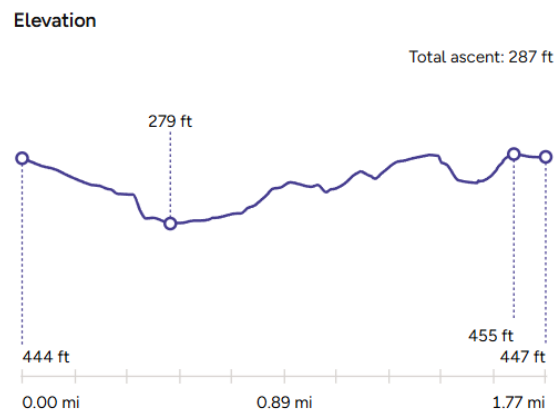


# The Swan Inn Rowberrow Walk

## A walk through the 'calamine capital' of the South West, 2 miles

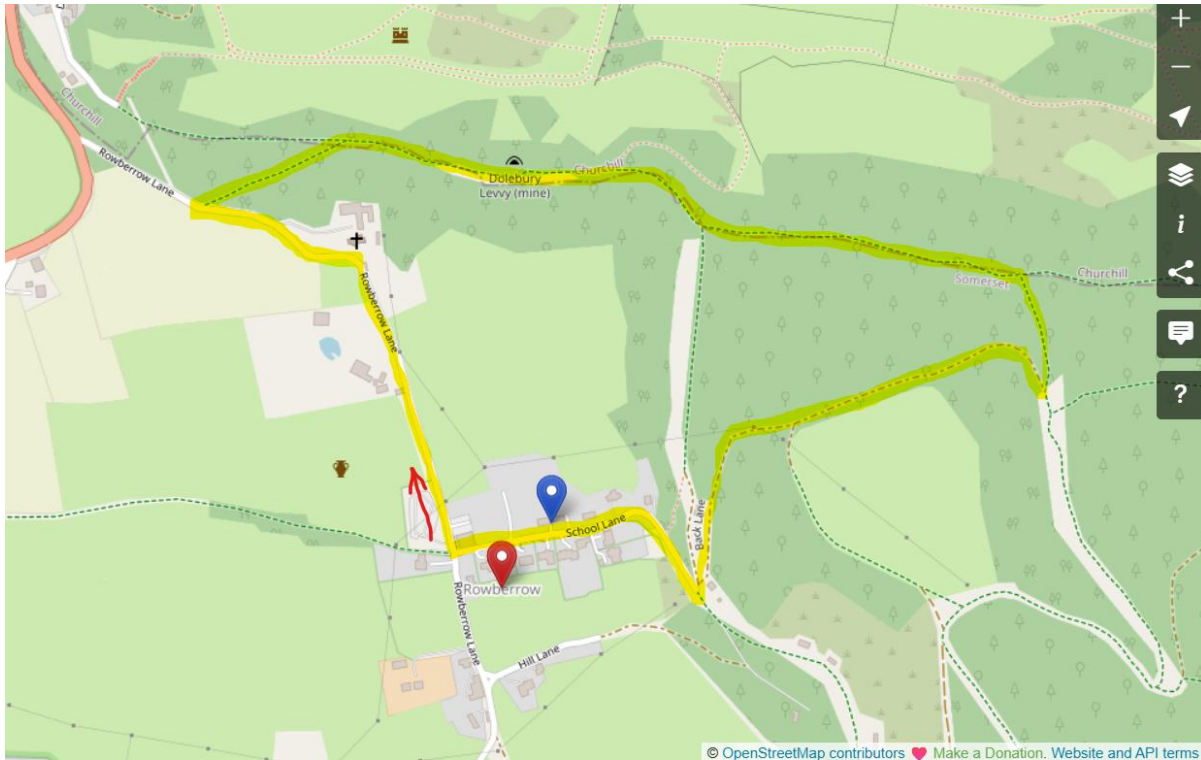
### OVERVIEW

This is one of the shorter walks that I've covered. By connecting this walk to the walk described in the entry for The Crown at Churchill, your route can be extended to visit the 'top of the hill' – the remnants of the Iron Age fort above you at Dolebury Warren. This is a lovely, easy short walk at the western end of the Mendips, mainly in woodland known as Rowberrow Warren. The forest here was planted in the 1940s & 50s, so by now there's little evidence visible of the mining history described in this entry. Take some time at the little church, which can help to reveal some clues to the history of the area.



<b>Start/Finish</b>	<b>The Swan Inn, Rowberrow Lane, Rowberrow, BS25 1QL. 01934 852371</b>		
<b>Parking</b>	Plenty of parking at the pub. Enter your registration at the pub.		
<b>Grid Reference</b>	ST 451 582		
<b>What3Words</b>	///thuds.dockers.assume		
<b>Distance</b>	1.8 miles / 3 km	<b>Time</b> 1 hour	<b>Ascent</b> 290 ft / 90 m
<b>Paths/Terrain</b>	Quiet lanes, woodland paths, some of which are stoney. Some short uphill sections.		
<b>Difficulty</b>	Easy		
<b>Public Transport</b>	None to the village of Rowberrow, but bus services serve Churchill from Bristol and Weston-Super-Mare.		
<b>Toilets</b>	At The Swan.		
<b>Other Pubs Nearby</b>	The Crown at Churchill is one of the best pubs in Somerset. It's covered separately on Pubs Worth The Walk ; The Star on the A38 is doing well after a recent transformation.		

## DIRECTIONS



1. As you leave the pub car park with The Swan in front of you, head left down the lane. It's not a particularly busy road, but take care. The first landmark is the Church of St Michael & All Angels (I'm not hot on Saints. Apparently, St Michael is the Archangel recognized in Christian tradition as the leader of God's heavenly army, a protector of the faithful, and a warrior against evil. Fair play.)
2. The Church building dates back to the 14th Century, but there's evidence of much earlier worship on this site. Inside the church there's a stone carving believed to be part of an ancient Saxon Cross (so pre-1066) that was dug up in the churchyard in 1865.
3. As the road curves around past the church you'll soon see a public bridleway footpath sign into Rowberrow woods. Look out for the [Butcombe Trail](#) marker.
4. The narrow path downhill through the woods eventually emerges onto a more level, wider track. Turn right. This is one of the key walking & biking routes in the area, and is part of the Limestone Link route that connects The Mendips with The Cotswolds Way. It's also the area where those calamine mines were.
5. The path is a gentle uphill slope. Above you to the left is the ancient Iron Age (>550 years BC) hill fort of Dolebury Warren. Continue along the path, ignoring the first right hand path which seems to head over an earthen bank.
6. Instead, continue until you see a right-hand path with a large Rowberrow Warren sign. Take this path, which is a little narrower than the path you've been on.
7. If you're walking this way in the drier months, you could imagine that it would be a pretty wet drainage channel in winter. If you're doing it after heavy rain, you'll know it's a pretty wet drainage channel!
8. When the path starts to open out again, you'll come to a sharp right-hand turn, uphill. Take that and follow the wider forestry track. After a short distance uphill the gradient eases and you pass a field on your left.

9. At the end of the field, continue straight on at the next path junction. Lots of chunky loose stones here, so watch your footing as you head downhill around a bend.
10. The path straightens as it enters a valley, with a house on the right. Leave the woodland of Rowberrow Warren in front of the entrance to the cottage, to join the lane in front of you. Turn right onto the lane. This is School Lane. After a short, muscle warming distance uphill, the lane levels out and soon arrives back at The Swan.

## NOTES

**William Champion (1709–1789)** was a prominent metallurgist known for his significant contributions to the brass industry.

- He established the Warmley Works (south east of Bristol) in 1746, which became the largest metal processing plant in the world, producing zinc, copper, brass, and other metals.
- Champion patented a process to distil zinc from calamine, which was crucial for the development of the brass industry in Britain.
- His innovations led to Bristol becoming Europe's largest producer of brass, and his works at Warmley are recognized for their historical significance in metallurgy and industrial development.

**Hannah More (1745–1833)** was a Bristol-based writer and philanthropist who became one of the most influential social reformers of the late Georgian period.

- She and her sisters set up schools across Somerset, including in some of the poorest, roughest villages on the Mendips.
- When More visited the Mendip mining villages in the 1780s and 1790s, she was shocked by the poverty, the lack of schooling, and the hard edge of life in places built around dangerous, low-paid calamine digging.
- Her line about Shipham and Rowberrow being “brutal in their natures and ferocious in their manners” wasn’t a casual insult — it was her way of describing communities living on the edge of survival, with no education, no safety net, and no real prospects beyond the next shift underground.