

Walks - English Bicknor

Dramatic cliffs, superb views and riverside walking with a wrapping of internationally protected woodlands and sprinkling of industrial ruins.

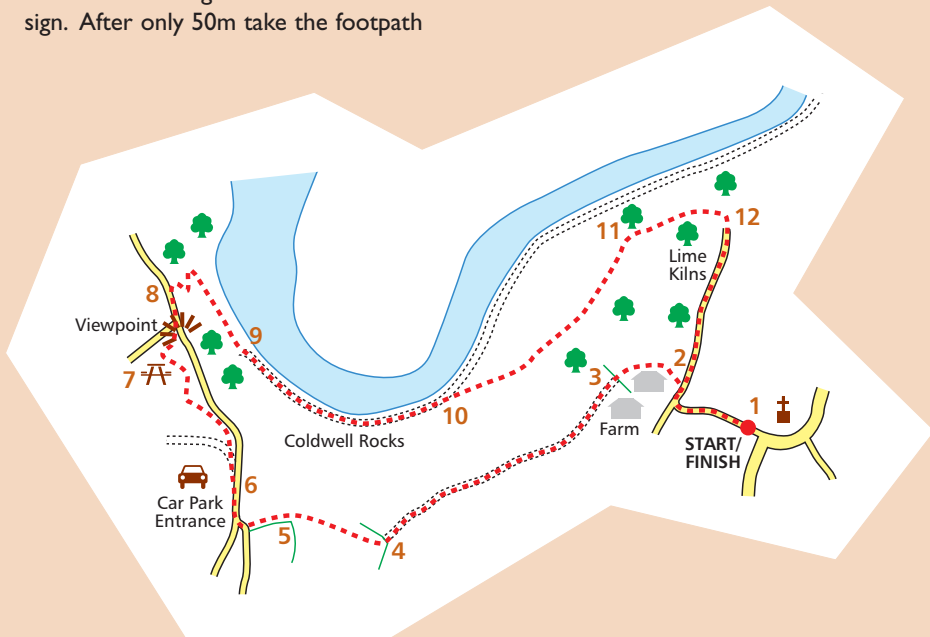
Bus route: 35; 745
Bus stop: English Bicknor Village
Distance: 4.8 kms
Walking Time: Between 2 and 2½ hours
Refreshments: Café at Yat Rock car park

From the main road in English Bicknor just to the South of the Church, take the dead end road called Balls Hill, signposted 'Coldwell Walks' (1). Walk to the bottom of the hill and turn right on the road following the Coldwell Walks sign. After only 50m take the footpath

on your left (2). Cross a stile and continue ahead to a gate.

Take a diagonal left to a second gate. Pass through a third gate and cross the field to a stile.

After the stile continue ahead along a track (3). After 700m you come to stile and the track ends shortly after in a field (4). Head diagonally left up through the field aiming for the right hand end of the hedge. When you reach the corner of the hedge continue ahead keeping the hedge on your left (5). When you reach the road turn right and walk the short distance to the Forestry Commission 'Yat Rock' car park on your left (6).



At 600ft above sea level, Yat Rock viewpoint is a tourist hotspot attracting thousands of visitors every year to admire the views. The name comes from a local word for 'gate' or 'pass' or, rather more confusingly, 'rock'.

The viewpoint is at the tip of a triangular six-acre Iron Age hill fort and there is evidence of nearby caves being used by Mesolithic hunters. The river below was once heavily industrialised with iron ore mining and smelting. These days it is one of the best canoeing sites in Southern England and the rapids were bought by canoeists in 2003.

Walk a short distance until you reach the pay and display machine and signs on your right. At that point, turn right along the footpath. Walk through the car park past the wooden finger post to the refreshment hut (7). Walk past the refreshment building to the far left hand corner of the picnic area and take the steps that lead steeply downhill. The steps emerge onto a track. Turn right and walk up to the road. Turn left and walk, with care, down the road for approx. 150m.

Turn right onto the public footpath near the bollards (8). Follow the footpath with care as it winds down through woodland for approx 1km before reaching the river bank and the Wye Valley Walk. Turn right along the Wye Valley Walk, with the river on your left (9). When you reach a metal kissing gate (10) turn right up a track that is bordered on the left by conifer trees and the right by broad leaved trees.

Continue to follow the track as it climbs up away from the river. The track passes through a gate and continues on through woodland (11). The track eventually becomes a lane (12). Continue up the lane for approx 400m. About half way up, in woods to your right, is a strip of common land with two derelict lime kilns being restored as part of a community project.

Lime kilns were once common in the limestone areas of the lower Wye Valley and Forest of Dean – there were at least 10 in English Bicknor alone. The stone would be heaped on roaring fires rising to temperatures of 1000 degrees Celsius, leaving behind 'lump lime' used to fertilize fields or mixed with water to produce 'lime putty' mortar or 'lime wash' used to waterproof walls, bleach paper or preserve leather.

After the kilns reach a T-junction. Turn left and retrace your footsteps back into the village of English Bicknor.

