

## Circular Walk One: Market Lane



***This circular walk of just over 4 miles (7 kms) over easy paths takes in woodland, open fields and lovely views over Shotesham. The walk takes about one hour and a half. Start point Explorer UK Grid reference TM 25807 97599***

Start at Market Lane at the stile and metal gate on the road near the south eastern corner of Little Wood (Shotesham Footpath 17 on the Norfolk County Council map). Walk along this westerly path up a gentle slope to the base of Little Wood. Turn right onto Shotesham Footpath 16 part of Boudicca Way, the famous footpath that runs from Diss to Norwich.<sup>1</sup>

Here the stile has recently been removed and there is an open gateway. Walk along the easterly edge of Little Wood, a precious Hornbeam wood and Site of Special Scientific Interest.<sup>2</sup>

Little Wood itself is maintained by the farmer owner with help from grants from natural England and also in part by the Shotesham Conservation Group who have cleared areas of dense undergrowth to allow light to enter and new habitation to take hold, restoring some of the old woodland floor and allowing some of the overgrown ponds to come back to life. There of is a mass of wildlife here in Little Wood including deer, hares rabbits pheasants and numerous species of birds. The path takes you north towards the northeastern edge of the wood. In May, there used to be a carpet of bluebells here, but the area is currently a little

overgrown. Cross the stile where you will see open fields and in front of you in the distance and just to the left, Great Wood. Ahead is Stubbs Green and the gable end of a white house poking through the trees.

Continue straight on to that house that you leave on your right, pass a hedge on the left and you will see in front of you a lovely meadow that is quite spectacular in early summer with masses of wildflowers and orchids. Continue close to the hedge on your right for thirty yards and then on your left you will find Stubbs Green pond. Here, you can walk around the pond and sit on the little bench overlooking it with views over Shotesham. Further north, through the trees, you can see the tower of Saint Mary's Church. When you have sat enough, go back to other side of the pond, the Shotesham side and follow the northerly path that gently turns to the right with a tall hedge on your left Shotesham Footpath 5. This follows the continuation of the meadow, with a house tucked away on your right and proceeds towards the village end of Market Lane. However you don't go quite that far. At the bottom of the meadow slope, turn left over a planked walkway into the next field Shotesham Footpath 6. This area is owned by Shotesham Park Estate, bought in 1731 by William Fellowes, founder of the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital<sup>3</sup>.

The land here also grows a rotation of crops, including linseed that displays sheets of blue flowers in June.

Continue your northwest direction up the slope of the field. This can be very muddy in winter and boots are certainly essential then. As you proceed, you will see to your right the backs of the houses along The Street in Shotesham. These views are particularly pretty on a snowy day in winter.

To your right the houses are much closer now and you can see how the fields slope to a former glacial valley that caused this formation. A small stream, The Beck, runs along the base of the valley through Shotesham and across the village Common to join the river Tas.

Now the scenery changes slightly as you'll find a tree-lined hedge to your right that marks the southwestern border of Shotesham House. To your left, gently sloping upwards, are still open fields of crops. Straight ahead Saint Mary's church is coming into view and in front of Saint Mary's church you may just be able to see the ruin of St Martin's that was recently cleared and made safe following work from the conservation group and a fundraising effort by local people. Follow this field edge path until the end of this hedge and you will come to a footpath that crosses north to south. This is part of Boudicca Way, Footpath 7 on the map. To the right you could take a small diversion from our circular route, down a wooded path to the stream that we mentioned earlier. There is a wooden bridge across and the path goes on a short way to Rogers Lane with All Saints Church on the right.

Coming back up the wooded path to Shotesham Footpath 6, our circular route takes us south-south-west to follow Boudicca Way again for just 2 fields, at first a cross-field path, then through a gap in the hedge to a field edge path continuing in the same direction. In the distance to your right stand St Mary's church, St Martin's ruin and the barn conversions at Hawes Green opposite St. Mary's.

At the end of this second field, there is a crossing of paths as Shotesham Footpath 7 crosses Footpath 8. Turn left keeping to the Boudicca Way. Great Wood, fifty-six acres of deciduous trees, is on your right. Follow this path back to the south end of Stubbs Green meadow. The final stretch differs from the official footpath map in that it follows the edge of Great Wood much more closely and passes through an almost invariably muddy twenty metre tree and bush lined stretch to the water-meadow on your left.

Follow the edge of the wood to its northeastern corner and turn right onto Shotesham Footpath 15. Follow this field edge path for one field, then you have a little twenty metre left and right skip to a plank bridge that crosses a dyke and into the next field to the south, where you continue to follow the edge of Great Wood. Low Farm on Wash Lane, very much an eco-barn, will have appeared by now and its wind turbine will have been the first part you saw. This building has extensive solar panels as well as the turbine. Cross the field on the usually very well marked path down to Wash Lane.

Turn right and after a few yards, find a way-mark with a path to the left, Saxlingham Nethergate Footpath 7. Follow this behind Low Farm on the south side, with open fields to the right and crosses a wooden plank bridge then continues eastwards with a dyke on your left.

We are about to rejoin Boudicca Way and at the way-marked T-junction, we turn left to head northeast and join Shotesham Footpath 17, whilst to the south-east, Boudicca Way heads off towards Saxlingham Green.

Cross Wash Lane following the way-mark onto the cross-field path opposite and we begin to get some lovely views over the eastern end of Shotesham and over towards Brooke with Brooke Wood to the east north east. Our cross-field path takes us to the south end of Little Wood and its hornbeams and follows the edge of the wood to its most easterly tip, crosses a planked bridge, turns left and after 20 yards right, to continue following the edge of Little Wood. As we descend, to our right we can see Market Lane Farm and surrounding paddocks. This attractive path will take us back to our starting point at the bottom of the slope on Market Lane.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://boudicaway.co.uk/bw\\_spaw2/uploads/images/Boudicca Way Route Full.jpg](http://boudicaway.co.uk/bw_spaw2/uploads/images/Boudicca_Way_Route_Full.jpg)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.english-nature.org.uk/citation/citation\\_photo/1004212.pdf](http://www.english-nature.org.uk/citation/citation_photo/1004212.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/records.aspx?cat=153-fel&cid=-1#-1>