



AW4. Wellington and the Monument.

- 5.7 miles, ascents and descents of 230 metres. 2 hours 20 minutes continuous walking, allow at least 3 hours plus visiting time if the monument is open.

Terrain: Roads and paths, some areas of slippery mud.

Access: Park in the town centre car park in Wellington (£). The entrance is off Fore Street, next to Perrys hardware shop (ST 138 205, TA21 8LG). There is also a frequent daily bus (22/22A) between Taunton and Wellington that stops in the centre.

Map: OS Explorer 128 Taunton and the Blackdown Hills.

Refreshments: Plenty of choice in Wellington, none currently at the Monument.

WELLINGTON MONUMENT STANDS PROMINENTLY ON THE NORTHERN RIDGE OF THE BLACKDOWN HILLS, at 53 metres (175ft) the tallest three-sided obelisk in the world and a landmark for miles around. It was built in stages by subscription between 1817 and 1854 as a memorial to Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington. The monument is now owned by the National Trust. Deteriorating stonework led to it being closed and fenced off in the early 2000s, but extensive restoration was carried out between 2016 and 2021 and it has now reopened with guided tours in season. This walk starts from the pleasant market and former textile town of Wellington and ascends gently at first, more steeply towards the end, to the monument.

Start the walk from the car park off Fore Street. Return to the main road, turn right, and shortly after a church turn left into Bulford. When this residential street bends left continue ahead towards a sports field. Take a narrow fenced path that runs next to the field. Cross a path and head to the next road, crossing over to continue on the path. Pass a school playing field and cross another road. The path continues alongside the blank wall of a house. At its end turn left on a narrow lane, cross the A38 Wellington bypass and enter a field (15mins, [1]). Turn right as signposted, then follow the path diagonally across the field. Go through a gate and turn left on an enclosed path. This soon crosses a track, then a drive to a large house, before coming alongside two smaller houses and arriving at a lane. Cross over and continue on the vehicle track. At some converted barns enter the field ahead and continue to the motorway; turn right, then a tunnel takes you underneath. Follow the path ahead through the next three fields to arrive at a road (40mins, [2]). Cross over and continue on a broad track. Pass a farm, go through a gate, then head through another gate into a nature reserve. The path takes you up into beech woods and, after a third gate, on steps up to the monument (1hr5mins, [3]). Take some time to explore here; there are various information boards as well as far-reaching views to the north.

To start the return back to Wellington, take a broad level path to the west from the cannon side of the monument. This goes through an obvious gap in a beech-topped bank and continues alongside a similar bank. Walk alongside the bank then follow the path around to the

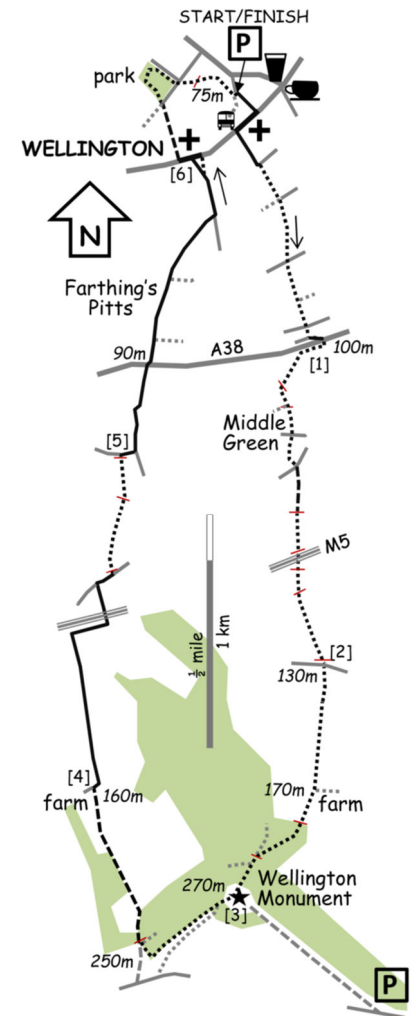
right, down and eventually left, going through two gates to continue downhill on a wider track. In eight or ten minutes this brings you to a farm (1hr25mins, [4]). Bear right here on to a lane and follow it to the motorway. Turn right when you can go no further, then left under the motorway. Turn right at the T-junction then in less than a minute where the verge widens go left over a stile on a footpath, signed but not easy to spot. Follow it for the length of the field. Go over a stile into the next field and pass a tall oak, soon coming to a stile that leads on to a lane (1hr45mins, [5]). Turn right, then left at the road junction. This will bring you back to the A38. Cross with care and continue towards Farthings Pitts. Pass various houses and follow the road as it curves to the right, soon arriving at a T-junction. Turn left and follow the road to Mantle Street, the continuation of the town's main thoroughfare (2hr5mins, [6]).

You could turn right here to return to the car park, but a short diversion will take you through some back alleys to Wellington's hidden town park. Turn left, pass a church on the right, then turn right at its end into a pedestrian alley. Keep ahead past the grounds of a school, then cross a path to enter the park. This ornamental garden was laid out at the beginning of the twentieth century, opening in 1903 to celebrate the coronation of King Edward VII; it only takes a few minutes to stroll around. Leave by a gate a short way along from the one you used to enter, opposite a small car park. Cross to the far left corner of the car park and follow the path around the edge of a sports field. When you come to a small toilet block the car park is on the left.

Stroll: Wellington Monument (● 1 mile, almost level). Park in the National Trust car park off the Blackdowns ridge road (ST 143 167, near TA21 9PB; £, members free). The monument is half a mile away along the track. Return the same way.

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Wellington Monument

