

Route and Points of Interest (continued)

weir and mill race, and the island in the river. The watermill here burnt down in the mid 20th century. Cross the road carefully to resume the walk.

Ground beside the Loddon can be muddy, but the banks are important wetland habitats for wildlife. Kingfishers feed among the overhanging trees and shrubs. The water level often rises in winter to cover the flat lands beside the river.

4. Walk on the concrete roads through the farmyard, which has a stile when the gate is closed, turning left to follow the footpath route in front of stables and a house on the left. Turn right onto a concreted storage area and then cross the fields, turning left with the footpath to the stile at the top of the slope. Go over two more stiles and walk down Sussex Lane to Hyde End Road.

Old buildings at Sheepbridge Farm include the granary set on its staddle stones to prevent rodents from getting to the grain. There is a historic moat on the right. In autumn and winter flocks of birds settle on the fields on the higher ground, where there are views to the south over the Loddon Valley. The land beside the stile was used for gravel extraction for road construction until the 1960s.

5. To shorten the walk, turn left and walk along Hyde End Road to the junction with Basingstoke Road, then turn left and walk down to the starting point. To continue the walk, cross Hyde End Road, go over the stile and walk ahead through the fields. Go over a final stile, turn left at Croft Road and at the end turn left again down Grovelands Road to rejoin Hyde End Road. Turn right, walk to the end of Hyde End Road then turn left to return to the starting point.

The three fields are known as the 'buttercup fields' and the hedgerows are white with blackthorn blossom at the end of winter. Croft Road is one of the small one-way farmland lanes of Spencers Wood. Wildflowers grow on its verges and ditches, and the trees on the hedge-banks shelter this walk.

Footpath Maps

Large maps showing all the footpaths across the Parish are displayed in notice boards situated (a) opposite Grazeley School; (b) on School Green, Shinfield; (c) on Perigee in Shinfield Park; (d) at the entrance to Spring Gardens in Spencers Wood; and (e) by the children's play area at Three Mile Cross. Maps are also displayed in Shinfield Parish Office, at the Library, and in local schools, surgeries and other places.

Footpaths are public rights of way which everyone has a legal right to walk freely. See the Wokingham Borough Council website: www.wokingham.gov.uk. They are shown on Ordnance Survey maps: Explorer no. 159 (1:25,000 scale) and Landranger no. 175 (1:50,000 scale).

This is one of six walk leaflets that are available free from the Shinfield parish office, shops and other outlets. Please call 0118 988 8220 to check the nearest location to you. Most walks will be safeguarded during the housing development that is planned in the parish. If in doubt about the viability of your proposed walk, please phone the parish office on 0118 988 8220 for the latest update on the building works.

The walks can also be downloaded from the Shinfield Parish Council website: www.shinfieldparish.gov.uk and from the WBC site above.

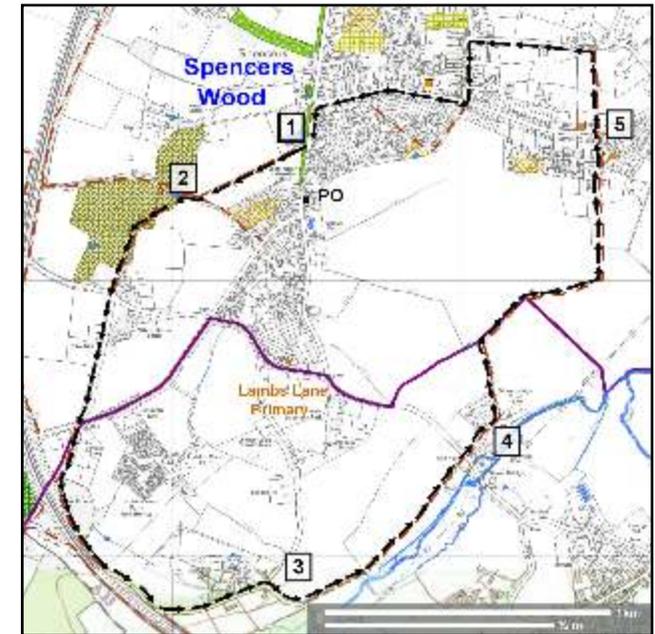
The walks are:

1. Shinfield Village and Ryeish Green
2. Shinfield Village and the River Loddon
3. Around Grazeley
4. Spencers Wood and the River Loddon
5. Three Mile Cross and Woodcock Lane
6. Pearman's Copse and Nores Hill



SHINFIELD PARISH WALK 4

Spencers Wood and The River Loddon



"We learn to know the nooks and turns of the shady lanes and sunny commons"

Quote from Mary Russell Mitford 1787 -1855.

This leaflet shows one of six walks across different parts of Shinfield Parish.

The Parish has many rights of way linking various facilities and places of interest such as post offices, shops, pubs, schools, the River Loddon and historic buildings.

The walks pass through villages, woodlands rich with wildlife and open fields often providing extensive countryside views.

We hope that you enjoy your walk.

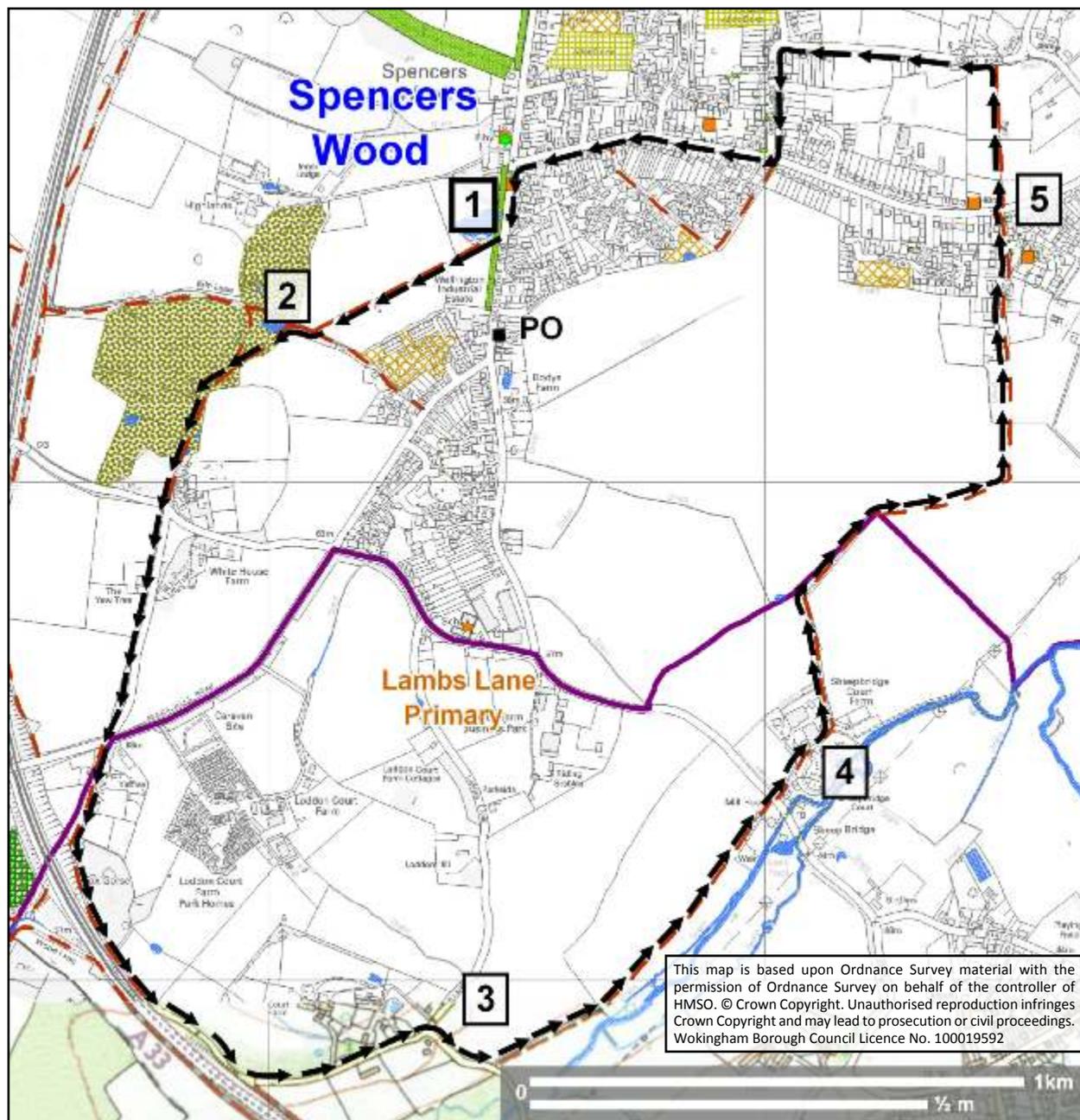


Route and Points of Interest

1. START at the entrance to Spring Gardens on Basingstoke Road. Cross the road carefully and go over the stile to follow the footpath across the field (which is called 'Spencers Wood Common' on old maps), and cross the metal fenced stile at the end of the field into the Kiln Lane track, which is at about '2 o'clock' after the stile.

One of the parish footpath map notice boards is at the starting point. At Basingstoke Road the linear village of Spencers Wood spreads north and south. Downhill are scattered shops (hairdresser, chemist, baker, post office, and beyond them the newsagent and general store). The library is in the historic building uphill near the road junction, opposite the estate agent and the restaurant. The pond has tadpoles and dragonflies in spring and summer, and the field has a multitude of wildflowers. To the left on the field, a well provided all the fresh water for many villagers until the late 1940s.

2. Walk about 50 yards uphill then turn left on the track along the edge of the woods which starts with an elevated section of wooden walkway. Continue ahead, bearing slightly to the left, and pass through a gateway with a stile on the right and a narrowed gap on the left. Keep straight ahead at the junction of roads



above White House Farm onto Yew Tree Lane. At the end of Yew Tree Lane, cross Beech Hill Road and take the footpath opposite, going down Clay Hill. Bear left when this becomes a roadway (the path on the right leads under the A33 dual carriageway). Turn right into Kings Bridge Road, which has a sign showing 'Weight Limit 3T 250 yards ahead' to the footpath on the left, after about 150 yards.

These paths were walked by labourers going to the brickworks in the woods above White House Farm. The ponds, many of which dry out in summer, were formed by the extraction of clay to make the bricks. Remnants of kilns and loading ramps are concealed in the bramble thickets and the woodland has grown back since the works were abandoned in the 1930s. This area of secondary woodland stretches down to Woodcock Lane, where the by-pass road divides the parish.

3. Before going into the field, it is worth walking along the road to the Kings Bridge, to look both up and downstream along the River Loddon. The bridge is an old one with iron balustrades. Back at the footpath, go over the stile and follow the path through the poplar plantation then by the side of the Loddon to the Basingstoke Road. Again, you may like to walk to the right along the road to look at the ▶