

WALK 1 CUTTLE MEADOW, COLESLEYS, SOUTHFIELD FARM.

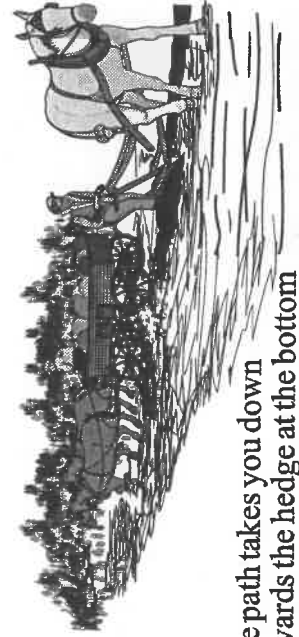
Time taken: 1 hour

If you need to travel to Coleshill by car, park in the car park in Church Hill. Walk through the churchyard, and pass through the stone gateway into the Croft. Follow the tarmac path down to the picket fence, bordering the cemetery.

In the cemetery you will see three paths fanning out in front of you. Take the right hand path and walk towards the hawthorn hedge that forms the southern boundary of the cemetery. When you reach the hedge, turn left and walk for a few yards to an iron kissing gate. Go through the gate, on to a gravel driveway that heads eastwards towards the Tennis Club. You will see another kissing gate in front of you, across the drive. The waymarker at the gate directs you into a small grass paddock.

You will find a much-used path in the paddock, that heads southeast, diagonally across the grass, sloping down towards the Blythe valley. In the corner of the field you will find a stile, a waymarker and a lovely memorial seat. Although you may not yet feel tired, pause here a while and absorb the beautiful view across the valley and up to the Arden rise.

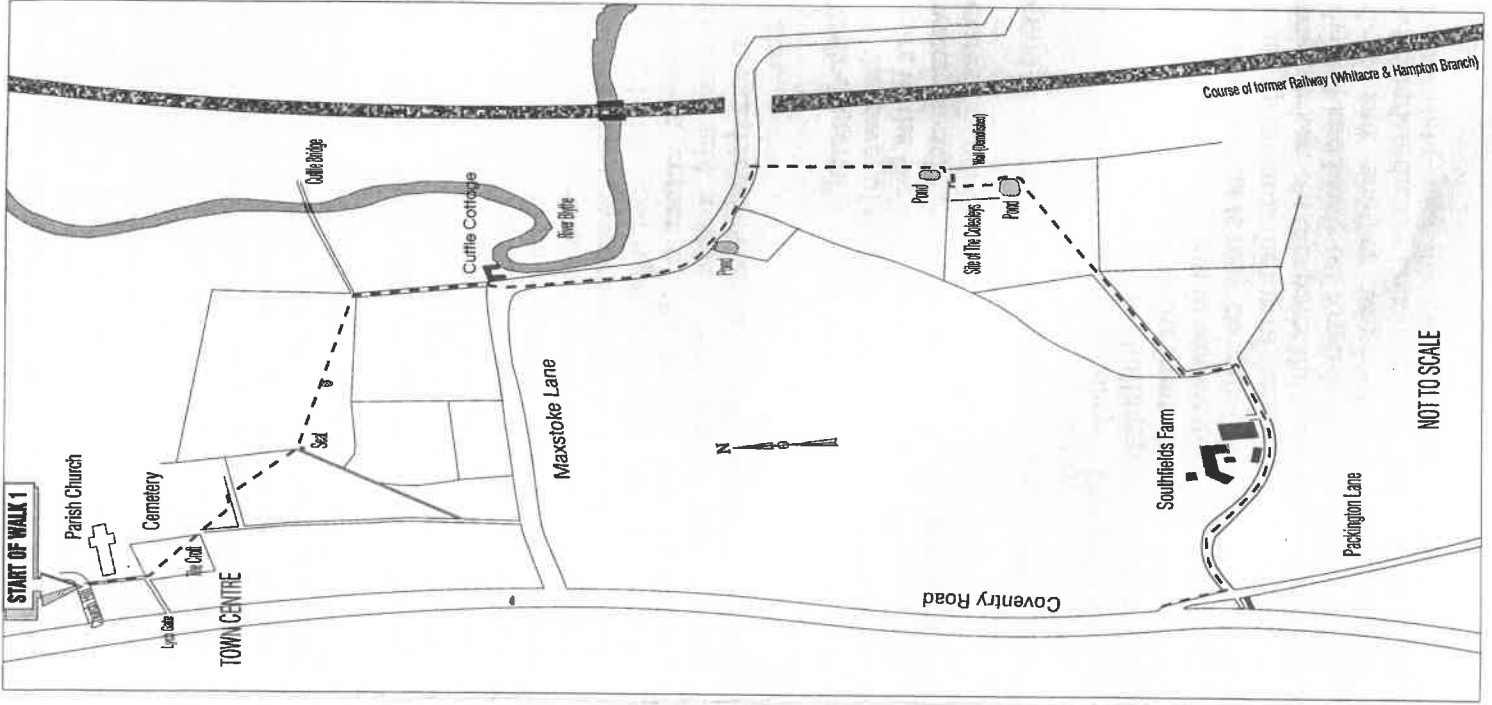
Cross the stile into a large wedge-shaped arable field that slopes down towards the River Blythe. The footpath heads towards the bottom right hand corner. As you walk along the path, you will pass to the left of a small field pond, with three hawthorn bushes around its banks. The pond is largely silted up, but it contains areas of reed and rosebay willow herb in the summer. The field pond was an important feature of farming in bygone days, when horses and oxen were used in the fields. If you are walking this path on a hot sunny day, you will appreciate the fact that a pair of horses, ploughing an acre travelled 15 miles, and needed water several times a day.



The path takes you down towards the hedge at the bottom of the field, and then sweeps round to the right, to take you to the field corner. Here, under a large ash tree, you will see two waymarkers. One is attached to a stile across a post-and-rail fence, and points eastward down a fairly narrow track, towards Cuttle bridge. However, our route follows the right hand waymarker. The path takes you past an ash tree and down a short, but wide section of green lane, or farm track towards Cuttle Cottage and Maxstoke Lane.

The track leads you out on to Maxstoke Lane, at the point where the road is curving round to the south, alongside the River Blythe. A footpath is provided on the right hand side of the road for this first stretch down Maxstoke Lane. As you walk down the road take care as the footpath ends. Your route takes you further along the road and bends round to the left after about 55 yards (50 metres). After the bend, continue eastwards towards the old Whitacre to Hampton railway line. The route takes you under two rows of power cables, and past a lay-by positioned between them, on your left. Just beyond the pylons, between two ash trees, you will find a metal gate in the hedge on the right, with a stile and a waymarker. Cross over the stile into a large, open field. Look straight ahead, to the hedge on the far side, and you will see hawthorn bushes and undergrowth that surrounds a large field pond.

The path passes to the left of the field pond, and you will find a waymarker on a post beside the pond. As you pass the pond you will come to a fence and an iron gateway - ignore the waymarker, pointing left towards the old railway, and turn right instead.



Cross over a two-step stile; the waymarker points down a grassy trackway that passes behind the field pond. The path is slightly overgrown with hawthorn, but you should be able to see a length of old brick walling on your left. This was once part of the garden or orchard of the Colesleys, a farmhouse, long-since demolished. Some of the hand-made bricks have pebbles in them - a sign that the clay was not sieved carefully enough. This fact, and their size, dates them to the early nineteenth century.

As you reach the end of the wall turn left, and through the old, ragged, and overhanging hawthorns that surround a small grass paddock. Walk diagonally across the paddock, to the left hand corner, where there is another field pond, largely dried up. The path goes clockwise round the pond, and there is a waymarker on a post to guide you. Look up the hill to your right, where the path leads to the southwest corner of the field. You will see a gateway and a stile. You should also see the corrugated roofs of the farm buildings of Southfield Farm.

Walk diagonally across this field, you will be able to see the tower of the Roman Catholic Church and the spire of the Parish Church from here. The concrete water trough on your left, is in an area that is extremely muddy after rain, so walk with care.

On the other side of the gateway, you will be on a wide farm trackway that runs along the left hand side of the old hedge boundary. The path heads westwards, towards the buildings of Southfields farm, clearly visible to the front. In the summer this track is fairly dry, but in wet weather and during the winter months it may be quite muddy. The track leads up towards the top of the field, where there is a waymarker. At this point the track turns sharply to the left and heads off towards the top corner of the field and another waymarker. This second waymarker indicates that your route takes a sharp turn to the right, past the old rick yard of Southfields farm.

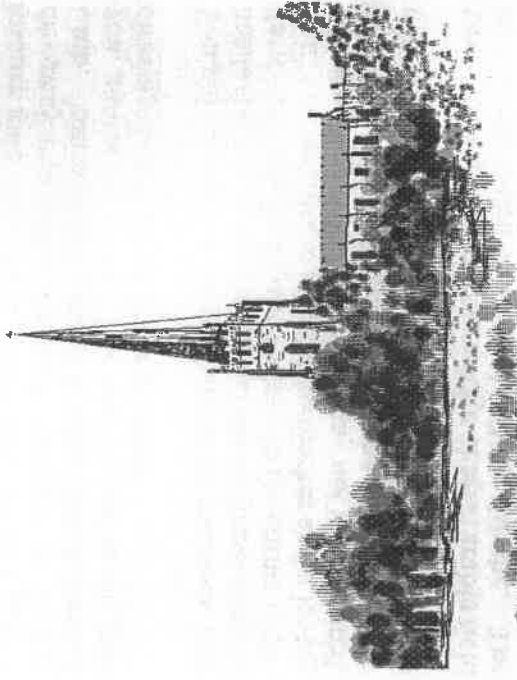
The track passes by the south side of the farm, so you should have the hedge on your left, and the farm buildings on your right. As you walk you will not fail to notice the silage pit - this is not a place to linger, because the noxious gasses are most unwholesome.

You will notice that Southfield Farm buildings are a mixture of old and modern. There is extensive use of breeze-blocks in the farm buildings. But the old, brick-built farm is still there, and can be glimpsed through the yard. Walk straight ahead, past a gate on your left and one on your right. The farmhouse is on your right, set well back from the path. The path takes you past a charming old barn, on your right, with a modern, breeze-block battery henhouse beside it.

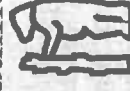
The track develops into a metalled farm driveway. As you walk down the drive, you will notice the great variety of hedge plants on each side of you - an indication of the track's great antiquity. Another feature that you cannot fail to notice is the group of tall, old Scots Pine trees in the hedge line; an unusual, and attractive, tree in Coleshill. Southfields Farm drive leads you out on to Packington Lane, where you turn right, towards the Coventry Road. Before you head back towards the town centre, take a look at Pound Cottage opposite Southfield Farm Drive. This beautiful medieval building is a reminder of what most of Coleshill's High Street must have looked like many centuries ago. As you walk along Coventry Road you will see the changing styles of domestic buildings: There are examples of farm cottages, large houses and modest sized homes that date from medieval times to the twentieth century. When you reach the lych gate, next to Lloyds Bank in the High Street, you may like to turn right along St. Peter's walk towards the Croft, where you turn left, past the West Door of the Parish Church, and back to the starting point.

COLESHILL CIVIC SOCIETY

WALKS AROUND COLESHILL



Number 1
Cuttle Meadow, Colesley's,
Southfield Farm.



KarmyckStridell

Countryside Service