



Ambling to Axbridge



Last month marked 50 years since the last passenger train travelled along the Strawberry Line, now a popular walk and cycle route. It starts in North Somerset but continues out of the district onto Axbridge and beyond to stunning views of the Somerset Levels. It's an easy walk or cycle ride suitable for novices.



How to get there

Start at map ref:
ST419575

Car:
A371, Woodborough Road

Bus:
121 Weston-super-Mare to Bristol or
126 Wells to Weston-super-Mare

Start at Old Station Green, just off Woodborough Road in Winscombe. Turn left up the slope and then left onto the track just past the old station, now Millennium Green. The station was originally called Woodborough (after the hamlet) but was later changed to Winscombe. Information panels along the route give some interesting historical details.

Continue along the line, taking care to keep an eye out for cyclists who will usually ring bells or call out as they approach. There are also several places where tracks cross the line so check before continuing over them.

As you walk along the line you'll pass the War Memorial Recreation Ground on your left and from there it's only about two miles to the square in the centre of Axbridge. All along the route there are places to stop and rest on seats in quiet shady spots or overlooking stunning views.

On the right, just before you reach the Shute Shelf tunnel, you pass Sladers Leigh Nature Reserve run by The Mendip Society. The meadow's shape means it has not been farmed extensively and it has become an acid grassland with more than 130 different plant species and more than 20 kinds of butterflies recorded. It can be accessed from the track by steps up the bank and there's a wheelchair entrance earlier on the line.



Approaching the tunnel you'll see a large wooden wheelbarrow and shovel on your left, with an information panel inside. This is the point at which construction of the Strawberry Line began.



Carry on through the tunnel, which recently reopened with new cats eyes installed to help light your way. Continue through the cutting and past the sign to Kings Wood car park and path to Crook Peak. The line then crosses the busy A38.



Once over the A38, the landscape opens up to reveal the Somerset Levels and you can enjoy views of both Brent Knoll and Glastonbury Tor in the distance.

You will reach a road, so turn left and at the bottom of this road turn left towards Axbridge. Cross the road following the

National Cycle Route 26 signs to the town centre, down West Street, then into High Street. This opens out onto Axbridge town square and King John's hunting lodge, a Tudor timber-framed wool merchant's house now run by the National Trust.

There are several pubs, tea shops or local stores if you wish to stop for refreshments around and near the square.

At this point you can either retrace your steps and return along the Strawberry Line or head out of the square on St Mary's Street (opposite the High Street) and walk along the road for about 10 minutes until you reach a tree lined turning on your right (signed Bristol Corinthian Yacht Club). This is the entrance to Cheddar Reservoir which you can walk around to enjoy stunning views of the levels.

Route information

Distance:

4.5 miles to Axbridge and back (additional 3 miles if you include the reservoir)

Difficulty:

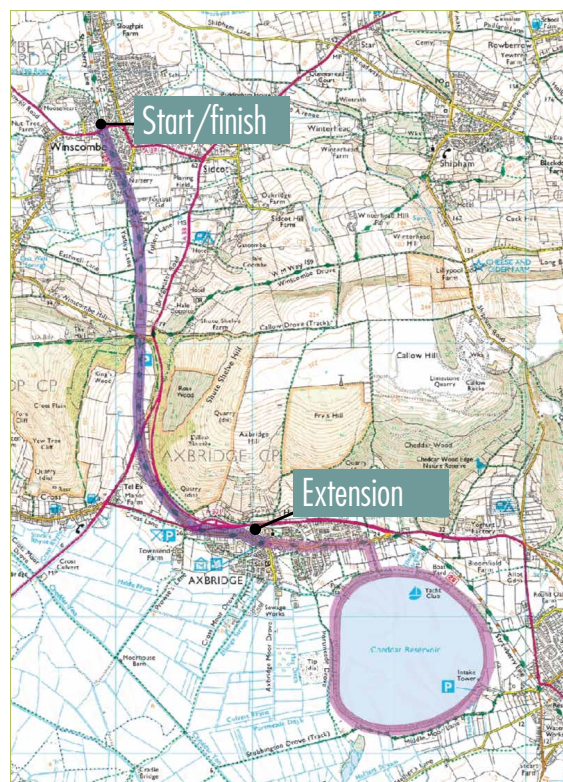
Easy

Duration:

2 hours (3.5 if you include the reservoir)

Map:

OS Explorer Map 141



© Crown copyright and database rights 2013 Ordnance Survey 100023397

You are not permitted to copy, sub-license, distribute or sell this data to third parties in any form.

