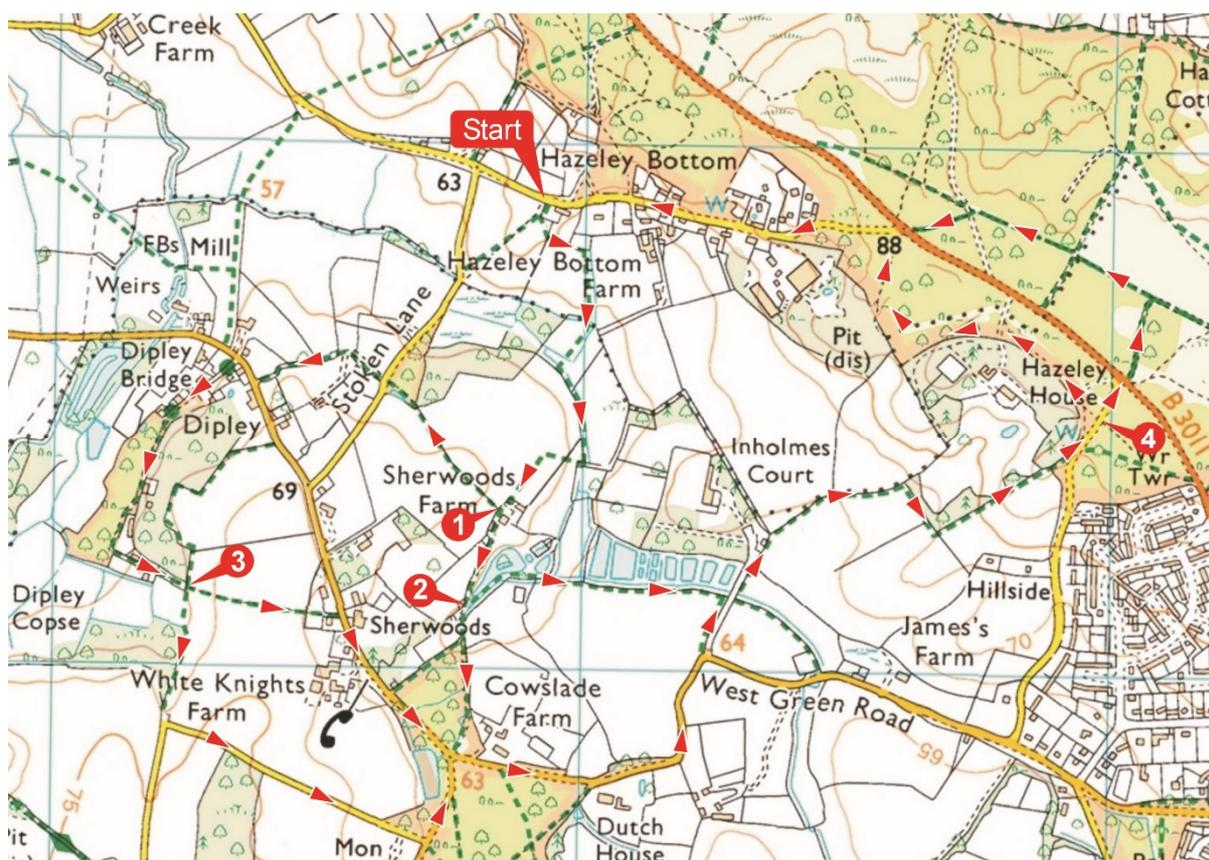


## THE NORTH WEST FRONTIER – WHITEWATER COUNTRY

Shortened Route – 1.5 hours

Longer Route – 1.75 hours

The pasture lands in Whitewater Valley around Dipley have certainly been farmed since the Civil War in the XVII century and probably since Saxon times. When the Domesday Book was compiled in 1086 there was a Saxon mill near Mattingley, four acres of meadow land and enough farmland for three ploughs.



A circular route allows the walker a choice of starting places but probably the easiest place to leave a car is at the far end of Hazeley Bottom village, where there is not much traffic. Coming from the Reading Road there is a wicket gate and footpath sign up some steps just beyond the last cottage on the left and one can park just beyond on the right. Through the gate the path skirts a garden then turns sharp left. Follow the field boundary with the hedge on your left to the corner of the field, then turn right and down the hill over two ditches, the second of which marks the ancient boundary between Mattingley and Hartley Wintney. Just after the second, bear left at the gate following the way mark and continue with the hedge on your right until you can turn right over a bridge and through a gate, then over a stile. Turn left and follow the field boundary turning right and then left until you reach a gap in the hedge onto the drive to Sherwood's farm **(1)**.

Here you have the option to *shorten* the walk by going down this drive. Soon after passing the farmhouse there is another choice **(2)**. Either continue ahead to West Green Road, where you turn left onto the route of the longer option at West Green Common, or better, unless the ground is very muddy, take the footpath to the left after the lake, over the footbridge on the right and turn left after the hedge on the boundary of the field ahead. This leads to the drive to Inholmes Court where you re-join the other routes.

For the *longer* walk turn right and follow the track with the hedge on your right, which passes through an ancient field known as "Paine's Field" and into a copse known as "Black Pightle" to Stoken Lane. Go over the stile opposite and follow the track. Immediately after a left hand bend the footpath goes off to the right. Follow this round the field until you can exit onto a drive going down to the road almost opposite an 18<sup>th</sup> century malting house called Dipley Grange. Turn right then left onto Dipley Common. (For the energetic it is well worth a brief diversion to look at Dipley Mill with its beautiful gardens from the bridge over the River Whitewater and the 18<sup>th</sup> century beer house to the right, which is now a private residence).

Follow the road, which becomes a gravelled track, past the ancient hamlet of Dipley Common. The track turns left then becomes an uphill path. At the top there is a junction of paths **(3)** where you can continue straight ahead to reach West Green Road by Whiteknights Farm then turn right, or better, turn right and come to the D243 Murrell Green Road at the bend. Turn left up the hill where later, on the right, you will get a good view of the tree lined drive leading to West Green House, an 18<sup>th</sup> century building owned by the National Trust. Other HWPS walks use the paths around this property which allow a glimpse at the extensive gardens.

At the end of the road turn left and then right to join the route past Whiteknights Farm. The road now goes past the curiously-shaped Dutch House, built for one of William III's Dutch admirals, on the right and on to the drive to Inholmes Court. This road is narrow and sinuous so take great care! Take the footpath in the field to the left of the drive as there is no right of way along the drive itself. Follow this to a gate where you cross the drive, through the left of two gates and continue with the drive on your left. Continue along the edge of the field past the house on your left, veering to the right until you reach a stile which you cross and continue ahead until a road (Arrow Lane) is reached.

Turn left and 60 yards after Hazeley Lodge turn left into the woods opposite a footpath sign pointing to the right. (Note this is not an official footpath, but it is common land.) This track skirts the boundary of Hazeley House and crosses the two entrance drives. It is not always well defined so walk with the boundary ditch on your left as far as possible. At the point where the brick-lined ditch ends there is a fence at right angles to it. Walk along this fence, ahead and to the right of the iron structure and keep going (north) until the road is reached at the junction with the Reading Road. Turn left to get back to the start.

An alternative route **(4)** in more open country is to cross the main road after passing Hazeley Lodge on to the heath. Take the first left after the tarmac ends and continue over two tarmac drives until the main road is reached again. The road opposite (signed Hazeley Bottom) goes back to the start.