriptions. The information is available in the Heritage Hub at the Gloucestershire Archives. Several of the thirteen listed chest tombs in the churchyard were repaired by Mr G B O'Hare in 2019.



St Cyr's Church

Return to the path and leave by the wooden gate next to **The Old Parsonage (13)**.



The Old Parsonage

This was once the churchhouse, used for brewing ale and for festivities unsuitable for the church itself. Traces of an outdoor staircase are still visible at what is now the back of the house. In 1650, during the Cromwellian Republic, the building was surveyed and valued as former property of the deposed Royal family. Later it housed incumbents of the church, until one decided that it was not sufficiently grand. At one time it was the home of a village schoolmaster, who ran a lending library there until the early 1900s.

As you emerge onto Wick Lane, don't miss the **Drinking Fountain (14)**, which is a memorial to George Phipps Prevost, veteran of the Crimea and the Indian Mutiny. He was the son of the Ven. Sir George Prevost, long time Perpetual Curate of St Cyr's and leading light of the Oxford Movement. The water, supplied from Church Farm, is now reduced to a trickle but a resident remembers drinking it as a young boy and thinking it came from the graveyard.



The Drinking Fountain



Manor Lodge

Continue 50 metres left on Wick Lane to see mid C19 **Manor Lodge (15)**, once the lodge house for Stinchcombe Manor, about which more later. Manor Lodge housed the Church of England Temperance Club started by Sir George Prevost in 1877. Tea, coffee and cocoa were sold and, more surprisingly, beer though not for consumption on the premises.

The next few points of interest (16), (17) & (18) can also be viewed from the safety of the churchyard if the road is busy.

On the corner of Wick Lane and Echo Lane is **The School House (16)**, built in 1839 and subsequently extended. (An earlier schoolhouse is believed to have adjoined The Old Parsonage.) At its peak there were about 140 pupils, dropping to 11 by the late 1950s. During WWII, the school hosted a total of 26 evacuees. The remaining pupils were transferred to North Nibley school in 1966 after the Stinchcombe school managers lost their long battle to keep it open.



The School House



The War Memorial

In the middle of the road near the School House is the **War Memorial (17)** erected in 1920. It was adapted by Mabel Mildmay of Drakestone House from the design of an old cross. Originally, only eight names were inscribed, most ex-pupils of the village school. In 2002, the weathered inscription was covered with a brass plaque bearing 25 names, including the two men lost in WWII. A wreath stand with a poppy design was added in 2018 so that the wreath no longer obscures the names.

Around the corner into “Church Lane” is C16-C17 **Church Farm (18)**. When put up for auction by Richard Hooper in 1834, it was described as a desirable and improvable freehold estate with 83 acres and valuable rights of common on Stinchcombe Hill. In 1890, it was again auctioned, along with much else in the village, as part of Mary Mabbett’s estate. Miss Mabbett, a popular resident and a great benefactor to St Cyr’s and the poor of the parish, was the last of her line to live in Stinchcombe. She and several generations of her forbears have an impressive row of chest tombs in the churchyard.



Church Farm

Continue up “Church Lane” for a shortcut back to the start, otherwise reverse your steps to enter Echo Lane, passing the post box and Parish noticeboard on your right. Cotswold Tudor **Stinchcombe Manor** is sadly out of sight to the left of the road. It was built in 1837 for the Rev. (later Ven.) Sir George Prevost Baronet, 2nd Baronet as a residence more suitable than the Parsonage for a titled gentleman like himself. As there are good views to be had of Stinchcombe Manor from other vantage points we will save the rest of its history for a future walk.



The Old Vicarage

The Old Vicarage (19) was built by Prevost c.1848 for his great friend, the Rev. Isaac Williams, a famous cleric, poet and theologian. (It cannot be seen from the road but as you gain height on the footpath in a few minutes turn back for a glimpse of this house.) Isaac’s sister, Jane, was Prevost’s wife. He came to Stinchcombe in 1846 as a very ill man and not expected to survive long.

When he rallied, the house was erected for him next door to the Prevosts at Stinchcombe Manor and he lived there until his death in 1865. It later became the home of Stinchcombe’s vicars, as the name suggests, a role that lasted into the 1940s.

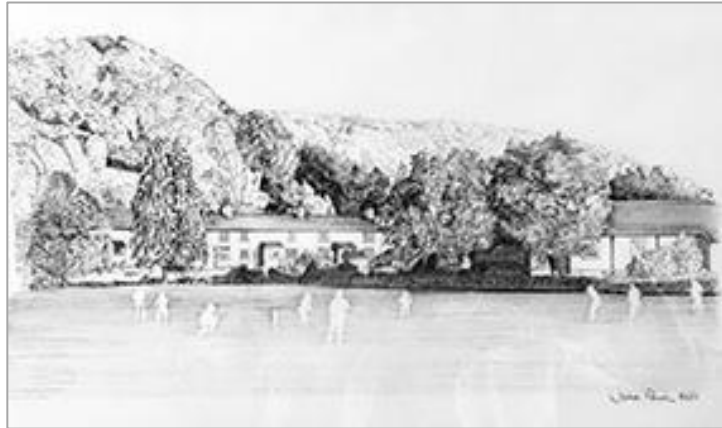
On reaching the gateway of Clingre Farm, turn right across a modern stone stile. Follow the driveway to the bend, then continue straight across a stile. As the path goes gently uphill, aim to the right of a few large trees and a disused stone slab stile. Cross a wooden stile to the left of a gate and take a moment to enjoy the views of the Severn Vale and the hills beyond.

Turn right over another wooden stile to follow a woodland path up the hill, quite steeply at first. Near the top, look out for the entrance to an underground cistern to the right of the path. At one time this supplied the whole of the lower village.

Follow the path round to the left and reaching a stile cross into an arable field. At this point you will get a distant view of Melksham Court, better when the trees are not in leaf. Head straight across the field and cross a further stile into a field now owned by Dursley Rugby Club.

An aerial survey identified a Roman or Iron Age farmstead enclosure partly in this field and partly in the field to the right. Various small finds from the Roman period have been made in the vicinity. Follow the field boundary left then right.

Eventually reach a gap in the hedge leading into the **Sports Field (20)**, known as the Stragglers field and used for cricket and rugby. This area is the base of the venerable Stinchcombe Stragglers cricket team, Dursley Rugby Club, Dursley Running Club and Crock's Gym. In their 1930s heyday the Stragglers introduced Sunday cricket, then a novelty, and drew large crowds. The high standards maintained attracted many County and even some England players.



The Sports Field (Stragglers Field)

Walk down the right boundary of the sports field and reach The Street by a gap to the left of a stone stile. Cross the road to look at the terrace of cottages, which is somewhat prosaically called **The Buildings (21)**.



The Buildings

These workers' cottages were probably erected by the Mabbett family, who owned much of Stinchcombe in the nineteenth century. Contrast the wide colour variation of the handmade bricks of No. 1 to 4, built in 1817 with the more uniform red bricks of No. 5 & 6, built 2 years later. Duplicate fireplaces and evidence of additional stair ladders suggest that each cottage originally housed two families. At the back of the terrace were privies, piggeries and shared well, wash house and bread oven.



The Swedish Houses

After looking at The Buildings, cross the bottom of the bridleway adjacent to No.1 to reach the black timber-clad **Swedish Houses (22)**. Contrary to popular belief, these prefabricated homes were purchased by the Ministry of Works rather than given as a gift by Sweden. Sixteen were allocated to Dursley Rural Council, including the four in Stinchcombe which were erected in 1946. They were not intended as permanent housing at the time.

Recross The Street opposite the Swedish Houses and turn into the side road called Northfields. The third house you come to is **Langside (23)** a C18 stone cottage attached to a grey rendered building. Langside is where Stinchcombe's blacksmiths lived, in a convenient location for shoeing the oxen that hauled carriages up Stinchcombe Hill to spare the horses.



Langside

Return to The Street and turn right to get back to where you started out at the Village Hall.

We hope that you have enjoyed our history-packed walk around Stinchcombe. If you would like to know more about some of the buildings and monuments that you have seen, please visit [Our Virtual Village](#) . There are also articles about important families in Stinchcombe's history and reminiscences about village life and characters in times gone by.

Stinchcombe History Society