

A Walk Around Castle Cary & Ansford

Distance: approx 2 miles - however, for the energetic there are two optional detours, making it closer to 3 miles in all. The short version only is pushchair-friendly, with a few steep inclines.

Start from the **Market House (1)** Although it may look much older, it was built in 1855 when it was thought that the new railway would bring increased trade to the town. Running down one side is the cobbled way with drain called 'The Pitching' which is quite rare.



DON'T MISS THIS!



Face the **George Hotel (2)** which is one of Cary's oldest buildings. Look carefully at its walls to see fragments of stone taken from the Norman castle built into the façade.

Turn left and walk up the High Street. Note the buildings on either side with their individual shop fronts. **Pither's Yard** off to the right through an archway, was once the site of Pither & Son, furniture and cabinet makers and a large employer in the town. Continue up the road to the fine **Methodist Church (3)** on high ground to the right. The present building dates from 1839, 55 years after the first preaching house was secured and John Wesley made the first of five visits to the town.

Opposite the church is **Ochiltree House (4)** built in the early 1620s. John Boyd (horsehair weaver) lived in the house and it is named after Ochiltree, in Cumnock, Scotland where he was born. The inscription over the cart passage refers to the foundation of his business in Castle Cary. A plaque commemorates the Macmillan's later occupation and the start, in 1912, of the first cancer relief charity.



DON'T MISS THIS!

Continue up the hill, noticing a particularly fine Queen Anne façade on the right. **The Pines (5)** once belonged to the Donne family, who established flax mills in the town in the late eighteenth century. At the top of the hill turn left onto the A371. A little further on, stands **Cumnock Terrace (6)** 12 dwellings built by John Boyd for his workers and named after his birthplace.



DON'T MISS THIS!

Walk on past the traffic light to the junction with **Ansford Road**. On your left is **Ansford House (7)** built in the late 18th century for the Woodlote Family and visited by John Wesley in 1789.

Before turning left down **Ansford Road** notice the large building on the corner. It is the former **Ansford Inn (8)**. Now residential, it dates from the 17th century and at one time was probably the best-known inn in Somerset. In his diary, **Parson Woodforde** describes a carnival atmosphere at the Masquerade Ball held here in 1767.

Going down **Ansford Road**, look out for an oddly shaped building on your right, the old **Turnpike Toll House (9)** used to collect revenue from passing travellers to help towards upkeep of the road.

Turn right at the first junction into Catherine's Close. Follow the path round and enter the **Playing Field (10)** on your right. From this field, on a clear day, you can see **Glastonbury Tor** slightly to your right. Towards the end of the path, across the **children's playground** you can see a Living Cross planted on Lodge Hill to mark the millennium. The Cary stone building in front of you was originally a silk factory and later used for horsehair weaving. Behind it the imposing building with the dome is **Florida House** built in 1877 by John Stephens Donne (a rope, twine and webbing manufacturer). It later became a convent (known as The Priory) and has more recently been unoccupied. At the end of the footpath, you have a choice: for the shorter walk, turn left into **Florida Street**; for a longer walk, turn right and take **Detour No 1**.

Detour No 1 - to Ansford Church

(about 10 minutes each way)

Keep to the path, passing a bowling green on your left and down a short slope to the road. Cross this road and enter **Priory View**. Continue alongside **Fairfield**, an amenity space for Castle Cary and Ansford, until you see a path leading to **Saint Andrew's Church, Ansford (11)** on your right.

Visit the church: this is where **Parson Woodforde's** father was rector, and the family lived in the nearby parsonage. Inside the church notice the 12th century font, and the pulpit which is Jacobean and would have been used by the diarist **Parson Woodforde** during his time at Ansford. Retrace your steps

| MAP LEGEND | |
|------------|--------------------|
| | Information Centre |
| | Market House |
| | Museum |
| | Toilet |
| | Car Park |
| | Post Office |
| | Railway Station |
| | Churches |
| | The Round House |
| | Observation point |
| | Macmillan Way |
| | Leland Trail |
| | Monarch's Way |
| | Footpaths & Tracks |
| | Railway |
| | Bus Stop |
| | Petrol Station |



A303 (West) Sparkford
To Yeovil



Go along **Florida Street** with its pretty cottages to the top of **Bailey Hill**. Here you will find the **Post Office**, a fine building dating back to 1767, and the **Round House (12)** - a rare 18th century lock-up. The key can be collected from the butcher and pie-maker's shop, opposite. The Round House is now licensed for weddings!



DON'T MISS THIS!

Leave **Bailey Hill** using the right-hand pavement and turn right into **Woodcock Street** and then turn left into **Lower Woodcock Street**. Ahead of you are the **Horse Pond** and **War Memorial**. This area is known as **The Triangle (13)**.



DON'T MISS THIS!

The source of the **River Cary** is a spring rising beneath **Lodge Hill** (just beside the town) and it flows into the **Horse Pond**. From there it runs westwards through an area off **Torbay road** where watermills were to be found, and on via **Cary Moor**, to **Somerton Moor** and into the man-made **King's Sedgemoor Drain**.



DON'T MISS THIS!

To the right of the **Horse Pond** up a small incline is a tiny old building with red doors - this is the old **Fire Station**.

From here you can see the spire of **All Saints Church (14)**. Spires of this sort are rare in Somerset. Enter the churchyard by the first gate you come to, and walk round to the main entrance. The Church was remodelled and enlarged in the 19th century. Inside, much of the stone work belongs to the older church building and there are some fine old memorial slabs in the floor.



DON'T MISS THIS!

The path in the churchyard will take you to the **Millennium Wood** planted by the community to mark the year 2000. Here you will find some standing stones - full of fossils. A good place to picnic. Retrace your steps to the road and head back towards the centre of town.



Cross the road in front of **Castle Cary Primary School (15)** - a Victorian building that still retains the separate entrances for Boys and Girls.

DON'T MISS THIS!

If you do not wish to take **Detour No 2** up **Lodge Hill**, follow the pavement past the **Horse Pond** and up through **Fore Street** with its many shops and back to the **Market House**.

Detour No 2 - up Lodge Hill

(about 50 minutes - can be muddy and there may be cattle)



Here is a second detour for the energetic. With the primary school on your left follow the road up the hill - until it becomes a farm track. Continue along this and after a bend to the left you will see a kissing gate and a finger post signing to the left through the fields to the **Observation Point** (with its telescope) ahead of you. Go there. On a clear day the views are magnificent.

Leave the **Observation Point** on the opposite side and follow the path, through a gate and on until you pass a couple of bench seats. With the hedge on your right descend towards the town.

You will pass a large grassy mound on your left. This is the site of the old castle. Continue down and go through the next kissing gate. On your left is the **Moat Garden (17)** with its wild flowers, vegetable patch and picnic benches. Continue downwards through a narrow passage called **Paddock Drain**, which emerges into the **Market Place** beside the **George Hotel**.

The Stones of Castle Cary

Cary is fortunate to have as its local building material limestones which were deposited in the **Jurassic Period** over 145 million years ago. The most striking perhaps is the honey-coloured **Cary stone** which was (and is) quarried at **Hadspen** about two miles away. You will also find **Blue Lias** used - a durable bluish slabs coloured stone. Both are full of fossil oysters and other marine shells and the different colours of the stones are due to the amounts of iron they contain.