

Longparish, Firgo



HAMPSHIRE
COUNTRYSIDE
SERVICE

Distance: 4 miles

Start: Village Shop

Longparish consists of numerous hamlets, including Forton, Middleton, Longparish Station, West Aston and East Aston, lying along the west bank of the clear braided waters of the River Test. The valley is about half a mile wide, flanked by low ridges, with Harewood Forest to the north and west.

The village has many attractive thatched cottages and St Nicholas Church, which dates from the 13th century. An excellent network of footpaths including part of the Test Way links the settlements and provides some memorable views of the old cottages, the landscape and of the river.

The low lying fields of the valley are used for grazing livestock, while the rising ground is used for arable crops such as barley, wheat and oilseed rape. Small spinneys and areas specially planted provide cover for game birds and other wildlife.

Harewood Forest, in Saxon and Norman times a royal hunting forest, is now managed for forestry, hunting and wildlife. Harewood Forest was used in World War II for storing and marshalling ammunition which was then taken by rail to Southampton, so many rides were concreted and are still used for forestry operations.

Diections

This walk will take you up the ridge bordering the village to the south. In early morning or late evening you get lovely views of the mist-filled valley around Longparish and up to Hurstbourne Priors.

Park at the Cricketers or near the village shop for the long version of the walk, or for a shorter version drive straight to The Cleeves and leave your car there, being careful to remove any valuables.

At the Cleeves head along the grassy footpath leading parallel to the river, then look for the narrow path leading off to the right just before you get to the overhanging trees.

After you cross the old railway embankment, follow the line of the ride past the jumps and solitary yew tree, and turn left as the path meets the trees. There is a sign pointing to the right, but this is for the riders.

Follow the path through the copse then take the first opportunity to cross through the hedge, which you then follow until meeting the path that crosses diagonally down to Firgo Farm.

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