



Shutford Circular walk

Plus optional village trail



Circular walk:
Distance 4.5 miles Time 2.5-3 hours

Village trail:
Distance 1 mile Time 1 hour



Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Shutford Circular walk and village trail

The **Shutford Circular Walk** follows 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. This 4.5 mile/7 km walk starts from the village pub (George and Dragon) but there is no designated parking area at the pub or within Shutford so walkers are asked to show consideration for residents and other road users when parking on village streets.

The circular walk is clearly waymarked but it helps to follow the information in this leaflet as you go. **Before setting out on your walk, please check the council's website for updates in the leaflet text or along the route - www.cherwell.gov.uk/circularwalks**

The **Shutford Village Trail** offers a short 1 mile/1.6 km walk around this once world renowned village (for the weaving of plush), pinpointing some of its more interesting features and giving an insight into its history. The route is steep in places and so would be difficult for pushchairs and wheelchairs. Many of the buildings described are private dwellings. Please respect the privacy of residents by viewing from a polite distance.

About Shutford

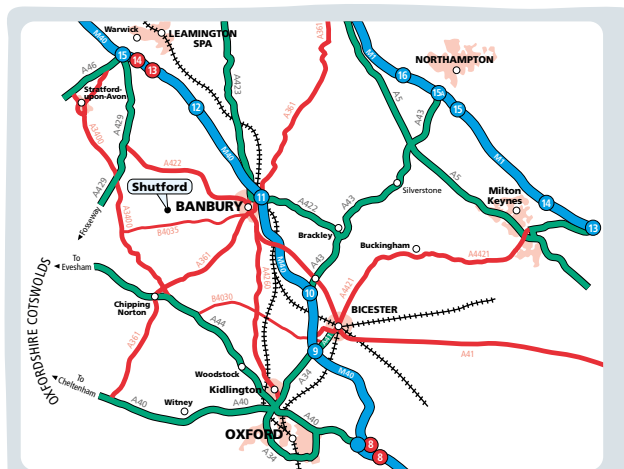
The area around Shutford has been settled since ancient times though the village itself is probably of Saxon origin. For centuries it was a mainly agricultural community though associated trades of brewing, malting, spinning, weaving, hat and stocking making are known to have existed too. In 1701 many 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.



Getting there

The Shutford Circular Walk starts at the George and Dragon Public House. To find it on a mapping website or using satellite navigation, the grid reference is SP352377 and the post code is OX15 6PG.

By Train: The nearest station is Banbury which links to Bicester and Oxford to the south and Birmingham to the north. A taxi would then be required as the bus service through Shutford is very irregular.

By Car: Shutford is five miles west of Banbury. Take the Shutford Road from Lower Tadmarton off the B4035 (Shipston on Stour Road)



Shutford circular walk

October 2020 edition*

Distance 4.5 miles/7km

Approximate walk time 2.5-3 hours

1 Start outside the George and Dragon pub, walk up Church Lane and through the gate at the top.

See step by step guide for detailed route description

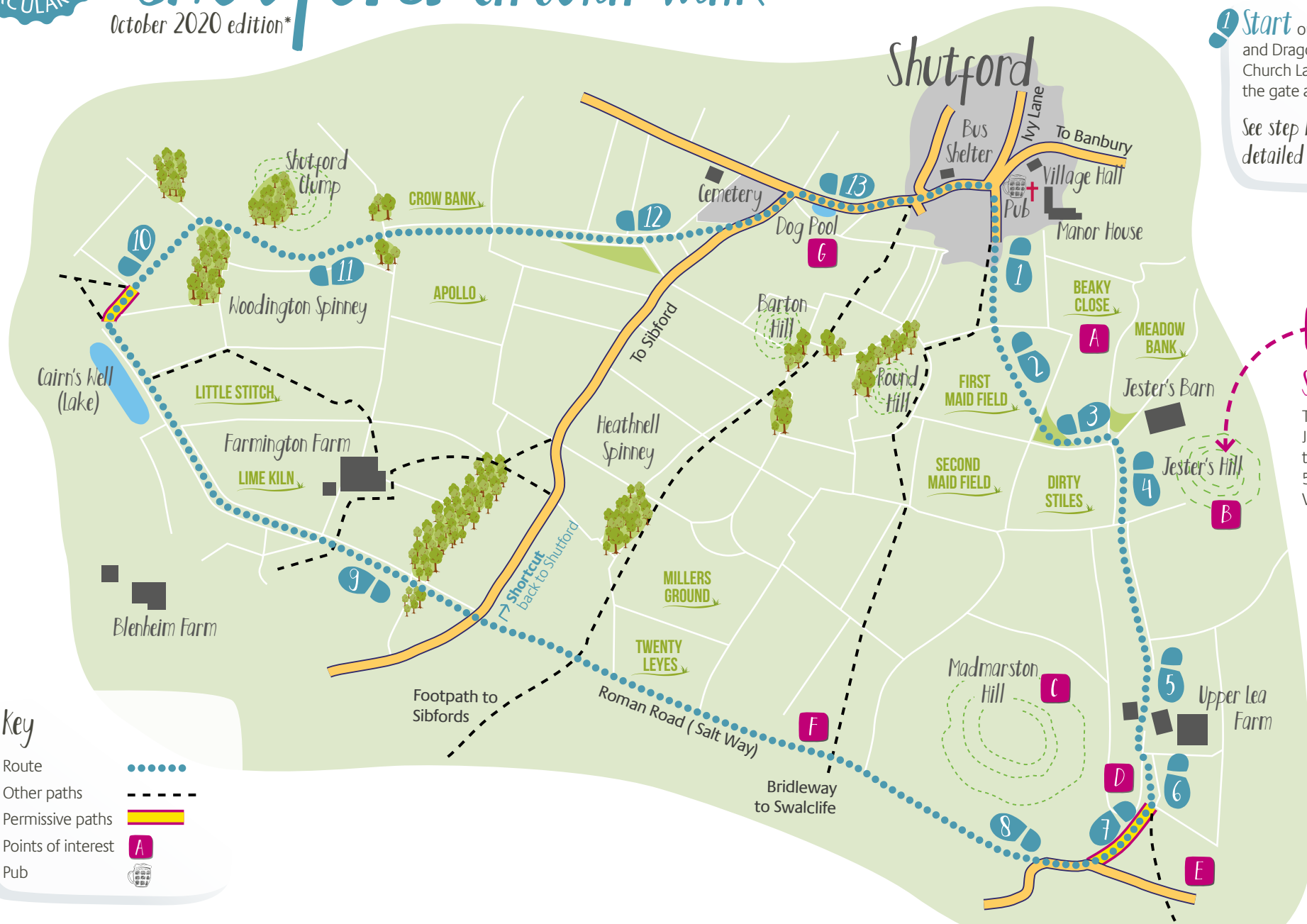


Shutford Beacon

The Shutford Beacon on Jester's Hill was erected to commemorate the 50th anniversary of VE DAY.

Key

- Route
- Other paths
- Permissive paths
- Points of interest
- Pub



*Please check www.cherwell.gov.uk/circularwalks to ensure you have the latest version of this map including any temporary alterations

Shutford Circular walk

August 2018 edition*

step
by step

1 Start outside the George and Dragon pub, walk up Church Lane and through the gate at the top.

3 Cross the stile, bear left across the field and head towards the plantation in the far corner. Walk between the two areas of trees, then bear left and follow the track to the next gate, near Jester's Barn.

5 Keep following the track to Upper Lea Farm (on your right is **Madmarston Hill**) passing the first barn to your right. Bear right and follow the track, keeping the fence and the rest of the farm buildings to your left.

7 Go through two gates, a stretch which is very muddy even in dry weather. The second gate is difficult to open and involves lifting a metal chain over the left-hand gatepost. Take care as there is barbed wire at the back of the post follow the permissive track ahead (rather than the footpath which bears left) between two fields to its junction with the **Roman Road** (Swalcliffe Church is visible from this point).

2 Keeping the large oak trees on your right, follow the footpath (rather than the bridgeway) and bear left across Manor Field towards the stile set in the hedge ahead. (Look back to see the Manor House behind you).

4 Continue to follow the circular walk waymarks and turn right through the gate/gateway. 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.

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

8 Turn right and follow the Roman Road. After approx 100 metres, keep straight ahead onto a bridgeway. Keep going straight on for 1.5km ignoring any tracks and turns to left and right. Keep straight on towards and through a metal gate and do not follow the surfaced track as it turns left. Continue to follow the bridgeway straight ahead until you reach a bridlegate and the Shutford / Sibford Road*.

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

9 After crossing the road, go through the bridlegate and then follow the field edge as it descends, crosses a watercourse and then ascends. Bear right between two hedges (follow the bridgeway rather than the footpath), a stretch that can be very muddy. Follow the track for approx 350 metres and then descend. Once on the level, ignore the track to the left and carry straight on. Then ignore the track to the right, eventually passing a lake on your left (hidden from view on the other side of the hedge). On reaching a gatepost with two waymarks fixed to it, follow the direction of the Shutford Circular Walk Permissive Footpath waymark which takes you **right** at this point and not straight on.

11 Continue walking along the field edge as it bears round to the right until you reach a path going left. Here turn left and then follow the tractor tyre tracks into the cropped area and walk parallel to the field edge and hedgerow on your right, around the bottom of the hill. The path through the crops is the footpath, not the field edge. Keep walking and, as you emerge from the crops, you will see an opening and waymark in the hedge over to the left ahead.

13 The route back to the village from here is on roads with no pavements so take care. Turn left and continue to the road junction. Turn right to go back to Shutford and the starting point (George and Dragon) along the High Street, passing the pond known as **Dog Pool** on your right.

10 Follow the track to the field edge ahead. Then walk in the general direction of the Shutford circular walk waymark, following the tractor tyre tracks through the crops as best you can. Head straight across the field towards the large oak tree. Once across the field, find the opening in the hedge next to the oak tree (where there is a post and circular walk waymark) and walk through it. Turn right, keeping the wooded area on your right, and continue to walk close to the trees and along the field edge.

12 Go straight through the opening and, keeping to the field edge with the hedge on your left, pass through a gap between fields. Carry straight on and follow the path between the hedge and some newer planting. This stretch is wide enough but is very overgrown which obscures the uneven terrain; the fence to your right is barbed wire; and there is a low branch partially blocking the route. Please be aware of these hazards.

Seasonal tips ⚠️

The route can be overgrown with nettles, grass and crops in spring/summer obscuring the terrain and signs. Stretches of the route can be waterlogged in the winter or after heavy rain, particularly around gates.

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Preperation

- Wear appropriate clothing and strong, comfortable footwear. Trousers, strong boots or wellingtons are recommended as parts of the route are often wet and muddy.
- Carry water and take a mobile phone if you have one but bear in mind that coverage can be patchy in rural areas. If you are walking alone it's sensible, as a simple precaution, to let someone know where you are and when you expect to return.



Things to remember

- Much of the route is across cultivated and grazing land. If you bring your dog with you, keep it under close control and on a lead through stocked fields. However, current advice recommends you should not walk between a cow and her calf and, if you are threatened by cattle, you should let the dog off the lead.
- You may come across temporary fencing not mentioned in the leaflet as farmers will use this in different places to manage their livestock throughout the year. Provision for walkers to get through this fencing safely should always be made – please let us know if this is not the case.
- Ground nesting birds can be disturbed by dogs, particularly in the Spring, so please keep them under close control.
- Respect plants and animals and take your litter home.
- Remember that the countryside is a working place - leave crops, buildings, machinery and livestock well alone. Leave gates and property as you find them and please keep to the line of the path.
- Take great care when crossing or walking along the roads.
- Park your car responsibly. Do not obstruct gateways, narrow lanes and village facilities. Consider leaving valuables at home.



Shutford Circular walk

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 language 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 and Shutford Beacon

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



The Shutford Beacon on Jester's Hill was erected to commemorate the 50th anniversary of VE DAY.



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!



Acknowledgements

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

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Shutford Village trail

October 2020 edition*

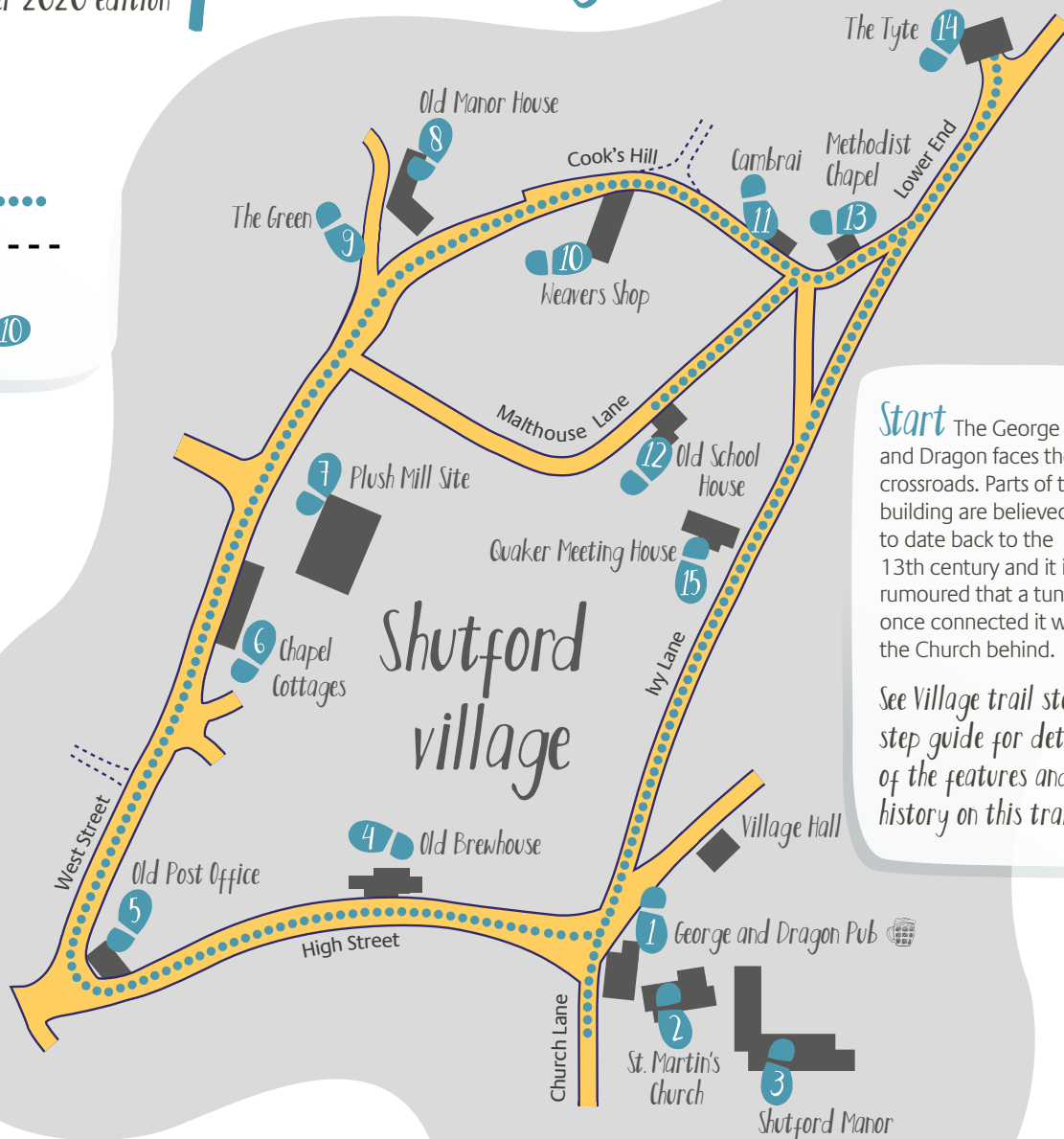
Distance 1 mile/1.6km Approximate walk time 1 hour

Key

Route 

Other paths –
Shutford Village
Trail map 

Points of interest 



Start 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.

See Village trail step by step guide for details of the features and history on this trail



11 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, sejtant.

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.

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Shutford Village trail

step by step

October 2020 edition*

The village trail 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.

1 Start 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.

2 St. Martin's Church 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.

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.

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

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 St.**

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.**

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.

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 factory in Shutford apart from the tall mill chimney rising behind the cottages on West Street.

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 page 5 for more details.

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.

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.



Continue along Lower End until you reach, on your left: The Tyte, 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.**

