

An undulating walk that passes several historic buildings, through scenic farmland and estate parkland with extensive views, passing through the hidden Lid Brook valley.

Distance: 8km/5 miles with an up and down of 305m/1000ft.

Time: 2.5 to 3.5 hours

Start: Parking by the woodland at the junction with Middlehill Road ST815689
W3W: season.tester.coverings

Access & difficulty.

You will need a reasonable level of fitness. There are several stiles and two narrow footbridges to negotiate and some steep slopes.

Route:

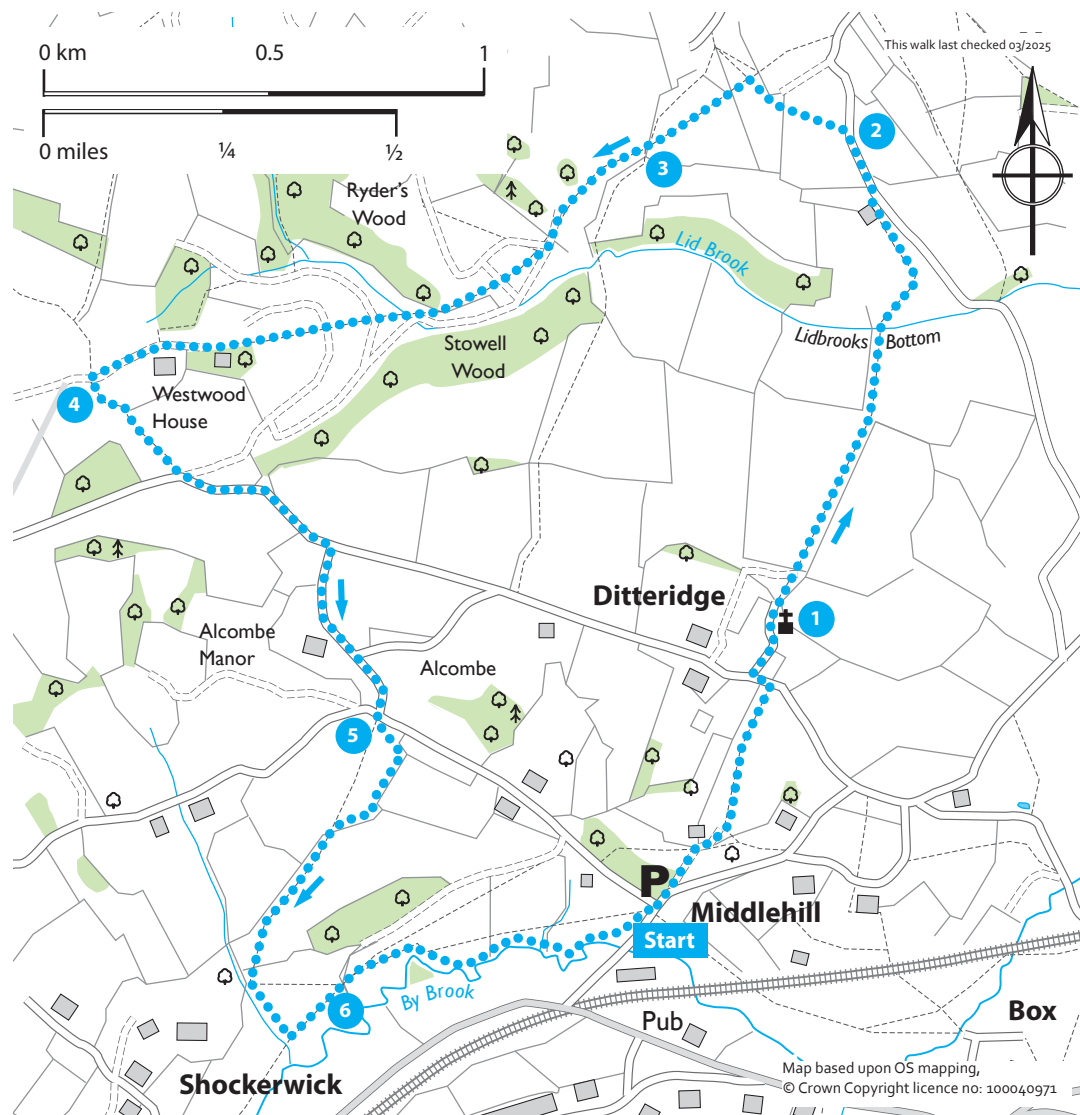
Start from the parking area take the "NO THROUGH ROAD" in a northeast direction to Middlehill.

Francis Allen's 1626 map shows that the hamlet had humble buildings and common land for grazing. Middlehill Spa House (1786) opened as a spa, tea room, stabling and lodgings. Spa Cottage may have been the pump house for the spa.

Continue past Spa Cottage, into a field. A way marker points the way up the field to Ditteridge. Near the top of the field, on the left, is a view of Cheney Court.



Path towards Ditteridge



The current Cheney Court dates from 1600s but has some 15th century flooring from an earlier farmhouse. Court was an early word for farmyard and Cheney was a family name. The present building was used by the Catholic Queen Henrietta Maria (wife of Charles 1st) to hold court. She may even have hidden in a nearby barn to avoid Cromwell's troops when fleeing to France in

1644. The Northey family owned Cheney Court from 1726 to 1948. John Neate, a Bristol merchant, became an early tenant of Cheney Court, before building a house in Middlehill in 1775. Interestingly, Neate advertised for the return of a slave, John Camera, who ran away. Neate offered 10s and 6p for his recapture. The escapee was described as a farmworker with a dark

complexion. PG Woodhouse spent much of his childhood here when his parents were living in Hong Kong.

At the road turn left then almost immediately right at the memorial cross towards St. Christopher's Church.

The main structure of St. Christopher's Church dates back to 1097 and one slit window remains from this

time. The other windows were enlarged in the 14th century. Look for graffiti written in 1672, as well as witches' and masons' marks in the Norman porch. The churchyard has buried casualties from the English Civil War battle of Lansdown.



Looking back towards the church

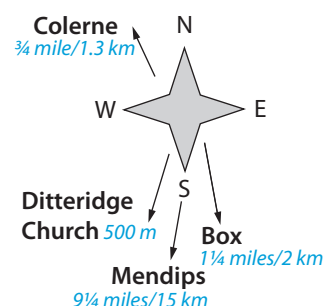
- 1 Continue past the church and over the stile keeping the field boundary to your right. Enter the next field at the fingerpost, follow the edge of the field uphill.

This is Ditteridge Upper Field originally divided into strips.



Part of the 360° view

Pause at the brow of the hill for a 360° view with the Mendip Hills in the far distance.

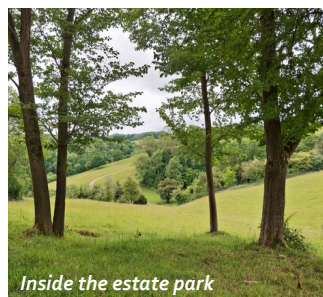


At the next fingerpost continue downhill through trees to another field. Keep to the left to reach a footbridge over the Lid Brook. Walk in a northeasterly direction towards the trees on the horizon. When the slope begins to flatten veer northwest to a gate, through a paddock and onto a road. Go uphill and turn left after 200m.



Crossing the paddock

- 2 At the finger post the uphill route crosses the field towards an open barn. From the barn head northwest to a gate. Turn left through the gate following the barbed wire fence to a way marker. Continue in the same direction, across the field, to a black kissing gate entering the parkland of a large estate.



Inside the estate park

- 3 Walk downhill heading to a cattle grid before next proceeding uphill to a fingerpost in the open field. Follow the fingerpost direction downhill to a

footbridge marking the start of a steep ascent eventually heading just to the right of Westwood House and onto a road.



Back towards the Lyn Brook valley

This Neo Georgian property was built between 2006 and 2008 at a cost of approximately £10m.

At the end of the tall wall leave the road turning left over a stile.

- 4 Moving downhill Salisbury Plain can be seen in the distance. Cross another stile and turn left along the road. Be aware of vehicles. After 300m turn right onto a narrow road continuing downhill to pass Alcombe Manor.

Alcombe Manor was built in 1641, but has a medieval window dating back to the 1300s. Observe the parish boundary stone between Box and Ditteridge in the wall by Alcombe Manor.

Continue onto the road junction by Stable Cottage.

- 5 Turn left downhill and along the road if you want to take a short cut back to the start. Alternatively, pass through the kissing gate opposite and turn left to follow the field boundary.

After approximately 250m the path drops a metre doglegging into a lower field.

At this point look backwards to Coles Farm, a Jacobean building dating from 1645 and purchased in 1972 for just £85,000.

Continue to the end of this field and down into another field keeping the boundary to the right.

To your right you can glimpse Shockerwick House, built in 1750, by John Wood the Elder. Gainsborough was a frequent visitor. This Grade 1 listed building is now a nursing home.

- 6 Stop at an obvious gate on your right, do not go through this but head southeast across a field. Turning right at the entrance to another field you soon reach the By Brook river and can follow the path for several hundred metres to the start point.

Sources of information Box People and Places, St Christopher Church For further historical information search online at www.boxpeopleandplaces.co.uk/