






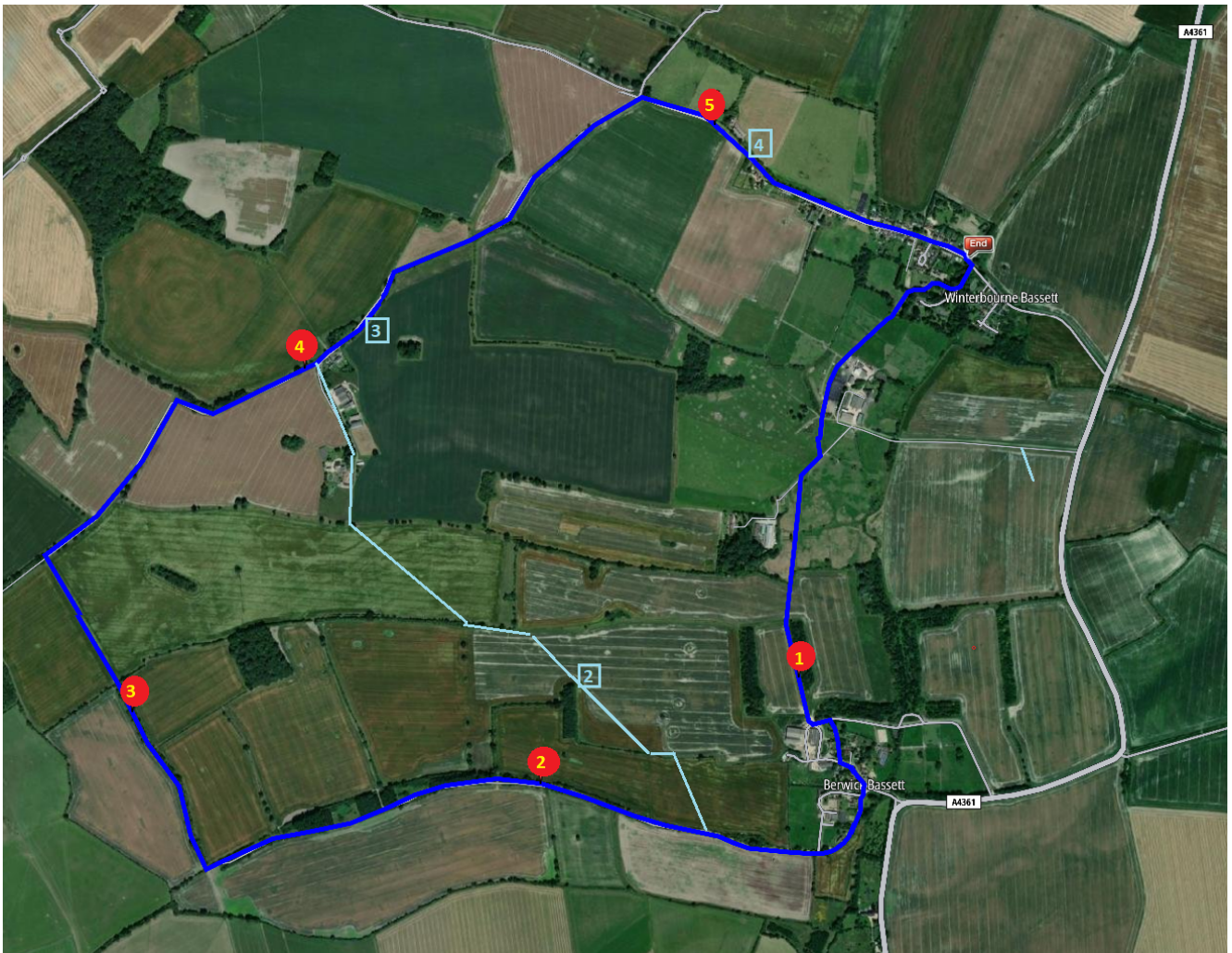
The Broad Hinton and Winterbourne Bassett Parish Walks

Circular Walk From Winterbourne Bassett To Berwick Bassett Common and Yatesbury Lane

*A gentle walk over flat ground, passing Manor Houses,
a Deserted Medieval Village,
two old churches
and the site of a prehistoric stone circle*

		<u>Long route</u> 5.6 miles (9 kms) 2 hours 30 minutes	<u>Short route</u> 4.4 miles (7 kms) 2 hours
	footpaths bridle/byways country lanes	1.1 miles 2.7 miles 1.8 miles	2.6 miles 0 1.8 miles
	Access: difficult - 1 stile		Dog friendly
	The footpath after Rabson Manor can flood in wet weather; the bridleway after Berwick Bassett can also become muddy and puddle		

Google Maps image with mile markers



Route Details

Start at the car park for the Winterbourne Inn, especially if you plan to use it for refreshments later. Unfortunately the pub is currently not open Mondays and Tuesdays. Check out opening times and menu at www.thewinterbourne.pub.

Alternatively, you can park in the church car park accessed through an entrance on the opposite side of the road from the pub and a bit further in to the village. If starting here go into the church first, then follow the rest of the route.

Leave the Winterbourne car park and turn left. At the end of the car park wall you will be on the bridge over the actual winterbourne. There is a sign to the Church – follow the signed route, crossing the road and taking the lane which runs alongside the bourne. After 100yds/95m the lane swings north towards the churchyard of **St Katherine and St Peter**. The church is well worth a visit if you have the time.



The church of Winterbourne Bassett dates back in 1121. At the Dissolution it was granted to Thomas Cromwell in 1538. The church was dedicated to St. Catherine in the 16th century, although in 1848 it was known as St. Peter's. Consequently in 1904, it was dedicated to St. Katherine and St. Peter.

The current church was built in the 14th century using local sarsen and several early features still can be seen. The tower – constructed c1450 – was built using Corallian limestone, possibly indicating that it replaced an earlier structure. As with many churches, this one was “restored” by the Victorians. The two tall wall-shafts of the chancel arch, display moulded capitals supported on corbel heads of a queen in a crown and a bearded man.

Note also the trees planted in 2018 to commemorate end of WWI. At the far end of the church car park aim slightly left to find the stile (the only one on the walk) – quite well hidden in the hedge. The footpath goes across a small grass field to a metal gate. This is broken and left open. The route now takes you along a wide grassy path between paddocks usually full of inquisitive horses and brings you out at the back of farm buildings belonging to **Rabson Manor**.



Rabson Manor was owned by Amesbury Abbey in 1066 and later by Edward Seymour, duke of Somerset, an elder brother of Jane Seymour

The path then diverts around a circular horse training ring and more horse related enclosures to reach the farm yard. The main farm track heads off to the left. Don't follow that route but aim almost straight across in front of a small booth to a gap in the hedge. The other side of the gap is a ditch; cross this and the farm track to the next field which has another ditch running by its side.



After a short distance there is a stone bridge over the ditch. This has suffered some damage and is a little uneven but easily passable.



After the bridge turn left and head to a metal pedestrian gate which opens onto a lane going towards the red brick house Richardson Cottages. Head up towards the house.

After about 65 yds (60m) on the other side of the lane go through another metal pedestrian gate (at SU 09753 74311). As the path heads south across the field you will see many humps and bumps to your left.

*These are the remains of the Deserted Medieval Village of Richardson. It is possible to make out a series of low rectangular platforms, enclosures and trackways located either side of an east to west hollow way which was the main street through the settlement, but now used as an open field drain.
The settlement was referred to in 1242 but was largely abandoned by 1545.*

Check out: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1019188>

Warning: The path crosses the old hollow way can flood after prolonged rain.

There is an old rusty kissing gate after which the path runs along the side of a hedgerow. It comes out into an open field. At this point you are entering **Berwick Bassett parish**. After winter or spring ploughing the route may not be clearly visible but don't worry, it goes straight across the field towards the wooded corner of the next fields. Aim for this corner –see photo – at SU 09718 73879. [1 mile point]



Continue on and you will reach some farm buildings. Although the path takes a sharp left at the start of the farmyard, it is worth going across the yard to take a look at the magnificent **Old Farmhouse**. This dates from c. 1500 with walls of stone on the ground floor and of timber framing above.

Take the track to the left with a sign to “*Footpath and Church*”. There is a wooden gate on the right opening into churchyard of **St Nicholas’s**. Enter the churchyard through the wooden gate, duck under some low hanging branches and the church comes into sight.

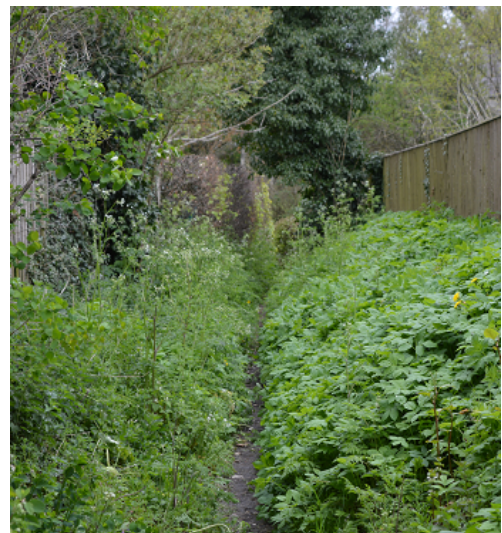


This church was declared redundant in 1972, and passed into the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. There are some interesting objects in the churchyard – well worth a look. The brick part of the church is part of the Victorian “improvements” in 1857. The church is open during the day time so pop in and see. The font remains from the original structure. The wooden screen is 15th century. The chancel was remodelled in the 18th century, but several medieval windows were re-used.



The church was originally built between 1199 and 1221 and dedicated to St Nicholas in 1331. Previously the villages' inhabitants would have attended Winterbourne Bassett church and paid tithes to Calne church.

The path heads across the churchyard and to the left of Old Farmhouse garden wall.



There is a kissing gate that opens on to a narrow path and out on to the road in the centre of the village. Turn left and head into the centre of this small hamlet.

The name of both villages on this walk relate to Lord Alan de Bassett 1155 – 1232, who held both manors and was one of the signatories of Magna Carta

It quickly becomes obvious that the main stone used in the village was sarsen – the same as the stones of Avebury and Stonehenge. It is everywhere – the pavement, garden walls and houses. Take the stone pavement towards the Manor.



The Manor comprises two stone ranges. An older range which has an external stack at each end formed an entrance hall and dates to about 1600. This is joined to a long early 17th-century east-west range.

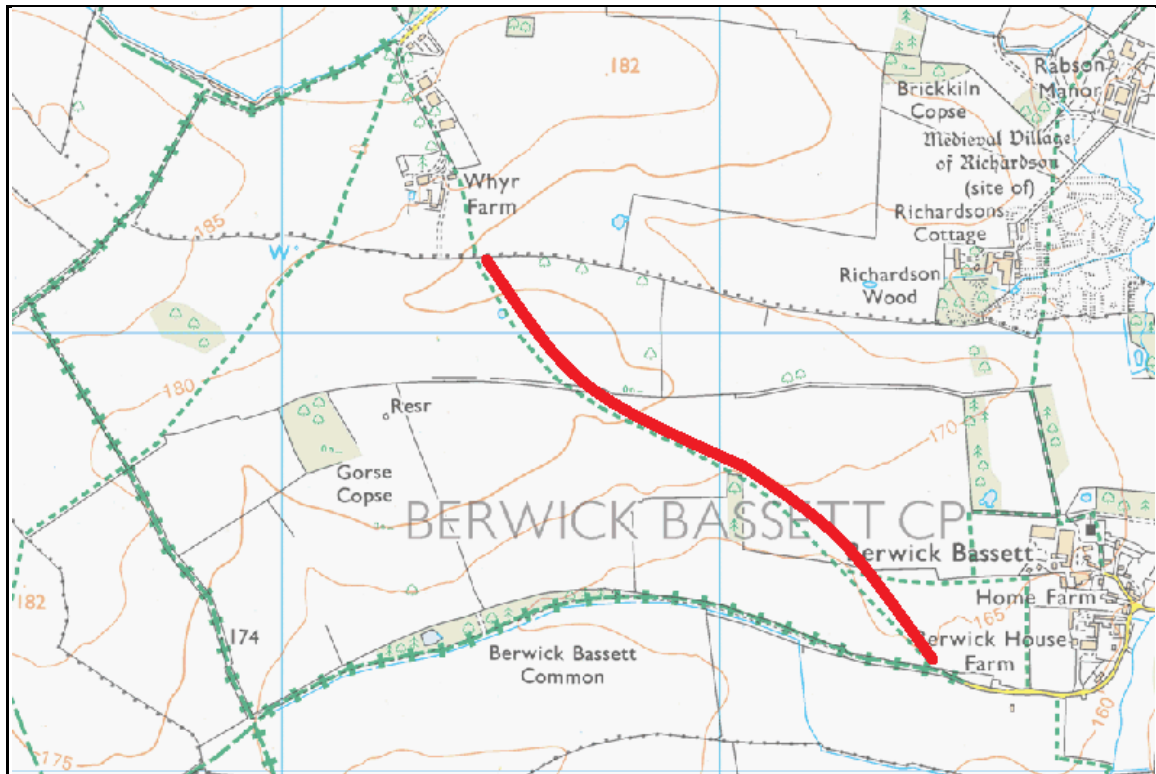
Turn right to follow the road that curves in front of Home Farm and then follows a late 18th century road westwards towards Berwick Common. The first curving part is tarmacked but after 5 minutes becomes a concrete surface.

At this point there is an option – a short route or a longer one.

SHORT ROUTE

(jump to Page 11 for longer route)

On the right after the bend there is a concrete strip leading into a field (at SU 095140 73237). This will take you on the shorter route crosses 3 fields towards Whyr Farm.



In summer the crop is often left long before the way is cleared.

In 2021 the footpath route followed either tractor flattened paths or had been cut especially. All are easily spotted and provide a great stretch of quiet countryside.



Following this route across the fields will bring you out on the east side of Whyr Farm.

A farmhouse has occupied this site since c1700 following enclosure and the split of Richardson estate in 1685. It was rebuilt c.1832 and is constructed with a limestone ashlar front but the sides of the house are brick. The end wall of an attached barn has a dovecot, the only one in Winterbourne Bassett, of brick construction with a stone tile roof.



The footpath to the side of Whyr Farm opens on to a paved lane which skirts the front of several large barns.

After 400yds/390m this lane joins Yatesbury Lane.

Both long and short routes converge from here.

LONGER ROUTE



The concrete surface of the lane coming out of Berwick Bassett the lane becomes just an earth and stone track. After a while the trees bordering the track move away to reveal Berwick Bassett Common. **[2 mile point]**

After about 1 mile from Berwick Bassett you will reach a byway junction with sign post. Take the turning to the right

– at SU 07938 73125.



The new path is hedged on both sides at first then crosses open countryside and eventually will join Yatesbury Lane – at SU 07432 74067. **[3 mile point]**

Yatesbury Lane was originally part of a Saxon Army Road – a *herepath*. These were laid out during the Viking invasions in the 9th century to allow troops to move rapidly from one fortified town – a burh – to the next. This one probably linked the Saxon settlement at Avebury to Cricklade.



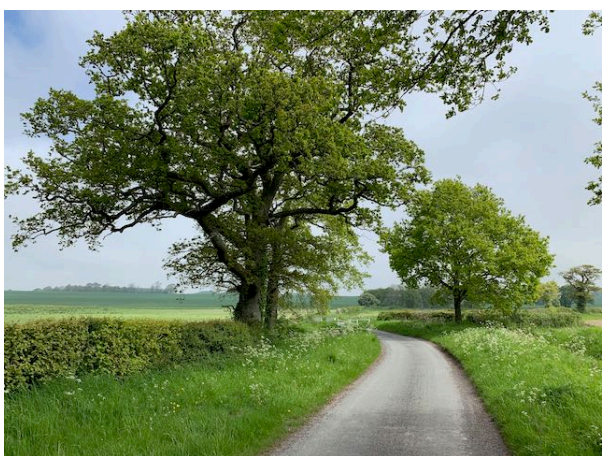
There are some magnificent trees lining this track. The lane was known as Corten Lane between 1728; Whibston Lane c. 1760, and Yatesbury Lane from 1828. It is a byway – unmetalled - until it reaches the lane to Whyr Farm at SU 08175 74661. This is a good area to look out for wildlife. If you are lucky you may be rewarded with sightings of buzzards and red kites, and much else.

Both long and short routes converge from here.

Turn left and follow the twisting tarmacked lane. [4 mile point]

The large field to the left (west) of the lane going north from the Whyr Farm junction used to be called Jericho. Puritan Biblical names for fields seem to date to the Commonwealth and period. Jericho has a special sense in farming vocabulary as an isolation field for sick cattle.

There are some great views along this stretch of the walk. Marlborough Downs rise up to the south. In good light it is even possible to see Silbury Hill. It will become very obvious where this lane ends (at SU 09263 75482) as there is a standing stone on the corner to the left. This is not ancient. It was dug up by the farmer from Whyr Farm about 25 years ago because his ploughs kept hitting it. Turn right.



This is the lane that will take you back through Winterbourne Bassett. It used to be called **Lambourne Way** and was one of the drove roads from the winter sheep pastures near the farms up to the summer pastures up on the higher fields on the Downs. The field immediately to your left at the junction is called Upper Oxlease. It was thought to be the site of a late **Neolithic stone circle** as there are several large stones poking through the grass. It was recorded as on the Scheduled Monuments register back in 1924. [5 mile point]

However, a 1998 English Heritage geophysical survey showed it to be a natural sarsen field; EH also unearthed a drawing of the circle made in 1724 that did not fit the scheduled location. In 2004 a Bristol University survey and exploratory dig found evidence for the actual site in the field on the opposite side of the road. This field has more history in its fenceline.

There are at least 3 rectangular posts. Look at them closely. You should be able to see pairs of holes drilled into them. These are Archangel Posts. The posts are made from Siberian cedar that was imported from the Russian port of Arkhangelsk in WWI until 1917. They were used as railway sleepers. When they came to be replaced later by more modern sleepers the old ones were bought by farmers for fenceposts. More of these can be seen in the fences along the Ridgeway National Trail running along the hill above the village. They have lasted over 100 years – about 10 times longer than modern softwood posts.



The road now becomes the “high street” of **Winterbourne Bassett**. Cross over the western branch of the winterbourne after which the village is named. The pub car park borders the other branch. Both branches merge to the south of the village. The village in fact was built on a spur of slightly higher ground between these two bournes. Looking ahead highlights this – the roof of the pub can just be seen over the top of the spur.

The first mention of the village dates back to between 967 and 975 when King Edgar granted to his thegn Edric an estate at Winterbourne.

As you pass by the houses look out for the eclectic mix of building styles and materials – the old chapel, the schoolhouse, old, new, large, small; sarsen, brick; tile and thatch

There is a house on the left side of the road called The Schoolhouse. However, this may have been where the teachers lived. The actual school was in a nearby cottage. It opened in 1838 and lasted until 1965.



And end back at The Winterbourne or the church

The pub was originally where the car park is now. It was a thatched pub, called the White Horse Inn, but was completely destroyed by fire caused by lightning in October 1913.



The modern pub is owned by the community.

And you can be sure that a warm welcome awaits you

We hope you enjoy the walk and the hospitality of the pub.