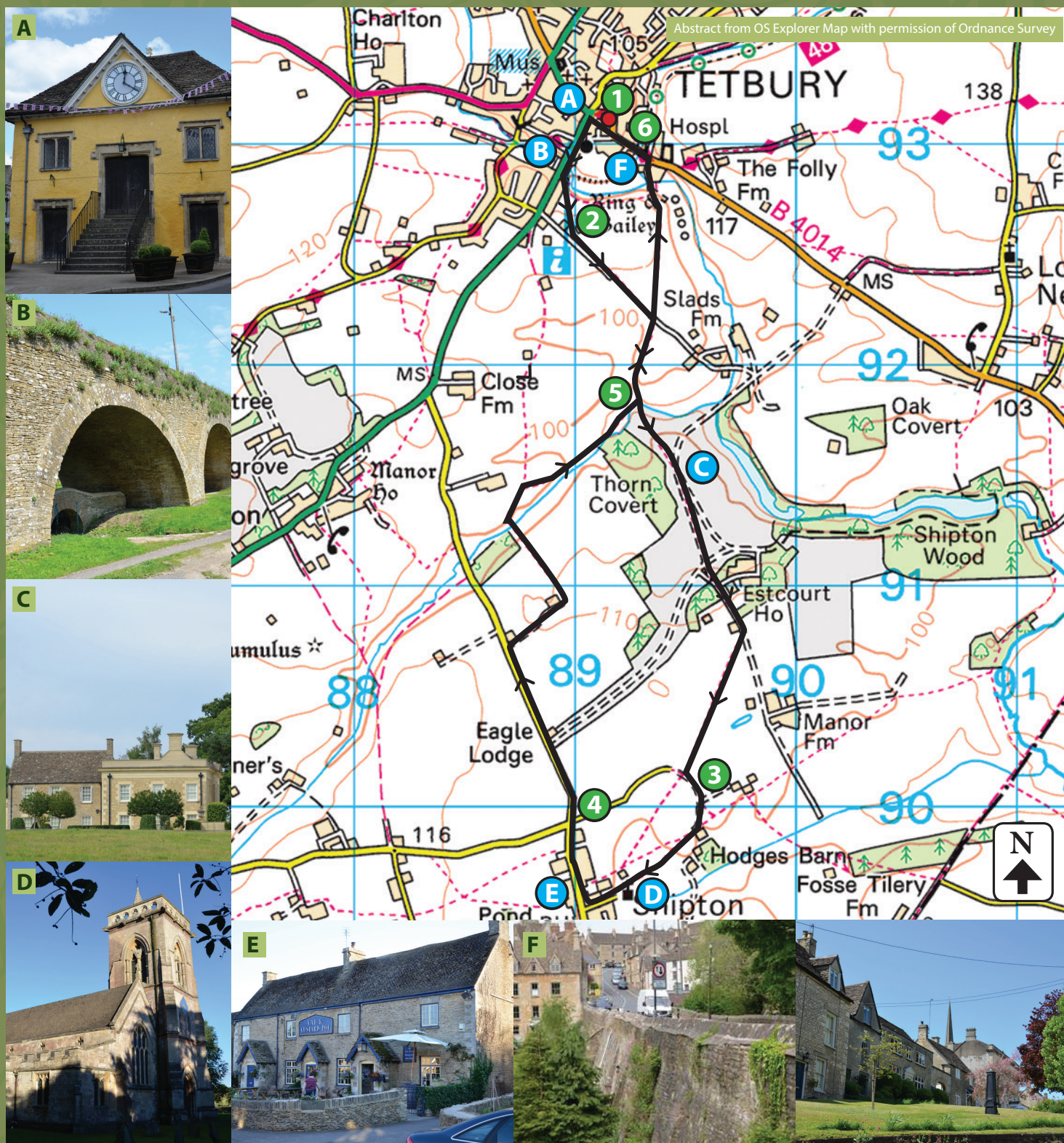


Walks around Tetbury



Parks and Rides

Through lovely horsey parkland to a pretty village and return via a secluded valley

Distance - 8 kms (5 miles)

Walking Time – 2.5 hrs

Starts and finishes at the Market Hall: point 1 on the map

Grade A on a scale where A is easy and D difficult (note there are ten stiles to cross, some of which are a little tricky)

Description

Distance – 8 kms (5 miles)

① From under the **Market Hall** **A** make your way along Church Street, go past (or pop into) the Parish church of St. Marys' which is said to be one of the earliest and best examples of a Georgian Gothic church. Carry on down the hill and over **Bath Bridge** **B**. As the road levels out you will see, to your left, stone steps and stile. Go over these and continue up the field with the dry stone wall on your right and cross a wooden stile in a wire fence followed by another wooden stile and a third stile just across the driveway leading to a converted barn.

② Keeping the hedgerow on your right, continue to yet another wooden stile. Go over this and into a spinney where you shortly cross first an old stone and then a wooden stile. You are now in a large field; your route lies straight ahead between the trees, after which you will come to two wide wooden gates and a stone stile in a cluster. Go over the stone stile and turn immediately right, crossing a green lane known as Grange Lane, and walk alongside the field's right hand-side wall and wire fence until you come to a wooden stile in a post and rail fence. (Ignore the hunting gate on the right just before this. You will make use of this on the return journey.) Some 50 metres further on turn sharply right through a gate and descend a steep slope (very slippery after wet weather). It turns left and then right to lead across an old stone packhorse bridge to a wooden bridge across a tributary stream of the River Avon. Go over the stile into **Estcourt Park** **C**, up the rising parkland to a private drive and eventually pass through a gate and alongside the high stone walls of the old gardens of Estcourt House. Immediately after the last house on the right, leave the drive and bear right to a gate in the wooden boundary fence. Cross that field diagonally towards a gate on the far side. (If there are horses in these fields you may prefer to take the permissive path round the fence to reach the gate.) As you proceed note the tidy orderliness of the Park with its neat open-fenced fields with their curved corners to avoid injuries to the sheikh's valuable stud horses. Go through this gate, over the stile ahead and turn right to another gate. Cross this field to yet another gate slightly to your left. Go through this and follow the field fence; go over the stile in the hedge ahead.

③ Turn left and follow this lane (ignore fork to Park Farm) until just before a private house. Turn sharply right to a wide gate. Pass through the gate and as you cross this field note the squat tower of **St John the Baptist Church** **D** in the mid distance. Arrive at, and cross a stone stile; follow the broad green lane to reach the Churchyard. Pass round the Church, or pop in, and take the lane to the main street of the village of **Shipton Moyne** **E**.

Turning right you will come to the quaintly named **Cat and Custard Pot public house** **E**, a recommended stopping point for both drinks and meals.

④ Continue the walk by following the road out of the village and on down the road towards Tetbury for over a kilometre. Take the farm track in front of two cottages on your right and turn left after passing some derelict farm sheds. Follow the waymarked route through a wide gate and drop steeply to cross a wooden bridge over a stream (in dry weather this stream may well be dry). Turn right along the valley, roughly following the course of the stream. You will pass through two gate-ways and at the third, cross an area of ground which is often boggy; after about 150 metres look for a gate on the bank to your right. This is the hunting gate noted on the outward journey.

⑤ Pass through the hunting gate and turn left to re-trace the outward route back along the edge of the field to Grange Lane. Again cross the lane and go back over the stone stile, but this time do not turn left but instead go straight on keeping the field boundary on your right. At the end of the field cross a stone stile and cross the next field to a wooden stile and cross this third field to another wooden stile in the right hand corner as the field drops away and the path gets tricky. Below you, to the right is a kissing gate which lets you out onto the small road which leads you left towards **Wiltshire Bridge** **F**.

⑥ At the main road turn left and head uphill back into Town and the Market Hall where your walk began.

POINTS OF INTEREST

A MARKET HALL

This fine two storey, attractively restored pillared building, dates back to 1655 and was part of the prosperous wool trade of that time. It has had various uses and has undergone considerable alteration over the years but it is still regarded as the finest example of its kind in the Cotswolds. The Cupola on top was added to celebrate the Jubilee of Queen Victoria.

POINTS OF INTEREST

B BATH BRIDGE

In 1774 the Turnpike commissioners employed a local mason, Thomas Webb, to build a new bridge to provide an easier entrance into the Town for the Bath – Cirencester coach road and it was completed two years later. It is built of coarse rubble and all the arches are of different size although no one seems to know why. It is said to be the 'most outstanding example of an arched dry stone road bridge in the whole of the country'. In 1985 it was granted Grade 2 Listed Building status.

C ESTCOURT PARK

The Estcourt family lived here from 1303 and the Park was created as early as 1515. The original Manor House was replaced by the much larger Estcourt House in 1770 and the estate and pleasure gardens were enlarged and improved throughout the 19th Century. The house itself was demolished in 1963, though the stables, farm buildings and several small houses remain. In 1996 the estate was sold in its entirety, with planning permission for a new principal residence. Thus after seven centuries in their hands, it passed out of the hands of the Estcourt family. The estate, some 1400 acres, is now owned by Prince Khalid bin Abdullah Al Saud. He maintains a low profile and runs this large important stud farm as his hobby.

D CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

This medieval church, much of which was rebuilt in 1865, has close ties to the Estcourt family and several family members are entombed within as are some of the Hodges, another family important in the early history of Shipton Moyne.

E THE CAT & CUSTARD POT, SHIPTON MOYNE

This was built in the early 1700s by the Estcourt family who built and owned much of this village. The building was an off – license and ale house / village store, a bakery and a post office until 1924 when the Estcourts sold it to the Stroud Brewery Co. The name brings to mind 'Handley Cross' or 'Mr Jorrocks's Hunt' and the five other books celebrating life in the English countryside in a bygone age.

F WILTSHIRE BRIDGE

Strictly a causeway as it was built to ease the steep incline into town. The stream running beneath marked the Gloucestershire / Wiltshire border until it was moved in 1939 further out of town to where the old Roman road (Fosseway) crosses the Tetbury to Malmesbury road.