

Acknowledgements

This leaflet was researched and written by Shutford Conservation Group with the approval of Shutford Parish Council. Photography by Claire Winfield. Thanks to the landowners, whose co-operation helped to make the walk possible.

Additional Information

All of Cherwell District Council's circular walks and rides are published on the Council website and can be downloaded free. Leaflets can be purchased from Banbury Tourist Information Centre (01295 259855). For further information about circular walks and rides, guided walks and grants available for countryside access projects, please contact:-



Circular Walk 4.5miles/7km **Time** 2.5-3hours
Village Trail 1mile/1.6km **Time** 1hour

Shutford Circular Walk

4.5miles / 7km

The Shutford Circular Walk covers footpaths and bridleways to the south and west of the village, including a section of ancient road past Madmarston Hill. It offers fine views over the surrounding countryside and neighbouring villages.

The route is signed and described in a clockwise direction though it can be walked either way. Stout footwear is advisable as ground conditions can be wet and muddy, especially in winter.

The walk has been devised with the co-operation of local farmers and landowners and much of it passes over cultivated and grazing land. Please follow the route as marked and observe the Country Code along the way.

Shutford Village Trail

1mile / 1.6km

A short walk around this once world renowned but now largely forgotten village pinpointing some of its more interesting features and giving an insight into its history.

Most of the buildings described are now private houses. Please respect the privacy of the occupants and view from a polite distance.

Car Parking

There is no designated car parking area within Shutford. Walkers are therefore asked to please show consideration for residents and other road users when parking in the village.

About Shutford

The area around Shutford has been settled since ancient times though the village itself is probably of Saxon origin. For centuries it was a mainly agricultural community though associated trades of brewing, malting, spinning, weaving, hat and stocking making are known to have existed too. In 1701 many of the buildings were destroyed by fire but by 1774 it had become one of the largest villages in the area with 71 houses.



Shutford became known around the world as a centre for the weaving of plush, the top grade of which is a luxurious silk fabric. Beginning as a cottage industry in the 17th century, manufacture continued here until 1947 mostly, and latterly exclusively, under the management of the Wrench family.

Their handwoven livery plush was exported to many of the royal courts of Europe as well as to Africa and the Far East and won a number of awards at international exhibitions.

By the 1960's with the demise of its traditional occupations the village was in decline with many properties derelict, no school, no permanent vicar and for a while no pub.

Attempts to draw attention to its plight by entering the best kept village competition in 1969 and advertising the village for sale in an American newspaper in 1970 gradually bore fruit. Abandoned houses were rebuilt or renovated and new ones erected bringing new people and with them new life to the village.



Circular Walk Directions

11 Walk around the side of the hill, keeping the stand of trees on the hilltop (Shutford Clump) to your left. Stay with the path as it goes down the hill to an opening in the hedge.

12 Go straight through the opening, and keeping the hedge on your left, follow the field edge through three fields then over the stile onto the Sibford Road.

13 Turn left and continue to the road junction. Turn right to go back into Shutford along High Street (passing the pond known as Dog Pool on your right).

1 Starting outside the George and Dragon walk up Church Lane and through the gate at the top.

2 Keeping the large oak trees on your right, head across Manor Field then over the stile set in the hedge (look back over your left shoulder to see the Manor House behind you).

3 Follow the footpath diagonally left across the field and through the gate near the far corner. Follow the track to the next gate, near Jester's Barn.

4 Turn right through the gate and follow the track along the bottom of the field (with the hedge on your right). At the next gate the track changes sides so that the hedge is on your left.

5 Keep following the track to Upper Lea Farm (on your right is Madmarston Hill) passing the first barn to your right, then bearing right to pass rest of the farm buildings on your left.

6 After the farm buildings go through a steel gate on the left and into an old orchard. Turn right and walk to the gate at the far end (note the ridge and furrow groundform).

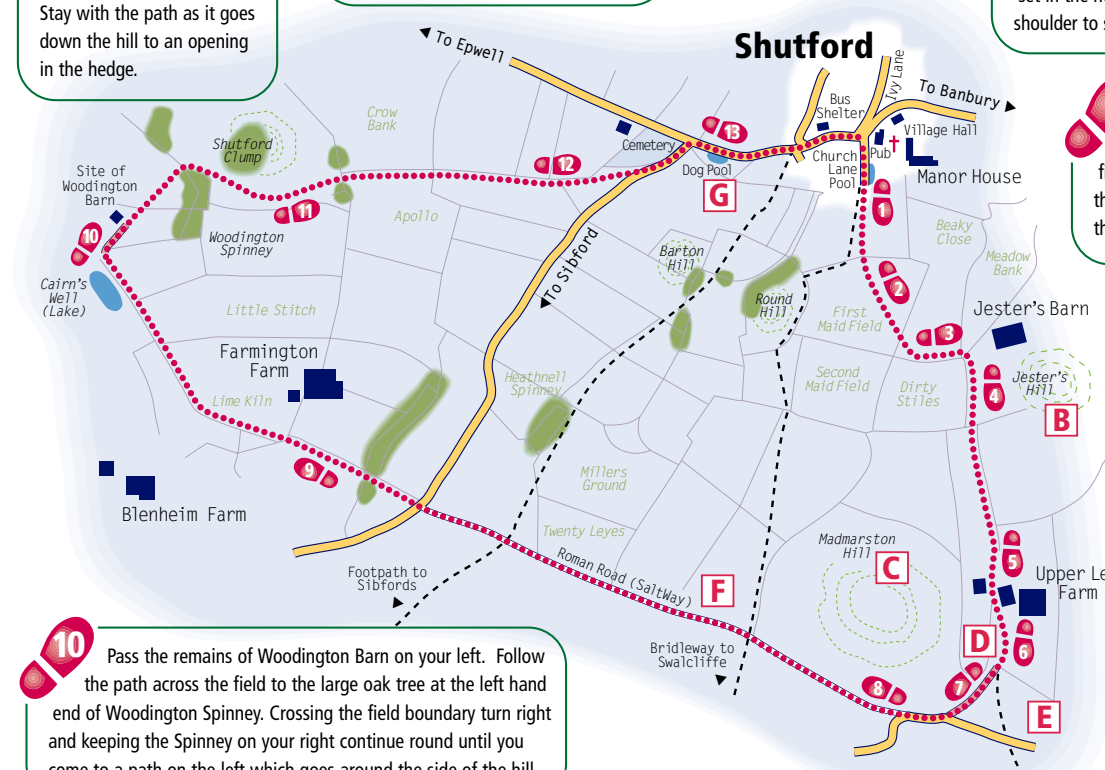
7 Go through the gate then follow the track to its junction with the Roman Road (The churches of Swalcliffe and Tadmarton are visible from this point).

Shortcut: Here, the less energetic can turn right and follow the road back to Shutford.

8 Turn right and follow the Roman Road. Keep going straight on until you reach the Shutford / Sibford Road.

9 Cross the road and continue along the field edge path, (after a couple of fields it crosses to the other side of the hedge). Pass a lake on your left then stay on the track as it bears round to the right.

10 Pass the remains of Woodington Barn on your left. Follow the path across the field to the large oak tree at the left hand end of Woodington Spinney. Crossing the field boundary turn right and keeping the Spinney on your right continue round until you come to a path on the left which goes around the side of the hill.



For those who would like to venture further afield we recommend the OS Explorer sheets 191 and 206.

KEY

- Route
- Other paths
- Track
- Permissive Paths
- Points of Interest B

Points of Interest

A Field Names

Several of the fields along this walk have interesting names. Some like 'Meadow Bank' and 'Lime Kiln' are self explanatory whilst others are words which were once part of the rural vernacular and are no longer in common usage. For example 'Beaky Close': A close was a piece of land enclosed from an open field or common by an individual farmer. 'Twenty Leyes': A ley field was grassland. 'Millers Ground': The word ground described a piece of land distant from the farmstead or manor that owned it. 'Little Stitch': A small nook of land.

B Jester's Hill

Named after a local family. William Jester's grave stone can be seen in Shutford churchyard.



C Madmarston Hill

A late iron age hill camp, is the earliest known settlement in the (Banbury) hundred. It was probably occupied from the 2nd century B.C. until the 1st century A.D. when it appears to have been deserted, except for a brief period in the 4th century. The site was extensively excavated in 1957-58.

D Ridge and Furrow

Is usually associated with medieval open field farming, where each farmer would be allocated a certain number of strips in a communal field. Its main purpose was probably to improve the drainage and as an insurance against the bad seasons. In floods the crops on the ridges would survive and in droughts the furrows would stay damper.

E Site of Romano - British Settlement

It lies close to what is now known as Swalcliffe Lea and was one of the largest Roman occupation sites in the county, covering 50 acres. The site was occupied throughout the Roman period and possibly earlier. The settlement which was quite large in the 1st century A.D. seems to have declined in the second but flourished again in the late third and fourth centuries.

From the 14th to the 17th centuries a medieval hamlet called the Lea stood on the site all traces of which have now disappeared. The site was excavated by the Oxford University Archaeological Society in 1958. A villa in the field to the south east of the township site and immediately to the east of Lower Lea farmhouse was excavated in 2000.

F Roman Road

Is the local name for this track but it was originally a pre-Roman Salt Way, part of the main road from London to Droitwich, which was a centre for salt production.



G Dog Pool

Originally known as Frog Pool!

George and Dragon

(01295) 780320

www.georgeanddragon.co.uk



Traditional village pub with some features dating back to the 13th century. Local and guest real ales. Restaurant with extensive home made menu. Terrace garden. Families welcome. Open Tues - Sat lunchtime and evening, Sun 12noon - 10.30pm. Closed Monday. Check for details and reservations

The Gates of "Cambrai"

Cambrai: A city in France which gave its name to the first major tank battle. Surmounted by the Tree of Life, supported by a Tank of the Second Battalion, salient, and a Lion from the crest of the British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association, sejan.



Above, the tower of the Church of St Martin's and Banbury Cross, recording a family of monumental masons. To the left and right, the Thistle of Scotland and the Rose of England in gold leaf and the crest of the clan Maclean.

On the extreme left, a replica of the original sign of the George and Dragon and underneath a plaque of the New Inn. On the extreme right, the sign of the Lamb and Flag and underneath a plaque of the Weavers Arms. All record the four hostelries that existed in the village and to which the family were connected at some time.

The Blacksmith and his mate at work are typical of at least four generations of smiths. In the centre, the carriers cart of William Coles and the Oxfordshire wagon of William Gibbs. The line of Scrolls represents the waves and shows the family connections with the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy.

Shutford Village Trail

The walk begins outside the George and Dragon pub on the corner of High Street and Church Lane. It is advisable to follow the walk in a clockwise direction as described so that you come down Cook's Hill instead of up it.



8 Facing you at the end of West Street is: The Old Manor House of the former West Shutford parish. It was at one time a public house, The Weavers Arms, much used when the home weavers, having brought their cloth into the mill to be measured were paid.

9 The area in front of the Old Manor House is the official Village Green where fairs were held in former times.

7 The buildings on the right mask what was the site for over 200 years of Wrench's Plush Mill, once the only maker of handwoven livery plush in the world. The industry existed in Shutford before 1747 and despite a fire which virtually destroyed the mill in 1913 the factory continued in production until 1947 when difficulties with the supply of raw materials and labour combined with ill health forced the family to sell up. Reminders of the industry remain in the house names along this row.

6 Chapel Cottages are built on the site of the former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, almost certainly given to the village by mill owner William Wrench in the mid 19th century. **Continue along West Street.**

5 The thatched cottage on the corner was once the village Post Office. The position of the old Post Box is detectable under the right hand window. **Turn right along West Street.**

4 **Walk along High Street**, passing on the right: The Old Brewhouse, a former public house once known as The New Inn.

3 Visible behind the Church is part of Shutford Manor, the main house of the former East Shutford parish. Built by Sir Richard Fiennes, the MP for Banbury, between 1580 and 1600. A distinguishing feature is the tall staircase tower. Although the Fiennes family never lived at the Manor it is said that just before the outbreak of the Civil War the Parliamentarian Lord Saye and Sele drilled soldiers in the upper storey of the house (then one large room). For the best view of the Manor turn back and look as you cross Manor Field at the start of the Circular Walk.

10 **Continue down Cook's Hill.** On your right is: The Weaver's Shop which once housed a dozen or so hand looms supplementing the production of the home weavers in this and surrounding villages. Certainly in existence before 1815 this was the only visible evidence of a manufactory in Shutford apart from the tall mill chimney rising behind the cottages on West Street.

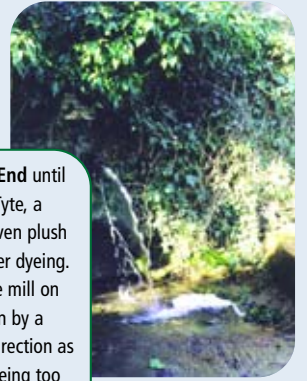


2 St. Martin's Church also dates from the 12th century with additions made throughout the Middle Ages. A leaflet giving more detailed information is available inside the Church but of particular note are the traces of early wall paintings.

11 **Continue down Cook's Hill.** On your left is: Cambrai, the home of the Gibbs family, village blacksmiths for many years whose works include the Church gateway and the Village Hall railings. The plaques and finials on the gates commemorate the tank battle of Cambrai as well as local and family history. See the panel on the previous page for more details.

12 **Turn right and walk a short way up Malthouse Lane** to see on the left: The Old School House, built by local subscription organised by the vicar in 1868. At one time there were 60, mostly part-time pupils. Originally a church school it was later taken over by the local authority and eventually closed in 1962. It is now a private house.

13 **Return down the hill into Lower End**, passing on the corner: the former Primitive Methodist Chapel, now also a private house.



14 **Continue along Lower End** until you reach, on your left: The Tye, a natural spring where the woven plush was brought to be rinsed after dyeing. It was then taken back to the mill on handcarts or on a float drawn by a Shetland pony in the same direction as this walk, the wet material being too heavy to push back up Cook's Hill.

15 **Turn around and walk back along Lower End and into Ivy Lane.** You will pass on your right: The former Quaker Meeting House which is one of the oldest houses in Shutford. It was licensed in 1690 as a meeting house for this and the neighbouring villages, the area at that time being a Quaker stronghold (There is still a Quaker meeting House and Quaker school in nearby Sibford Ferris). Meetings here ended in 1804 when numbers declined, though the surrounding land was used for burials until 1851. It has been a private house since the late 19th century. **Continue along Ivy Lane until you get back to the George and Dragon.**

1 The George and Dragon, faces the crossroads. Parts of the building are believed to date back to the 13th century and it is rumoured that a tunnel once connected it with the Church behind.

