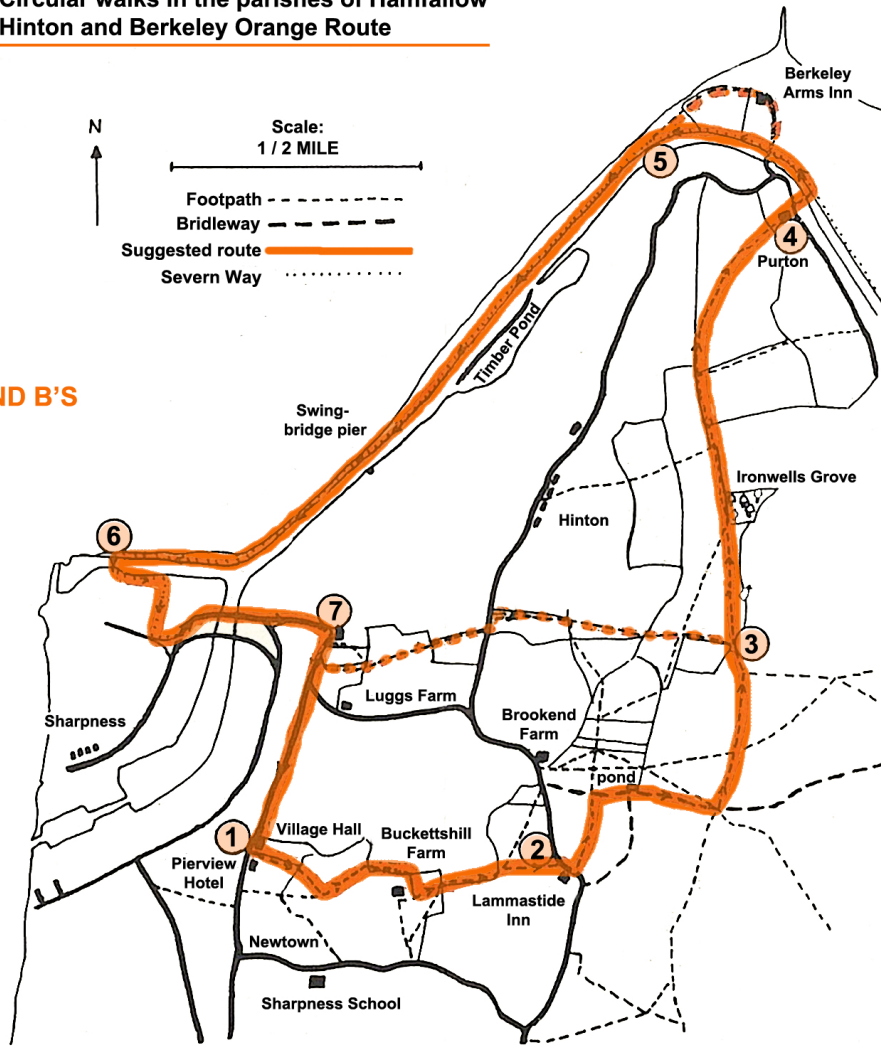


Circular walks in the parishes of Hamfallow Hinton and Berkeley Orange Route

A AND B'S



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When walking these routes please remember that all the land you are walking over is working farmland from which local people earn their living. Please observe the Country Code.

This circular walk includes the interesting section of the Severn Way which runs from Purton to Sharpness between the canal and the River Severn, as well as public footpaths over the highest bit of local land with some of the widest views in the area. The total distance is 5.4 miles, but there is a short-cut option of 2.8 miles. The start point is by Sharpness Village Hall (1). Alternative starting points are the Lammastide Inn at Brookend (2) and the canal car park at Purton (4).

1. FASTEN ALL GATES
2. KEEP DOGS UNDER CONTROL
3. TAKE YOUR LITTER HOME
4. GUARD AGAINST STARTING FIRES
5. KEEP TO THE FOOTPATHS
6. PROTECT WILDLIFE, PLANTS AND TREES
7. AVOID DAMAGING FENCES AND HEDGES

Route Details:

Start by the finger post at Sharpness Village Hall and take the footpath which goes to the right and behind the village hall (1). The path goes alongside the copse passing under the unusually large and leaning specimen of a Field Maple tree. Bluebells bloom in this copse in the spring, which is also a good time for hearing lots of bird song here. Continue to a gate and stile at the end of the copse. Cross the stile and walk diagonally across the lower part of the field towards the right of a waymarked telegraph pole, to a stile in the hedge opposite. Climb the steps and the stile and walk up-hill with the hedge on your right for about 100m to a farm gate behind Bucketts Hill Farm. Go through the gate and turn left to reach a stile at the bottom of the hill. After crossing this stile turn right almost immediately through a kissing gate and then half left up hill to a gate and a further gate onto the road (2).

Turn right and walk about 50m to a stile at the start of a footpath opposite the Lammastide Inn. Cross the stile and aim left towards the right-hand corner of Brookend allotments. Cross two stiles by the allotments to reach the bridleway known as Lip Lane. This is an ancient route linking Brookend and Halmore, following the parish boundary between Hinton and Hamfallow for much of its length. Turn right through the metal farm gate and walk 150m to a bridle gate by the side of a pond. The pond used to extend across the width of the highway here and it may have been used in the days of horse-drawn transport as a site to soak the wooden wheels of carts of the time. Go through the gate and up Lip Lane between the two hedges for 250m to the top of the hill and turn left through a gap in the hedge opposite a metal farm gate and concrete bridleway marker stone. Walk straight across the field in a northerly direction about 250m to a hand gate. Go straight ahead through the gate to reach another hand gate at the far end of the field (3). Around here views are opening up of the Cotswolds to the east and the River Severn to the north.

(There is a short-cut route from here back to the starting point but it does not include the canal river section. If you want to short-cut go through the gate and turn left. Follow the hedge to a stile on your left, about half-way down the

field 150m. Cross the stile and bear right down the field to the farm gate. Go through the gate and aim up over the brow following the line of the electricity poles and down a wooden farm gate. Continue through the gate up-hill with the hedge on your right to the road in Hinton. Turn left for 50m and right at the next finger post. Go through the kissing gate into the remains of an old orchard and follow the hedge on your right to a farm gate. Through the gate, go in the direction of the large grain silo to a metal hand gate. Go straight through the hand gate and continue with the hedge on your right down to a kissing gate on to Oldminster Road. Turn left and walk back on the pavement to the Village Hall).

For the main route from point (3) go through the gate and continue in a northerly direction across the field on the brow of the broad ridge over to a hand gate in the corner of Ironwells Grove. Go through the gate and continue past the wood on your right until you reach another hand gate. From this point onwards the views to the North and East are extensive, the meanders of the River Severn are very clear and many settlements along the foot of the Cotswold escarpment can be picked out by the sight of their church towers. Go through the hand gate and then a farm gate. At this point the public footpath follows approximately the line of the power cables down towards Purton church, going through a farm gate to the left of a cottage and across half-right to a hand gate to the right of the church. The path passes through a private garden and the onto the road (4).

From the car park on Purton green cross the Purton Upper Bridge past the bridgekeepers house with its Doric columns to the canal towpath. Turn left along the bank to Purton Lower Bridge. At this point the suggested route continues on the towpath alongside the canal, but there is an alternative route which goes out the bank of the River Severn behind the Berkeley Arms public house along the waymarked footpath shown on the map and rejoins the canal towpath just beyond bank cottages (5). This diversion gives lovely views of the river and can be interesting for bird watching, but be warned, the bank can be very muddy at times after high tide. (If you want to follow this diversion turn right at the Lower Bridge and walk down

the road to the Berkeley Arms. Immediately beyond the public house is a gate and along the path which runs between the hedge and a fence, almost parallel to the river until it emerges on the river bank. Pass through a gate, across the field and up the ramp ahead to join the canal towpath at a white post and rail fence beyond Bank Cottages (5).

Continue along the towpath passing under the silt discharge pipe near the canals and River Trust. The towpath follows a narrow neck of land between canal and river. Scattered on the river bank are the decaying remains of wooden and concrete barges deliberately scuppered there to protect the bank from erosion. On the opposite side of the canal are the old timber ponds dug in 1906 and originally intended for storing logs. They have not, however been used for that purpose and have gradually become silted up and filled with phragmites reeds and now form the largest reed bed in Gloucestershire. This pond area is being conserved to protect the fascinating range of wildlife that now exists here, in particular the birds such as grebes, ducks and warblers which are specially adapted to this sort of habitat. At least 40 different species of bird have been observed breeding here in recent years. Many of these can be seen or heard from the canal bank. If you are lucky you may see the brilliant flash of blue as a Kingfisher hunts along the canal. Beyond the Timber Ponds can be seen remains of the Severn railway bridge demolished in 1967 following damage caused in a disastrous collision between two out of control oil tanker barges and a pier of the bridge in October 1960. Most noticeable is the circular tower by the towpath. This was the pier which supported a steam powered swing bridge over the canal. Follow the towpath to the Sharpness Marina and, after passing a low stone building on the right (old stables) (6), turn left to cross the old lock bridge and climb the steps to the road. Follow the road round and down the main docks road. Turn left opposite the large open sheds and cross the high level swing bridge. There are good views back up the canal and over the working dock from here. Continue along the elevated road to the Severn Bridge Nursing Home (7). Turn right here along the road back to the starting point. The elevated position of Oldminster Road gives a good view of the trade activities of the docks. The disused railway makes an attractive foreground with its variety of shrubs and trees which provide nests sites for many song birds which can be heard singing, particularly in the spring.