

Fiona Shipsey



This is a transcript of what I said at the open floor hearing.

I have lived on the edge of Sherston (Site A) within the AONB for almost 20 years. I have walked out daily since I moved here, first with a three wheeler buggy and now with my dog.

For me, my walks are a time of quiet reflection when I remove myself from the daily stresses of life. I listen to birdsong, look for wildlife and watch the trees and fields as they change throughout the seasons. Recently I have enjoyed looking at the bluebells, spotting a hare and seeing skylarks, as well as the more common deer, kites and finches. All of this brings me joy.

Also, [REDACTED], walking is a necessity for me; I have to keep moving to ensure my continued mobility and independence.

IGP's proposals impact directly on the footpaths I use and the views that I look at, specifically Easton Grey<sup>1</sup> and Sherston 11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18, 35 and 37. All of these footpaths lead directly from the AONB. They are included in the Sherston walks booklet and so are enjoyed by both locals and visitors to the Cotswolds. I will not be the only one not wishing to walk these footpaths either during or after the construction period. In fact, seeing the natural beauty being destroyed and replaced by an industrial landscape, will be of serious detriment to my mental health and quality of life.

IGP admits, that tree and hedge scaping will take years to grow up and hide the enormous 4.5m high panels, conversion units and substations. Their images indicate that footpaths, that today I enjoy for their peace and tranquillity, will in certain places, such as the extension of Commonwood Lane, feel like a high security fenced tunnel. Moreover, if trees were ever to grow high enough to shield the panels and infrastructure, they would de facto obscure the beautiful views.

Fields along the Fosseway will be dug up for cabling, whilst one end will also be destroyed and used as an extra-long vehicle turning point. The Fosse Way is an ancient heritage site with lovely, delicate verges. Damage to any part of it should not be allowed, let alone almost one and a half acres. This area is also where families and elderly people park to enjoy a flat and safe walk.

I would like to draw your specific attention to the field of Sherston 15 which is on the boundary of the AONB and affords stunning views of Sherston church tower. Whilst no longer designated as a site for panels, this field and its neighbour are still inexplicably retained within the industrial site plan. These fields are used by hundreds of skylarks - a species of conservation concern. I am worried that keeping the field within the site allows for a future change of use as it will no longer be designated as agricultural land.

I am kept awake at night fretting at what will happen to our footpaths and countryside if the project were allowed to go ahead and I honestly don't know how I would cope with the reality. This proposal is not going to be a temporary hindrance; indeed the life of the project is a human lifespan. The landscape will be changed forever and the birdsong replaced by industrial buzzing even after banging from the construction stops. There will be no joy for me from walking my local footpaths.

As requested I'm attaching the Sherston Walks booklet as a download. Please also refer to [www.whitewallsway.weebly.com/route.html](http://www.whitewallsway.weebly.com/route.html)



# Sherston Walks

A guide to the village including 10 circular walks  
with maps in the surrounding countryside



## About this guide

The Wiltshire Parish of Sherston lies within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and this guide is aimed at helping local residents and visitors alike to enjoy its countryside through a series of 10 circular walks. It also includes a fascinating introduction to the Parish, particularly its geology and early history, together with a trail around the village with its many fine and interesting buildings.

This guide has been produced by the Sherston Footpath Group set up by the Parish Council in 2008. Its remit is 'to promote the use by all of the rights of way in the parish, ensuring they are in good condition and free from obstruction'. Its first project has been the publication of this guide which has involved hundreds of hours of work all undertaken on a voluntary basis. We hope you find it useful and the walks themselves as delightful as we do.



## Sherston: an introduction

Sherston is situated in the southern Cotswold Hills in the north west corner of Wiltshire. Some of the character of the area, like the rest of the Cotswolds, derives from the underlying Jurassic limestone, and the long history of the ground under the feet of residents and visitors to the village still has an influence today. The rocks of Sherston Parish were laid down in a shallow sea between 165 and 160 million years ago. At this time, 'Sherston' was about 30°N – roughly the latitude the Canary Islands are today – part way through a long journey north from the southern hemisphere, borne by moving tectonic plates. The seas were warm with strong currents – similar to the modern Bahamas. This environment gives rise to ooliths, which are tiny egg-shaped bodies formed by precipitation of lime (calcium carbonate) on a minute nucleus of sand. Deposition of these in the sea, and compression by sediments deposited on top, has given rise to the rock (oolitic limestone), which underlies Sherston.

a marble – it is named after Charnwood Forest in Oxfordshire, where it was once used for making ornamental fireplaces. The name was given in 1799 by William Smith, who made the first national geological map and who started his researches in the Bath area. 'Forest Marble' is thus one of the earliest geological names.



The seas in which the Forest Marble was deposited were inhabited by a variety of creatures, largely shellfish, and you can see some of these preserved as fossils. The most common fossil remains are shell debris, the remains of long-ago beaches and sandbanks. There were larger creatures in the seas of the time, but they stayed further out to sea where there was more to eat – hence their remains are not found here. On the adjacent land masses the dinosaurs held sway, including *Megalosaurus*, the first dinosaur to be named, whose remains have been found in rocks of the same age near Oxford. The first birds (now the only surviving relatives of the dinosaurs) were beginning to take to the air. The vegetation would have looked odd to our eyes – there were no flowering

Oolitic limestone is a good building stone, used extensively in Bath and the Oxford colleges as well as Cotswold villages like Sherston. The old houses in the village are largely built of, and on, a hard oolitic limestone called the Forest Marble. This rock underlies the whole Parish and can be seen in small disused quarries and road cuttings. It is not strictly speaking





plants then, but there were swampy forests of such plants as conifers, cycads and the maidenhair fern tree *Ginkgo*. A specimen of this 'living fossil' species, apparently unchanged since the Jurassic, is planted near Sherston Post Office – a living link to the time when its ancestral relatives grew on the islands round about the present site of Sherston.

After the Forest Marble had been deposited, the sea level began to rise, and a succession of other rocks was deposited on top, culminating in a thick layer of chalk in the succeeding Cretaceous Period. All this has gone – eroded away in the succeeding 60 million years of the Tertiary Period when Britain once again rose above the sea. One legacy of the Tertiary Period is the 3° NW-SE slope of the Parish, reflecting the slope of the underlying rocks, which were horizontal when laid down. The rocks may have been tilted by the uplift of the Alps far to the south.

A striking feature of the area is the trench-like valleys which hold the River Avon and its tributaries. The modern river is not large enough to have cut them – almost certainly they date from the end of the last

ice age, about 10,000 years ago. The last ice age lasted about 100,000 years, and a large icecap accumulated over most of Britain. Though the main icecap did not quite reach Sherston, the landscape would have been tundra-like, with accumulations of ice and snow on higher ground. We now know that at the end of the ice age the temperature rose remarkably quickly and this would have generated large volumes of meltwater, roaring down the existing valleys and excavating them close to their present depth. The excavated material was deposited on the plains beyond Malmesbury, or swept out to sea.



Another legacy of the ice age is the large amount of broken stone (brash) in the soils which you will see if you cross a ploughed field. This was mostly produced by weathering of the exposed surface rock by frost, freeze-thaw and other similar processes. The soils of the area have benefited, however, by being south of the main icecap. Most areas of Britain are covered in a layer of sticky boulder clay derived from the moving ice – in Sherston Parish the soils are free of this, and thus are relatively well-drained and easy to work. This benefits the predominantly arable agriculture,

though there are wetter patches with more clay as you may discover on your walks.

As soon as the ice began to melt at the end of the last ice age, hunters are likely to have moved in, followed by pastoralists. Adjacent areas had significant human populations in the Bronze and Iron Ages. However, no local prehistoric remains have been found, though the area may well have been cultivated in places given the relatively well-drained fertile soils. It was the Romans who first left significant traces on the landscape, most notably with the Fosse Way (the Roman Road from Exeter to Lincoln) which forms the southern boundary of the Parish. In 1987 the remains of a small Romano-British farm house were discovered to the north of the village. The farm apparently grew and prospered until it was attacked and destroyed, possibly in the early 5th century. This may have been the result of a Saxon raid, or a local dispute following the breakdown of law and order after Roman troops were recalled from Britain. The remains of the last owners of the farm were found under the fallen buildings, and a subsequent archaeological investigation suggested that they were murdered.

At some stage after this a Saxon settlement grew up on the flat top of a spur of land formed by tributaries of the River Avon. The first known mention of Sherston in a written document (recorded as



'Scorranston') was in 896AD, but the settlement had clearly then been in existence for some time. Sherston later re-appears in records describing the Battle of Sherston in 1016. This was part of the struggle for the throne of England between the Saxon Edmund Ironside and the Danish King Cnut (Canute). The battle was inconclusive, but Edmund settled the matter by dying later that year, leaving

Cnut to become a great early mediaeval king. Local interest centres around a Saxon warrior called John, who was nicknamed Rattlebone because of the lusty blows he gave with his sword. Edmund promised Rattlebone lands in Sherston if he won, and though Rattlebone was mortally wounded he fought on, clutching a tile to his wound to staunch the blood. This image lives on in the Rattlebone Inn (see below) and also the logo of the local primary school. For more history about Sherston take the village walk!





## A village walk

The walk starts in the High Street at the Post Office. Stand with the Post Office on your left and look down the High Street. The houses were built wide apart to accommodate the weekly market established when Sherston was given Borough status sometime between 1170 and 1241. Borough status was granted by the King to a local landowner who hoped to make a profit from



rents and market tolls. The landowner laid out building plots known as *burgage plots*, with a narrow frontage on the High Street and land stretching behind them to roads running parallel with the High Street. These plots would be let to people who felt it was an advantage to

live in the High Street, such as tradesmen, craftsmen and even other landowners. This basic arrangement can still be seen, many of the houses in the High Street having long gardens with boundaries corresponding to the original burgage plots. Smaller houses were subsequently built along the back roads. The core of the modern village is thus based on a piece of mediaeval

town planning. Sherston seems to have been a moderately successful small town for a while, but the market died out by the 16th century probably because it was

suffering from competition from larger places like Tetbury and Malmesbury. A disastrous fire around 1511 is reputed to have destroyed most of the village, which may have been the coup de grâce. In 1835, Sherston lost its Borough status and became a village.

1 On your left is the National School building, built in 1845 on the site of the old tithe barn. This provided primary education to the children of Sherston until 2005, when increasing numbers forced a move to a modern building on the edge of the village.



The old school has been re-developed as a community building hosting the post office and other businesses.

2 Walk a few yards down the street. Church House (numbers 13 and 15 on your right) was built in 1511 on a burgage plot given to the Church over 100 years



before. The purpose was to raise funds for the Parish Church. After the religious reforms of the 16th century it may have been sold and used as a poorhouse, housing the poor and needy. One way in which funds were

raised for this in later years was the annual Ale Feast. The Ale was brewed before Whitsun and while it lasted all ale houses in the village would be closed. As there were around fifteen of these at the time, the Church was guaranteed a sizable profit for the poor. The Feast was accompanied by general merrymaking, showing that combining fundraising and having fun is not a modern invention.

Church House is linked by an arch to a late 17th century building which was once a pub, The Bell. The carved sheep over the archway dates from the 1930s when Mr Herbert Goulding opened his butcher's shop, which continued as a butchers until recently.

3 On the other side of the road note the shell porch on Huntly House, built in the late

16th century. This was also once a pub, the Foresters Arms.

4 The narrow road joining the High Street is Swan Barton, the word 'Barton' indicating a farmstead. The 'Swan' element derives from The Swan, the largest of Sherston's old pubs, which occupied the corner of Swan Barton and the High Street.



Further down the High Street is the Angel Hotel. It was built in the early 16th century and as you can see from the date stone, Mrs Winifred Goodcheap was the owner in 1648.

5 Back on the opposite side of the road is the Old Pharmacy, a most original building. The Neale family lived here from the late 19th century to 1933, carrying on business as chemists, veterinary surgeons



and manufacturers of sheep dip and other chemicals. The last Neale, Duncan, is known for having arranged his own funeral 11 years before he died in 1933, buying a coffin which he kept under the bed and inscribing his name on the family tombstone, leaving spaces for the date and age of death.





**6** On the west side of the street is Balcony House, reputed to be the oldest in the village. Although the façade dates from the late 1500s, older material is incorporated into the structure, as it is in other village houses. Queen Anne is said to have called in here on the way to take the waters at Bath in 1705. It is rumoured there are tunnels which connect the cellars of Balcony House to the mediaeval quarry under the junction of Cliff Road and Silver Street, or even further afield.

**7** At the far end of the High Street is the Tolsey, which was where the market tolls were paid and where the official weights and measures were stored. Since the market ceased it has had many uses, including cottages, a youth hostel and the local HQ of the British Legion. It is now the doctors' surgery.

Turn right along Silver Street, a common name in the West Country, though of unknown significance here.

**8** At the corner of Silver Street and Cliff Road (name changed from Back Road in the 1950s) there is a view out over the River Avon towards Badminton. The steep slope below you is



known locally as The Cliff, and under your feet are some underground mediaeval quarries, the spoil from which you can see down the slope.

**9** Walk along Cliff Road, noting the Congregational Chapel, which dates from the 1820s, and its burial ground. This has now been converted into a house. A little further on is the British School Room, which was opened in 1844. This was part of a national movement which provided primary education independent of the Church of England. There was a system in which a teacher taught the older children and they in turn taught the younger ones, thus enabling a large number of pupils to be taught by one teacher.

**10** At the north end of Cliff Road is the old Court House, thought to date from the early 16th century, extending round the corner into Court Street, where a fine shell porch canopy covers the main entrance. This was where local justice, concerned mostly with nuisances or trespass, was administered by the Lord of the Manor or his steward in a 'Court Leet' or 'Court Baron'. Offenders were kept in the village lockups in the cellars.

Turn right and walk down



Court Street. On the left is the village recreation ground, Penny Mead. This was once very uneven with huge lumps, clearly an earthwork of some sort. These were cheerfully levelled 'in minutes' as a goodwill gesture in 1944 by the 626th Engineers of the US Army, stationed in the village in preparation for D-day. The loss of historical interest has to be balanced against a much better football pitch!

Continue along Court Street. Ahead you can see the Rattlebone Inn, the only survivor of Sherston's 17th century pubs. Note the inn sign depicting the local hero. Unusually for a village, we have the added benefit of having access to an Indian Restaurant and takeaway offering authentic Indian Cuisine - The Bridge (former Carpenters Arms) is located on the main road through the village.



**11** Walk round to the Church. The lych gate was built in the 17th century and restored as a war memorial. The Church was re-built about 1170 on the site of a Saxon foundation. It has much of interest, and a guide is available for purchase inside. To the right of the porch is an old weathered statue, which locals believe is John Rattlebone holding the tile to his wound. Cynical historians point out it is a priest



holding a missal. There are many interesting tombstones, including that of Private George Strong, one of the first recipients of the Victoria Cross for bravery at the Siege of Sebastopol in the Crimean War.

Probably the most famous of Sherston's clergy is Henry Chichele, rector 1400 -1403, who founded All Souls College Oxford and was Archbishop of Canterbury 1414 -1443. Shakespeare gives him a long speech at the beginning of *Henry V*, persuading the King to attack the French. The ambitious Chichele probably spent little time in the village, taking the income and paying a deputy to perform his duties.



Leave the Church by the lych gate and turn right. **12** On a triangle of grass at the road junction is the Jubilee Tree, an acer planted in 1897 by Sir George Holford, founder of Westonbirt Arboretum, to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Continue back to the Post Office.

This concludes the walk, though there are many other features of interest visitors can explore for themselves.





## General information

### Footpaths and the Law

The walks included in this guide all follow Public Rights of Way. As such you have full right to walk along them freely.

Footpaths are typically on private land, please respect this. You and any dog(s) are legally required to keep to the line of the path and not stray onto land on either side.

Please remember that the local area is farmland and it is not uncommon for you to come across horses or other livestock in fields. Dog owners are reminded that they have a legal responsibility to keep their dog under close control.

In fields where crops are growing, follow the footpath line wherever possible. Dogs must be kept on the footpath in fields where there are crops to avoid damage.

### Safety

At all times you are expected to use your own judgement regarding personal safety before proceeding along any of the given routes.

Areas are often muddy, even in dry conditions and conditions can change suddenly. So please ensure that you wear appropriate footwear, with good grip and have warm waterproof clothing with you.

In a separate section in the pocket with the maps is an extract from the Countryside Code, which provides general advice on walking in the countryside.

### Reporting Problems

Although the footpaths in this guide are all Public Rights of Way, you may occasionally encounter obstructions or consider an area to be unsafe. Should this occur, we would be grateful if you would report the nature and location of the obstruction or hazard, either to:

The Clerk  
Sherston Parish Council  
E: [clerk@sherston.org.uk](mailto:clerk@sherston.org.uk)  
or to:

The Public Rights of Way Officer  
Wiltshire Council  
T: 01225 756178  
E: [rightsofway@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:rightsofway@wiltshire.gov.uk)

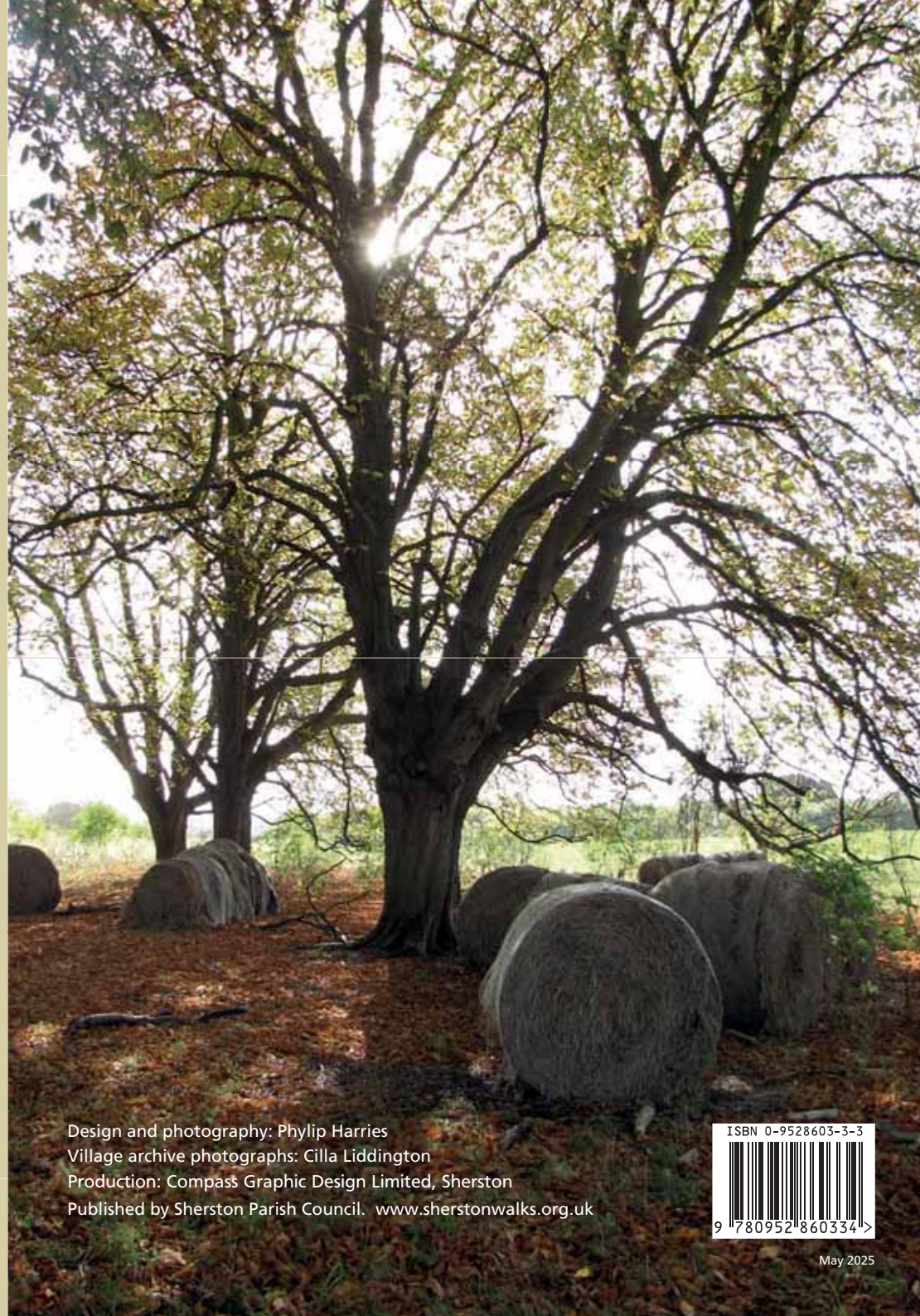


## 10 walks around Sherston & The Countryside Code

- 1 Brook End Ford
- 2 Commonwood Lane
- 3 Ladyswood
- 4 Easton Grey
- 5 Pinkney
- 6 Willesley
- 7 The Cliff
- 8 Sopworth
- 9 Shallowbrook Lane
- 10 Luckington & Alderton



*Each walk map has been labelled in accordance with the Wiltshire Council's official Public Rights of Way Map*



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# Brook End Ford

**Using Brook Hill, Sherston 20, Backrill Lane, Luckington 53, Alderton Road and Sherston 19 & 34.**

**3.2 miles** - *includes a couple of gentle hills.*

Leave the High Street, heading towards Luckington, down Brook Hill past the old silk mill site. At the bottom of the hill is a signpost on the left to The Grove and Alderton (SHER20). Take this signed footpath, cross the stone stile or access the field via the wooden kissing gate and bear right over the river bridge, continuing right to follow SHER20 (which incorporates a section of the Macmillan Way) enter Grove Wood via the wooden kissing gate. The Parish has acquired this wood on a long lease and it is being developed as a community asset for local groups to enhance and enjoy. The wood was probably a valuable resource as there is evidence of coppiced hazel. On leaving the wood, turn half-left and find the waymark on the brow of the slope. The path continues across the field to another waymark and on to the corner of the field by a group of old ivy-clad hawthorn. Cross the stone stile and pass into the next field. There are two footpaths across this field but, depending on the cropping, it is suggested that the path straight in front of you leading to a gap in the hedgerow may be the easier route. This leads to a waymarked gap onto Backrill Lane, the verges of which contain a variety of wild



flowers. Turn right and continue for approximately 150 yards. You then have a choice:

**Either:** turn left through the metal kissing gate, staying on SHER20, to go diagonally right across the field, past the buildings of the old vineyard. The vineyard once used to make ciders, one locally famous brew being called 'Sherston Scorcher'. Through the pedestrian metal kissing gate and over bridge in the hedgerow and veer right across the next field to a bridge and stile beside an oak tree. Then bear right towards the tree in the middle of the brow of the slope and go on to cross another bridge and stile. Go straight over this field to the pedestrian gate and onto the brideway (LUCK53), where you turn left to walk to the Alderton Road.\*



**Or:** continue on the road to the ford. You can walk down to the ford, which has a small causeway beside it. Using Brook Hill, Sherston 20, Backrill Lane, Luckington 53, Alderton Road and Sherston 19 & 34. 3.2 miles



- includes a couple of gentle hills. Just before the ford there is a left turn onto the brideway (LUCK53), which soon takes you past the orchards that once served the old vineyard. The brideway is

a charming walk, with lovely views and an interesting character. This route also leads you to Alderton Road and is a very similar length to the option overleaf.\*

Turn left onto Alderton Road and after 350 yards, SHER19 is on your left soon after a metal field gate on that bend, cutting off a blind corner. Now continue left along the road as it winds past Widley's Farm. Further on, just past Widley's Farm Cottage, there is a fine old barn (on your left), dated 1749. Stay on this road until you reach a crossroads. Now go half-left via a pedestrian gate onto SHER34. Keep the hedge on your left and pass through a gap into the next field. Bear left down the hill, making your way along the bottom edge of the field, going through a metal kissing gate just before the corner. Bear left down the steepish bank towards the river and left to re-cross the bridge on SHER20. Now bear right to cross the stile back onto Brook Hill and turn right to return to the High Street.





## Commonwood Lane

**Using Commonwood Lane, Sherston 35 & 18, Luckington 35, Alderton Road and Sherston 19.**

**4 miles** - a lovely walk along two very minor lanes, a short section in the middle cuts across fields, which can be muddy at times. There are pleasant views across to Luckington and Didmarton on a clear day and some fine old Cotswold buildings on the route.

Go towards Malmesbury and turn right beside the Rattlebone Inn down Noble Street, going past Grove Road, to the bottom of Tanners Hill (named after the tannery that used to be by the stream). Over the bridge where the road bends left, turn right up Thompsons Hill and then turn left onto Commonwood Lane. Go over the crossroads leaving Sherston behind. There now follows a long level walk southwards with meadows and farmland on each side.

After 3/4 of a mile the lane bends right towards Commonwood Farm. Continue straight ahead onto the signed byway (SHER35), a broad track which shortly passes the gateway and tree-lined drive to Lordswood House on the left. The hedgerows here are over 300 years old and are rich with many wild flowers. About 220 yards after the gateway turn right off the track, though the kissing gate onto SHER18 and continue west over the first field with the hedge on your left. This field is currently a meadow with many wild flowers in abundance. Head for the kissing gate in the left-hand corner of the field. Go through this kissing gate and over a small board bridge just after the kissing gate, taking

care to avoid the drainage ditch sometimes hidden by undergrowth to your left. Continue over the next field, again with the hedge on your left, and through the next kissing gate. After the third field go through the kissing gate in the top left corner and continue into the fourth field where the path now becomes LUCK35. The footpath veers away from the hedge at the dogleg kink. Head for a large gap in the hedge on the far side of the field and go through it into the fifth field. Here the path leads towards a new barn conversion straight ahead of you. Pass to the right of the building where the path then joins a broad track and there is a lovely view on your left of Alderton Church.



This track leads to a final gate onto Alderton Road. Turn right and head north back towards Sherston. You can soon see the church tower of Sherston in front of you on the horizon and on a clear day there are pleasant views across to

Luckington and Didmarton on the left.

After some 650 yards the lane bends right and there is a wooded copse visible in the field on your left. If you are quiet you may see deer here using the copse for cover. Carry on along this road, cutting off the blind corner by using SHER19 on your left. Then pass Widley's Farm, a beautiful Georgian farmhouse and garden, and a little further on is a lovely Cotswold barn dated 1749 - ironically called 'New Barn'! Continue across the Luckington/Malmesbury crossroad, then head down Thompsons Hill to reach Tanners Hill where it is a short climb back up to Noble Street and left to the High Street.





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# Ladyswood

**Using Noble Street, Sherston 26, Forlorn, Foxley Road, Sherston 13 & 37, Ladyswood Estate and Sherston 15.**

**4.1 miles - a bit hilly.**

Go towards Malmesbury and turn right by the Rattlebone Inn into Noble Street, beside the triangle and large acer tree. This is known as the Jubilee Tree, as it was planted in 1897 to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. A short way down the hill turn left up the steps onto SHER26. Follow this across the road and through the houses to a metal kissing gate and along a field edge with houses on your left. Continue through the next kissing gate, veer diagonally right across the field, over a stile, then on the same line to another kissing gate in the field corner. Descend the steps to the road and follow it with care downhill to Forlorn Bridge over the River Avon. Cross the bridge and immediately turn left, climbing through pleasant woodland.

Do not take the track on the left that leads to Keeper's Cottage but continue along the road until you reach the T-junction. Go left onto Foxley Road, cross the road and then go right, through a gate onto SHER13 (do not go onto the track to the right of it which is a signed bridleway).

Go diagonally across the first field, cross the stile and bear right to another stile in a gap between the end of the hedge and a tree. Walk directly ahead across the large field aiming for the middle of two large trees and through the gap in the hedge, up steps and down over a bank. Bear left to pick up the footpath on the other side of the track, cutting across the corner of the polo pitch and through the gap in the stile and through the field ahead, where is a gap in the hedge and a bridge. Go over this bridge and keep the hedge on your left as you walk up the last field to another

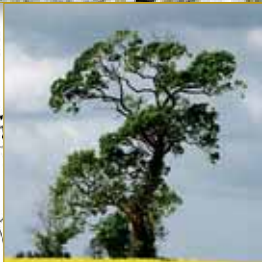
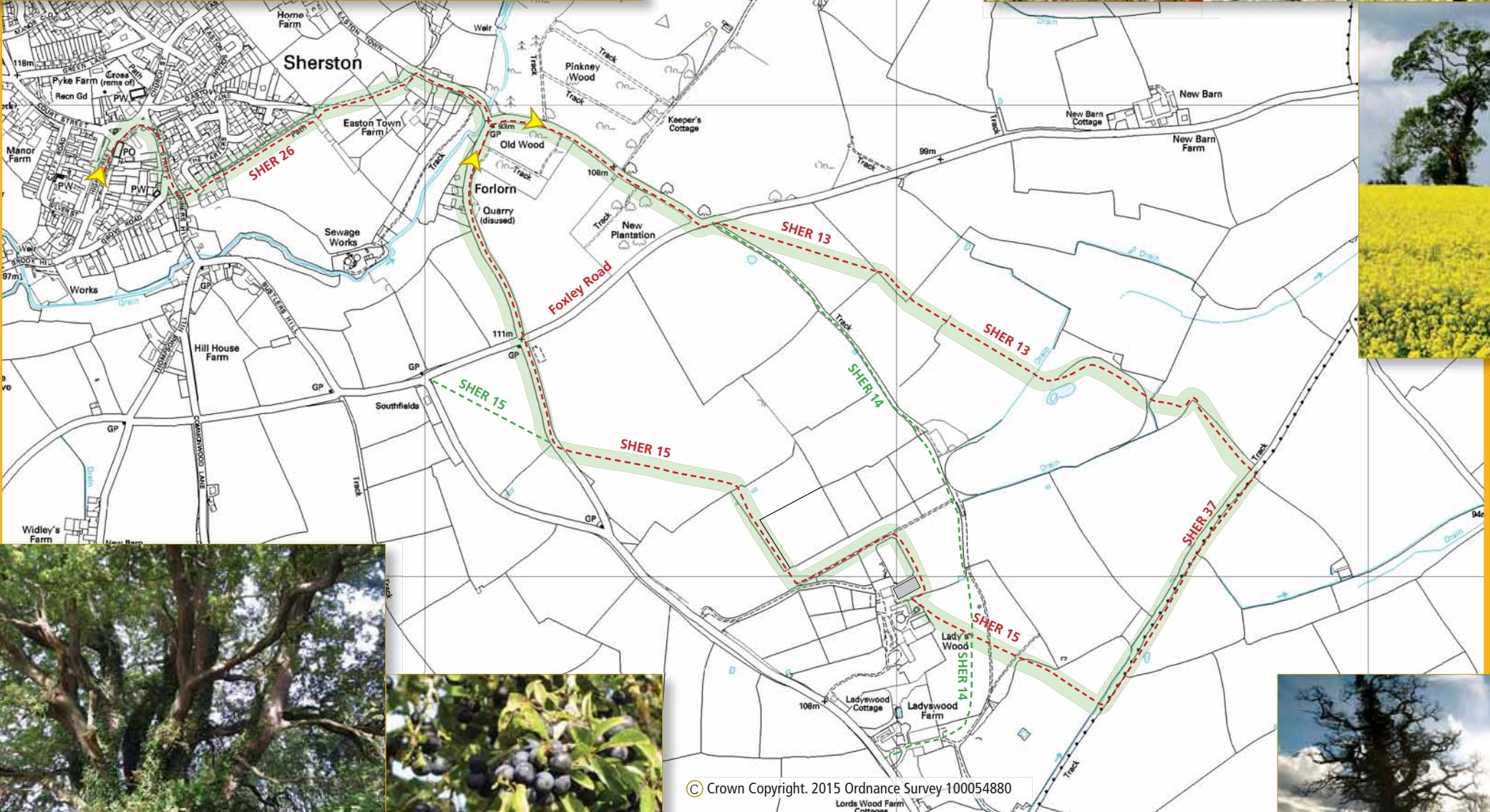
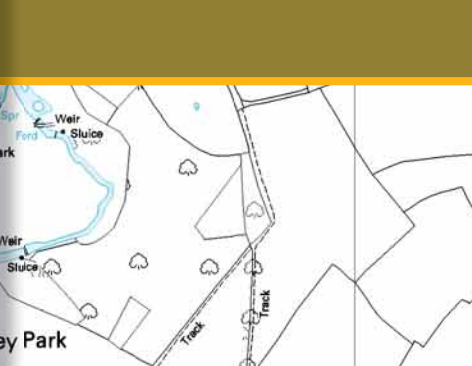


gap the hedge that brings you out onto the old Fosse Way (SHER37). Turn right on this long, straight byway and take

care as vehicles sometimes use this track. After about 400 yards, SHER15 is on your right.

Cross the plank bridge and stile onto this footpath, which re-enters the Ladyswood Estate where polo ponies may be grazing. Continue between the post-and-rail fences and across a stile. Keeping the hedge on your left, cross the next field by bearing slightly left, aiming between two spinneys and then heading for a gate into an area of woodland. Go straight on keeping a green fence on your left until post and rails, then turn left and walk between the post and rails and the horse exercise track. At the end of the horse track turn right keeping hedge on left and post and rails on right. Cross the field going through two small gates which lead into a large arable field. The footpath now goes diagonally left across this field where skylarks can be heard in spring and summer. Head for two telegraph poles close together to the left of the view of the church and cross the stile and bridge there onto the road. Turn right and go down the hill back to Forlorn. Cross the bridge and retrace your steps up the hill on the other side and along SHER26 back to the High Street.





## Easton Grey

**Using Noble Street, Sherston 26, 12, 10 & 9, Easton Grey 2, 4 & 1 (the Fosse Way) and Sherston 11.**

**6 miles** - includes a couple of small inclines and some parts. May be muddy.

Go towards Malmesbury and turn right by the Rattlebone Inn into Noble Street, beside the triangle and large acer tree. This is known as the Jubilee Tree, as it was planted in 1897 to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. A short way down the hill turn left up the steps onto SHER26 then across the road and through the houses. Then go through the metal kissing gate and along a field edge with houses on your left. Continue through the next kissing gate, veer diagonally right across the field, over a stile, then on the same line to another kissing gate in the field corner. Descend the steps to the road and follow it with care downhill to Forlorn Bridge over the River Avon.

Make your way over Forlorn Bridge and immediately left up the hill. When the woodland on the left stops, turn left onto the signed track (SHER12), going past Keeper's Cottage. Continue on this track, passing through a large iron gate, which once retained Pinkney Park's herd of deer, and follow the wall round to the left (SHER10). Go through a wide metal gate then through the small metal field gate to your right to take the signed, diverted footpath (SHER9).

Stay in the field and follow the path around the two field sides then go through the metal kissing gate into a field on your right. Continue with

the hedge on your left, go through a small metal gate then continue to a metal kissing gate and across a small stream (EGRE2).

The path then veers right and through a gate before going diagonally across the field towards two large oak trees and a water trough. Bear right following the tree line, go through two wooden kissing gates (the first with a bridge) and continue alongside pheasant rearing pens then along the righthand side of a post-and-rail fence. Views of Easton Grey House and parkland lie to your left. A downward slope now takes you to a gate and out onto a road. Turn left over the bridge into the picturesque village of Easton Grey. The bridge is probably 16th century while The Bridge House and collection of smaller buildings are 17th century, including the original laundry which at one time serviced Easton Grey House.

*A short diversion left, up the hill for 500 yards, will bring you to the church, which is well worth a visit. Retrace your steps to rejoin the walk.*



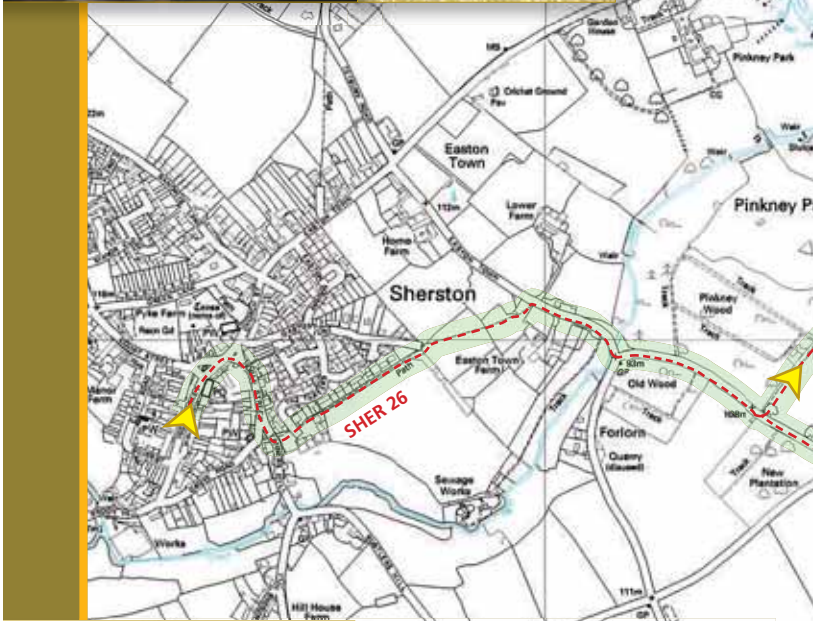
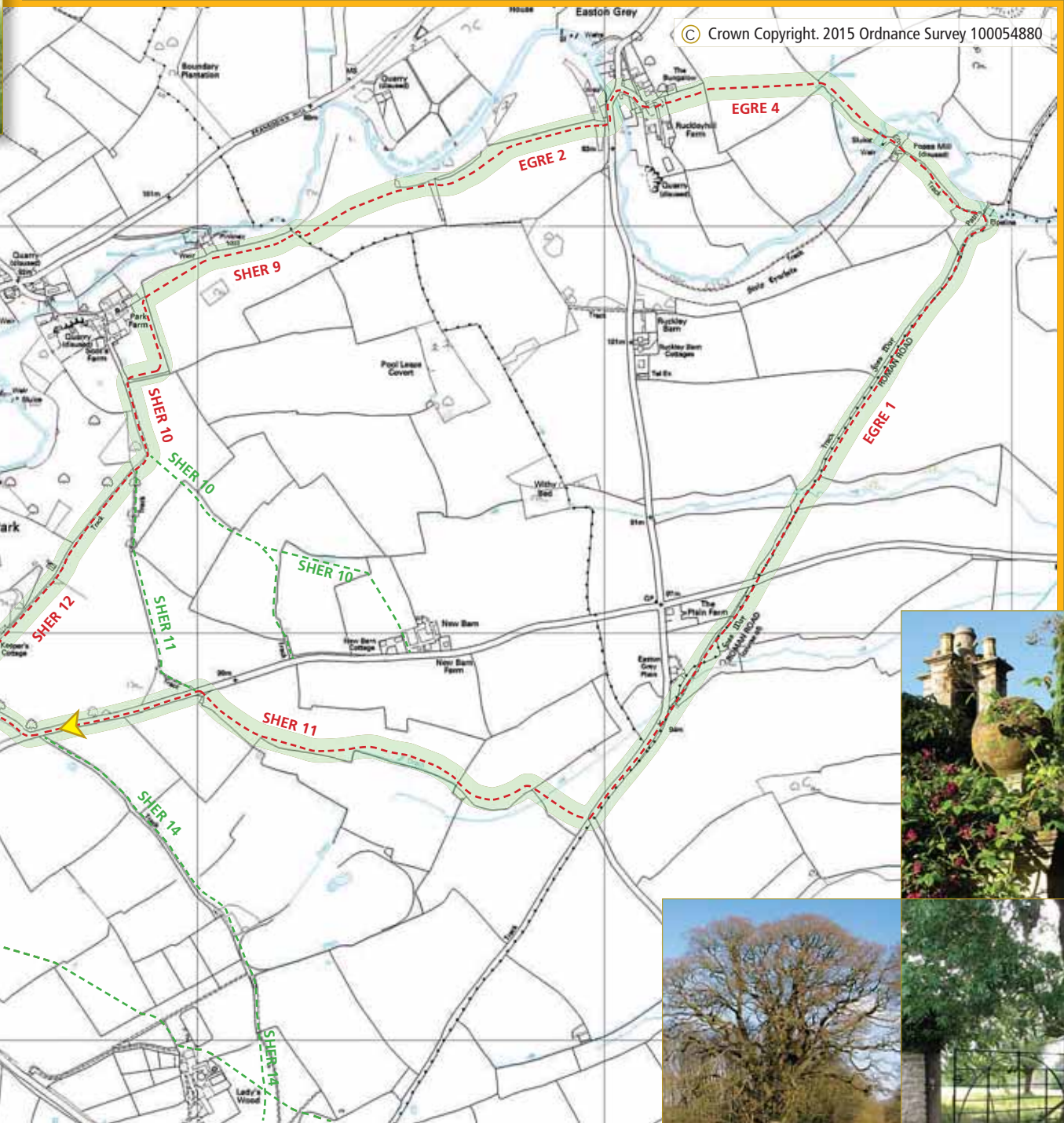
Turn right up the small lane beside The Bridge House, then left at the footpath sign to EGRE4, between buildings and through a metal gate. Continue across the field to a stile and then through an arable field with

fine, open views (If ploughed and muddy consider using the field edge). Go through a large gap in the hedge and immediately turn right. Follow this rough path with the hedge on your right for 100 yards. At the corner of the field veer right down a steep path. At the bottom a bridge crosses the widened river with ruins of Easton Grey Mill on the left. Proceed straight ahead through a metal gate, then a kissing gate and on along the track, through another metal gate and down the sloping path and finally through a kissing gate. This brings you back to the river beside the Fosse Way and is the site of a former Roman settlement. There were once important military and trading posts at this river crossing as it was approximately halfway between the cities of Aquae Sulis (Bath) and Corinium (Cirencester).

Bear right up the hill along the Fosse Way

(EGRE1), passing through a metal gate while being wary of possible off-road vehicles. After 3/4 of a mile go through another metal gate, cross a minor road and continue for 400 yards to join another road (muddy in wet weather). Go left along this road to rejoin the wide, stony track of the Fosse Way where the metalled road sweeps left. Immediately turn right through the gate on a signed path (SHER11) towards the left hand corner of the field. Cross a stile and turn left following the hedge round and then go over a stile. Go across an all-weather horse track and almost immediately go over a second stile. Keep the hedge on your left for 700 yards until you reach the gate onto the road. Now turn left, and after about 500 yards, take the first right, where you soon rejoin the first part of this walk and you can retrace your steps back to the village.





## Pinkney

**Using Sherston 26, Forlorn, Sherston 12 & 10, Pinkney Road, Sherston 32, Tetbury Road and Sherston 30.**

**3.5 miles** - two minor hills.

**2.7 miles** - using the shorter option - returning via the fairly busy B4040.

Go towards Malmesbury and opposite the church lych gate turn right onto the narrow one-way road called Gaston Lane. Follow the lane to a road junction. Cross over, turn right, then almost immediately left to continue down Gaston Lane to a metal kissing gate (also known as a swing-swing). Bear left on SHER26, taking the path across the field with views of Pinkney Wood ahead. Go over a stile, then continue on the same line to another kissing gate in the right-hand field corner. Descend the steps to the road, turn right and follow it with care down the hill to Forlorn Bridge and over the infant River Avon. Take the road on your left, signposted Malmesbury, climbing uphill through pleasant woodland.

When the woodland on the left stops, turn left onto the signposted footpath (SHER12), which passes Keeper's Cottage. This was traditionally the home of the gamekeeper for Pinkney Park which is also on your left and has some fine trees. The land on the right was once the site of a US Army transport base set up in readiness for the 1944 D Day landings. Beyond this, on a clear day, the chalk downs behind Calne can be seen, notably Cherhill Down



with its monument and White Horse.

Continue along the track to a large iron gate which once retained Pinkney Park's herd of deer. Go through the gate onto SHER10 and follow the wall of the Park round to the left. Easton Grey House will be seen in the distance. Go through the gate and then down through the farm, ignoring a footpath sign to the right. The road now curves left and then right to cross the Avon again on a picturesque stone bridge. Climb the hill to the B4040 crossroad in the hamlet of Pinkney.

**Either:** cross over this road and go straight on up the quiet lane opposite. After 500 yards, the fine house of Pinkney



Court is seen on the right, and normally herds of alpacas occupy the fields on either side of the road. These endearing relatives of the camel are natives of South America kept for their high quality hair. Keep on this road for a further 400 yards to the top of the rise, where the trees of Westonbirt Arboretum can be seen ahead. Now turn left through a gate on the signed footpath (SHER32). Walk through two fields (which can be very muddy when wet), keeping the hedge on your left and passing two deep wooded hollows containing ponds and a stone trough. These are relics of the days when cattle were kept in these fields. At the end of the second field, go through a gap in the hedge onto Tetbury Road and turn left towards Sherston. When the road bends sharp left you will see some steps on your right leading up to a kissing gate onto SHER30. Follow this path over two fields and two more kissing gates and through a gravelled drive between houses. At the end



turn right and continue along the road, past the church and Post Office, to return to the starting point.

**Or:** if you prefer a much shorter walk you can turn left onto the B4040. There is a narrow pedestrian pathway along the right-hand side, which will take you back into the village, across the crossroads and into the High Street.





# Willesley

**Using Sherston 30, Tetbury Road, Sherston 28A & 28, Willesley Road, Sherston 3 & 29, Knockdown Road and Sherston 4.**

**4.5 miles** - very gentle incline near the start, bridleway sections can be muddy.

**3.9 miles** - if missing out the Willesley village loop.

Leave Sherston High Street, walking towards Malmesbury, along Church Street and passing Easton Square. Turn left by a pillar marked Hunters Field, down the shared gravel driveway of the three houses and continue along the footpath (SHER30) to the right of the far house. This well-trodden path leads across two fields, each entered through a kissing gate with a final third kissing gate bringing you onto Tetbury Road. Turn left and follow this country road for 3/4 of a mile, leaving the houses behind and with open farmland views, until you reach a signed, wide bridleway (SHER28A) on your left as the road bends around to the right.

Follow this track for around 3/4 of a mile. Over the hedges are farmland views and if you are lucky, you may catch a glimpse of deer in the fields. The hedgerows here are abundant with wild flowers, particularly during the late spring and summer months. There is also a wide variety of established trees along the way. At the footpath/bridleway crossroad SHER28 continues in narrower form both left and right.

**Either:** turn right and



continue a short distance on SHER28. After a sharp lefthand bend, you will see a stone wall on your right-hand side and an equine clinic on your left (just before you reach the main village road, slightly to your right). Turn left at the road, noting the fine shell porch of Byam's Farmhouse where Siegfried Sassoon was a frequent visitor. In his autobiographical novels he called himself George Sherston! Walk through the village, passing Anne

Brayne's cottage on the right and a beautiful cedar tree on the left, opposite Willesley House. Just beyond the willow tree on the village triangle, turn left (opposite the phone box), onto a bridleway (SHER3) passing between two houses. Follow this gravelly track as it passes the entrance

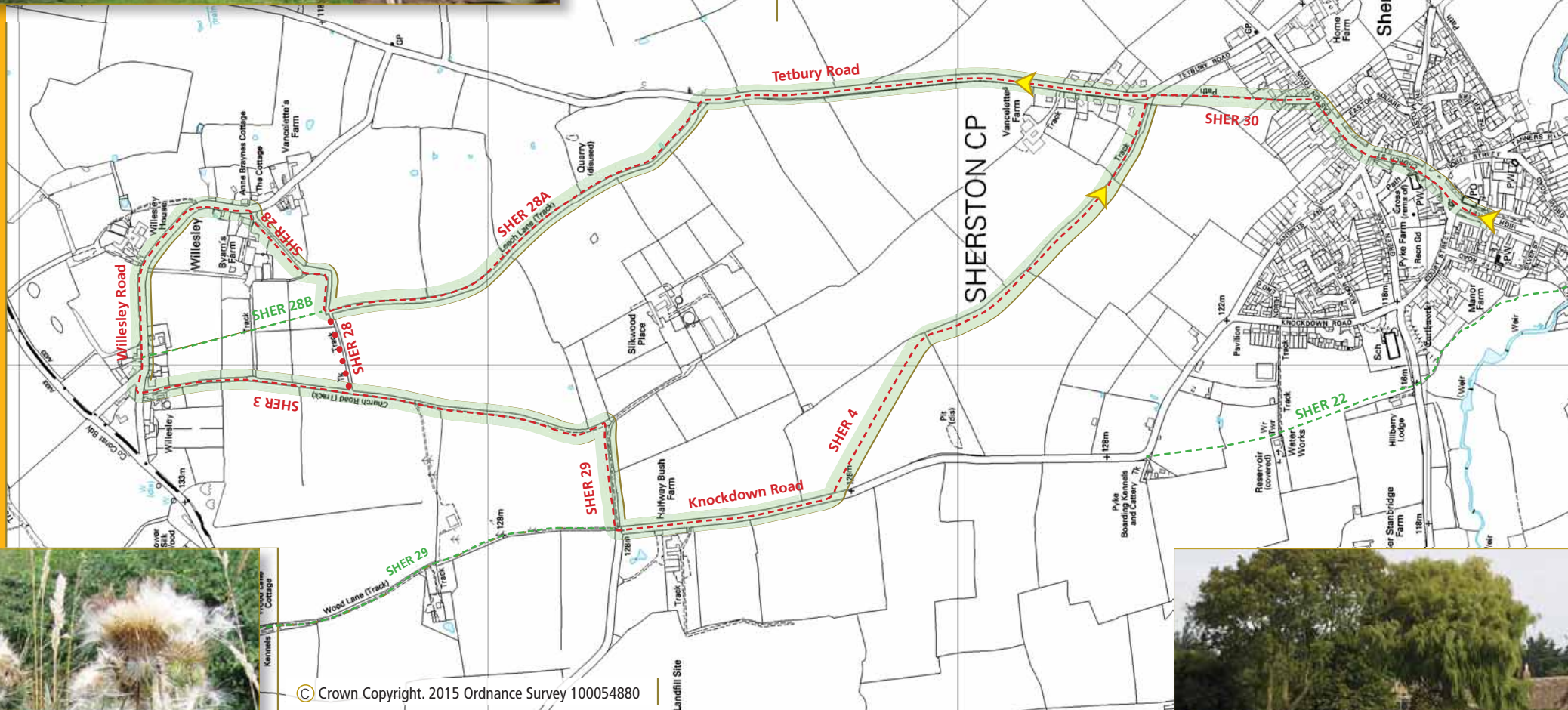
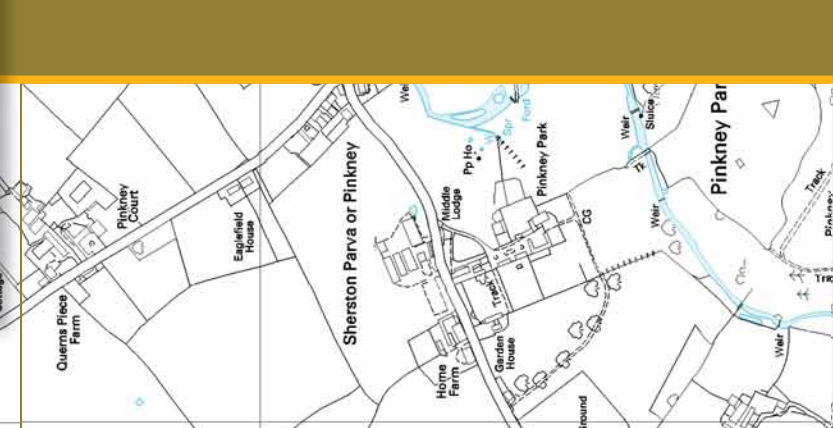


to a farm on your left. Where the gravel track turns to the right carry on straight ahead on the grass track to the left edge of a field, keeping the hedge on your left. \*\*\*You will eventually reach a tarmac farm driveway at a bend, with a bridleway sign. Turn right here (SHER29) and continue for a short distance until you join the sharp corner on Knockdown Road. Turn left and walk along the road for about 1/3 of a mile. After stone walls on the left-hand side are replaced by hedgerow, look out for a gateway on your left and a bridleway signpost for the Macmillan Way (SHER4) where you rejoin the directions above\*.

**Or:** if you would prefer a shorter walk, avoiding the loop through Willesley, turn left here and follow SHER28 for approximately 250 yards, until the bridleway meets a farm track at a T-junction. Turn left onto SHER3 and then follow the directions from above\*\*\*.

\*The official route for SHER4 from Knockdown Road is diagonal across the first field from the gate (as on the map). However, local usage is typically through the gap in hedge prior to the gate and then on the broad grassy strip round the field margin. Now keep the hedge on your left and continue to follow the path along the field edges. On your right you will see the tower of Sherston Church in the distance. The path briefly turns into a track before bringing you out onto Tetbury Road. Almost immediately, turn right at the footpath sign, and go up the steps back onto SHER30. Cross the fields via the kissing gates, turn right out of Hunters Field and retrace your route back to Sherston village centre.





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## The Cliff

### Using Sherston 30 & 4 (Macmillan Way), Knockdown Road, Sherston 22 and Brook Hill.

**2.3 miles** - lovely views, generally smooth and flat, includes 350 yards along a rugged, narrow ledge and a small, steep hill on road surface.

Head towards Malmesbury and, about 100 yards beyond the The Bridge, you will see a pillar on the left marked Hunters Field, beside a wide gravelled driveway. Take this track (SHER30), passing between the houses, onto a narrow pathway and through a kissing gate into a field. Go diagonally right across the field, through a second kissing gate and on through a smaller field and a third kissing gate. Now go down the steps onto Tetbury Road.

Do not go along the road but immediately turn left onto a bridleway that runs between a house and field (SHER4). You are following the Macmillan Way, a signed and waymarked route of 290 miles that runs along existing footpaths, bridleways and minor roads. It was opened in 1996 to raise funds, via sponsored walks, for The Macmillan Cancer Relief Charity. The track narrows as it passes along the edge of two more fields and as you join the fourth field, you must veer left quite quickly to cut across it diagonally to the gate, and out onto Knockdown Road.

Turn left here, taking care of traffic, and after about 700 yards on the right-hand side of a sharp

left bend, you will come to a stile next to boarding kennels. Cross the stile onto SHER22 and go through the paddock. After the next stile and field you will reach a track that leads to a water tower.

A windmill once stood there and was used to pump water to standpipes around the village when water levels were low. It was sold to the Bristol Water Board in the 1930s. Cross over the track, go straight ahead on a path that divides two fields and then along the left-hand side of the hedge. On your left you will see Sherston Primary School, built in 2005 to replace the old school in the High Street. Cross the stile onto Sopworth Lane, go straight over the road and cross another stile on the opposite side, signed to Brook Hill. You are now overlooking the valley



on part of Sherston known as The Cliff. This was probably the inspiration for Sherston's original, Anglo Saxon name 'Scorranstan', meaning 'steep slope' and 'stone'. Bear left, following the path down the slope and along the narrow ledge that

runs parallel to the top of the hill. There are excellent views in all directions from here. The river at the bottom is a branch of the River Avon and was used to power the old silk mill built in 1872 by Joseph Davenport & Sons. It closed in 1922 and is currently the site of a company that weaves elastic. This is the bold, square building that you will see ahead of you. Keep on this rugged path as it meanders down across hilly mounds, heading towards the final stile (not the gate at the bottom). The track in front of this row of houses leads out onto Brook Hill, part of the B4040. Turn left here and again taking care of traffic, climb back up to the High Street.





# Sopworth

**Using Sopworth Lane, Sherston 23, Sopworth 7, 11, 12 & 10 and Sherston 24.**

**4.1 miles** - fairly flat, mainly fields and tracks following the course of the River Avon with excellent views. May be muddy.

**5.2 miles** - with Didmarton option, using Sopworth 8, Didmarton 33/1, 28/2 & 30/1 and Sopworth 5 & 1.

From the High Street turn left at the Post Office, go along Court Street and pass the recreation ground. This is known as Penny Mead and was bought for the village in 1934. At the crossroads turn left down Sopworth Lane. As you walk along past the school on your right, note the school Nature Reserve. About 3/4 of a mile along Sopworth Lane you come to Stan Bridge where a white egret is often to be seen.

Take the first of two footpaths on your right, 80 yards before the bridge, going through a gate onto SHER23. Bear left towards a clump of trees and go through a large gate. Walk along the next field with the hedgerow on the left to cross a stile beside a gate and keep walking straight ahead (SOPW7). Beyond the wall on your left are Crow Down Springs which feed the Sherston branch of the Avon coming from its source at Joyce's Pool in Didmarton, (although at times this part is dry). Keeping the wall on your left, cross the next field, listening for skylarks, and you will come to a track.

**Either:** turn left down this track to just before a

barn where a signpost can be seen on the left. Climb over the stile onto SOPW11, cross the field, then over another stile and field, veering to the right and the end of the hedge. SOPW11 now bears left, but you should fork right onto SOPW12. Cross the field admiring the magnificent oak before continuing to the metal gate that brings you onto the Sopworth road where you rejoin the directions below\*

**Or:** for a longer walk, turn right up the track until level with Field Barn, then turn left onto a waymarked bridleway (SOPW8). Follow this along, keeping to the right of the buildings as it curves left to the gap in the wall ahead, then onto NDM/33/1 and, keeping the wall on your left, cross the field. Large teasels sometimes grow



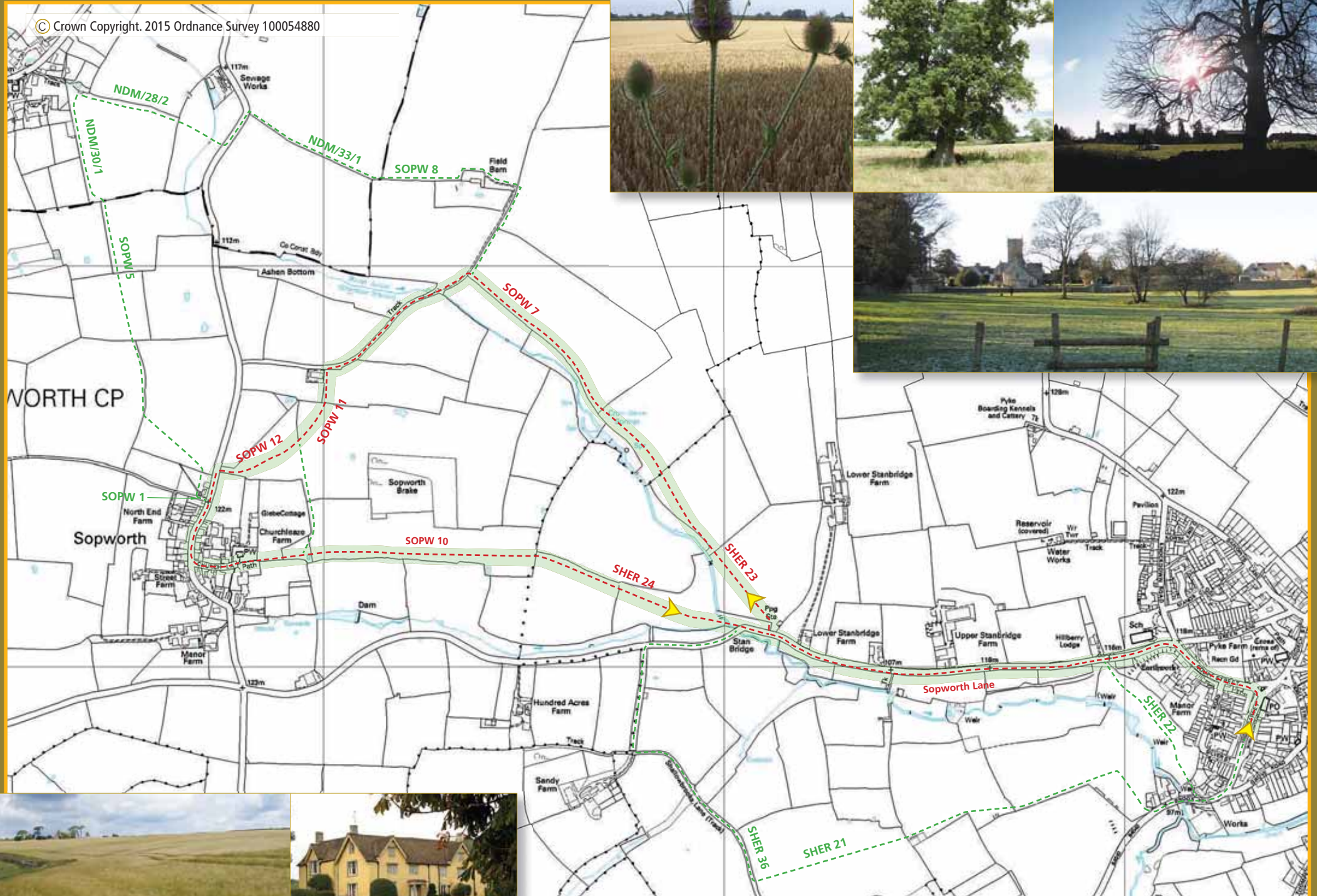
beside this path. Go down the hill, through the gate at the bottom onto the road.

Turn left and after about 100 yards, cross the stile on the right onto the signed footpath (NDM/28/2). Cross the bridge ahead, go up the slope and through the entrance into the next field. Walk along the field edge, keeping the wall on your right, which soon becomes a tree line. Head towards the outbuilding at the end of the field. Ahead is a gate onto the road into Didmarton, which is well worth exploring but for this walk you will need to turn hard left here (NDM/30/1) and walk along the other edge of the field. Aim for the gate which then takes you into the next field and onto SOPW5. Cross this field, climb over a fence and head up the hill to a stone stile with lovely views behind you. Cross this stile, walk halfway along the left-hand side of the field to cross another stile on your left. Now veer right across this field, heading towards the nearest trees and go through a kissing gate. Continue straight ahead, through a gate and then left onto a bridleway (SOPW1). This will lead you back to the Sopworth road where you turn right to rejoin the main route at the point below.\*



\*Walk into the village then turn left down Church Lane and take the waymarked path (SOPW10) through the church gates. Bear right through the churchyard to a waymarked kissing gate and follow the path alongside the wall to a stile. With the church behind you, walk straight ahead through a field which is full of wild flowers in spring. Sopworth Brake is on the left. Aim for the right-hand gate and climb over the stile onto SHER24. With the hedge on your left, walk to a gap at the end of the field. Now bear slightly right towards the footbridge. Cross over and leave the field by a metal gate onto the road.

Turn left to walk back to Sherston or turn right to return via Shallowbrook Lane (SHER36 & 21), as shown on the Shallowbrook Lane Walk, which is only 1/2 a mile longer.



## Shallowbrook Lane

**Using Sopworth Lane, Shallowbrook Lane, Sherston 36 & 21 and Brook Hill.**

**2.4 miles** - relatively flat, quiet road then a track and across fields. May be muddy.

**Either:** Leave Sherston heading towards Luckington down Brook Hill. Approx 2/3rds of way down Brook Hill just before the factory take the footpath (SHER22) on your right - this initially appears like a pavement/driveway and takes you in front of a row of cottages. Cross the wall/stile and follow the winding footpath along the embankment (the flat field at bottom of embankment has no public access). Exit the footpath over a wall stile onto Sopworth Lane, bearing left.

**Or:** From the High Street turn left at the Post Office, go along Court Street and pass the recreation ground. This is known as Penny Mead and was bought for the village in 1934. At the crossroads turn left down Sopworth Lane. As you walk along past the school on your right, note the school Nature Reserve.

About 3/4 of a mile along Sopworth Lane you come to Stan Bridge where a white egret is often to be seen.

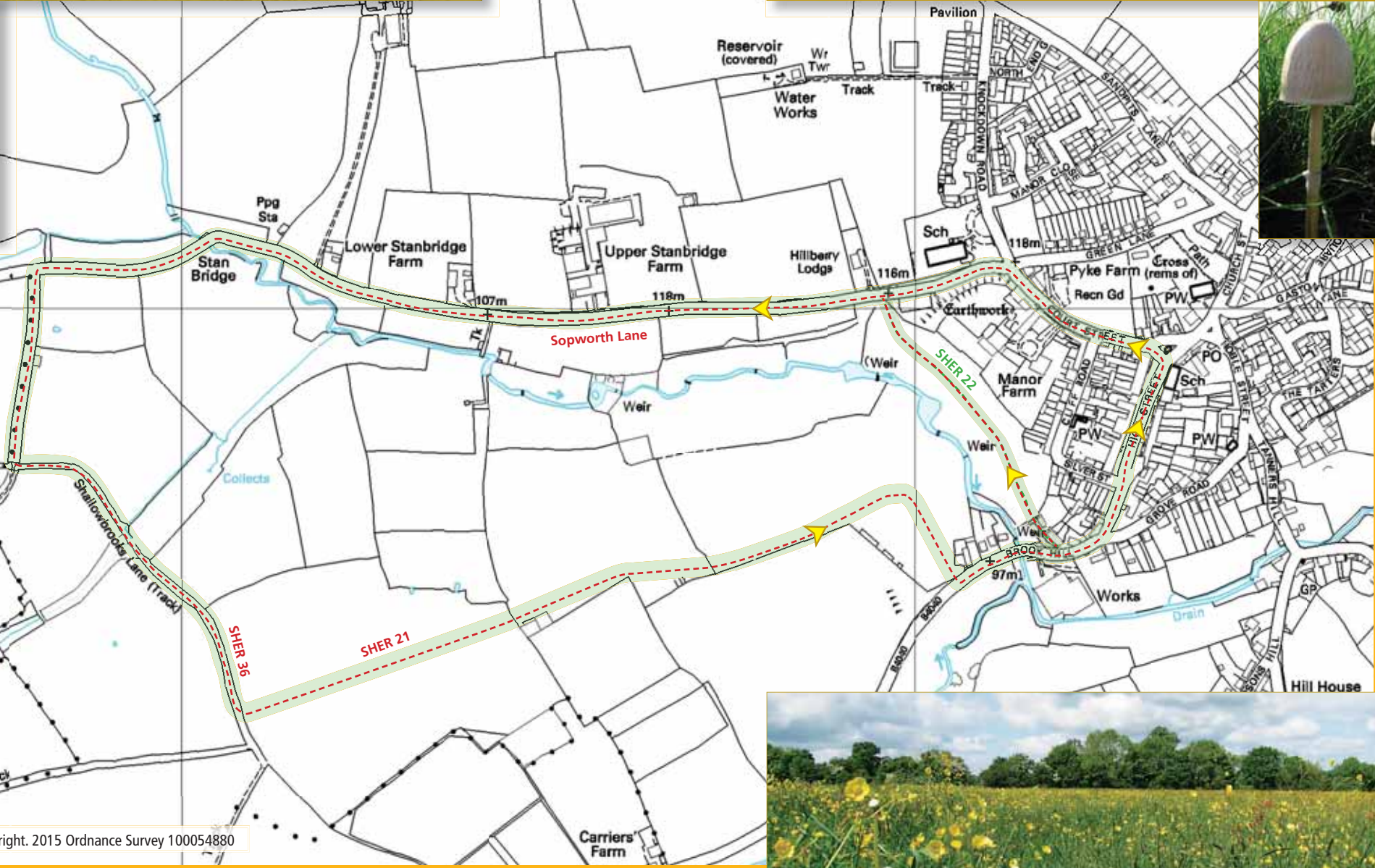
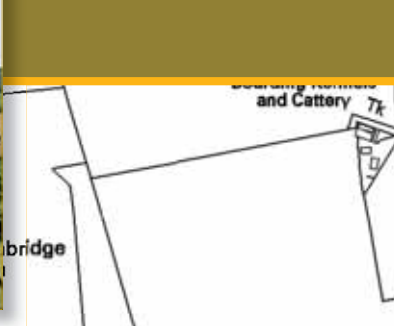
*The following part of this walk can be added to the end of the Sopworth Walk.*



Cross the bridge and continue for a further 220 yards and then take the track on your left. Go up this small road towards a barn and continue until you come to a pair of stone pillars. Turn left just before these pillars onto the track that is Shallowbrook Lane. The lane drops down and may be wet and muddy at the bottom. It then rises up, becoming SHER36. Follow it up the hill for 300 yards to a break in the trees on the left where you will

see a waymarker on a fence by a stile. Climb over the stile and take this footpath, SHER21, keeping to the left of the bush in front, and walk straight across the field aiming for the tall gateposts ahead. This is known as the 'Flying Field' as Lady Blanche Douglas, sister of the late Duke of Beaufort and a great early aviation enthusiast, used it as such during the 1930s. Go through the gate and cross the field, keeping the wall to your right. (There may be horses in this field.) Go through a second gate, noticing the lovely view of the river and cliff ahead. Then veer right as you make your way between the fenced trees down the hill, known as Reeves Hill. On reaching the flattened part of the slope above the gardens, turn right and walk to the kissing gate then out onto the road. Turn left here to go back up Brook Hill and into Sherston High Street, being vigilant of traffic where there is no pavement.





## Sherston - Luckington - Alderton

**Using Tanners Hill, Backrill Lane, Brook End, Alderton Church, Luckington and Sherston 21.**

**6 miles** - some gentle hills, mainly fields and tracks with short distances on roads.

Leave the High Street, heading towards Malmesbury, turn right past the Rattlebone Inn and walk down Tanners Hill to the bridge. Turn right into Thompson's Hill and past Mill Cottage, go through the metal gate on the right onto a permissive path which follows the river to Grove Wood. Go through the kissing gate into Grove Wood on SHER20 (which incorporates a section of the Macmillan Way). The Parish has acquired this wood on a long lease and it is being developed as a community asset for local groups to enhance and enjoy. The wood was probably a valuable resource as there is evidence of coppiced hazel.

On leaving the wood, turn half-left and find the waymarker on the brow of the slope. The path continues across the field to another waymarker and on to the corner of the field. Cross the stile and pass into the next field. There are two footpaths across this field but, depending on the cropping, it is suggested that the left fork (which leads straight ahead) may be the easier route. The path leads to a waymarked stile out onto Backrill Lane, the verges of which contain a variety of wild flowers.

Turn right and continue on the road to the ford which has a small causeway beside it. Cross over and turn left and

walk along the road through Brook End. At the end of the houses ( 'M' of M15 lived in one of the

original houses), continue along the raised causeway beside the river. Continue along the grassy path and turn right towards Luckington Court ahead but before the entrance to the Court take the signed footpath to the left through the Churchyard and around the Church. Luckington Court is a fine C18th mansion which was used as Longbourne, the home of the Bennet family in the 1997 BBC version of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Leaving the Churchyard walk through the gate and walk straight ahead along the path between the field and Court, noting the huge Cedars of Lebanon in the garden. Turn left onto Church Road and walk downhill, crossing the bridge over the Avon. Continue up the hill through what is known locally as 'the Rathole' due to its tunnel-like appearance. Take care for passing vehicles. At the top of the Rathole take a waymarked path to the right and walk along the path at the edge of the field towards Alderton Church. The path joins a farm



track and you will pass a recently restored mediaeval carp pond on your right. Turn right onto The Street, Alderton and follow the road through the village until you reach a crossroads beside the village pond on your left. Take the turning right towards Badminton out of the village. Be especially alert for traffic as this is a narrow road with high banks. Towards the bottom of the hill there is the remains of a quarry in some woodland on your right. Shortly after this you will then see a Pumping Station. In summer this pumps water up from a huge aquifer in the Inferior Oolite below your feet. It supplements the flows in the Upper Bristol Avon as it goes down to Malmesbury.

Immediately after this, turn right into Tanhouse Meadow, following the footpath sign, through the metal kissing gate. Walk straight ahead through the steep riverside meadow with caves carved by quarriers in an outcrop of limestone at the top. You can walk along close to the nascent river which has a claim to be the source of the



Bristol Avon. The river flows from here to Malmesbury, Chippenham, Bath and Bristol, reaching the sea at Avonmouth. As the hill steepens on your right you will approach a wooded area on your left, a path will lead you into this wood and you

will see ahead a footpath sign and a stone slab bridge. Cross the bridge and follow the path up to the right. Amongst the trees you will see traces of houses; in the C19 this was a small hamlet housing a tannery, the area contains a large number of springs and wells, apparently one well is full of the horns of the beasts who were turned into leather. Go through the kissing gate. Cross into the next field. Aim for the picket fence behind the houses. There is a gate at the right hand end of the fence and a stone stile at the left hand end. Both paths beyond take you to Church Road.

Turn left on Church Road, pass the village playing fields on your left (and notice a very pleasant playground across the road on your right) and you will come to the Village Green. If you are not stopping at the





shop or Old Royal Ship pub, cross the main B4040 (with great care, this is the busiest road you will encounter on this walk) and take the road on the right side of the school signposted Sopworth.

Leaving the village you pass Northend Road on your left and immediately after this you will see a footpath sign, gate and narrow stone stile on your right. Cross this meadow heading for the gate on the opposite corner (the official Right of Way follows the hedge to the right along 2 sides of the field). Go through the gate and keep right, walking along the edge of the field. Beside a stone stile cross into the next field and walk towards the stile opposite (a path would be cleared if there is a crop). Climb over the wooden stile and walk towards the gate (and stile) you will see directly ahead of you. Climb the stile and walk diagonally across the next field towards the opposite top corner where you will find a well-built stile taking you to a path between hawthorn bushes and a blackthorn copse. Climb the stile at the far end of the overhung path and prepare to cross an arable field either following a path through the crop or round the edge to the right. You are heading for the far side of the field at its right edge where you will find a footbridge over a usually dry, ditch. Keep to the path at the right hand edge of



the next field until you come, after 25 yards, to a field gate leading on to Shallowbrook Lane, a bridleway. Turn left up Shallowbrook lane and walk until you pass the junction with another

lane on your left. Ignore this lane (but admire the views across to Sopworth) and ignore the inviting gate to your right.

The footpath which will take you east (right) towards Sherston is about 50ft ahead and is well signposted at the stile which you will need to climb over. Take this footpath SHER 21, keeping to the left of the bush in front, and walk straight across the field aiming for the tall gateposts ahead. This is known as the 'Flying Field' as Lady Blanche Scott Douglas, sister of the late Duke of Beaufort and a great early aviation enthusiast, used it as such during the 1930s. Go through the gate and cross the field, keeping the wall to your right. (There may be horses in this field.) Go through a second gate, noticing the lovely view of the river and cliff ahead. Then veer right as you make your way between the fenced trees down the hill, known as Reeves Hill. On reaching the flattened part of the slope above the gardens, turn right and walk to the kissing gate then out onto the road. Turn left here to go back up Brook Hill and into Sherston High Street, being vigilant of traffic where there is no pavement.



