

CIRCULAR WALKS AROUND SOUTH PETHERTON PARISH



WELCOME TO OUR PARISH WALKS

These walks have been collated by local residents, and they offer you an opportunity to discover the beauty and peace of our local countryside. Most walks begin from the car park on St James's Street. Footpath numbers have been included (x) so that the guides can be used with the Parish Paths Map. Where paths are outside the Parish, the full identification is given (e.g. L17/55). The Parish footpaths and Rights of Way map can be obtained from the Library.

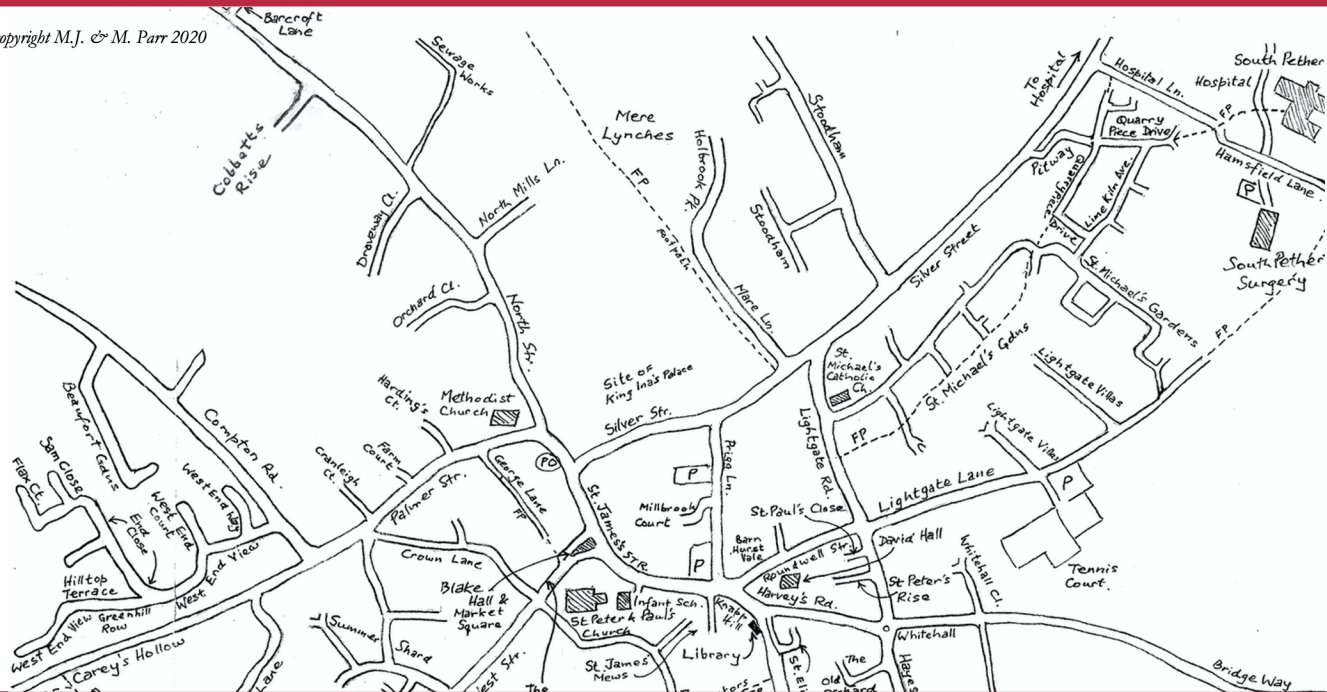
Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the routes given as public rights of way, they may change and may not be clearly defined on the ground. To determine the exact route of a public right of way, the definitive map held by Somerset County Council should be consulted. The publisher cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions arising from this publication.

All persons using the information in this guide do so at their own risk and discretion.

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AROUND THE HOUSES

Peter & Jean Kidner

This is a circular walk around the “middle” perimeter of the village, mainly on footpaths but with some short linking stretches of road, which can be started and ended anywhere along the route as suits the walker.

Start at the Junior School, at the junction of Coles’ Lane/Hayes End; turn L down the path between the school sports field and the house (50), through the gate across the fields for 500m; at the tall conifers turn L to reach Bridge Way. Turn R for 500m, past the houses, and before the point where the road is blocked off, turn L up Hamsfield Lane. As the noise of the A303 fades, and you turn through a couple of 90 degree bends, you pass an old limekiln on your R, and enjoy sweeping views towards Martock.

At the top of Hamsfield Lane, between the surgery and the hospital, continue along track (55) and down Hospital Lane to the junction where it meets the Martock Road at Pitway Hill.

Taking care on this busy road, turn R towards Martock for 20m to the start of the upward climbing path (1). Walk along the path, over the stile, along the field edge to another stile, and along the lane to a T junction. Turn R (3) and away from



AROUND THE HOUSES

continued

Stoodham, past the metal gate down a tree-lined track (taking care not to turn an ankle in one of the badger holes) to where 4 footpaths meet, as marked by a fourway way signpost. Turn L (10) Barcroft Lane (enjoy excellent views across North Mills Brook towards East Lambrook and beyond). Continue across the fields to the corner of an orchard on your L, then down through trees in an attractive sunken lane past the house and gates. Walk along the tarmac of Barcroft Lane to the T junction with North Street/Drovenway. Turn R along Drovenway for 400m; turn L at the T-junction (23) for 400m, passing the first gate on R to the second gate ahead. Pass through and follow the field edge to a gate then along the edge of the field for 150m to a gate on the far side below the buildings of Rydon Farm. Veer L at the T junction (22) and along Rydon Lane in front of the imposing hamstone farmhouse, looking down on Compton Durville. At the junction, turn R for 150m until, opposite the houses, the gate and signpost to Ben Cross (34). Walk along the field edge to a small copse and gate, then climb up to Ben Cross. On reaching the road, turn R uphill to the point where the road splits, then L onto the track (Partway Lane, 38); after 500m, cross over West Street and proceed carefully down Moor Lane; after 400m, at the gate next to the cottage, turn L (41). The track passes through an old kissing gate shortly after the junction with footpath 40, then after 800m, either following the field edge on the permissive path, or cutting the corner of the field via 2 stiles on the definitive route, you will enter Hele Lane.

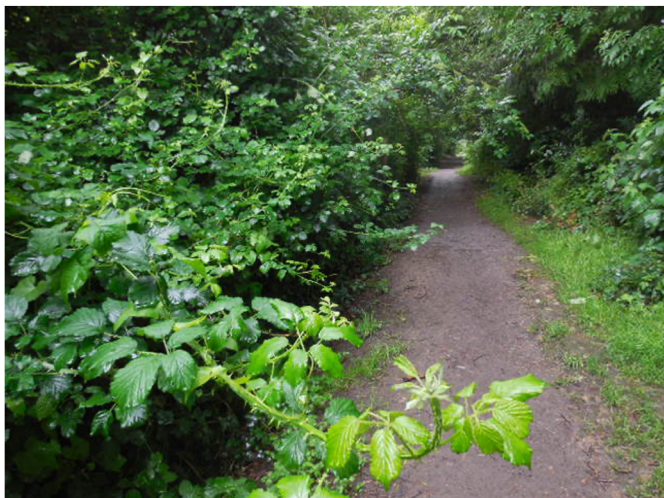
Turn R along Hele Lane for 20m, and on the corner, go through the gate (49). This passes behind the gardens of South Street, before emerging through a kissing gate at the junction of South Street and Coles' Lane. Walking up Coles' Lane you will reach the Junior School once more to complete the circular walk.

3 miles, 2 stiles, 1½ hours.

COMPTON & THE LAMBROOKS

John and Rosemary Johnson

From the Car Park, turn R up St James's St; at Methodist Church veer L uphill on Palmer St to junction with Compton Rd. Go straight on past cottages on L, then turn L into Whitfield Lane (87). On reaching allotments, turn R along hedge (36), to point above road at Carey's Hollow; turn L (35) along edge of 2 fields to arrive at Ben Cross. (Here enjoy the views back to the Church and Ham Hill). At the Y road junction, turn back towards Petherton for 20 m, then L up the track (34), Gorefield lane. (C3 coins were found in the field to L in 1935). Follow the track over the hill, between the fields and down to a copse and gate. Keep left along the field edge to Compton Hill Rd; turn L, then R to Compton Durville, past the old Community of St Francis buildings. At the bend in the road, continue straight onto a track (24) across gravel and through a gate/stile. The path is enclosed by hedges at first, then follows the L edge of large fields before a narrow sleeper bridge and stile is reached. Cross this, then down the R edge of the narrow field to the gate, and then across to another gate in the shadow of a large oak. (The houses to your L and ahead are West Lambrook). Continue straight ahead to the metal bridge across the leat, but do not cross; turn R and walk along the bank (88), following it



COMPTON & THE LAMBROOKS

continued

down the slope, ignoring the footbridge on your left and cross the flat wooden bridge over the ditch.

Turn L and follow the path along the edge of the brook, over a sleeper bridge and along a tree-lined walk to a stile at Mid Lambrook bridge. Keeping the Lambrook Brook to your L, walk along the track for 100m to a wooden footbridge. Cross and turn R through 3 fields, 2 gates and 1 stile (L17/55) to gate at Orchard End Farm. Walk straight through the yard into Water St, and on to East Lambrook Bridge. Turn R over the bridge, and up the road for 200m to a track on your R (15). Do not take this track, but instead climb the stile at the adjacent gate and walk uphill along the field's edge past the badgers' sett. Continue across the next field, over a stile and sleeper bridge and then along the edge of the next field to another stile and a fourway sign. Go R (10) along Barcroft Lane (admire the views to N and Burrow Hill, marked by a single tree on its top). On reaching North Mills Brook, next to Barcroft Hall, turn L (12) and follow path beneath Mere Lynches, through 2 gates to Mare Lane and arrive at Silver Street. Turn R, then at the weeping willow turn L up Prigg Lane and back to the car park.

3 miles, 5 stiles, 1½ hours.

HIGGIN'S GRAVE & FOSSE WAY

Matthew Shooter

From the Car Park cross over to South St past the Library, and after Burnworthy and the house adjacent, turn R down the narrow (and very slippery when wet) path "Doctor's Walk" (83) to Hele Lane. Turn L past the water splash and along Hele Lane until you reach the sharp L turn, next to the converted barn on your R. Cut across the corner and through the gate on the path (49) behind the gardens of the houses on South St, emerging through another kissing gate at the junction of South St and Coles Lane. In the shadow of these fine beech trees, turn R up South St to the Vaux bridge over the A303 to Watergore. Turn R onto Moondown Lane as you descend from the bridge, then after a mere 20m turn L up the path (92) to emerge in the loop road at Watergore. Cross the old A303 in the gap in the fence, onto Northfield Lane (79). Walk along the lane for 300m, past the houses, until you reach a crossroads. Turn R up Long Lane (81), a sometimes muddy bridleway due to its use by horses and from the many badger setts in its banks – this runs along the route of the old Fosse Way. Follow the path over the crest between the orchards, noting the vineyard to the S, then along the edge of the orchard on your right – this is the bottom end of the Touring Caravan Park. As you near the end of this orchard, in the far corner with some protected badger setts over the fence on your L, there is a steep path down the bank on your L which emerges onto the road with the memorable name of Higgin's Grave Lane; this is also the Parish boundary. At the bottom, turn L down the road and follow it for 800m to the junction with Field Lane. Turn L up Field Lane (79), past the crossroads at the start of Long Lane which you walked earlier, and down Northfield Lane back to the old A303. From here retrace your route down South St or Hele Lane as you see fit, back to the Car Park.

2½ miles, no stiles, 1¼ hours.

COMPTON DURVILLE/RYDON

Peter & Jean Kidner

From the Car Park, turn R onto St James's St before turning L at the Blake Hall and along West St. After some 400m, after Summer Shard and Lamprey's Lane, when entering the area of Little Petherton, turn R at a track entrance (37) next to a cottage where the garden is always well tended, with the footpath sign set back off the road and pointing to Whitfield Lane. Follow this twisting track for 100m until emerging into Whitfield Lane (87), adjacent to the allotments. Turn L, and either descend into Partway Lane (38) and turn R uphill, or follow the field edge round to the R above Partway Lane and walk up to Ben Cross. Here go onto the road and turn R immediately for no more than 20m before turning L up the track, Gorefield Lane (34), to Compton Durville. Follow along the field edge and down to the gate, then through the sheep pasture to the road below Compton Hill. Rather than turning L towards Compton Durville, turn R uphill for 75m to the road junction on your L, then walk above Compton Durville on Rydon Lane to Rydon Farm, a fine hamstone farmhouse. Walk past the house and follow the track straight on (22) towards Mid Lambrook. After 60m, at the waymark, turn R for 40m between the trees to a gate. Turn L along the field edge to another gate, turn R to the corner, then along the top of the field below a bank to a Bristol gate (pedestrian gate within a field gate). Passing through this gate, continue straight on and the track (still 23) will soon be lined by hedges on either side, until you reach a large oak tree at the head of The Droveaway. Turn R downhill on Droveaway, which becomes North St, and then emerges opposite the Post Office on St James's St, at the end of which is the Car Park.

3 miles, no stiles, 40 minutes.

LAMBROOK/NORTH MILLS BROOK

Roger & Brenda Drayton

From the Car Park, turn R up St James's Street; at Methodist Church keep straight on down North Street, which becomes Droveaway. At end of Droveaway turn R, go through the kissing gate immediately on left and along field edge (21), through into next field with edge now on your left. At the bottom, turn R along the field edge and join the track (88) parallel to Lambrook Brook for 20m to wooden bridge across brook. After crossing, turn R along brook (L17/55), and after 1/2 mile, 2 gates, 1 stile, reach Orchard End Farm. Turn R on leaving farmyard gate, along path next to hedge and over metal bridge; follow round to R (12) with field edge on left for 300m to 2 bridges followed by hamstone squeeze gate; proceed along fenced path (12) beside North Mills Brook, with private wildlife ponds to left, across junction with Barcroft Lane and, after 2 gates, below Mere Lynches to Mare Lane. Turn R downhill onto Silver Street, then at NO ENTRY road sign turn L onto Prigg Lane, which brings you back to the Car Park.

Look out for: Buzzards above Lambrook Brook; evidence of strip lynches at top of Mere Lynches, below Petherton's earliest settlement.

3 miles, 1 stile, 1¼ hours.

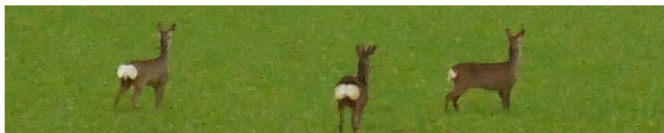


MID LAMBROOK CHURCH

Roger & Brenda Drayton

From the Car Park, turn R up St James's St; at Methodist Church follow road up Palmer St, then follow round into Compton Rd. After 3 modern bungalows turn R down track (17) to a gate; turn L behind houses (20), then R to kissing gate and down hill at field edge (18). Turn L at bottom behind gardens, and follow through to Droveway. (Alternatively reach Droveway as in the Lambrook/North Mills Brook walk). Walk to end of Droveway, turn R and through kissing gate immediately on L, along field edge (21) into next field with edge now on your left. Then at the bottom, bear R to track (88) parallel to Lambrook Brook. Turn L on track, and follow round to stone bridge. Turn R across the bridge past Mid Lambrook Manor (R) and the chapel (L) to a track/signpost on R. Follow this well marked route (L17/94) across 3 stiles, veer R on to the lower path before the 4th stile and emerge onto Church Lane. Turn R, past St James's Church, and turn R again at the bottom (Water Street) towards Orchard End Farm. At the farm gate, you can either turn L, across North Mills Brook by the metal bridge then along the path (12), across 2 sleeper bridges and through a hamstone squeeze gate before the 1/2 mile walk between ponds and the willow-lined brook, under Mere Lynches up to Mare Lane, Silver St and return to the Car Park along Prigg Lane, or go through the gate to the L of the house and across a flat concrete bridge, then take the path (13) through the orchard, which is a delight in apple blossom time. After leaving the orchard by the gate, either turn half R and walk diagonally across the field on the R of the hedge in front. At the far corner turn L at the gap in the hedge and follow the field edge along to the loose stones of the county road, through the gate to the end of Droveway then back via North St and St James's St to the Car Park. Or go straight on the permissive path and after 120m you'll come to the end of Islemoor Lane; go along the lane and emerge at the bottom of Droveway, turn L and after North St and St James's St, you will reach the car park.

4 miles, minimum 3 stiles, 1 hour.



ORBITING BARCROFT

Peter & Jean Kidner

A shorter, not too demanding circuit offering wonderful views Northward, particularly in Summer.

From the Car Park turn R along St James St then along North St. Turn R down Barcroft Lane, over the bridge and up the tree shaded lane past Barcroft Hall – a modern Georgian style house built in the 1980s by the Crocker family who owned South Petherton Fruit Farm as it then was, focused mainly on blackcurrants. It was the next occupant who awarded it the overly grandiose title of Barcroft Hall and fenced off the previously open footpaths which had been used by horse riders (The County Council has an application to restore it as a bridleway awaiting consideration.) Keep climbing up the lane past a small orchard on the R until the path (10) levels out and provides good views towards Burrow Hill and the Lambrooks; press on, past a small copse where the path has a dog-leg until it ends at a fourway signpost.

Cross over the first stile on the L, and keeping the small wood on your right, proceed down this path (8); after 300m there is a sleeper bridge over a ditch and a stile. Head on in the same



ORBITING BARCROFT

continued

direction across the next field, following the trodden path; the definitive line is to the left, but the landowner has created a permissive path to the right alongside the hedge by the road to East Lambrook. Follow this easier route, but mind the badger holes from the large sett in the top corner. At the bottom, by a field gate, there is a stile onto the road. After the stile, follow the track on your immediate left (15); after 70m there is a stile and field gate, and the latter is the easier route. Keep on for a further 40m with the hedge on your L until you reach another field gate and a low stile; cross over then turn R along the ditch/hedge at the bottom of the field. After 300m this turns a corner to the R where you emerge onto footpath (12) besides North Mills Brook. Turn L across the sleeper bridge and squeeze gate and follow the path beside the brook all the way back to Barcroft Lane, below Barcroft Hall. Here you can either return by the way you came up Barcroft lane and North Street, or you can take the scenic route straight on beneath Mere Lynches and Mare lane (no stiles), to arrive at Silver St before turning L onto Prigg Lane to take you back to the Car Park.

1½ miles, 2 stiles, 45 minutes.



SMOKECLOSE/MOONDOWN LANE

Peter & Jean Kidner

From the Car Park turn R up St James's St to the Blake Hall, turning L up West St. Shortly after passing St Peter & St Paul's church on your L, turn R up Crown Lane to Palmer St. Turn L and keep L past the cottages, into Whitfield Lane (87). On reaching the allotments turn R along the hedge (36), then turn L uphill (35), parallel to but above Carey's Hollow, to Ben Cross. Take the L fork of the road for 75m to the track on L which is Smokeclose Lane (39). Follow the lane past the Anaerobic Digester down to the A303, behind Frogmary Green Farm, and to the road with the bypass bridge on your R. Cross over the road into Moondown Lane (89/90), walking parallel to the A303. After Moondown Nursery, it is a relief to turn away from the bypass and the track ends at Moor Lane. Turn L along the lane and past Moor Farm; where the lane turns sharp left, turn R at the cottage through the gate onto the track (41). Continue straight on, past the junction with (40), through a metal kissing gate and old squeeze gate. Here you can follow the path to your L or walk in the field (permissive route). After 800m you reach Hele Lane. Turn L along Hele Lane until you reach the ford. Turn R up the "Doctor's Walk" narrow path on your R (83) - take care, as the paving slabs are very slippery when wet! Emerging into South St after 120m, turn L and after passing Burnworthy, you will see the Car Park in front of you.

Look out for: Hares between Ben Cross and the start of Smokeclose Lane; once numerous, sadly these are now seldom seen.

3 miles, no stiles, 1 hour.



WATERGORE/FOSSE WAY/MOOR

John & Rosemary Johnson

From the Car Park, cross St James's St and turn R past the library into South St; walk the length of this until you leave the village and climb up to Vaux bridge over the by-pass to Watergore. Turn R as you descend from the bridge along Moondown Lane, so as to avoid the dangerous junction onto the old A303, then after a mere 20m or so turn L up the path (92) and reach the old road loop in Watergore. Cross over the road at the gap in the fence, and along the track facing you, which is Northfield Lane (79), and the fields are old allotment gardens. Turn R after some 40m, up the track (45) in the middle of the fields to the line of conifers and into the orchard. Turn L along the edge of the orchard (80) until the junction with another path at the bottom edge of the orchard (there is another orchard across this path). This is Long Lane (81), part of the historic Roman Road known as the Fosse Way. Turn L along the lane, which sinks down between the hedges on either side and is notable for the badger setts which can make it muddy and narrow ! After 200m you will reach a crossroads; turn L along Northfield Lane again (79), and you will find yourself back at Watergore after 300m. (Alternatively go straight on at the crossroads for 40m, turn R when you reach the road and you will find yourself near the Royal Oak Inn). Cross back over the old A303, back down the path (92) and over the bridge - but this time turn L away from Petherton along the road to Moor. This is a windy road without pavements, so take care as you pass Moor and its old farm buildings largely converted into homes. At the cottage where the road veers sharply L, turn R through the gate along the track (41). After 150m turn L up the footpath besides the gardens of the houses in Lamprey's Lane (40), through the gate and out onto West St. Turn R and walk into Petherton, past the Blake Hall and R down St James' St back to the Car Park.

2 miles, no stiles, 1 hour.

PETHERTON MEAD DROVE

Peter & Jean Kidner

From the Car Park, turn left up Roundwell St and cross over Lightgate Rd into Lightgate Lane; passing the Recreation field, continue straight on the track (52, then 60) to the crossroads on the edge of the hospital grounds and at the top of Hamsfield Lane. Continue straight on in a NE direction between the side of the hospital grounds and an orchard on a sunken path (63), over the stile and down the field to the Bristol gate and Joyler's Mill, enjoying the views over the River Parrett and Cripple Hill to the E. Veer to the R of the barn ahead, and around the side is a gate and path (64) across the field to another gate and narrow bridge across a ditch on the edge of the river.

Continue on to the hedge opposite, where there is a multi-step stile down to the path (still 64). This next stretch is an attractive walk of 400m with views towards Martock with many horses running free in the field. At the stable, pass through 2 gates and climb 2 hazardous steel stiles to reach the road. On reaching the road, turn R and facing the traffic, walk along the road for 200m to the track on your L, which is Petherton Mead Drove. Go through the field gate and walk along the Drove (the ruts can be waterlogged in winter), and the path from the bridge at Parrett Works will join from your R. You may wish to make a detour to the bridge and river at this point (66).



PETHERTON MEAD DROVE

continued

At the end of the Drove, at the Bristol gate, the definitive route crosses the field on your L to the W corner; walk L in a diagonal across the field to gate/bridge to the path (7) along the bank of the Lambrook Brook. Turn L on reaching footpath (7) and follow it back through 2 kissing gates to East Lambrook bridge.

Crossing over East Lambrook bridge, turn L into Water St and along past the cottages on your L which include the ex-Public House "The Buffalo" to Orchard End Farm, where you can choose one of the 3 available routes back to Petherton – either along the S bank of North Mills Brook (12), all the way to Silver St, or through the orchard and diagonally up to the Drove way (13), or on the bank of the Lambrook Brook to Mid Lambrook (L17/55), up to Drove way and back up via North St to St James's St and the Car Park – all of these return routes are described in detail in earlier walks if required.

3 miles, 4 stiles 1¼ hours.

BEATING THE BOUNDS

Peter & Jean Kidner

The longest circular walk possible, almost all within the Parish boundary. There was a time when the entire Parish Council attempted this walk annually!

Exit the Car Park to the L, up Harvey's Road/Knaphill and across Lightgate Road into Bridge Way. Walk along below the Recreation Ground, past the cottages and just before the road is blocked off, turn L up Hamsfield Lane. Escaping the roar of traffic, admire the views to your R (E) as you climb up past the ruins of the old lime kiln towards the hospital. As you reach the corner of the hospital grounds, turn R at the crossroads down the side of the hospital, over 1 stile and through a Bristol gate (63) to Joyler's Mill, where the remains of an undershot water wheel survive in the old mill house. Going round the R side of the barn, climb over the stile and across the field to a bend in the River Parrett, and a gate and narrow footbridge over a ditch. Crossing over this, head for the stile in the hedgerow opposite and down onto the path (64) beyond.

Walk along this path with the hedge on your L, past the stables and through 2 gates onto the Martock Rd. Veering L on this dangerous bend, cross over the road and into the very large field beyond; without a well-worn track the path (65) is not obvious, but veer R away from the hedgerow on your L (at 12 o'clock) to the corner jutting out in the distance from this same



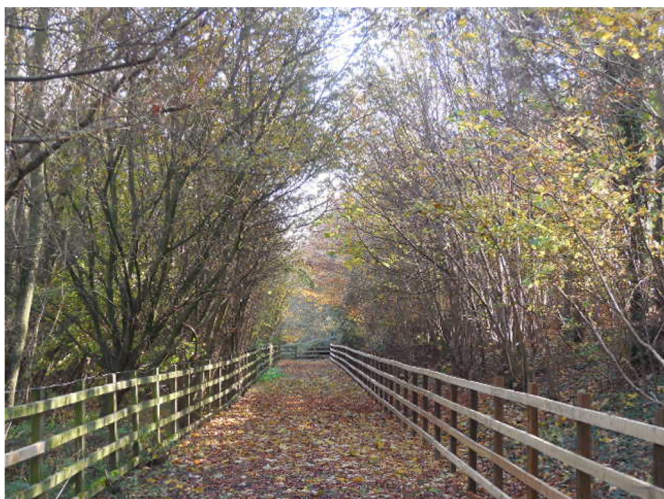


(hedgerow at 2 o'clock). At this corner, identifiable by a stile (from path 6) 10m along the hedge around the corner, follow the field edge ahead to the corner of the field and a gate and bridge over the ditch into the long narrow field beside Lambrook Brook. Head diagonally L towards the Brook (7), then along the bank and through a couple of gates to E. Lambrook Bridge.

Crossing the bridge, turn L down Water St to Orchard End Farm. Leave the farmhouse to your L, and go through the gate and along the path (L17/55 - you are out of the Parish here) on the N bank of the Lambrook Brook. After a stile and a gate, and usually to the call of Buzzards, you come to the wooden footbridge at Mid Lambrook; cross over, then follow the track (88) along the edge of the brook, past the stone bridge to Mid Lambrook, and over the stile along the tree-lined path (88).

After a sleeper bridge, follow the field edge round across a wooden bridge into a field with ranks of young willows, and up to the brook which is constrained in a leat. Follow the leat until you reach the metal bridge, then turn away from the bridge to the gate at the base of the oak on your L. Pass through the gate, and straight across the field (24) to another gate, then up the L edge of this narrow field to the end; follow the hedge round to the R where you will soon discover a narrow gap, a stile and a sleeper bridge across the ditch.

Crossing this, follow the hedge on your R all the way up through the fields (24) to Compton Durville. Passing the converted farm buildings, exit onto the road and keeping L, uphill past the old Community of St Francis. At the T junction turn L, but then take the track signed to Ben Cross almost immediately on your R. Follow the field edge to the copse, through the gate and up to Gorefield Lane (34), emerging onto the road just below Ben Cross. Turn R up the road, past the top of Partway Lane, and take the L fork for 150m to the track on your L after the first field. Go down the track (Smokeclose Lane, 39) and over the rise to Frogmary Green where West St passes under the A303. Cross over the road, then parallel to the A303 along Moondown Lane (89, 90), past the nursery and onto Moor Lane. (Here the adventurous can risk crossing the dangerous by-pass just after the nursery – the stile is on the R, and leads to the remnant of Moondown Lane to the S of the by-pass and thence to Watergore.) Turn R on Moor Lane and cross over the A303 Ilminster by-pass on the Vaux bridge, named after a previous Parish Council Chairman. Turn R into Moondown Lane as you descend from the bridge, then after 20m turn L up the path (92) to the loop road at Watergore. Cross over at the gap in the fence on the far side, into Northfield Lane (79), which after the houses and the crossroads becomes Field Lane. At the end of this lane turn L to the S end of Over Stratton, and ignoring the road junctions to R, then L, go down the road towards Wigborough. After some 400m, turn L up Southfield Lane (85) next to Skillbuild's premises. The Lane turns sharp R after



100m, and continue on until you meet the Yeabridge Rd; cross over and continue on the path (76) to Pound. Emerging onto the road, keep L along the road past the cottages for 150m until you reach a track on your L, Drayton Lane. Turn L at the start of Drayton Lane, but head diagonally across the field in front of you (69) – your aiming point is the end of the hedgerow across the field. When you reach this hedgerow, follow its line until you reach the road at Drayton. Here turn L along the road, past Old Bridge House, past the junction with the Fosse Way and up to the busy dual carriageway of the A303. Carefully cross this road into the entrance to the no through road of Bridge Way, and follow this all the way back to Lightgate Road, Knaphill and down to the Car Park.

You have just "Beaten the Bounds" of the Parish!

7 miles, 6 stiles, 2½ hours.

