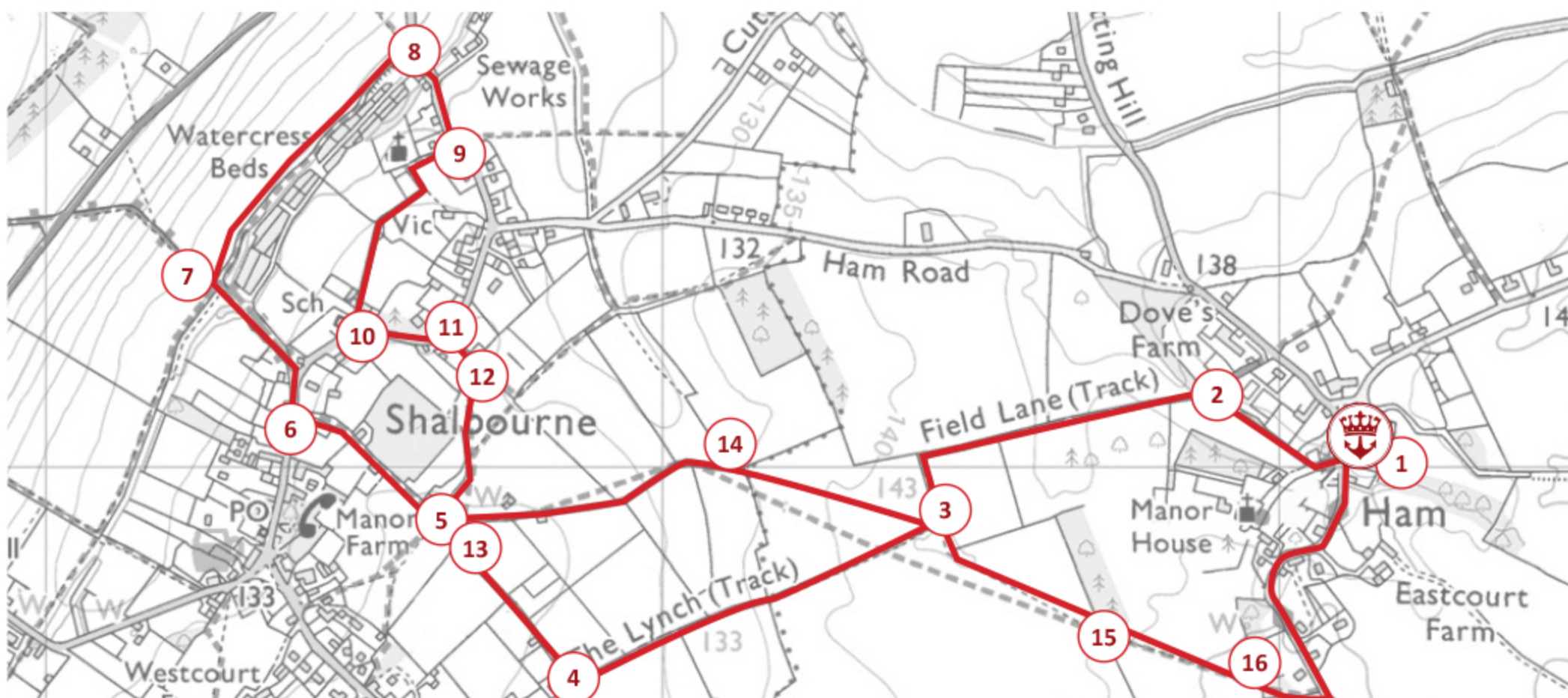


EXTENDED SHALBOURNE & HAM MANOR LOOP

3.7 miles 6.0 km: 1½ - 2 hours

generally level: no stiles



1 From the Crown & Anchor pub car park turn left onto the road heading towards Buttermere. Immediately on the left is the 16th century Rose Cottage with its later well-winding gear outside it. Twenty metres further on turn right along Church Lane. Thirty metres further on there is a public bridleway sign to the right. Turn right through the gate marked Humphrey's gate, unless you decide to view the church then return to the gate.

2 Cross to the pedestrian gate on the far side of the field and turn left down the track known as Field Lane. Continue along the track for 400 metres and follow the track when it turns sharp left between hedgerows. Emerge from the hedgerows, with fine views of the downs ahead. The more dominant bridleway turns sharp right to the village of Shalbourne.

3 Turn right on the more dominant bridle path. After about 20m ignore a footpath signed to the right (you will return to this point later). There are views of the downs, of Ham Hill and Rivar Hill to your left. Continue straight ahead along the path known as The Lynch for 650m until the path joins a gravel access road which skirts beside the first house reached.

4 Turn right on the gravel track keeping a post and rail fence along the boundary of a horse field with jumps and dressage arena to your right and passing a couple of houses on your left. After about 300m the gravel track narrows to a grass path until reaching another gravel track at the junction of several footpaths.

5 Continue straight ahead, joining the lane, Cox's lane, with 17th century Wood Barn (formerly Old Timbers) on your right. Follow the lane for about 300 metres passing several houses to reach the tarred road through Shalbourne and a number of very pretty 16th and 17th century cottages ahead.

6 Take care crossing the road and turn right along the pavement for a further 100 metres before following the bridleway, formerly Brook lane, curving downhill between hedgerows for 200 metres to cross the "shallow bourne" or stream, now far less a feature than when it gave the village its name.

7 Shortly after crossing the stream turn sharp right along the footpath that runs parallel to the stream. Open fields rise to your left towards the A338 at the top of the hill. To your right, just visible through the trees, are first the former watercress beds, which closed in 1972, and later the mill ponds – good birding spots for wildfowl in winter. Continue along the edge of the field till you reach the tarred road into Shalbourne.

8 Turn right along the road with The Mill (formerly Mill Farm), dating from about 1560, on your right: here the road crosses the stream which drove an under-shot water-wheel. Continue slightly uphill for 150 metres till you reach the lane to the church with a footpath sign to the right.

9 Turn right towards St Michaels and All Angels. Opposite the church turn left and continue along the path, initially between hedgerows around the cemetery, then after passing under hazel arches opening to fields on the right, until reaching the tarred road through the village with Shalbourne Primary School on your right.

10 Turn left along the road for 150 metres, taking care where the pavement runs out. Continue as it curves to the left, until reaching a lane to the right, just after The Grove, a Queen Anne 1670 farmhouse.

11 Cross the road and proceed along the short lane with Foxbury House and then Field House on your left. The middle part of Foxbury, with smaller windows, was at one time an Inn, The Red Lion. Field House was at one time a harness maker's shop and factory.

12 At the end of the lane cross the stile/gate and follow the path diagonally to the right across a field keeping the field boundary trees to the right (do not follow the footpath going straight ahead along the garden hedge). Pass a derelict wooden stable on your left the path curves to the right alongside the garden of Wood Barn (Old Timbers) to rejoin at **5** above.

13 Turn left through the 5-bar metal gate along a grass path between tall (usually trimmed) hedgerows on either side. Follow this path as it curves gently to the left and then slightly right until no longer fenced on either side.

14 The path crosses into a field alongside a disused stile. Continue diagonally across the field towards a large oak tree where you will rejoin the route near **3**.

You now have a choice of return

Either return to Ham retracing your route.

Or (recommended) at **3** turn right 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.

15 Continue straight ahead to another kissing gate. Looking left as you cross this field there are views of Ham Manor, a fine old Queen Anne Manor House and to the right fine views of the escarpment.

16 The path now goes through the garden of Manor Farmhouse. After 50m turn left at the road, slightly downhill: shortly after successive bends, taking care with oncoming traffic, you will pass the lane to the village hall on your right and, to your left, Forge Cottage, once the blacksmith's forge. After a further 100m you reach the Crown and Anchor.