



## Mick Aston's 'Ancient Archaeology in Uphill' walk



*Always follow current UK Government guidelines for COVID-19 ([www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)) when enjoying this walk and check the most up to date advice before setting off.*

Before his passing in 2013, the late Mick Aston - best known for his 20 year stint as resident academic on Channel 4's Time Team - was an enthusiastic supporter of The Churches Conservation Trust, helping us promote and plan a series of projects in Somerset in particular at St Andrew's Church, Holcombe.

The Old Church of St Nicholas at Uphill, Somerset, was a particular favourite of Mick's and this walk was suggested by him to explore the beauty of the surrounding area.

*Mick said: "This beautiful walk takes in stunning views of the Severn Estuary/ Bristol Channel -and the contrasting scenery of the mendips and the Somerset Levels. I particularly like the open grassland of the Mendip limestone upland, the rhynes (ditches) and wetlands of the Levels, the tidal mud of the creek with its changing water levels, the boats at Uphill and the distant views from St Nicholas' Church, Uphill."*

## Walk directions

### ***Start - Uphill Boatyard, Uphill Wharf, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 4XR***

Start by the new floodgate in Uphill, and walk through the boatyard.

Beyond the boatyard, bear right, and follow the path that runs alongside the 'pill' or inlet which gives Uphill its name ('place above the pill or creek'), onto the marshes of the Levels.

If you wish, you can also take the alternative route of following the base of the limestone cliffs to the left of the boatyard - these cliffs must have been the shoreline many thousands of years ago and caves with signs of early pre-historic occupation have been found in them.

The two paths meet again at the base of Walborough Hill.

After following the creek, you will come to the base of Walborough Hill, on top of which there is a prominent barrow probably of Bronze Age date. The Levels here are covered with generations of banks as people have attempted to keep the water from the sea and the River Axe from invading their fields, so they could remain usable as pasture.

Climb up the hill - the odd earthworks you will see as you climb up probably represent bits of early field systems, trackways and boundaries. Although there are paths, this is open grass downland, rich in large numbers of butterfly species in the summer.

At the top there are two focal points: the old windmill stump, also used as a beacon and now a good place to pause to take in the wide views, and the half-ruined church of St Nicholas standing on the edge of the cliffs.

### ***St Nicholas' Church***

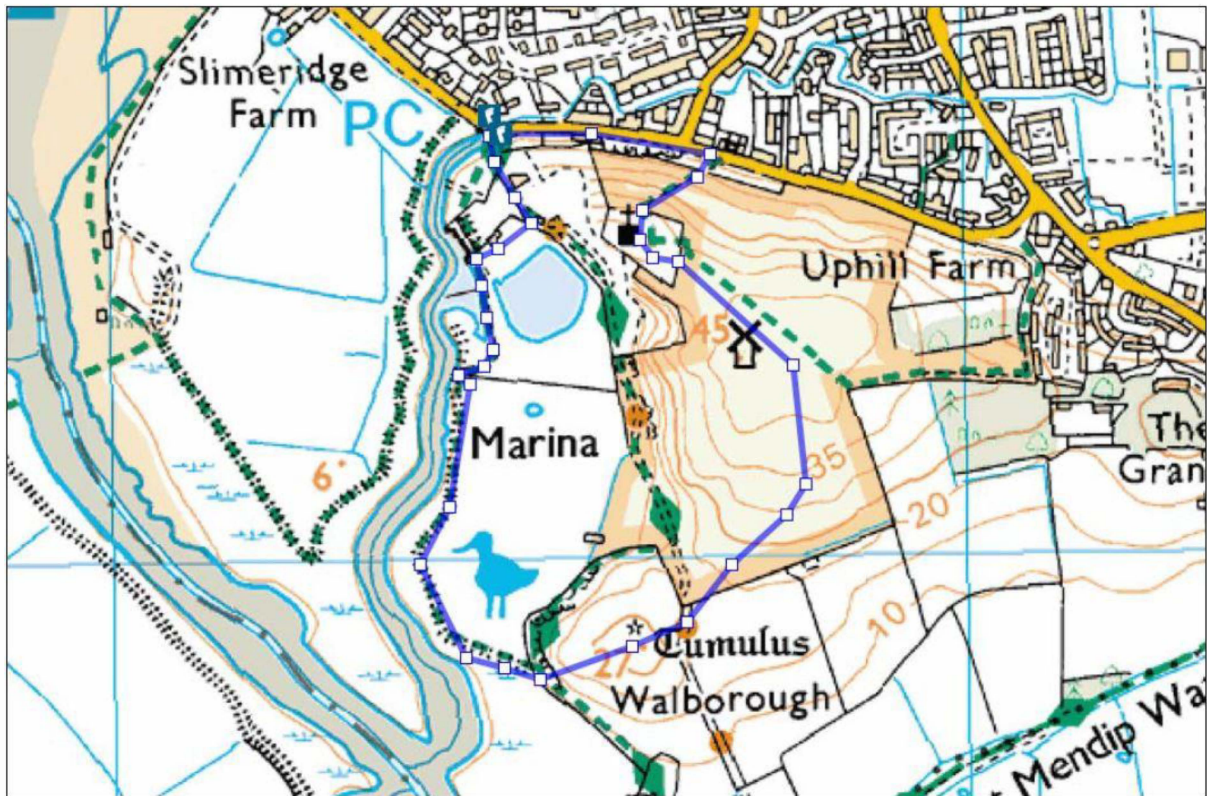
The church would originally have been on the end of the hill, but its site is even more dramatic now with the disused quarry coming very close to the western boundary.

This provides a superb viewpoint, with views out past Black Rock to Brean Down and the island of Steep Holm beyond. To the north Weston-super-Mare lies at the foot of the wooded Worlebury Hill, an Iron Age hill fort.

To return, follow the path past the church down the hill to the road. At the bottom, turn left to return to the boatyard.

### ***Route End***

## Map



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