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### Walk No. 1

A circular walk of about 4 miles in the area to the southwest of the village commencing from the Red House

Exploring

Historic Highclere



Highclere Church



The Studio



Highclere Castle



The Red House



Old shot of the Red House



Old shot of Little Flexford

*This walk includes quiet lanes and rights of way over fields and through woodland. Parts are hilly and it can be muddy so suitable footwear should be worn. The walk is not suitable for wheelchairs, pushchairs or for very young children. Please respect the countryside. You may encounter cattle, sheep or pheasants. Dogs may therefore sometimes need to be kept on a lead. If fields have been prepared for, or have crops growing you may need to skirt around the edge.*

The walk directions start and finish at the Red House Public House and Restaurant on the Andover Road. (Please only use their car park if you eat or drink there) With your back to the Red House turn right along the A343. After passing Little Flexford turn right into Hollington Lane noting as you do so Flexford House on your left which used to be a school. Along this lane you will see a number of interesting old properties including Boxhall Cottage

After 400yds Hollington Lane forks left, keep right (straight on for 200 yards) to the new Alma Farm. At a right-hand bend in the lane is a footpath sign, a stile and a dog-gate. Cross the stile and walk down the path towards the woodland.



Old shot of Flexford House School

At the entrance to Ireland's Copse, which has bluebells, there is a dog-gate and a stile. Follow the path uphill into the woods noting the "Dogs on lead" sign. At the top of the hill you will cross two rides with horse jumps made from tree trunks. Shortly after this you will reach a bridle path. There you will see a post with two HCC waymarks, the yellow arrows indicating that you need to go left.

After about 35 yards, you will see post with yellow arrows showing a right turn. This takes you into a clearing and heading downhill with a pine forest on your right and mixed woodland on your left. At the end of the clearing is an open field with a footpath going down diagonally into the valley.



Old shot of Alma Farm House

At the bottom you reach a footpath sign and a farm track in the far corner. Cross the brook on the track and after about 25 yards the footpath bears off to the left and goes uphill into another woodland, Long Copse. You should see pheasants in this area, in or out of the pheasant pen to your right. If you are lucky you may also see deer with buzzards and kites soaring above.

At the top of the hill you will pass alongside another pine forest, Collarmakers Copse, on your right. Continue on until you reach another stile. The footpath now crosses over a flat open field (direction 10 o'clock) towards the far corner where there is another stile and a large metal farm gate. Climb over the stile and turn left onto a quiet distant part of Hollington Lane. Follow the lane for about three quarters of a mile. You will pass by some interesting properties such as Yews Old Farmhouse.

At the bottom of the hill the lane turns left at a Y junction with a well proportioned Georgian house on the right-hand corner. This used to be called Wykes Farm House. Go straight ahead over the stile by a footpath sign into the field.



Old shot of Wykes Farm House

[Sometimes this field will have a sign warning that a bull is in the field with other cattle. If you prefer there are two alternative routes at this junction, both described later]

Walk up the hill across the field into the right-hand corner to a well hidden stile onto a wooded track. Cross this boggy track and a small ditch into the field opposite. Walk left to corner of the field then turn right with the field hedge on your left to the far corner.

Turn right for about 75 yards and then find a stile on your left to a path ahead between hedge and field fence. It is poorly maintained and can be overgrown. There is evidence that "regulars" walk in the field parallel with it for 150 yards until a large gap in the fence enables them to rejoin it.

The footpath passes between two properties with the hedgerow on your left and opens onto the Ashmansworth Road at Hill House. [Alternative 1 rejoins here] Cross the road and climb over the stile and a small 5 bar gate and walk ahead down the field to a stile at the bottom. **Warning:** This stile leads to the busy A343 so take care! Go straight across the road into Highclere Street. Follow the lane uphill and at the top bear left.



17<sup>th</sup> Century Plaster Panel

On the right Top Farm, a private home, has a plaster panel and frieze depicting the first Stuart royal coat of arms which is believed to have been cut in 1603. Continue along the lane to the A343 passing several old houses including Highclere Farm

At the junction with the A343 turn right and follow the Andover Road back to the Red House.

#### Alternative routes from Y Junction

1. This only adds a quarter of a mile to the walk. Turn right and follow the lane uphill for just over half a mile. At the T junction turn left down Ashmansworth Lane. Take care on this quarter mile stretch, it is a busier lane. Just after Zell Farm on the right take the signed footpath over the stile opposite Hill House. [You rejoin the main route above here]

2. If you want to shorten the walk by a mile turn left and follow Hollington Lane with Pill Hill to your right and Narington Copse left. Go past the Natural Garden. After about two thirds of a mile just past Ashdown House turn right at the Y junction, rejoining the first part of the walk to return down Hollington Lane until you reach the main A343. Turn left here to return to the Red House.