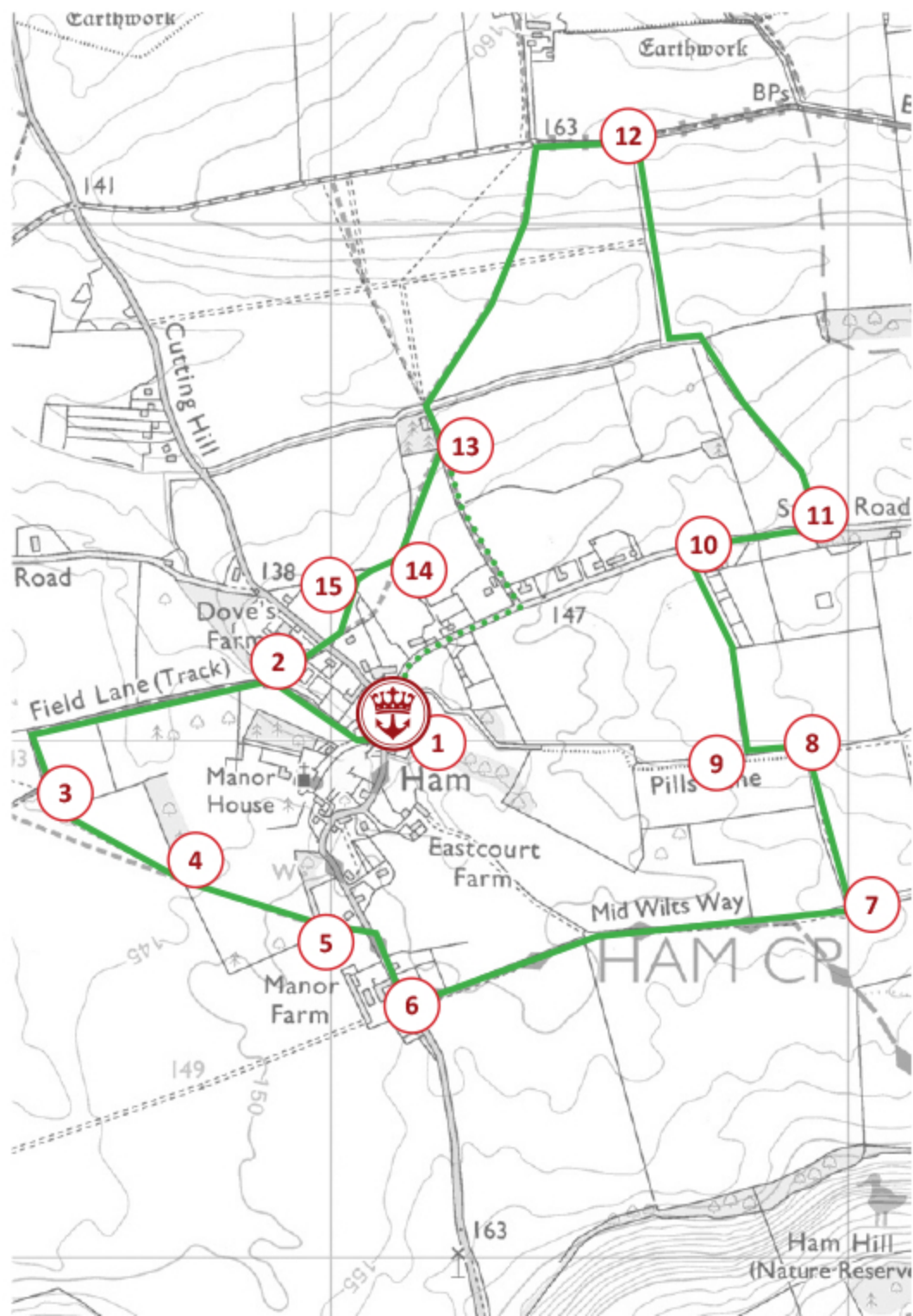


WALK 10

MANOR, WANSDYKE, AND DOVES FARM LOOP

3.8 miles/6.1 km : 1½ - 2 hours

generally level, some inclines: no stiles (unless return via Old Rectory)



- 1 From the pub car park turn left onto the road heading towards Buttermere. Twenty metres past Rose Cottage turn right along Church Lane: after 30m turn right through Humphrey's gate, or view the church first.
- 2 Cross to the gate on the far side of the field and turn left down the track known as Field Lane. Continue along the track for 400m and follow the track when it turns sharp left between hedgerows. Emerge from the hedgerows, with fine views of the downs ahead.
- 3 Don't follow the main track right but continue straight on along the fence line beside the field for 30m before turning slightly left towards a kissing gate across the large arable field that extends to the foot of the downs.
- 4 Continue straight ahead to another kissing gate: as you cross the field there are fine views of Ham Manor to the left and the escarpment to the right.
- 5 Follow the path through the garden of Manor Farmhouse and after 50m turn right onto the road for about 100m until just past the last house on the left, Elston Farm House, where there is a farm track and public footpath sign.
- 6 Take the farm track. Ahead of you on the top of the escarpment is Rivar Copse, known locally as the Bull's Tail, which conceals a Celtic bowl barrow. After about 500m ignore a path branching right across the fields towards the downs. After a further 100m on this permissive route the track turns sharp left.
- 7 Follow the track to the left. Looking right can just be seen the buildings of Ham Spray House, once the home of prominent members of the Bloomsbury Group.
- 8 After about 200m, when the track turns sharp right, leave the track, cross briefly straight ahead into a field, and turn sharp left leaving the field boundary on your left along a less distinct path. (Ignore the gravel track between fences). Follow the field boundary for about 100m until the path turns right at the edge of a wood.
- 9 Turn right: follow the path along the edge of the field until it meets Spray Road.
- 10 Turn right at the road passing Acorn Cottages on your right for about 200m until you reach a gap in the left hand hedgerow and an indistinct path up the bank.
- 11 Follow this path for about 500m alongside the edge of the field keeping the hedgerow on your left as it curves gently down to the bottom of the hill, where it crosses a ditch and turns sharp left for 50m before turning sharp right. Follow the field edge uphill keeping the boundary fence/ hedge and electricity poles on your left until, at the top of the hill, you reach the bridleway known as Bitham Lane.
- 12 Turn left along Bitham lane between the hedgerows until, after about 150m, reaching the gates to Prosperous Farm on your right. Turn left at the footpath sign opposite the gates and follow the path (sometimes indistinct) diagonally downhill towards a pinewood at the bottom of the valley (about 500m away across two fields). As you descend there are magnificent panoramic views over the Vale of Pewsey and the escarpment, Coombe Gibbet and Walbury Hill to the left. Continue across the valley floor to join a track: turn left along the track for 50m with a broadleaf wood along the valley floor to your left and beside the pinewood on your right, until reaching a path and stile to the right of the track.

You now have a choice of routes

- 13 **Either** follow the track for 400m with the hedge on your right until you meet the tarred Spray Road, where you turn right to head back to the Crown & Anchor.

Alternative return route with 4 stiles:

- 14 **Or** turn right, cross the stile and make your way uphill diagonally on an indistinct path towards a large oak tree in the righthand field boundary hedgerow. Continue with the hedgerow on your right crossing a farm track with a stile ahead of you.
- 15 Cross the stile into the wooded grounds of the Old Rectory. Follow the path to the right, skirting a pond, then through overhanging shrubs and trees to a stile.
- 16 Cross the stile and follow the path diagonally across the field to another stile beside metal gates and the tarred road into Ham. Cross the tarred road and follow the lane opposite, Field lane, some 70m back to point 2, and back to the pub.