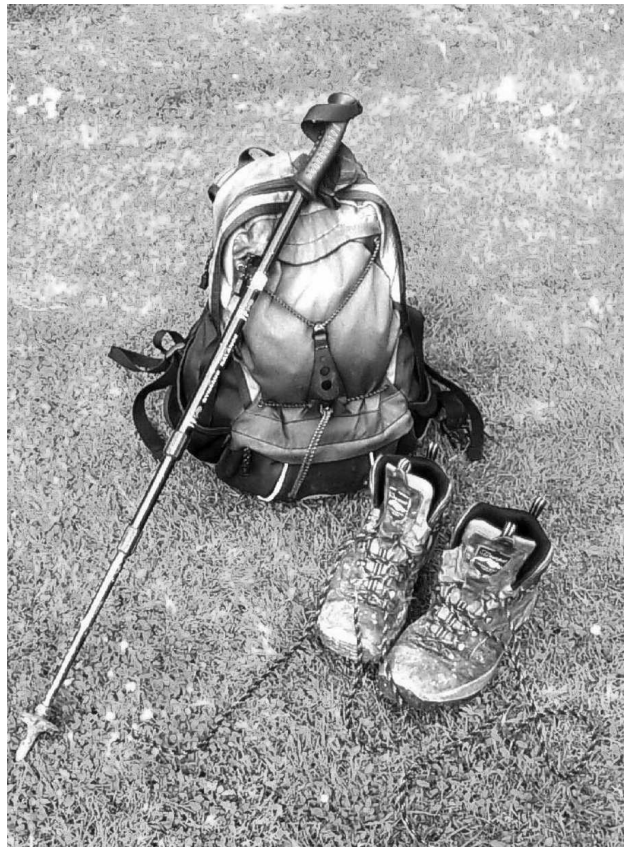


WALKING FESTIVAL STRATTON ON THE FOSSE 2012



www.mendipramblers.co.uk

This walks booklet has been written to support the Mendip Ramblers Group annual Walking Festival; this is the eleventh. Mendip Ramblers is a local group of the Ramblers, Charity Number 1093577, Company limited by guarantee 4458492.

CONTENTS:

The Countryside Code	2
General walking advice	3

THE WALKS

Short Walks: (less than 4 miles)

Chilcompton*, Killing's Knap and Locombe Wood (3.6 miles)	4
Barlake, Longleat and Holcombe* Old Church (3.9 miles)	7
Downside Abbey*, Rookery Farm and Coalpit Lane 3.8 miles	10

Medium Walks: (between 6 and 7 miles)

Chilcompton*, Gurneyslade* Bottom and Upper Benter (6.4 miles)	14
Holcombe*, Harridge Wood* and Pitcot (6.4 miles)	17
Chilcompton*, Clapton and Locombe Wood (6.3 miles)	21

Intermediate Walks: (between 8.5 and 9.5 miles)

Charlton, Radstock* and Chilcompton* (9.1 miles)	24
Gurney Slade*, Old Down and Chilcompton* (9.2 miles)	28
Holcombe*, Kilmersdon* Common and Stoke St Michael* (8.5 miles)	32

Longer Walks: (over 12 miles)

Coleford*, Mells* and Babington* (12.2 miles)	36
Harridge Wood*, Fosse Way*, Ashwick* and Chilcompton* (12.3 miles)	41
Gurney Slade*, Old Down, Clapton and Chilcompton* (12.2 miles)	46

Appendix

Information on local places. Places with * following e.g. Stoke St Michael*.

THE COUNTRYSIDE CODE: (This is an abbreviated extract. See www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk for the detailed code).

BE SAFE – PLAN AHEAD AND FOLLOW ANY SIGNS

LEAVE GATES AND PROPERTY AS YOU FIND THEM

Please respect the working life of the countryside, as our actions can affect people's livelihoods, our heritage and the safety and welfare of animals and ourselves.

PROTECT PLANTS AND ANIMALS AND TAKE YOUR LITTER HOME

We have a responsibility to protect our countryside now and for future generations, so make sure you do not harm animals, birds, plants or trees.

KEEP DOGS UNDER CLOSE CONTROL

The countryside is a great place to exercise dogs but it is every owner's duty to make sure their dog is not a danger or nuisance to farm animals, wildlife or other people.

CONSIDER OTHER PEOPLE

Showing consideration and respect for other people makes the countryside a pleasant environment for everyone – at home, at work and at leisure.

PLEASE NOTE: Some of the footpaths need to be walked in order to keep them open. Please report any problems to the Rights of Way team at Somerset County Council; www.somerset.gov.uk then search on 'Rights of Way'.

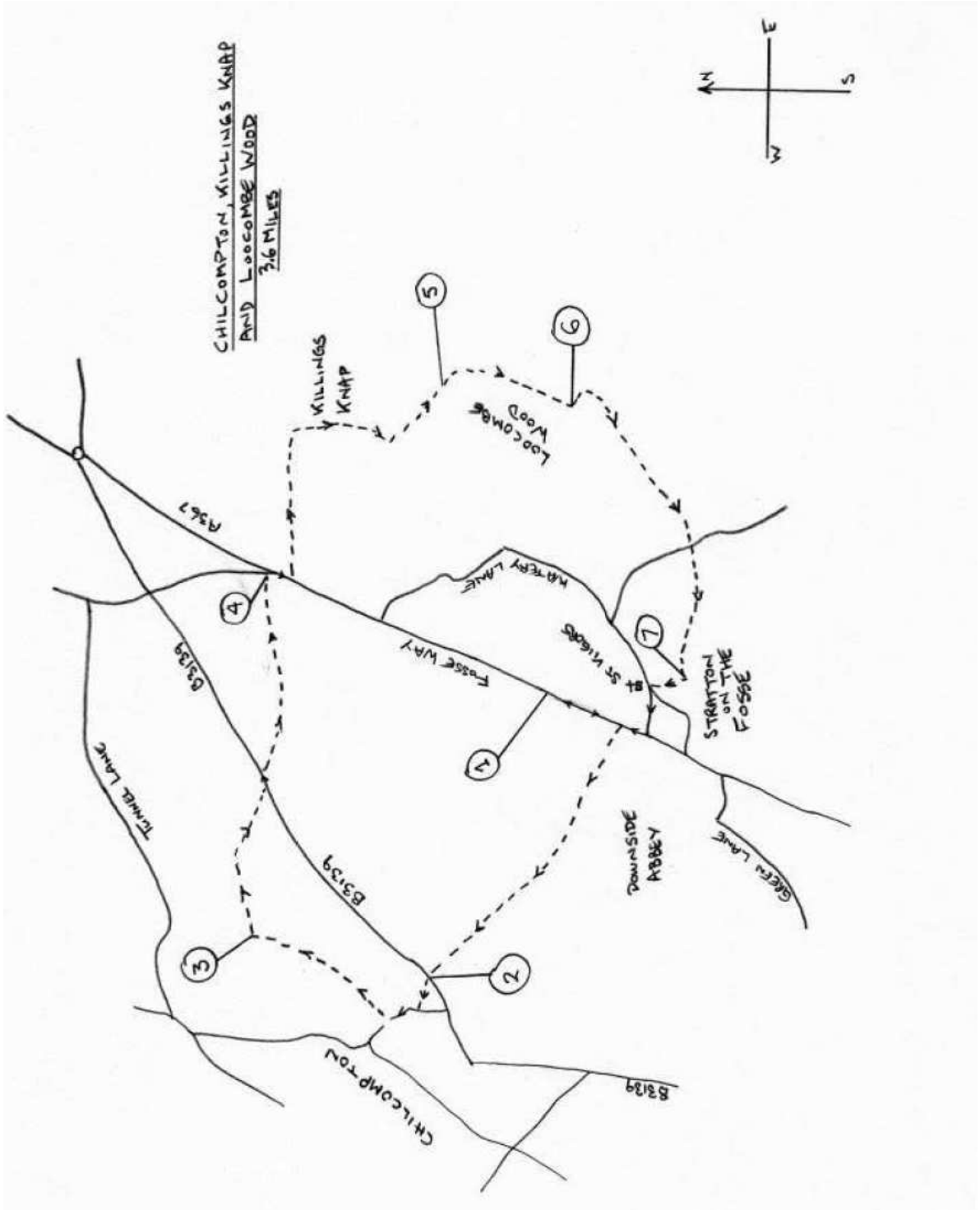
GENERAL WALKING ADVICE:

- 1 Wear sensible boots or shoes and socks suitable for walking in the countryside. These walks are not suitable for ordinary town shoes.
- 2 Wear or carry in your rucksack a good quality waterproof (not just showerproof) and windproof jacket; something with at least a hood or provision for a hood to be attached and with spacious pockets for maps, snacks, etc.
- 3 Wear suitable trousers. Everyday casual trousers are fine but may not be comfortable for longer walks. Modern synthetic walking trousers are lightweight, loose-fitting, quick-drying and have handy pockets. Shorts if the weather is fine but beware of nettles, brambles and ticks which are becoming more widespread. Denim jeans are not recommended because they take a long time to dry out if wet and can chafe.
- 4 Take suitable provisions (water/drink, food).
- 5 Use or carry gloves for cold weather.
- 6 Head covering is useful to keep the sun off and also keep you warm in cold weather. Also cream to avoid sun burn.
- 7 A rucksack or backpack is the best means of carrying what you need (including extra clothing); they leave the hands free and are far more comfortable than a shoulder bag over a long distance.

THE WALKS: (Start – Stratton on the Fosse* Village Hall car park Stratton on the Fosse* – Ordnance Survey (OS) Grid Reference ST ST658510)

- The maps in this booklet are sketches. Each map is to scale but the scales vary and no scale is indicated.
- The walk descriptions are written by many different people and vary in style and detail.
- The walks have been graded (1 to 4), principally by length and height gain; 4 being the most difficult.
- The walk lengths are accurate to within ½ mile.
- The walks can be very muddy and steep in places.
- It is recommended that you use the map sketches and descriptions in conjunction with the relevant OS maps and a compass (OS Explorer Map 142 – Shepton Mallet & Mendip Hills East)

Mendip Ramblers cannot be held responsible for any accidents or incidents that may occur whilst on these walks.



Chilcompton* , Killing's Knap and Loocombe Wood (3.6 miles)

(Grade - 1, Height gain - 275 ft)

Abbreviations are T= turn, H = half, R = right, L = left, K = kissing

1. Grid Reference (GR). ST658510 Stratton on the Fosse* Village Hall car park

Leave the car park, turning R to walk into the village towards the Abbey. TR into a road by the sign for the Abbey Pastoral Centre. At the junction head for the footpath on the R. Follow this path through 6 K gates, and passing the Abbey to your L, come eventually to the main road in Clilcompton, beside Downside Motors.

2. GR ST650513

Cross the road and take the path opposite, walking down to another road. TR and walk down towards a disused railway bridge. Just before the bridge take the steps on the R and climb onto the disused railway. Walk to the R, through a K gate , then follow along the track-bed for about 500 m until you meet a crossing track.

3. GR ST651519

TR onto the crossing track and climb the bank to a stile into a field. Cross the stile and walk straight ahead up the field to reach another stile in the opposite hedge, passing some caravans on your R. Cross the stile into a sports field, and head diagonally R towards a green shed in the far corner. When you reach the shed you will find a stile onto the road in the corner of the skateboard park. TL along the road for 30 m and then cross the road into a field and follow the path to a stile opposite to the L of the house. Pass into the next field and head for the stile opposite. Cross this stile and head towards the give way sign in the far L corner of the field.

4. GR ST662 518

TR along the main road, cross the road and go L down the drive to Manor Courtyard. Follow the drive until you come to a pond, on your R, in front of a large house. Go around the pond and head to the L of the house through the visitors car park, and enter the field ahead. Bear R in the field through an avenue of trees to reach a gate by the end of the avenue. Pass into the lane, then take the stile on the L into a wood. Follow the track to the R, and keep on it as it goes down and bends to the L, until you see a gate and stile to your R.

5. GR ST668513

Cross through the gate, and follow the track to the L ignoring the stile to the R. Follow the path through the trees and cross a boardwalk, ignoring the boardwalk to the L. Continue on the path up the hill, through a fence and on up the field bearing HR. At the top pass a viewing platform against a lone tree on your R and head for the gap in front of you.

6. GR ST668512

Pass through the hedge and follow the edge of the wood to your R as it bends around to the R. When you come to the end of the wood, you will see the Abbey to your R, walk ahead through the gap in the hedge. Follow the track until you come to a road. Cross over and take the stile on your R, following the hedge to the L. Ignore the stile on the L and continue to the K gate.

7. GR ST659506

The path then follows the hedge to another K gate. Do not go through but T back towards the Church across a small valley. Go down into the valley, cross a plank bridge and pass through the K gate onto Church Lane, turn L and follow the lane around to the R until you come back to the Fosse Way*, in front of the Abbey. TR and walk back to the Village Hall.

Barlake, Longleat and Holcombe* Old Church (3.9 miles)

(Grade - 1, Height gain - 308 ft)

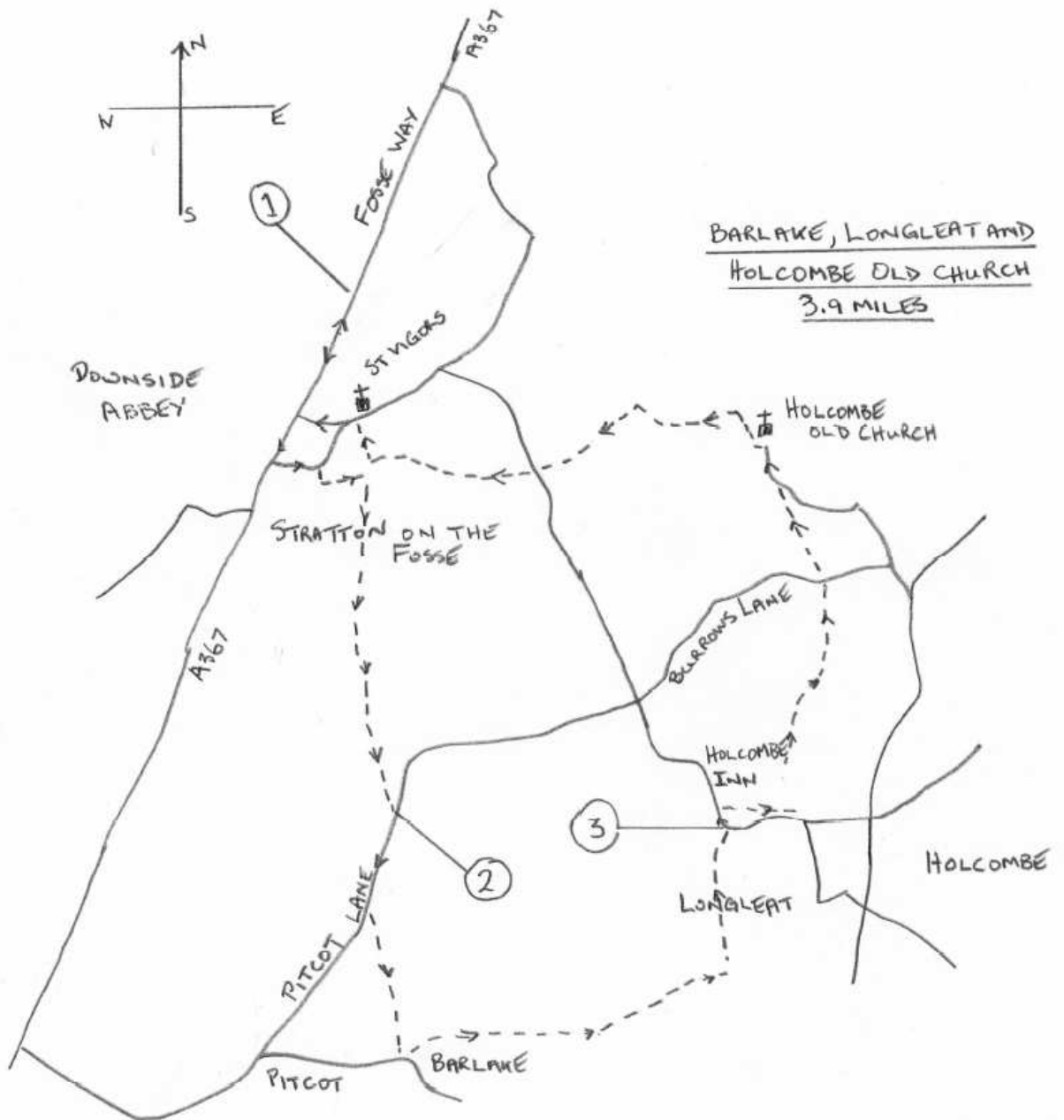
Abbreviations are T= turn, H = half, R = right, L = left, K = kissing, WM = waymark, S = side

1. Grid Reference (GR) ST658510 Stratton on the Fosse* Village Hall car park

TR out of Village Hall car park and walk along the main road until you see Kings Arms on the opposite side. Cross here and go down South St. TR at Fosse Farm and TL through gate into the field. Keep left with barns on your left and at end of barns, TR walking uphill with hedge on your left until you reach a gap in the hedge. Go through and cross the field to reach a stile opposite and slightly to R. Follow path downhill and then up to stile, continuing to another stile between two tall trees. Follow WM to kissing gate in RH corner of field.

2. GR ST660498

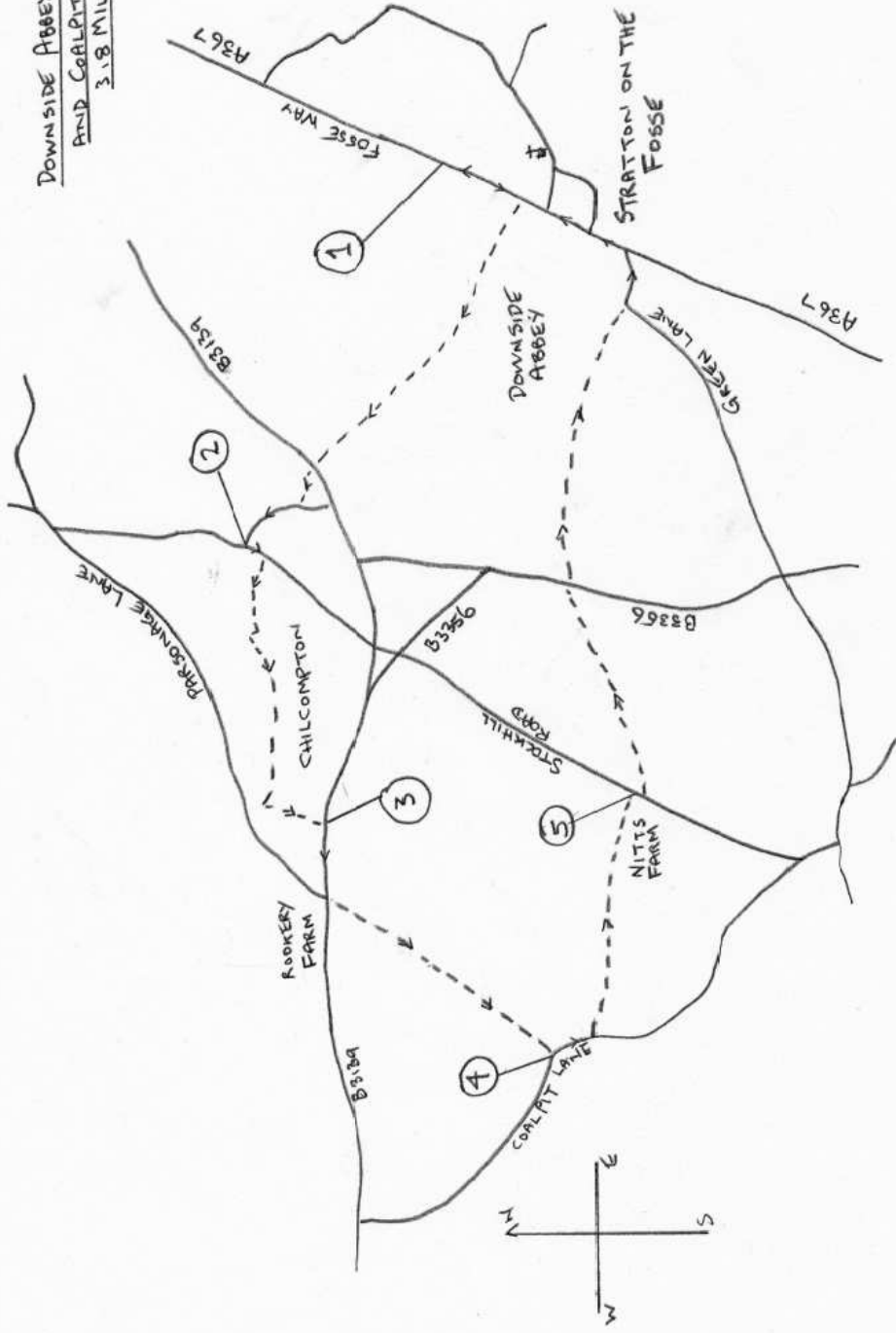
TR on to road (Pitcot Lane), pass Barlake Farm on L. TL off the road just before cream cottage where you see two finger posts. Take RH one following to left of garden fence and continue to cross a stile and take another shortly after on LHS. TR downhill towards cottage but do not go through gate onto lane. With back to lane turn half R and continue to double stile with plank bridge to left of a field gate. (This follows official FP). Walk ahead and uphill to top corner and through gate with WM sign. Shortly after, take stile on L in wire fence and follow enclosed path in same direction. At a newly planted tree in path, follow path to L, through a copse and into a field leading to a stile straight ahead. Follow path to "squeeze" gap, continue keeping hedge on your L. Cross stile on LHS and go uphill with houses on R. Cross stile, keep straight on with hedge on R (views of Downside Abbey* half left). Over next stile and straight on towards lane.



3. GR ST667497

TL and then TR at Holcombe Inn, through car park and follow path straight over field. Meet farm track coming from road and TL (again with fine views of Abbey) follow track taking stile on R and another stile shortly afterwards on L. TR and follow path around field past white cottage and diagonally right across field towards stile in hedge meeting the lane. Go across the lane and over stile continuing straight on to a stile under a sycamore tree with the Holcombe* Old church ahead. Go through kissing gate at left of church and follow church wall downhill through woods. TL on path above lake and follow path through woods, over stone bridge and then uphill to a kissing gate. Aim left for gap in hedge then following track on to road. Cross road, take stile on R of gate. TL and follow path with hedge on L, straight on through first kissing gate. Meet kissing gate on L but don't go through, TR heading across a small valley towards St Vigor's church. TL in lane, pass church, head for the main road and retrace your steps to Village Hall.

DOWNSIDE ABBEY, ROOKERY FARM
AND COAL PIT LANE
3.18 MILES



Downside Abbey* , Rookery Farm, Coalpit Lane
(3.8 miles)

(Grade - 1, Height gain - 307 ft)

Abbreviations are T= turn, H = half, R = right, L = left, K = kissing, RHS = Right Hand Side, LHS = Left Hand Side

1. Grid Reference (GR) ST658510 Stratton on the Fosse* Village Hall car park

From Village Hall TR along main road (A367) and walk approximately 200 yards to take path to R signposted 'Downside Abbey* and Pastoral Centre'. After about 100 yards R fork through gate to follow waymarked path. Continue along path through 2nd gate into woods keeping to fence and wall on your L. Follow path through another gate then a double gate towards houses, passing a school on the L and reach a road (B3139). Cross road to climb a stone stile opposite and follow tarmac path downhill to another road. TR under the bridge to the road junction.

2. GR ST648516

T slightly L to cross road by the cenotaph and walk about 50 yards to take waymarked path on RHS next to road sign. A narrow path between houses going downhill. As path opens up it bears L towards a mill building, but before the mill bear R to find the stile on RHS and cross the bridge over the stream. TL along path, pass houses and long field for approximately 500 yds to find waymarked path on L beside an open barn. Follow footpath back across the stream then uphill to stile (large building on L) and follow path to road.

3. GR ST641514

TR along road and at first junction (Parsonage Lane) cross main road (B3139) to go through gate opposite into field. In field go diagonally R to find stone stile just past half way point in hedge. Climb stile and bear L uphill towards gate. Climb stile to the L of the gate then follow the hedge on the L to reach Coalpit Lane.

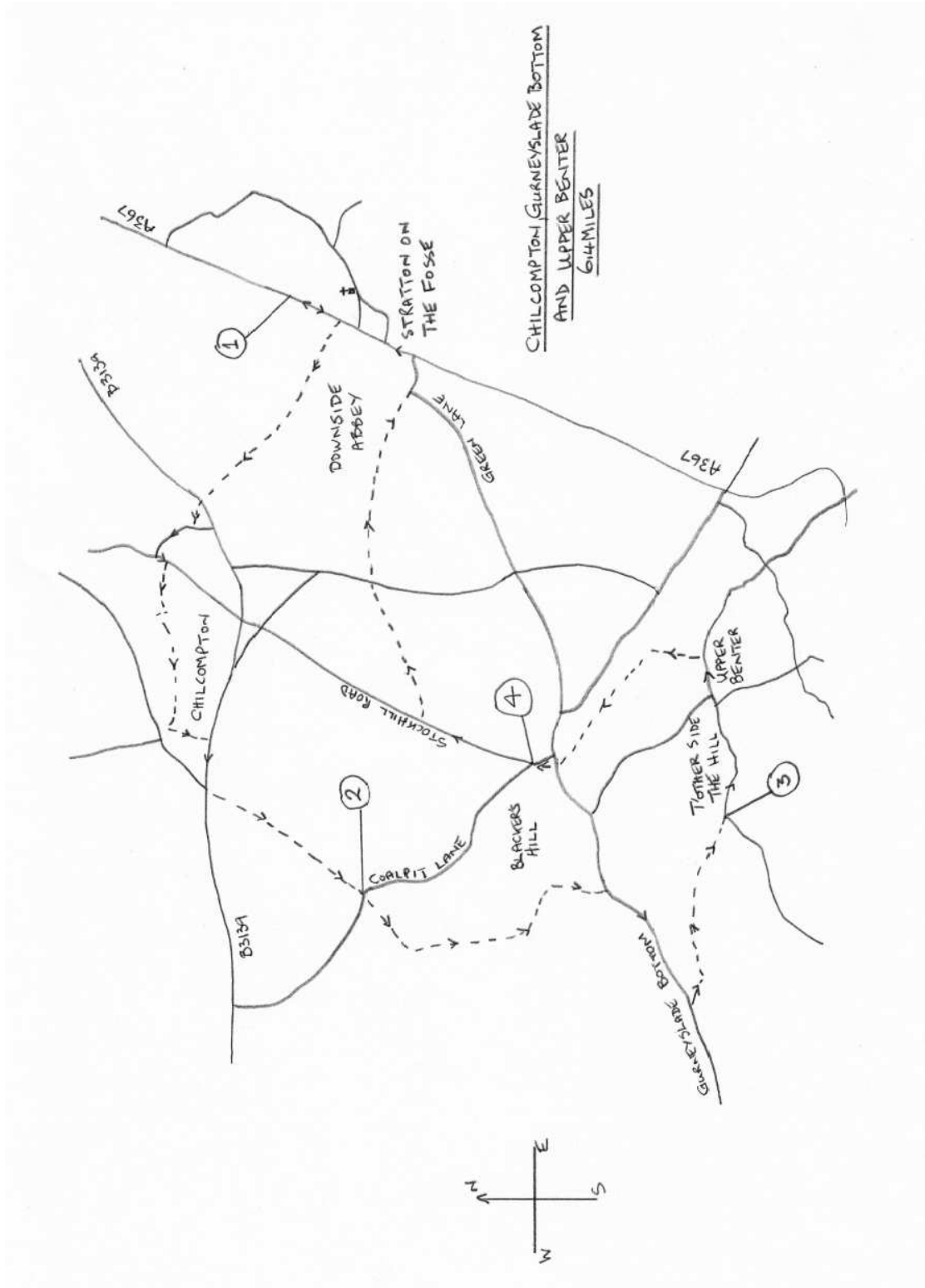
4. Grid ref. 634507

TL along the lane for about 150 yards and climb a stile in the hedge on LHS. With stile behind you go diagonally R to a gate (at the time of walking it opened at the hinge end) then bear L in the direction of the trees in the middle of the field and reach a gate at the end of the R hand hedge. Go through the gate and straight towards Nitts farm to find a stile and bridge to the L of the farm buildings. (Stile may be difficult to see if silage bales in front of it.) Cross further field to reach a road.

5. GR ST641505

Go straight across the road and climb a stile to the L of a house. Cross field and go through a K gate. The next field is long, keep to the L hand hedge and reach the road. Cross road and climb the stile (garage on R). Passing the tree, go straight on and cross the stile ahead, ignoring a stile on RHS. Climb a stile in wooden fence opposite to cross a small field with ornamental trees. Climb another stile into larger field. Cross diagonally and climb a stile in the far L corner of the field to reach a path. TR and follow the path on to the lane by the Abbey grounds which will take you back to the road through Stratton on the Fosse* (A367). On reaching the road TL and walk back to the entrance of the Village Hall.

Left blank



Chilcompton* , Gurneyslade* Bottom and Upper Benter **(6.4 miles)**

(Grade - 2, Height gain - 687 ft)

Abbreviations are T= turn, H = half, R = right, L = left, K = kissing, s/a = straight ahead, f/p = footpath

1. Grid Reference (GR). ST658510 Stratton on the Fosse* Village Hall car park

Walk along road R from Village Hall take 2nd R (approx. 300m) into Abbey Road, at Mogghill House take f/p on R and follow s/a until you reach the main road through Chilcompton* (B3139). Cross over to a stone stile opposite follow this f/p downhill to the next road. TR and follow road under bridge and at end TL into Bakers lane, after about 50 yards take R at f/p sign, follow f/p downhill between houses into a field winding L then R cross a wooden bridge. TL along rough lane with the stream on your left for approx 450m, L again at another bridge beside an open wooden barn then follow this path uphill over a stile to reach the B3139 again. TR at B3139 and after approx. 200m take f/p L opposite Parsonage lane. Cross field diagonally to R and over a double stile (beside a telegraph pole), cross next field diagonally to left and over a double stile (beside a tree) into next field, go L along hedge and through a gate onto Coalpit Lane.

2. GR ST634507

Go straight across Coalpit Lane and down a rough, stony track opposite. At the bottom go L through iron gate, walk s/a along the bottom of the small valley. The path leads through woods keeping 2 ponds then the stream on your R. Follow the low path up and down until you reach a metal gate by houses, through gate take stile to R down onto road. TR along road, round a sharp R bend and short steep uphill section, then it levels out. Continue past Waterworks Cottage and take next lane L uphill with some terraced houses on your R. At top of this steep lane TL over a high stile (before farm buildings), s/a to next stile into field cross diagonally to stile in far R corner with another stile almost immediately

on R. Over this into next field and follow boundary to L over another stile, keep along boundary then slightly L to stile, passing to left and in front of cottage onto the road.

3. GR ST637492

TL and continue downhill passing a road on the right and another on the left till you reach Rose farm at the bottom on R. Take L (no f/p sign visible) opposite Rose farm through a metal gate in front of Mill cottage. Continue to end of buildings and TR beside ruin at end of cottage up rough path to stile, then take another stile on L, follow rough path up through wood to a stile ahead into field. THL cross this field to reach the main path running through it. TL (keeping the stone ruins on your R) through a gateway ahead of you, follow f/p to top R corner taking farm track to stile onto road. Cross onto f/p opposite follow uphill to reach the end of Stockhill Road.

4. GR ST639500

The road immediately to your left is Coalpit Lane that you crossed earlier; continue s/a on Stockhill Road. After approx 400m take f/p on R beside house No.111. Cross field diagonally left to K gate, in next field keep the hedge to your left and continue s/a onto road. Go straight across and over stile opposite, then s/a across a series of stiles to reach a larger field. At this larger field, cross diagonally to R and over last stile onto a track. TR on track with Downside Abbey* grounds to L. Continue s/a onto tarmac drive to reach a road (Green Lane). TL and follow Green Lane round the bend to reach A367, then TL back through Stratton on the Fosse* to reach the Village Hall.

Holcombe* , Harridge Wood* and Pitcot (6.4 miles)

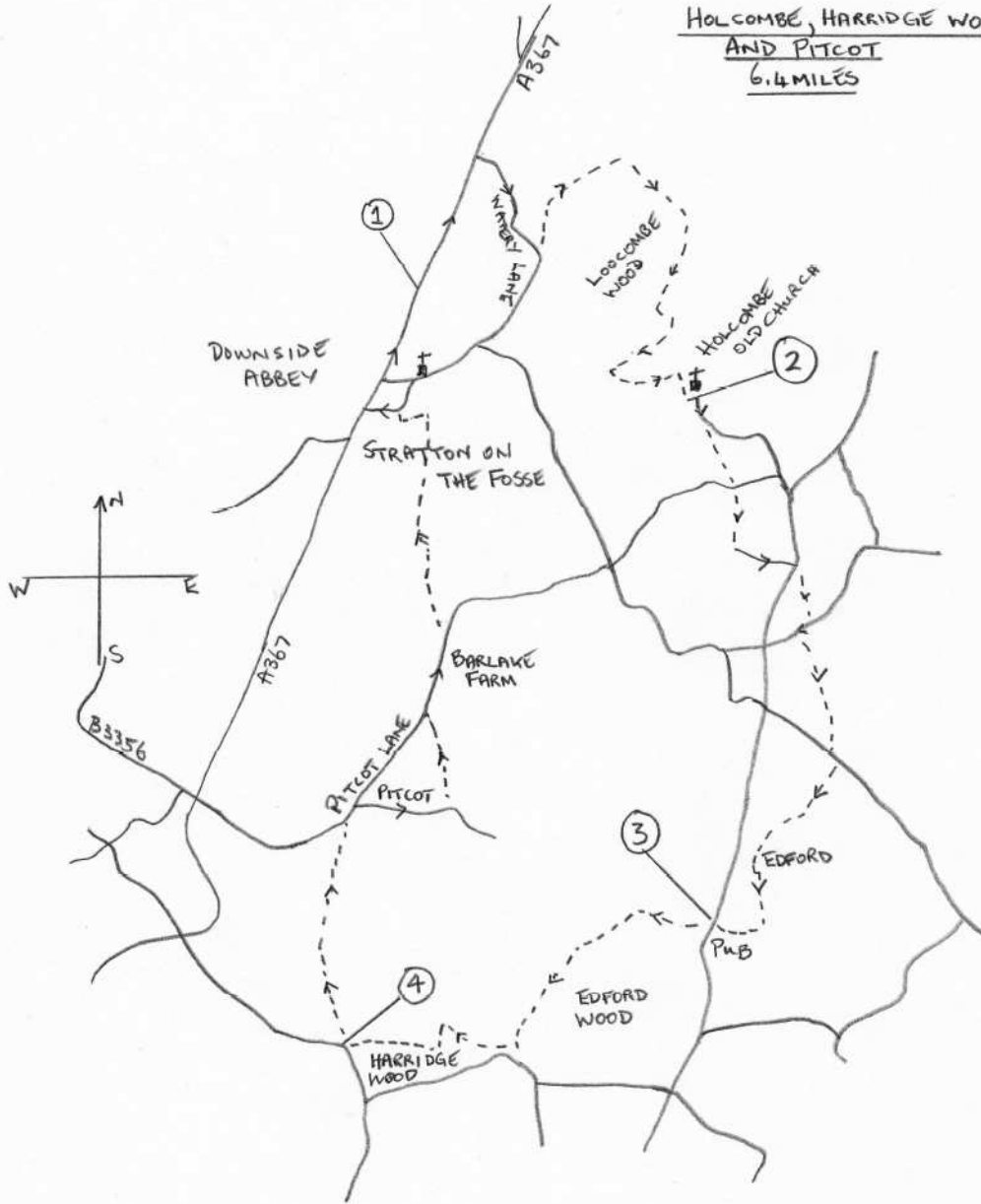
(Grade - 2, Height gain - 579 ft)

Abbreviations are T= turn, H = half, R = right, L = left, K = kissing

1. Grid Reference (GR). ST658510 Stratton on the Fosse* Village Hall car park

Exit the car park and with the hall on your left go up the pavement and then the grass verge to the first turning on the R, Watery Lane, signposted Holcombe and Coleford. Go along Watery Lane until on a R hand bend in the road a bridle path goes sharp left. Follow the track until you come to a gate across the track. Go R over a stile and follow the grassy path down between the trees to a stream and a plank footbridge. Do not cross the bridge but go downstream until you reach another plank bridge. Cross this bridge and go straight up the slope to a field. The path forks here. Take the R hand path up across the field to a large tree at the top with a look-out platform on it. TL with the tree behind you and go through gap ahead into the next field. Follow the path around the field boundary keeping the wood on your right. At a gap ahead, between the wood on your right and a wood on the left, cross to the left wood and through the K gate into the wood. Follow the path through the woods until you come to some steps crossing the path, with some ponds down to your left. Go right up the steps into a field. Follow the church cemetery wall on your left come out on the lane in front of Holcombe* Old Church.

HOLCOMBE, HARRIDGE WOOD
AND PITCOT
6.4 MILES



2. GR ST668506

Go up the lane with the church behind you until you come to a K gate on the right. Go through into the field, up across this field and the next, across a lane and into another field. Cross this field, aiming to pass to the right of the houses you see ahead. On reaching the houses go over the stile on the left to the head of a cul-de-sac. Continue along the road (Silver Street) to reach the T junction with the main road through Holcombe*. Go straight across the road and into a field divided into paddocks with stiles in the fences. With the stile behind you THR and go through these paddocks to the next road. TR on the road, go past an old brewery building and go down the drive of Hill House on your left. Continue down the drive to the end, ignoring a path to your left, and go through a V stile into a field, across and out on to another lane. TL, and very shortly opposite a junction on the left, go right in front of a house, through a metal gate, across a concrete yard and over a stile. Cross this field and over the next stile, bearing right to reach the footpath going behind the houses down to the right and out onto another lane. Go left and before the concrete works entrance TR down a house drive with a brown gate set back from the road. Go down this short drive and into a field. Go down the field and at the bottom TR and follow the footpath to a house ahead with the path diverted around the garden with a fence either side and out onto the road just above the Duke of Cumberland pub.

3. GR ST669488

Go across the road into the field opposite and head towards the old canal bridge, across the track over the bridge and down into the field below. Keeping the woods and the stream on your left, follow the path along the edge of the woods, keeping straight on through several fields to eventually reach a metal gate and the junction of more paths at a lane. Do not go into the lane but TR past the information board for Harridge Wood*. Follow the path through the woods until you come to a fence. TL and with the fence on your right reach a track to some converted barns. Go left over the stream and then right to continue

through the woods with the stream now on your right. At the end of the woodland path, go out on to the lane.

4. GR ST656483

Almost immediately go right up the farm track with a bungalow on your left. After crossing the first fence line bear right and head towards the stile in the hedge ahead. Keep on the same direction after crossing the stile, and go uphill across the next field to the stile in the trees at the top and then out on to Pitcot Lane. TR along the lane to a fork in the road. Either go down the lane on the right to the first footpath on the left and then up across the fields to Barlake farm or continue along Pitcot Lane to Barlake farm. Go past the farmhouse, on the right, and to the next K gate on the left. Take the right hand path across the field to the stile opposite. With the Abbey tower ahead and slightly to the left of you follow the path through the fields, passing through a K gate to the right of the farm buildings and across a small stream to eventually reach the parish church. TL up the road to the war memorial and then right along the main road and back to the Village Hall.

Chilcompton* , Clapton and Loocombe Wood (6.3 miles)

(Grade - 2, Height gain – 513 ft)

Abbreviations are T= turn, H = half, R = right, L = left, K = kissing

1. Grid Reference (GR). ST658510 Stratton on the Fosse* Village Hall car park

From the front of the Village Hall, TR into the A367. Follow the road for 300 metres and TR into Abbey Road, immediately after St Benedict's Church. After 50 m take the HR path (in front of Mogghill House) and pass through a wooden gate onto a path with a field on your right. Follow this path past five gates for 700 m until you meet the Wells Road in the village of Chilcompton*. Cross the road and take the path (over a low stone stile), signposted in front of you. This path winds past a few houses for a 100 m and exits onto Fry's Well road. TR (past Fry's Well) and pass under the old brick railway bridge. The road curves to the L, and at the junction of the next road (200 m after the bridge), TL. Follow this road for 400 m and at the SW electricity sub-station, take the path sign to the right, shortly before a major road, (if you reach the Wells Road in Chilcompton*, you have gone too far by 100 m), Follow this path (follow the yellow markers) downhill for 300 m to the bottom of the valley and cross the little bridge over a stream. At this point TL onto another path-cum-track for 600 m until you meet a road junction.

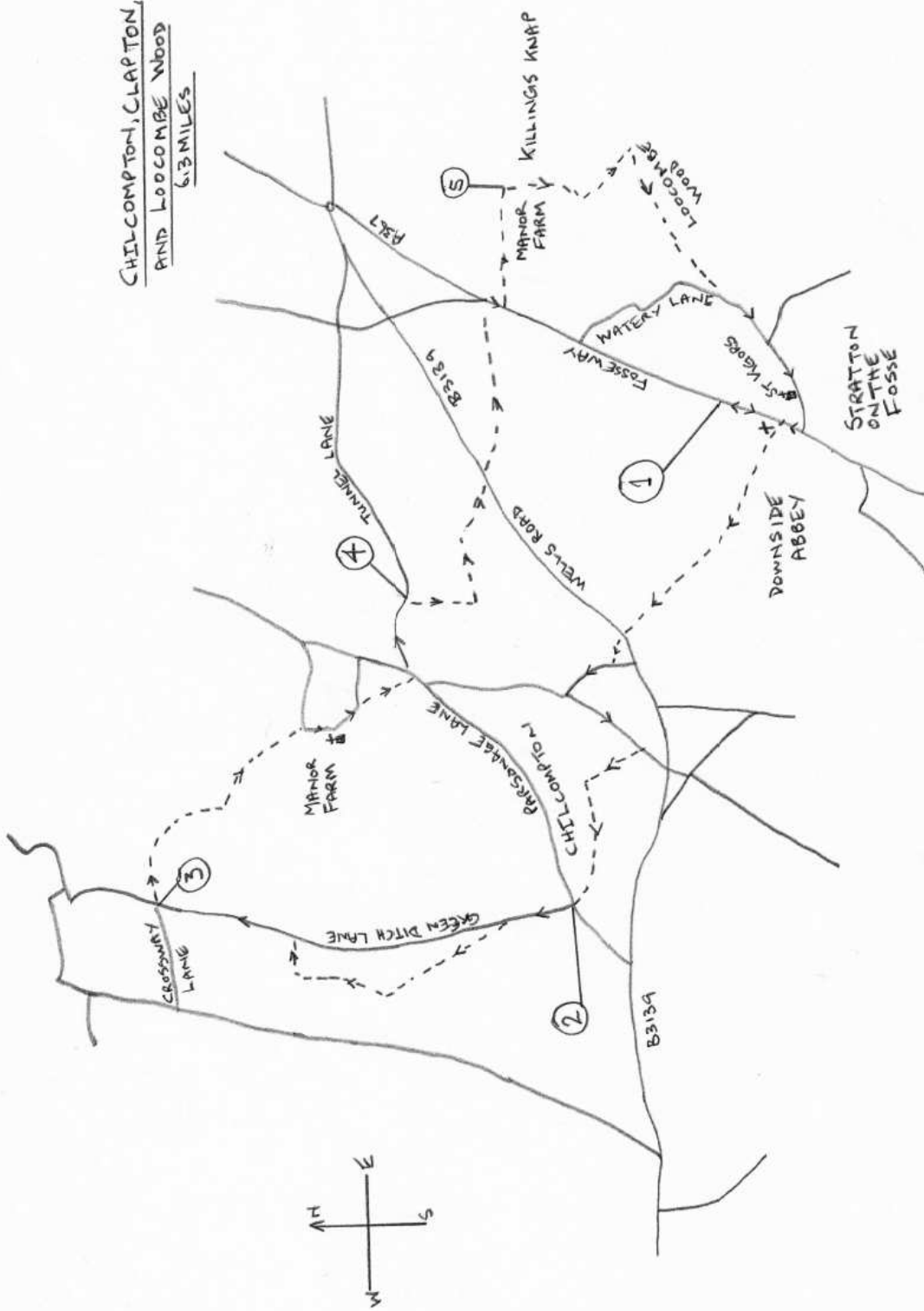
2. GR ST641515

Cross the road and walk up Green Ditch Lane (the middle of the three roads at the junction). After about 300 m, take the path signposted on the L. Follow this path which runs almost parallel to Green Ditch Lane Road. After about 500 m, the path crosses Green Ditch Lane. At this point TL into Green Ditch Lane for about 500 m until you reach a road on your L (Crossway Lane).

3. GR ST640530

On your right will be a signpost back into fields. Take this path. The path curves R and is level for 500 m. The path then goes downhill crossing two stiles, to reach the tarred road at Manor Farm. At Manor Farm, go over the two step stile by the gate and TR, past the farm entrance and past St John's Church.

CHILCOMPTON, CLAPTON,
AND LOOCOMBE WOOD
6.3 MILES



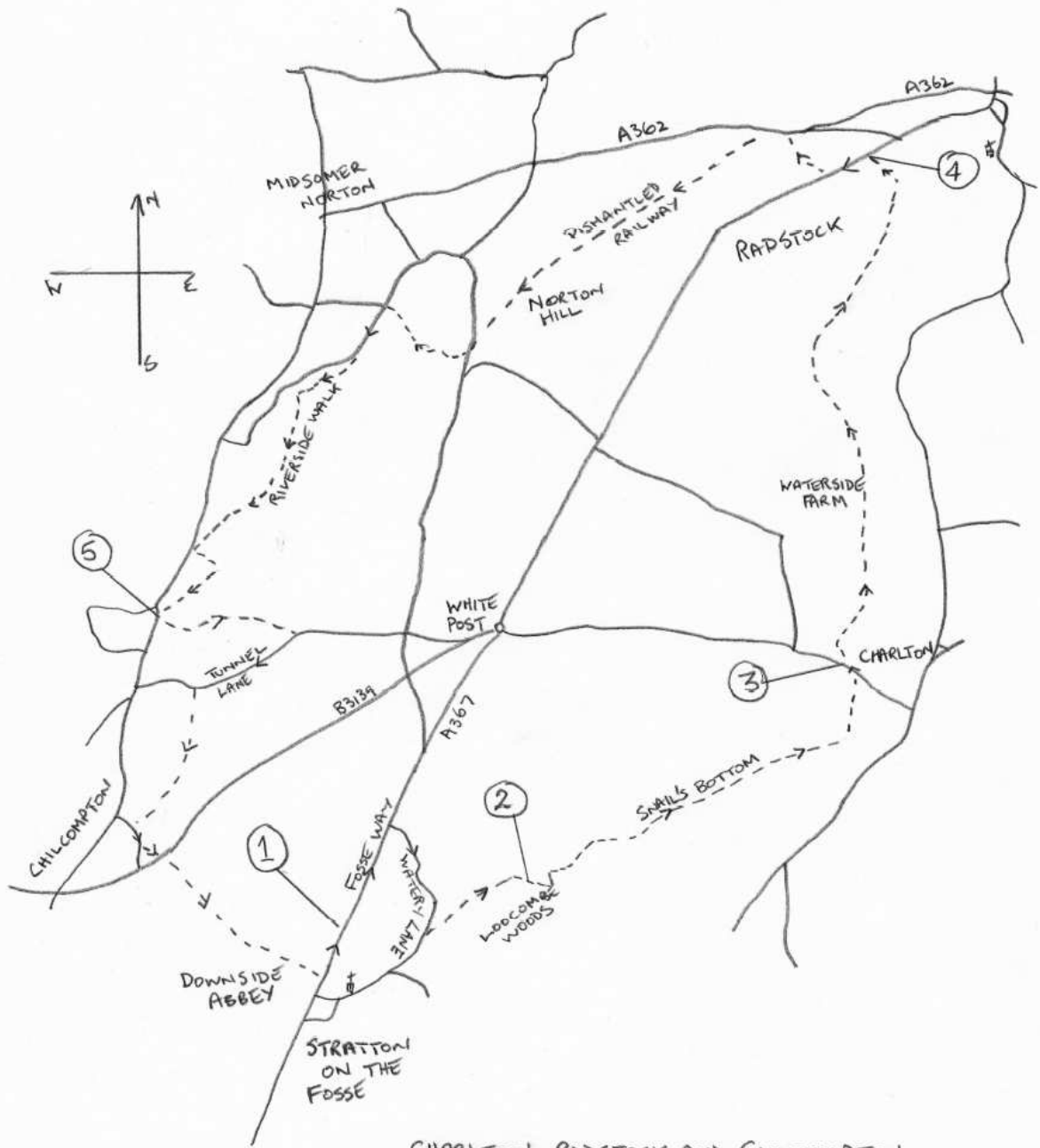
Continue along the lane (don't take the path to the R at the church) for 100 m until you reach the L hand bend in the road. At this point take the path signposted on the R. Follow this path for 150 m and at the junction with a road (Parsonage Lane) TL for 50 m and then take the next TR into Tunnel Lane. Follow this road uphill for 300 m until you reach the old railway line.

4. GR ST652521

The stile (due to be replaced with K gate) you need to cross is on the R of the metal security gates. Continue ahead keeping the hedge and concrete posts to your L until you reach the stile on your L. Cross the stile and TR to follow the path onto the old railway track. After 200 m the path crosses another path. TL, up the embankment and follow this path for 300 m keeping to the right hand fork, where the path goes over a stile. The path exits onto the Wells road. TL into the Wells road for 50 m and then take the path signposted on your right. After 600 m this path reaches the busy A367. TR into the A367 for 50 m and cross over the road and follow the signs to 'Manor Farm (Killings Knap)'.

5. GR ST666518

At the farm house, take a R turn and pass between the farm house and the farm buildings (with the farm house on your R), passing through a wide gate into a field with beautiful oak trees. Pass the oak trees and aim for the bridle gate in the R hand corner of the field. Go through the gate and immediately go over the stile on your L. Follow this path as it winds downhill for 300 m to a stream; cross the bridge and immediately, at the junction with another path and at the entrance to Loocombe Wood, take the R hand path (it is signposted), uphill, for 600 m. The path passes over two stiles, passing a set of pheasant enclosures on your L, and exits onto Watery Lane in front of Clare Cottage. Bear L into the lane and follow it back to the A367, ignoring two roads on your L. Your path passes St Vigor's Church, with St Vigor in the niche above the door. He is leading a dragon with his stole). At the junction with the A367, TR and after 300 m you will be back to the Stratton on the Fosse* Village Hall.



CHARLTON, RADSTOCK AND CHILCOMPTON
9.1 MILES

Charlton, Radstock and Chilcompton (9.1 miles)

(Grade - 3, Height gain - 749 ft)

Abbreviations are T= turn, H = half, R = right, L = left, k = kissing

1. Grid Reference (GR) ST658510 Stratton on the Fosse Village Hall car park

Commence the walk from the village hall walking down to the main road. TL and walk alongside the road. Continue on and shortly after a lay-by you will see a sign to Holcombe and Coleford. Cross the road and walk down this lane (Watery Lane). Follow the road until you reach two houses on your R, ignoring a public bridleway on the L. Take the footpath opposite the houses, almost turning back on yourself, following the track ahead.

At the end of the track go through a gateway and follow the arrow markers which take you diagonally R to a marker post. From there go straight ahead to a stile in the fence and then diagonally R to a gap in the hedge. Continue straight ahead to a stile on the edge of woodland.

2. GR ST667512

Follow the track down towards Snail's Bottom and cross the bridge. Immediately after the bridge TL at the marker post. Follow the path round to the L, turning L when it joins another path. Continue ahead over a stone bridge which crosses the stream. On your R there is a two plank board walk. Cross this and continue ahead along the path with the stream on your R until you reach a bridge.

Cross the bridge and continue ahead along the path keeping the stream on your L. Following the arrow markers keep to the path, ignoring openings on either side, until you go up a short rise to a stile at the top. Continue on and out of the wood.

Continue ahead keeping the hedge on your L until you reach a gateway. TR up the hill to a stile at the top to the R of the tree. Cross the stile and continue ahead towards the gap between the hedges in front of you and then follow the R hand hedge around to the L and through the gap. Keeping the hedge on your R, look for a stile in the hedge about a third of the way along. T so that the stile is behind you and cross the field walking diagonally R. The footpath is in the top R corner between the wooden fence and the bungalow. Walk down the side on the fence and TR to reach the B3139. Cross the road and bear L down the road to reach a stile next to a gate on your R opposite a sign to Charlton Farm.

3. GR ST681523

Cross the stile and follow the path down keeping the stream on your R. Continue along the path for some distance, reaching the edge of the woodland. Cross the stile and continue ahead across the field. Continue ahead ignoring footpaths either side until you reach Waterside Farm up on your L. Follow the path around continuing ahead with the stream always on your R. After passing several horse paddocks to your L you will reach a marker post in the gap in the hedge. Continue on and through a metal kissing gate.

At the top of the bank you will see coal scree slightly to your R ahead. Go down the bank heading in this direction towards a stile. Cross the stile and then the stream. Take the path to the L of the scree going between the bushes. Continue ahead ignoring any paths on either side. At the T junction TL up towards the houses and a metal kissing gate. Go through the gate and walk along with the houses on your L. Bear slightly R where the path divides as the next metal gate is half way down in the hedge opposite. Follow the path through the two kissing gates and continue along the top of the valley and through a gap in the next hedge. Continue along the path aiming for the red brick houses and a telegraph pole at the top of the valley.

The metal kissing gate is beside this telegraph pole. Go through the gate and along the path ahead. Walk down the lane (The Dring) to the A367.

4. GR ST682546

TL and walk up the road to the zebra crossing. Cross and look for a sign on your L to Fossey Cottages. Go down this lane, past the yards on your L continuing down past the cottages and down to meet the A362 at the bottom. TL and immediately on your L you will see the cycleway signed to Norton Hill School. Follow this cycleway all the way along keeping in the direction of Norton Hill School, ignoring the sign to Midsomer Norton.

At the end of the cycleway cross the B3355 going straight over to Silver Street nature reserve. Follow the tarmac path down and continue on this path ignoring paths on your L and R. On reaching the bottom bear R ignoring a bridleway on the L. The lane then goes round to the L to meet a road ahead. When you reach the junction TL and walk along Steam Mills and on to Withies Park. Walk ahead until you reach house number 98. (At the time of writing Withies Bridge is a new development under construction here). Take the footpath which goes beside no 98 and continue along Riverside Walk. Continue ahead keeping the river on

you L. Eventually you will reach the final house on your R (number 1). Follow the path round to the R and almost immediately on your L you will see a wooden k gate.

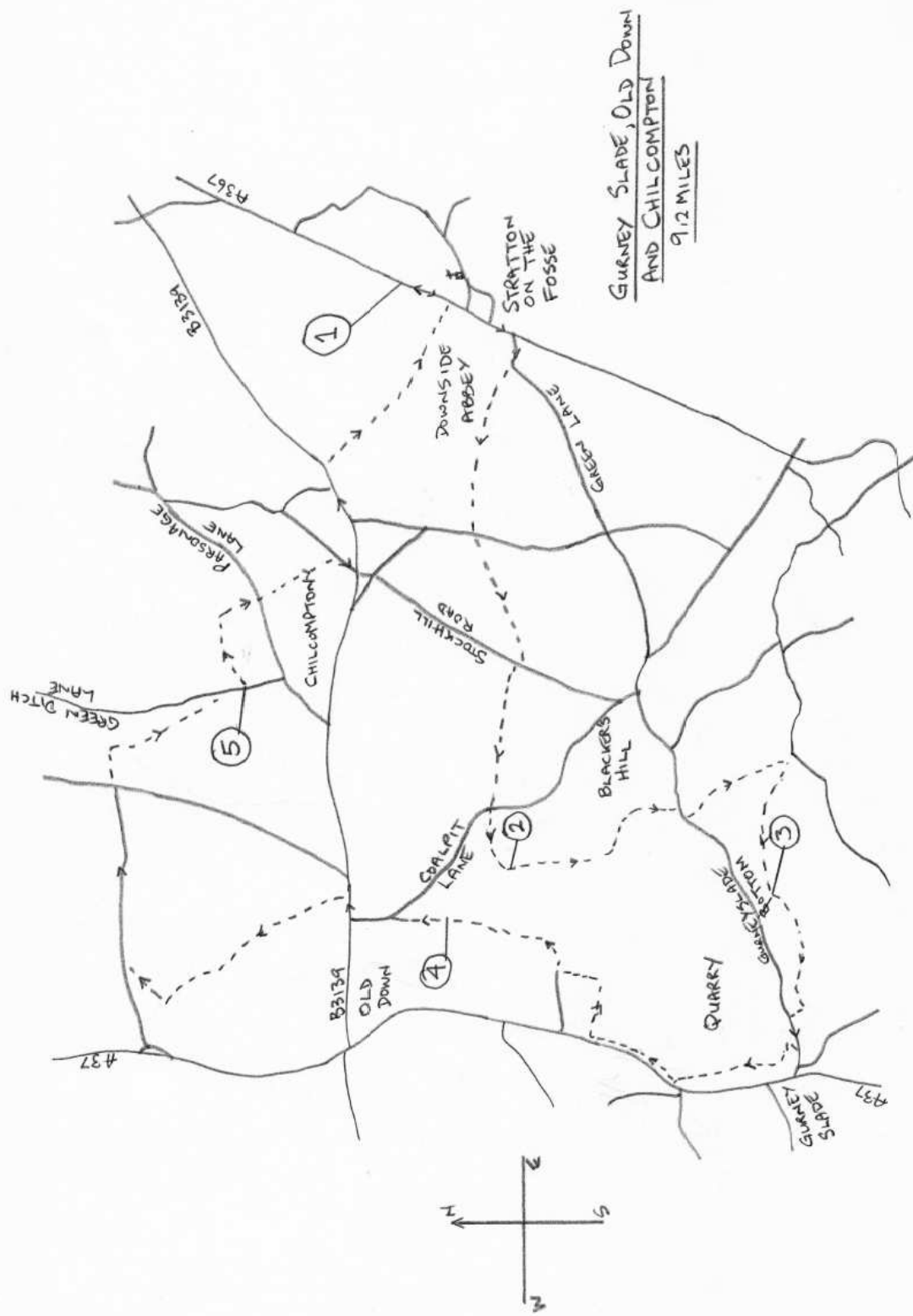
Follow the path through the gate and across a bridge. Keeping the river on your R follow the arrow marker through 2 k gates and over a stile. The river now goes off to the R and you go straight ahead to a k gate. Bearing slightly R walk ahead across the field towards the top R hand corner of the field. T so that the gate is behind you and walk straight ahead keeping the hedge on your R. Ignore the metal farm gate on your R, but continue on to the hedge opposite. Go through the wooden gate beside a metal farm gate in the hedge. Shortly on your R there is a stile in the hedge. Cross and continue on walking diagonally R across the field to cross a wooden stile in the top R hand corner.

5. GR ST650524

T immediately L to walk up a cart lane to a stile beside a gate. After crossing the stile bear diagonally L across and up the field heading for the gap in the hedge boundary. TL after going through the gap and follow close to the hedge to cross a stile. TR along the trackbed of the old Somerset and Dorset railway. Very shortly you will see a board walk and handrail on the R. Cross this and follow the path up the embankment and into the field. Continue on and cross the field heading for the middle telegraph pole as a directional guide. Walk to the R of the pole and on to the gateway ahead.

TR along the lane (Tunnel Lane) and walk along until you see a brick wall in front of you with a metal fence and security gates beside. The stile (due to be replaced with K gate) you need to cross is on the R of the gates. Continue ahead keeping the hedge and concrete posts to your L until you reach the stile on your L. Cross the stile and bear R onto the trackbed. Continue ahead until you reach a wooden k gate. Walk on to reach the steep steps down onto the road at Fry's Well.

TL. You will shortly reach a footpath beside a cottage called Hillside. TL along this path and follow it around to the R and up to the stone stile at the top. Cross the B3139 and follow the footpath directly ahead. Continue ahead along a clearly defined path which will take you back to Stratton on the Fosse. Go through the wooden gates by Mogghill House and bear L down the lane to reach the A367. TL and walk along to the Village Hall which will be on your L.



Gurney Slade* , Old Down and Chilcompton* (9.2 miles)

(Grade - 3, Height gain - 760 ft)

Abbreviations are T= turn, H = half, R = right, L = left, K = kissing

1. Grid Reference (GR). ST658510 Stratton on the Fosse* Village Hall car park

Begin walk from Stratton on the Fosse* Village Hall, TR down the A367 to pass Downside school then TR up Green Lane and as the lane curves to the L carry straight ahead on a footpath through Downside school grounds. When you reach a stile, on your L pass over this and cross the field diagonally R, cross another stile keep to the L and cross over three more stiles to reach a road. Cross the road into the field opposite keeping the hedge on your R, pass through a K gate continue straight ahead to the far corner to pass over a stile. Cross the road and a stile into a field and go straight ahead to another stile and a plank bridge avoiding the mud. Bear to the L and keep the fence on your L. Go through the first gate and continue diagonally to the R to pass through another gate. Cross the field slightly, to L to pass over a stile into a lane(Coalpit Lane) T slightly to the R to find a stile opposite, cross over into a field and go diagonally slightly L to a shrubby area and drop down to a stile, cross this to enter a green lane. TL and continue ahead for approx. 100 metres to find a metal gate on your L with a gap at the side, pass through this to a grassy valley area. This is a nice place to stop for a drink. T to the R and continue ahead.

2. GR ST632505

Continue past the pond as you enter a wood keeping the pond and stream on your R hand side. Pass through a gate on the R and in 5 meters TR down to a stile, pass over onto a road. TR and follow the road for approx. 50 metres then TL off of the road to pass through a gate, go between some farm buildings to cross over a stile into the field ahead. Go across the field and pass through the R hand gate. Continue up this field keeping the hedge and wood on your R, at the corner of the field pass over a stile in the L hand hedge. Carry on up and pass over a

stile near a house. TR to cross another stile now keeping the wooded area on your R. Pass over three more stiles to cross the next field diagonally R. Go over a stile, on your R at the end of a row of fir trees and follow the track ahead, when you come to stile continue ahead on a road/track then over a high stile to reach a junction with a farm track.

3. GR ST631493

T to the L up past some farm buildings then turn R off the farm track before the concrete farm area. Go through a farm gate and heading slightly south of west, follow electric poles to reach a gate. Go through heading slightly R to cross a stile and bear slightly to the L continue down to reach a stile by a gate. This takes you on to a track, TR and continue down to meet the road by the quarry works. TL to follow the road and then TR when you meet the first house on the R. Follow the track up into the quarry woods, TL when the track turns. Follow the track keeping the quarry on the R hand side. Continue along this well, defined path through the woods, over a stone stile, until you reach the main road by some large stones. Cross the stile straight in front of you on the same side of the main road. When you enter the field TR keeping the hedge on your R. When you come to a stile, cross this and TL to pass over another stile then another one immediately on your L. Keeping the hedge on your L continue to another stile to join a farm track, TR to follow this track in front of Cockhill Farm, when it turns R you continue straight ahead through a farm gate into a field. Continue downhill through two more gates keeping the hedge on your R. The last field goes more steeply downhill, continue ahead and slightly to the L to reach and cross a stone stile in the L hand corner at the bottom.

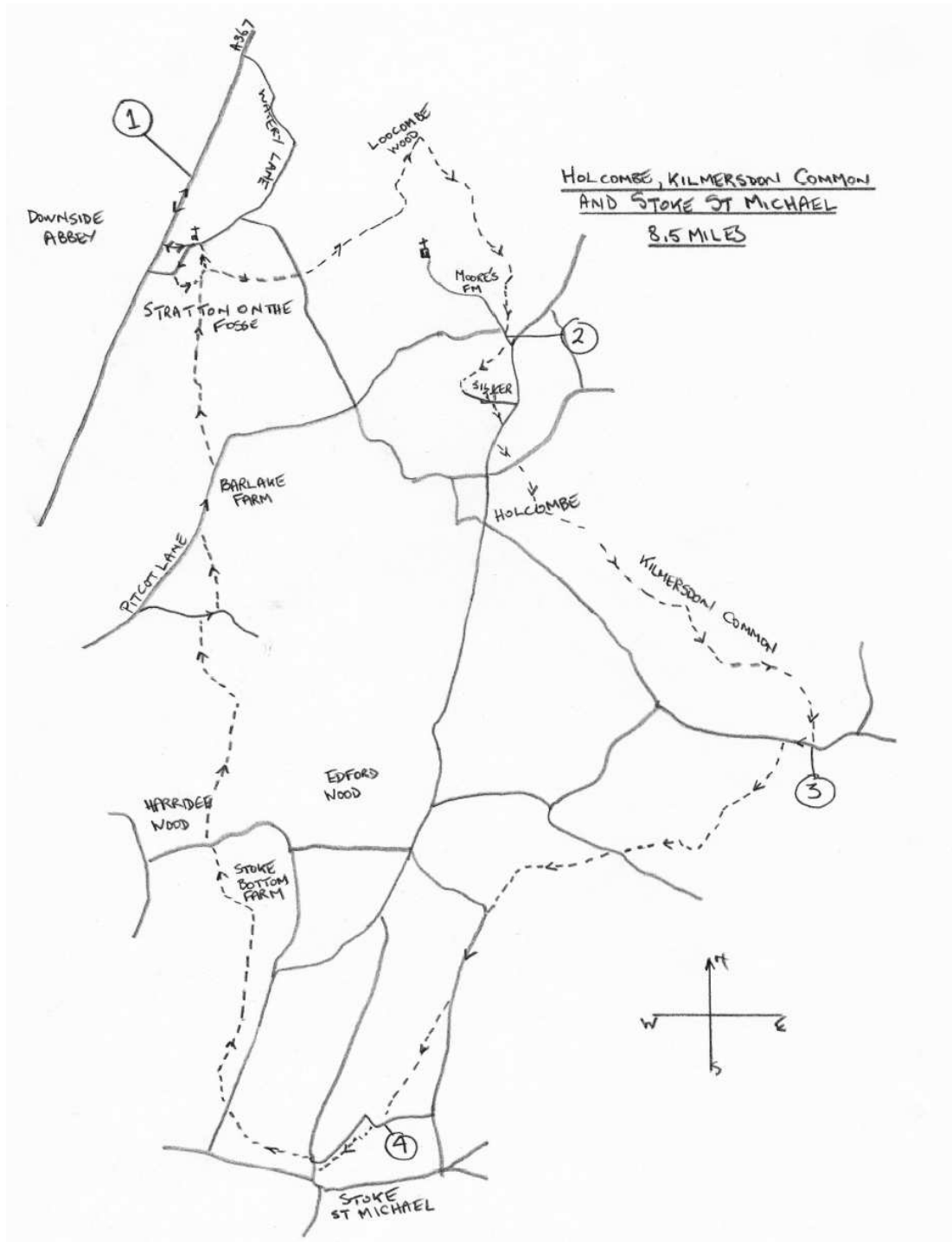
4. GR ST629508

Go straight ahead to cross a stile, carry on up across this field keeping the hedge on the L hand side. Pass over the next stile and go under an old railway bridge. Join the farm track, TR and then L onto the road. Continue ahead to meet the B3139 then TR and follow the road for a short distance. Go across this road and walk up the drive by a bungalow to pass through a stable area, cross a small paddock to cross a stone

stile straight ahead .Keeping the hedge on your R pass over another stile. Cross the next field diagonally L down to a metal farm gate, pass through to keep the hedge on your L and continue ahead. When you reach a gate and a stile do not cross this but bear R to reach a metal gate and stile in the hedge pass over this to reach a lane .Follow the lane down to the R. When you reach a T junction cross the road, T slightly to the L to go through a gate. Keep the hedge on the R, when the hedge turns R follow it. You will reach a stone wall with a barbed wire fence in front of you, there should be a stile, if it is obstructed, follow the wall to a farm gate. Pass through this and cross the field slightly diagonally to the L and go through another gate. Continue diagonally L to reach another gate onto a lane (Green Ditch Lane).

5. GR ST640517

TR on this lane for a short distance and then TL through a gate to cross the field to a double stile in the hedge opposite Cross and continue straight ahead to reach a hedge, TR keeping the hedge on your L. Cross several stiles and obstructions to reach a small lane (Parsonage Lane). Go across the lane to pass over a stone stile and continue ahead onto well used path down through a wooded area. At the end of the path you meet a driveway, TL up the driveway and after a short distance TR across a wooden bridge. Continue straight ahead bearing slightly to the R to pass through a K gate, bear round to the L into a small housing estate. Keep following the footpath. When you reach a road the footpath ends, TR and continue up for a short distance until you meet the B3139, TL and continue along. When you reach a footpath on your R just past the Village Hall but before the garage, follow this path. Go R past Downside Abbey* on you R and eventually you will reach the A367 TL back to the Village Hall.



Holcombe* , Kilmersdon* Common and Stoke St Michael*
(8.5 miles)

(Grade - 3, Height gain - 767 ft)

Abbreviations are T= turn, H = half, R = right, L = left, K = kissing

1. Grid Reference (GR) ST658510 Stratton on the Fosse* Village Hall car park

From the Village Hall TR, continue to the War Memorial (on left side of road) then TL along Church Road. TR to go down South St, where it bends to R continue straight on farm track. At end of track TL through bridle gate, through gate on L and TR. Continue with hedge on R through K gate and over stile to cross stile onto a road. Go directly across the road down track into field with wood on R to pass another wooded area to L. TL at end of the wooded area and reach a large oak tree containing a viewing platform. With large tree directly behind go slightly L and down across field to reach gateway at the edge of another wooded area. Do not enter woods, instead TR and follow path until stile on L. Over stile and THR downhill towards gap in trees by ford. Over bridge to the L of ford and continue straight ahead then uphill on the broad farm track. Ignore the stile on R continuing up the farm track. Just after track bends R TL off the track (by fir trees well before farm buildings) and head HR to reach a stile. Bear slightly to R to reach another stile then HR to reach stile onto road.

2. GR ST672503

TL on the road then over stile to R before the junction. Across field keeping wooden fence to L, at gateway over stile to R then diagonally to L to go over another stile. HL and follow residential hedges to L to reach a high stile, over into Silver St. Straight on along Silver St ignoring first path on R but taking second opposite bungalow (Toormina). Along and TR on reaching road then TL through gate just after Village Hall. Continue straight across playing field and parking area to reach another road. Straight across onto Hill House drive. Continue to end of drive then take path at 90 deg L and through K gate onto grassy track.

Follow track with fence on R as it bends R then through gateway. Continue straight ahead ignoring track that goes to R and at bottom of hill go over footbridge with K gates each side. TR after bridge and follow path with stream and valley bottom close on R. Eventually reach a small holding with K gate just before, follow enclosed path then under viaduct (Hucky Duck*) then L on stony drive to reach road.

3. GR ST684486

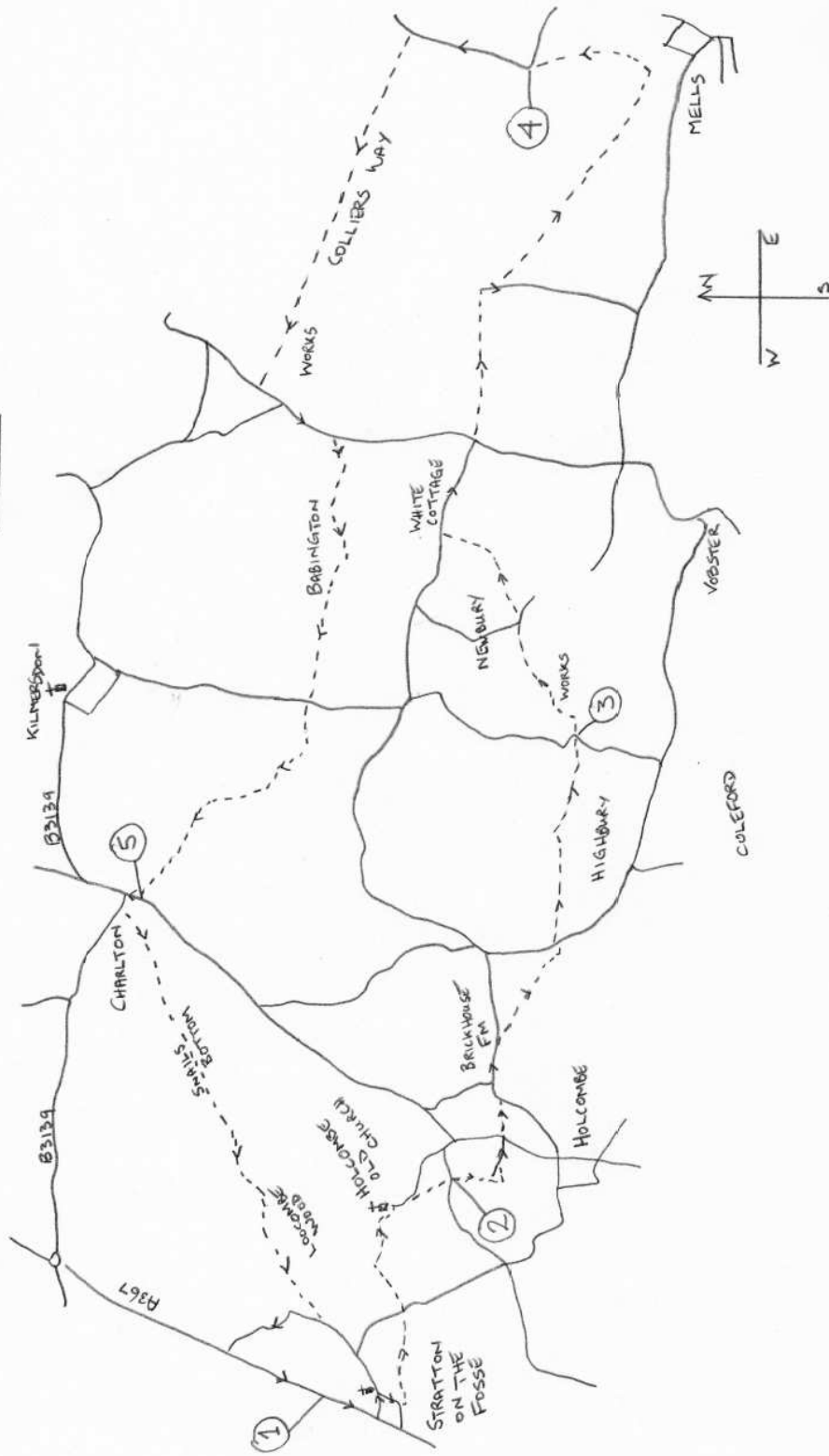
TR on road then uphill and where road bends to R go through footpath signed gate on L (opposite Ash Cottage). Pass to L of wooden shed downhill and through K gate into field. TR and follow hedge boundary to end of field. Do not go on farm track but take K gate to left. Continue through other K gates and remains of old canal to R. Through K gate at end and where path forks take L fork to stile above stream. Over stile, down to stream, across bridge, TR and follow stream to cross another bridge to R (looks like Tufa stone on L as you cross bridge). Straight on after bridge then over a stile and short boardwalk. Continue HL across field, see gable end of building to L, aim for that. Through K gate, TR on road then shortly TL through K gate. Follow path with garden fence to R, at end go over stile and THR go up aiming for oak tree at top of climb. Pass under oak tree and aim for leftmost of two power line posts. Over stile on L and across bridged ditch. THR after stile on other side of ditch and through gap in fence to reach road. TL and after about 300m TR at footpath. Follow footpath downhill through trees the open field to reach another path at the bottom. TL and follow this path as it rises to reach road by L side of house.

4. GR ST667470

TR and shortly L over stile then straight downhill and over stile and bridge. TL after bridge and follow by side of stream to reach centre of **Stoke St Michael***. TR on road past church, cross over and take path at back of houses uphill to reach playing field. THR to cross playing field to reach road (Frog Lane). Straight across through K gate then HR downhill to reach junction with another path. TR on this path and follow through copse and field to reach a farmyard (Stoke Bottom* Farm) with house to

left. TL on farm track and follow to road. Straight across onto drive for Heathercott House, at gates TR and follow path keeping garden fence immediately on L ignoring other paths. Across stile into field, continue slightly L to reach gate in electric fence then THR and look for stile and bridge in field boundary. Over these then TL and continue straight on to road. TR then L through next gate, continue uphill just to R of shrubby area to reach stile in top left corner of field. Over this and stile immediately to R, continue straight on with garden fence to left to reach stile onto Pitcot Lane. Turn R and then L through K gate just past Barlake Farm. Aim part R to go over stile between two tall trees then continue straight on across fields, keeping hedge on R at last field before farm (views of the Abbey above the trees). Pass to R of farm buildings through gate used at start of walk but continue straight across small valley to reach K gate in front of St Vigor's church. TL on road, follow back to A367 then R to walk up to Village Hall.

COLEFORD, MELS AND BABINGTON
12.2 MILES



Coleford* , Mells* and Babington* (12.2 miles)

(Grade - 4, Height gain - 734 ft)

Abbreviations are T= turn, H = half, R = right, L = left, k = kissing

1. Grid Reference (GR) ST658510 Stratton on the Fosse* Village Hall car park

On leaving Village Hall TR, cross road, TL by war memorial. Shortly TR into South Street, turning L on RH (signed) bend and up track to TL through bridle gate. Walk to the end of the buildings on your L, through gate on L and TR. Continue through next K gate keeping hedge on R and cross stile in corner just past a gap in the RH hedge (this is the line of the path although your OS map may be different). Cross road to track opposite. When you cross the second field boundary (approx 300m) bear R towards wood, go through K gate and downhill, crossing stream and then bearing L. Shortly TR up steps and over stile. With church on L, follow round to gate and then R onto tarmac path. Reach a K gate on your R, go through and walk up across field towards trees ahead to cross stile. Continue straight ahead to cross stile onto road

2. GR ST670503

Walk towards end of houses, see a stile to the R in hedge in front of you. Cross this stile, TL, then go over 2 stiles into lane and TR. Walk to T junction, cross road and over stile bearing L to cross 2 more stiles, then bearing slight R towards metal gate and stile. TL on road, then, by farmhouse on L, go through gate on R and TL, walking towards house on L. Go through a gate, then over stile and walk up field in same direction. Keep the houses on your L and cross the concrete, passing a "ticket office" on L and walking towards a grey, flat-roofed building to find a stile. Cross into alley and at junction TL to road (Coleford*). At road TL and almost immediately cross to road to take footpath on R (Rush Ash Lane). Go through metal gate, then over stile and bear R to stile in bottom RH corner. Cross stile and take middle footpath, bearing HL to far corner of field. Over stile and TR. At junction of paths keep straight on and cross stile, just before buildings. Continue to road.

3. GR ST693497

Straight across road towards Works – and Happy Smiling Chimney Services. There is a FP sign on L, take this path, which goes around the works then over stile into field and TR. Follow boundary round to R then L to hidden stile on R, cross this and next stile into field where there is a small tree plantation. RoW goes straight on through the plantation to stile to R of metal gate. (If plantation is obstructed with vegetation TL around the field edge following a grassy track, which bends to and then goes slightly downhill and through a metal gate to rejoin RoW.) Over this and TL following the hedge boundary past another metal field gate and a bit further reaches a farm track. Cross track, TL and follow fence short distance to reach stile. Over stile, straight across road and over a two step stile into field. TR with hedge boundary to R, through gate, then diagonally across the field to reach stile in far L corner. Over that stile and HL aiming for white house, through gate onto road. TR and walk along road to T junction. Take FP opposite (entrance to Mells Pit Works). Where there is a fork to the R, TL over stile and R onto FP, through the next metal gate which is chained but not padlocked or go over the metal rail beside it. Pass through 2 further metal gates and into field, then continue in same direction along field edge to reach road ahead. TR on the road and shortly see FP on the L. Walk diagonally across field towards the group of trees and Mells* Church Tower in the distance ahead. On reaching driveway, which goes between two small walls, cross and continue walking towards the church tower through gap in the hedge into next field. Walk slightly R across the field and then keeping hedge and wall on R walk towards church. At corner of cemetery wall TL and walk up field to cross stile in hedge. Bear L to gap in far hedge. Walk across field to bottom LH corner, passing a telegraph pole in middle of field, out to road. (If you cannot walk across field TL to stile. Do not go over this stile but TR and follow hedge to road).

4. GR ST728499

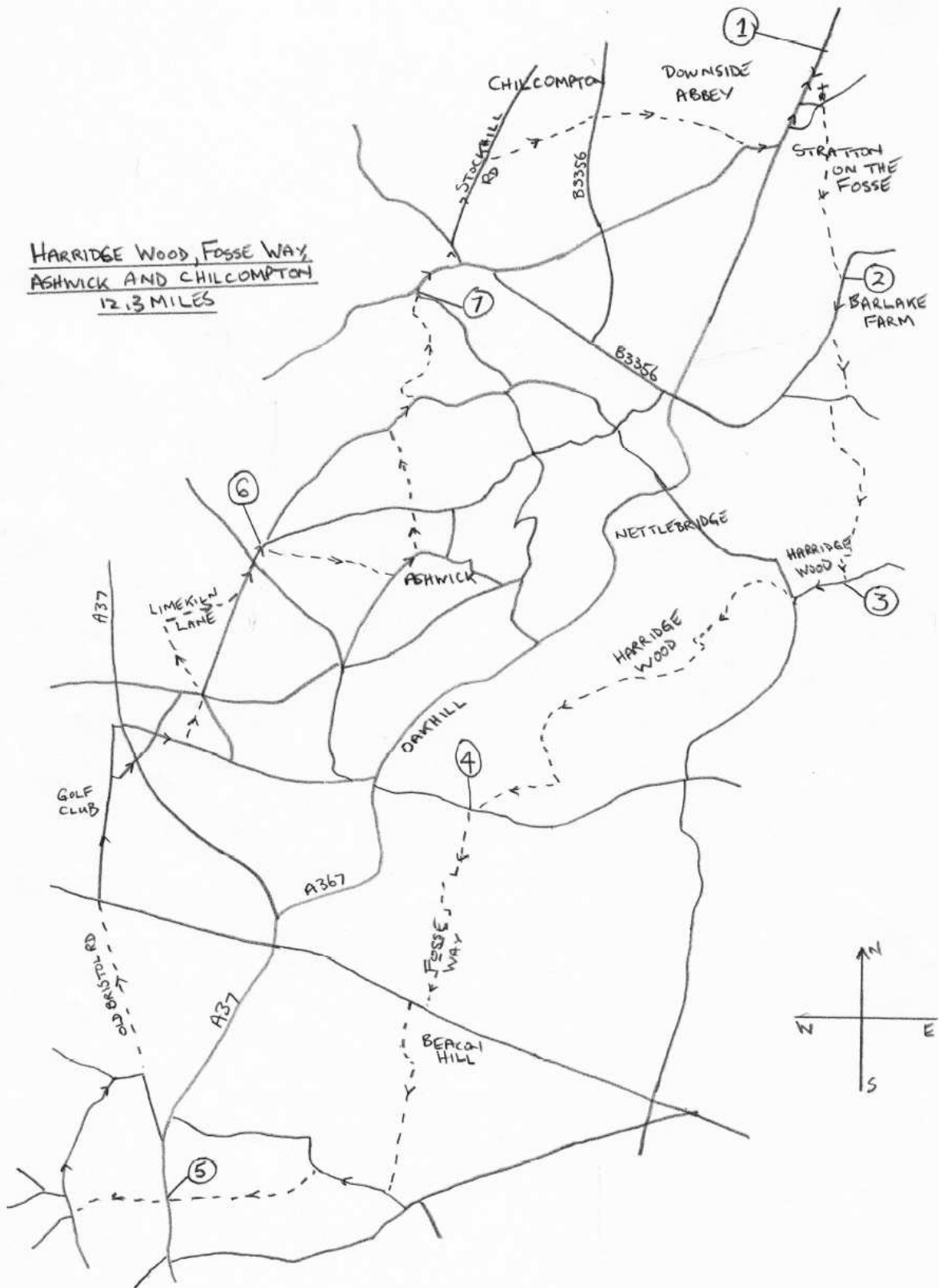
TL on road. Walk to bridge and TL onto Colliers Way (signed). Eventually you will come to an information board and track to the R. TR

here and then L onto private road. Continue to the T junction and TL over the bridge. At the cross-roads (CPM entrance on L) go straight across (towards Vobster). Shortly you will see a FP sign on your R, take this to reach the drive to Babbington House. TR to walk alongside the drive and on reaching the church on your R continue passing Babington* House and car parking area on L. Take path R passing shop. Continue along bark chip path, slightly R to cross field to stile and continue ahead. Do not take the next stile but TL and then R keeping hedge on R to a gap in hedge ahead then over stile to road. TR and cross stile immediately on L. Continue ahead alongside hedge, over next stile then TR. There is a new fence with the stile to the R of it but the path is on the L of it so go through gate and head downhill to stream. Cross stepping stones over stream and go over stile ahead. Bear slight R to cross stile then straight on. At metal gate T diagonally L towards ditch in middle of field, over a footbridge and TL. Cross stile ahead and bear R to stile at top of hill. Cross and continue straight ahead across field to road.

5. GR ST684519

TR and at junction TL. Take the footpath very shortly on your L. (You can now see Downside Abbey* in the distance). Continue ahead, bearing R – just past stile on L and where LH hedge turns L – to cross stile in hedge by a single tree. Across the field towards the metal gate and into next field, walking in same direction with stream on your R. You will see a small marker post in the ground on your R. Follow this path with the stream on your R. Eventually you will cross a bridge on the R and TL. Now follow the path with the stream on your L. At the marker post TR to cross on boarding, the stream is still on your L. You will soon see a bridge on your L which you cross and walk over duck boarding and cross another stile. Bear R up hill and through the gap in the hedge to the stile. Cross and walk with fence on your R to metal gate on far side of field and into lane which leads to the road. TR along road, ignore bridleway and at road junction TL to walk back along this road to Stratton on the Fosse* Village Hall, which will be on your R.

HARRIDGE WOOD, FOSSE WAY,
ASHWICK AND CHILCOMPTON
12.3 MILES



Harridge Wood* , Fosse Way* , Ashwick* and Chilcompton* (12.3 miles)

(Grade - 4, Height gain - 1265 ft)

Abbreviations are T= turn, H = half, R = right, L = left, K = kissing

1. Grid Reference (GR) ST658510 Stratton on the Fosse* Village Hall car park

Starting in the Village Hall car park go out to the main A368 and TR. Walk about a quarter mile and look for the war memorial on the L side. The side road from this point is signed to the Holcombe Inn. Follow this side road a short way and pass South Street. Go on as far as the church where there is a K gate on the R. Cross the small valley, via the bridge and go up the other side to a gate.

Go through the gate; there is a long hedge leading away from the farm buildings. Follow the other, west side of the hedge in a southerly direction. When you come to the end of the field go across the next field heading R of the power line to a stile. There is a small valley ahead, cross this to a stile, then ahead towards two trees where there is another stile. Over this and head towards the farm buildings, Barlake Farm, and join the lane through a K gate.

2. GR ST660498

Go R along the lane for about 200 yds and look for a double footpath signpost on the T. Cross the stile, take the R hand path and follow the wire fence south, there are a couple of stiles, then descend the hill towards a cottage. There is a gate with a chain catch onto a lane. TR and after a short distance TL at a gap in a beech hedge where there is another stile. Cross it and follow the fence south to yet another stile, then by a hedge with a ditch, after crossing another stile look for a partly hidden crossing point over the ditch. This is on your R, with a double stile and plank bridge.

The next bit is a little unclear, but follow the hedge down the hill to a wire fence. Cross this and look for the exit stile about 100yds R of the

bottom corner of the field. Cross this, into woodland, ignore a path heading L and follow the fenced track by a winding route to a gravel farm road. TL on this and walk a short distance to a lane.

3. GR ST659482

TR and follow the lane, ignoring signs to footpaths, until you reach a T junction. Slightly to the R of the junction as you approach is a footpath sign. Take this path, staying low by the stream. The path leads to a K gate leading into the Harridge Wood* Nature Reserve.

Follow the track as it winds through the woodland, crossing a stone bridge and rising to meet the end of a broad forest track. Ignore this and TL into a pine wood and follow a narrow track across a rough gully and over muddy rocky ground. This section is not very clear, take care both looking for the track and with the bad ground. Eventually you will come to a wooden footbridge below you on the L. Cross the bridge, TL below a leat and after a few yards cross the leat by a ruined building and T back on yourself up the valley. It is signed to Oakhill. Follow this good path up the valley, crossing the stream and passing below a rock face with a cave in it. Ignore side tracks and go ahead until open country can be seen through the trees ahead. Here the path turns L and is signed to Fosseway (GR ST644476). Follow it up through the woods a few hundred yards, go through K gate and follow the hedge on your R until you come to a cross hedge at the end of the field. T sharp R and cross an open field with no obvious track. The exit stile is in the bend of the far hedge, it only becomes visible after you have crossed much of the field. It is a double stile. Head across the next field for a K gate in a wooden fence. The next K gate is in the far corner of the field in the fence of the garden of the farm house and close to the hedge that separates the field from a lane. Go through these gates and reach a lane.

4. GR ST640471

TR on the lane and the almost immediately T into a hedged track that rises to the south. This track is part of the Fosse Way*, follow it ignoring

side tracks, for about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile. It is mainly straight but does make one wiggle. Just stay with the track. Eventually the track reaches the road that runs from Waterlip west along Mendip. This is a fast road, cross with great care (ST637460). Opposite is the Woodland Trust property of Beacon Hill* Wood. Cross into it and go R parallel to the road to a small car park. TL and follow the track winding down through the woods eventually passing a couple of boundary stones. At the bottom of the wooded hillside the track becomes straight again and goes south about half a mile to reach a lane. TR, pass a smelly farm on the L, and after a short distance, at the top of a rise take a footpath on the L (GR ST631452). The line is not obvious but THR cross this field heading L of obvious trees. Go down into the far bottom corner of the field where there is a stone stile. Over the stile and head west keeping the hedge to your L. Over another stone stile and past a farm building to a wooden stile. Over this, L through a gate, go west along the hedge on R. After a couple of stiles you will reach the A37 by a public house.

5. GR ST624451

Cross with great care. Then take the path below the pub car park, cross a stone stile and head along a stone wall to go through a derelict farm. Keep on going with the fence on your L until you reach a lane. TR and follow the lane uphill, ignoring other footpaths and lanes on the L. Eventually you come to a T junction where a rough track called Old Bristol Road* heads up onto the hills. TL on it and follow it up until you reach the ridge by a communications mast (ST620466). Go straight on down the opposite lane that leads to the Golf Club. After about half a mile T first R on a narrow lane that will bring you to the A37 again. Cross with care and take the opposite lane to a cross road. TR and after a short distance there is a footpath sign on the L. The stile is definitely 'hos-stile', take care. The field is being turned into horse paddocks but can be crossed. The exit is at a kink in the hedge at the top of the paddock. No kangaroos in the top paddock unfortunately. The way on can be seen by the top of the signpost on the road junction ahead visible over the hedge. Cross the field and go to the crossroad (ST626477). The path on is well signed on the northwest of the

crossroad. Follow it with the hedge on your R, crossing a couple of stone stiles until you reach Limekiln Lane. Follow this R along a very pretty wooded track past caravans to reach another lane. TL, cross a crossroad and take a path on the R about 100 yds beyond the crossroad.

6. GR ST629484

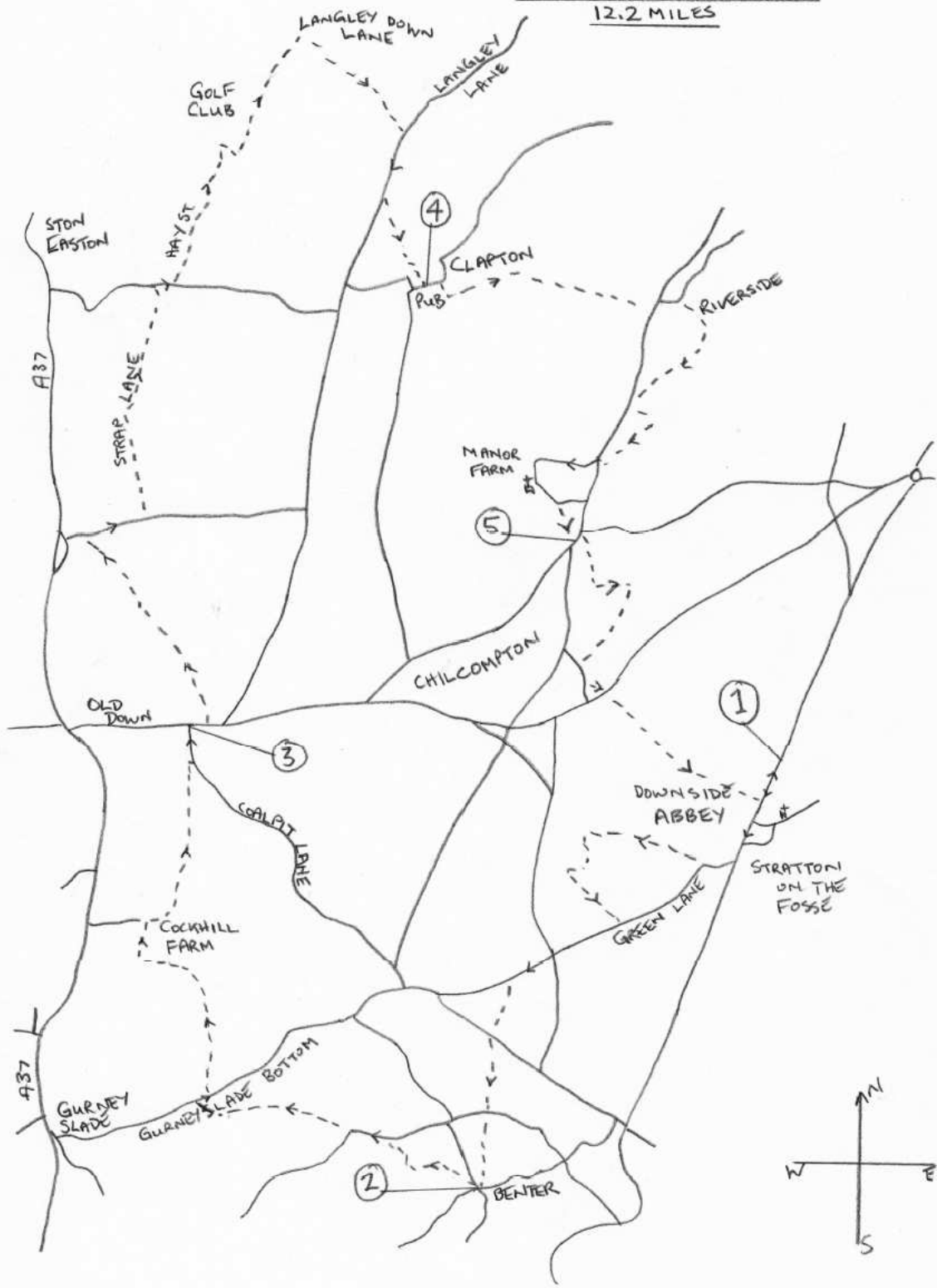
Cross the field keeping an obvious tree to your L and go through a gap in a field corner. Go ahead through two more hedge gaps coming eventually to a stile into woodland. Go through the woodland and after leaving it look for a stile in the R hand hedge. Cross this and now keeping the hedge on your L reach a lane in the hamlet of Ashwick*. TL, follow the lane past the church into a single track section. Where the lane turns R continue straight on across a drive and over a wooden stile with a very large dog flap (ST637484) reached over a cattle grid. Go straight down the slope keeping near the hedge and cross a wooden stile to a lane, then over a stone stile opposite. Go straight up the slope, look for a red soil path at the L end of the wood. This is about mid way along the top boundary of the field, take care not to go too far to the R. There is a stile on the edge of the woodland, cross it onto open ground and head up the slope, the exit is in the far corner of this field. Follow the R hand hedge through this and on to another stile onto a lane (ST636490). Go R down the lane. At a bend in the road TL in front of a cottage and take the R hand of a pair of stiles. Down the steep slope, look for a gap halfway along the bottom hedge. Go through this gap and look for a drinking trough. There is a stile L of the trough, cross it and swing slightly L to a gap in the hedge. Beyond you can see a stile and gate behind a distinctive multi-trunked tree. Cross the stile and head L to another. Cross it and head sharp R up rough ground to a stile in the hedge. This leads onto a tarred lane. Go L to the obvious junction, signed to Stratton on the Fosse*.

7. GR ST637498

Continue uphill on the road. At the top look for a steep path on the L at the end of a tidy hedge. At the top of this path go straight ahead down the road past the 30 mph signs. After about ½ mile after a church yard

there is a path on the R by the last of a group of houses, the signpost for it on the wrong side of the road. The way ahead is towards the hill with pine trees on it, actually a spoil heap, and after the K gate follow the hedge L till you get to a busy road B3356 (ST647507). Cross this road with care and take the path opposite, ignore a side path onto the spoil heap. Most of this track is well waymarked but when you get to a large meadow look for the exit stile slightly L of the line you have been on. Cross this and TR past the school playing fields. The way becomes a tarred private road onto the school playing field, and then after a gate a public road. Follow this to the main A368 and TL. Continue to the Village Hall about ½ mile away.

GURNEY SLADE, OLD DOWN,
CLAPTON AND CHILCOMPTON
12.2 MILES



Gurney Slade* , Old Down, Clapton and Chilcompton*
(12.2 miles)

(Grade - 4, Height gain - 1149 ft)

Abbreviations are T= turn, H = half, R = right, L = left, k = kissing

1. Grid Reference (GR). ST569511 Stratton-on-the-Fosse* Village Hall

Leave the car park and exit onto the main road (Fosse Way* A367) and TR towards Stratton-on-the-Fosse*. Follow the road for 400 yards until you are past Downside Abbey* and TR into Green Lane. Follow Green Lane until the road turns sharp L and you continue forwards onto a private lane. After 150 yards, keep R onto the path and after a further 150 yards, take the wooden stile on your L (ignore metal K gates) . Diagonally cross the field to the L of the house and go over the stile in the corner. Keep L and cross next stile then bear L again to next stile. Sharp L along fence, over hurdle, and up steep hill to trees and top of spoil heap. From the top of the mine spoil heap, follow the track to the R of the phone mast , down to the bottom (keeping to the R) and climb over the stile that is somewhat to the R of the gate. Bear HL across the field to a metal K gate and then straight across the football pitch until you reach Green Lane and TR.

Follow the road to the cross roads at The Lodges by Green Lane Farm, go straight across and take the path on the L after 200 yards, just before the road bends to the R. Cross the corner of the field to a stile and proceed straight across to the road. Cross the road and follow a winding path steeply downhill to a stile. Bear L past an old barn and aim for the stile in the far L corner. Follow the indistinct woodland path down to the L to arrive at 2 stiles near to Mill Cottage. Go through the farmyard to reach the road at Upper Benter. TR then almost immediately L over the stile in the hedge and straight across to a double stile by an electricity pole. Cross the field diagonally L to reach a stile near a crossroads.

2. GR ST643489 (Crossroads near Benter)

Leave the crossroads by the gate at the fingerpost and cross the field to the gap to the R of the electricity pole. Up the field to cross a stile in the hedge at the top L of the field and then join the farm road at the gate to the R of the barn at West Farm. TR and after 100 yards join the lane. Follow the lane to the L until it makes a sharp LT at Wesley Cottage. The path goes straight ahead to the R of the cottage. Climb the wooden stile on the L and THL to cross a fence. Keeping the hedge on the R, go over a stile in the field and along the hedge to a stile in some trees. Cross 2 stiles and diagonally cross the field to a stile in the far R corner. Follow the path to a high stile next to a gate and TR to follow the track down to the road. TR at road and walk for 100 yards until just past the waterworks there is a path on the L. Climb steeply up the hill past a blasting sign and over a double high stile to the L of a house. Climb the next stile and sharp L to yet another high stile. Cross to next stile and follow hedge crossing 3 more high stiles before coming to the edge of the quarry. At the next high stile, T sharp R over low stile to cross field to next stile to the L of Cockhill Farm. TR to follow track around the front of the farm. At path junction in 100 yards, take leftmost path through gate and follow keeping the hedge on the R. Pass through gate and continue along hedge to gap. Bear L and drop down between trees to find a stone stile. Cross to wooden stile and climb enclosed lane to stile at top L corner of field. Go under old railway bridge and TR to reach gate onto road. TL and follow road to B3139 Old Down to Chilcompton* road.

3. GR. ST629512 (B3139 near Old Down)

After 50 yards along the road towards Chilcompton*, TL at Whitchurch Bungalow and follow the path to the R of the house through 2 gates and past a stable. Cross over the field and cross the stone stile. Follow path with hedge to R to another stile. Bear L across large field to far L corner by trees. Cross small stream and through gate to follow hedge on L. Go through a further gate into a green lane which leads down to a tarmac lane. At the lane, TR and follow the lane for 300 yards then TL into the track opposite a footpath (Strap Lane). Follow the lane for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to the

lane from Ston Easton* to Clapton. TR and then after 50 yards TL down Lower Hay Street . At the end of the lane, go through the gate and take the path dropping down to the R. Pass a stone trough. At the bottom of the hill, cross stream by bridge and stile and enter the golf course. Follow tarmac path to the R, around lake and up the hill. At top of the hill, bear R to achieve stile. Over stile and sharp L to follow the hedge alongside the golf course. Cross a stile and across the field to reach the stile leading into Langley Down Lane. Ignore this lane and T 90° R to go down the hill. Aim just to the R of the single tree. Follow hedge from tree down to stile on L and use stile to cross hedge. Follow hedge down, over stile, through small paddock and over stile, bridge and stile to reach the road (Langley's Lane). TR into the lane and in 250 yards, just after Langley Cottages, TL over a double stile. Aim for the telegraph pole to the R, cross the small stream and climb to the stile in the hedge on the L. Cross stile, keep hedge on L, and climb to K gate and steps by concrete works (both up and down, can be very slippery as the author knows to his cost) finally crossing bridge and stile into field. Bear R up field, skirt redundant magnificent stile, and cross final field to reach stone stile. Enter the road opposite The Crown Inn and TL.

4. GR ST641534 (Clapton,Crown Inn)

After 50 yards along Clapton Road towards Midsomer Norton*, TR up a path between houses close to an electricity pole. At the end of the enclosed path, cross the stile and straight across the field to a stone stile in the top L corner next to a tower. TL and cross the 2 stiles. Continue straight ahead to a stile in the furthest point of the field. Cross stile, bear R and cross field to next stile. Cross stile and arrive in an open field. Descend down the middle of the field aiming for the track to the R of the houses. Enter the track at the K gate and follow track to meet the Chilcompton* to Midsomer Norton* road near Riverside. TL and then R at the roundabout into Riverside Gardens. Take 3rd road to R (Nos 48-62) and follow path around to K gate. Through K gate and cross stream via the bridge. Bear R to K gate and follow path through further K gate, gap and K gate. Go straight across the field to stile out on to road. Don't go onto the road, but TL and follow the hedge on your R, through a gate,

until you get to a stile through the hedge. Go straight ahead across the field until you come to a stile onto the road. TR then immediately L down Coach Lane towards Manor Farm. Follow road past Manor Farm and the church, ignore footpath to the R and follow the road for a further 100 yards. Opposite The Old School, bear R along a path next to the stream. After 200 yards you will exit onto the road by a phone box.

5. GR ST649521 (Chilcompton*)

TL and first R into Tunnel Lane, then immediately R into Somer Lea. At the end of the cul-de-sac take stile to the R of the leftmost house. Cross field to gate through hedge. TL and go steeply uphill to gap through hedge and join the old railway line. TR and follow railway line through a K gate until the bridge where you cannot proceed any further. Take the steps down to the L and on joining the road TL. Follow road for 100 yards until the footpath on your L to the R of Hillside. Follow the path and after 15 yards T sharp R to follow path up to road. Cross road and onto path to the R of Downside Motors. Go through K gate and follow path alongside the school and through 2 more K gates. Go straight across field to K gate to the L corner of Downside Abbey* grounds. The path then follows the wall then fence to a further K gate, across a field, and through a final gate into a lane. The lane goes back down to the main road (Fosse Way*). TL, and after 200 yards, TL into Middlemead. At the end of the close, there is a path into the children's play area and a further exit into the Village Hall car park.

APPENDIX

PLACENAME INFORMATION

Ashwick - The name means the settlement by the ash trees. Ashwick court by the church was the home of Somerset historian and agricultural specialist, John Billingsley. The church dates back to the fifteenth century but was largely rebuilt in the nineteenth. The village is scattered but was, in the nineteenth century, quite an industrial place – with breweries, iron works and collieries.

Babington - All that remains of the village is the manor house and the church. The manor house was the home of the Knatchbull family and is now a luxury hotel for celebs, and is owned by Kirsty Young's husband. The delightful small church built in 1750 is dwarfed by the manor house. It is used for celeb weddings – Zoe Ball and Natasha Kaplinsky were both married there.

Beacon Hill - From Tanyard Farm the festival walk follows the straight line of Fosse Way* for a mile. It climbs up to Beacon Hill, 300 metres above sea level and so visible from the whole area. Recent archaeological work has unearthed graves and urns from the Bronze Age – the second millennium BC.

Blacker's Hill is a prehistoric earthwork, that may be have used to protect the Fosse Way* from the west.

Old Bristol Road - The walk crosses the A37 and doubles back on to the Old Bristol Road, a stretch of a late eighteenth century turnpike road.

Chilcompton - The name means the settlement ("ton") in the valley ("comp" – from the old Celtic word for valley, "combe" – compare the Welsh cwm) of the church ("chil"). The church is fairly isolated, indeed in a valley, to the north of the village. The walk takes us over the site of the Somerset and Dorset railway, the construction of which in 1874 dragged the village up the hill to the station.

Coleford - means what it suggests the ford over which coal was carried, though when the place was named charcoal was probably meant. The festival walk passes by the west part of the village. But as we take the lane to the north we pass by an overgrown aqueduct, known as the Hucky Duck. This was built in 1800-01 to carry the failed venture of the Dorset and Somerset Canal. The parapet has been

recycled for local building. The path goes over fields with strange humps. These are the sites of Coal Barton, a colliery that flourished in the early nineteenth century – employing a hundred miners – and closed in the 1850s.

Downside Abbey dominates the landscape. After the Reformation there were no Roman Catholic schools in England. A boarding school for Catholic boys was founded at Douai, France, in 1606. After the French Revolution the school was founded here in 1795, and the buildings were built over the following decades. The church was first planned in 1872 but not completed until 1938. It is a magnificent building, simple, lofty and light, made from Bath and Douling stone. Meanwhile school buildings were extended. It had been planned that the tower, 50.5 metres, would have a spire. This tower, built on a site 190 metres above sea level, is a landmark for miles around. It is now one of the leading Catholic public schools in the country. Among its Old Boys (called Old Gregorians) are Rocco Forte, Auberon Waugh and Denis Wheatley. Two recent teacher monks have recently been imprisoned for paedophile offences. The school has since 2003 been co-educational. About one third of the pupils are girls.

Downside Abbey Cricket Ground - In May 1943 during a match between the school and an army eleven, two Hurricane fighter planes appeared over the ground. The pilots were showing off. One flew low over the cricket ground, then climbed to clip the fir trees fringing the ground and then crashed into schoolboy spectators. The pilot and nine people on the ground were killed.

Fosse Way was the Roman road that stretched in a more or less straight line from Exeter to Lincoln via the Roman towns of Bath, Cirencester and Leicester.

The Frome Radstock Railway - Built in 1854, this served the collieries and quarries of the surrounding villages. The festival walk leaves the line where there used to be a branch line south to Vobster. This part of the line finally closed in 1988, though the line to the east is still used to shift stone from the quarries.

Gurneyslade means the "slaed", or valley belonging to a family called Gournay. It is part of the parish of Binegar and has been a quarrymen's village, one quarry still functioning, others abandoned. The valleys were once full of human activity – mines and mills.

Harridge Wood and Stoke Bottom - An eighteenth century writer described this area as *a country pleasingly divided with hills and valleys. Some of the valleys are deep, gloomy and picturesque; the acclivities clothed with hanging woods, intermixed with romantic rocks.* In those days there was quite a bit of local industry – a logwood mill and a paper mill. Blocks of wood were imported from Mexico (strange but true), split into chips, soaked in water to ferment until they made glossy crystals that made a black dye used in the local cloth trade. The Mendips with its streams was a centre for paper manufacture in the eighteenth century. One owner in the previous century had been a Fussell, from the family of edge-tool makers who flourished in the nineteenth century in Mells* and Nunney. Some ruins of mills and factories remain.

Highbury - Very much of a nineteenth century mining and quarrying. The walk skirts the village to the north and past sites of collieries and quarries. The quarries are sealed off as potentially dangerous. The collieries have been turned into isolated industrial sites.

Holcombe Church - Holcombe, like Chilcompton*, is a village that is mostly some distance from the parish church. In the churchyard is buried Robert Falcon Scott ("of the Antarctic"). His father was the manager of a brewery. Legend has it that the old village used to be by the church, which has been known as the "Plague Church". When some archaeologists wanted to excavate the alleged site of the old village, some people objected saying that if graves were disturbed, they might "let the germs out again". It is more likely that the centre of gravity of the village shifted because of the collieries to the south. The church of St Andrew has a Norman doorway, box pews and a two decker Jacobean (early seventeenth century) pulpit.

Holcombe Village - Holcombe means hollow valley, but the main village is a hilltop village. The village grew up around the brewery of which Captain Scott's father was the manager. The three-storey brewery in Brewery Lane is now a block of flats. Scott lived for a while at Holcombe Manor. The collieries were mostly to the south.

Kilmersdon – The festival walk dips into a valley where a stream flows down from the village of Kilmersdon to the north. This village was a major centre and huge parish, extending to Highbury and Coleford*. The path became known as the Coffin Trail, because of the funeral processions from the outlying villages to the parish church at Kilmersdon.

Mells means the Mills. The village is around a fast flowing stream. The festival walk passes to the north of the church of St Andrew, next to the fifteenth to sixteenth century manor house that was the home of the Horners for four and a half centuries. Mells belonged to Glastonbury Abbey and the Horners took possession after the Reformation. The family vigorously deny that the nursery rhyme – Little Jack Horner has anything to do with them or that Mells was the plum. The Lady Horner of the early twentieth century was a great patron of the arts, and the village war memorial was designed by Edwin Lutyens (who designed the Cenotaph in Whitehall). He also did the plinth of the memorial to Edward Horner who was a war victim in 1917. The equestrian statue of Horner was a rare sculpture executed by Alfred Munnings. There is also stained glass by William Nicholson, a relief by Burne-Jones, another tomb with lettering cut by Eric Gill. Edward Horner married a daughter of the Prime Minister, Asquith, who became the Earl of Oxford. The Horners became Catholics and died out; the manor house is now the home of the third Earl. There are some interesting graves in the churchyard, reflecting the Horner/Asquith networks. Lady Violet Bonham Carter, grandmother of the actress and daughter of the Prime Minister is there. Near her is Monsignor Knox, a Catholic intellectual (and translator of the Gospels) who died as a house guest at the manor house. And behind is the poet, Siegfried Sassoon, another friend of the family. At the end of the churchyard is buried Lloyd George's Chancellor of the Exchequer, Stephen McKenna. The street from the church the main street of the village is, though built in 1470, called New Street, an attractive surviving medieval street. Kevin McCloud lives in Mells, as does Lord (William) Rees-Mogg, former editor of *The Times* and *pater* of the Honorable Jacob MP.

Midsomer Norton - Norton means a settlement ("ton") to the north of another (Stratton-on-the-Fosse?). This was a major mining centre. To the north can be seen the batch of Old Mills. This looks more like a North Country slagheap, for – unlike most batches – it has not been afforested. There used to be a midsummer fair in honour of St John, the patron saint. The original village was in the valley but it expanded vastly in the nineteenth century, thanks to the large collieries in the area. Evelyn Waugh's grandfather was a doctor here.

New Rock Batch - Batch is the Somerset word for slagheap. This batch marks the site of New Rock colliery which started working in 1819. It flourished after nationalisation and in the early 1960s miners were

brought here from redundant mines in County Durham. The pit closed in 1968. The site is now an industrial estate.

Norton Hill Colliery was one of the largest coal mines in Somerset and, in the 1930s, was the largest producer in the area. After nationalisation in 1947 there were vast modernisation plans and at one time the pit was employing 800 people. In spite of investment the pit was deemed uneconomic and was closed in 1966, one of the last in the area to close.

Radstock - The architectural historian, Nikolaus Pevsner unfairly described Radstock as being *really desperately ugly . . . without dignity in any building*.

Stoke St Michael. - Stoke means a homestead (stockade is from the same root). In 1617 the inhabitants of the village petitioned about the appalling quality of the roads in the Mendips, *founderous and bad for travelling*, they said. St Michael's church was built in 1838 when Stoke St Michael became a separate parish – it had previously been part of Doultling. The tower however dates back to the fourteenth century. To the west of the church the low cottage dates from the fifteenth or sixteenth century and was presumably a priest's house. At the village crossroads is the Knatchbull Arms pub, dating back to the late seventeenth century. It has gabled dormer windows and oval windows on either side of the porch. The festival walk to the north-east takes us past several quarry sites. Quarrying has – and still is – a major Mendip industry.

Ston Easton - The village to the west has a church rebuilt in 1890. The name refers to the limestone that is near the surface. Easton means the settlement east of Chewton, the main village in the area.

Stratton on the Fosse - The name means the street ("strat") settlement ("ton") on Fosse Way*. It is a straggling village and was a mining village until 1968 – the mines being on Stratton Common to the south. The parish church is dedicated to St Vigor, one of only two such dedications in England.