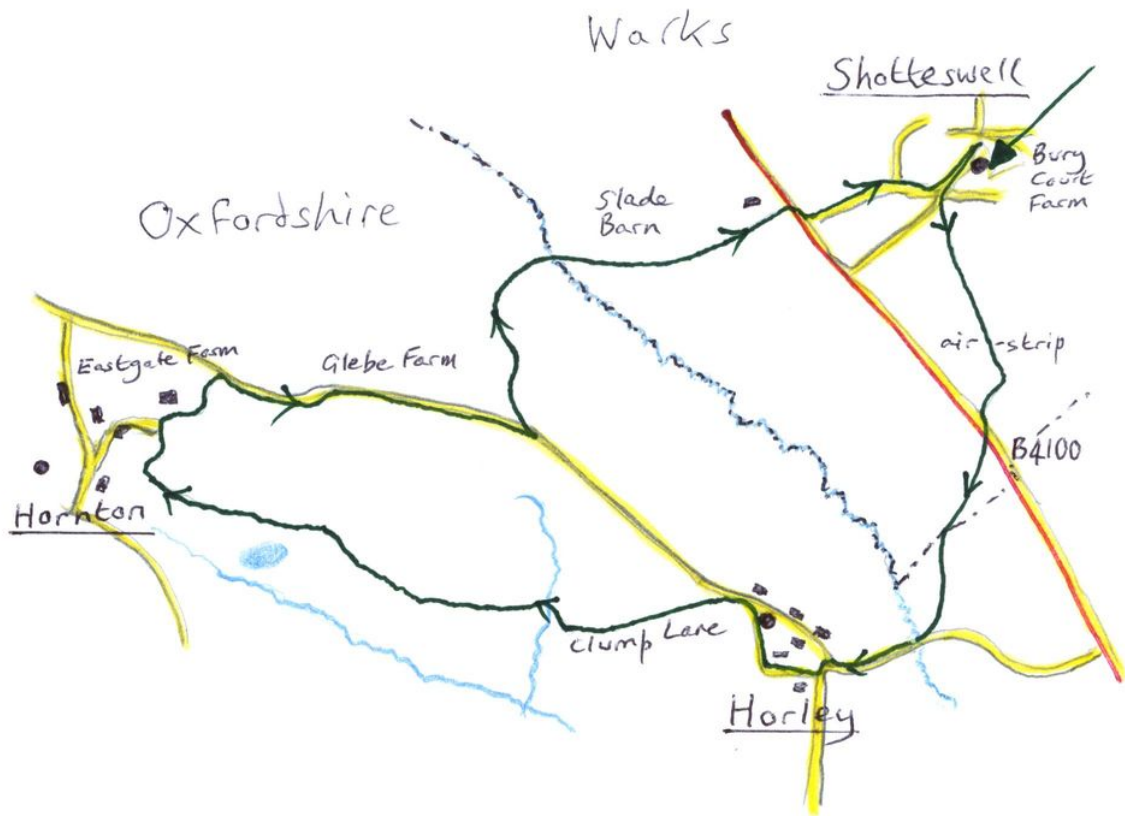


WALK 10



Walk 10 Shotteswell, Horley and Hornton

On this walk you can visit two magnificent churches. From Shotteswell the direction is SSW to Horley, with a short section in the neighbouring parish of Hanwell. You then go WNW to Hornton, returning in an eastward direction over the beautiful valley of the Sor Brook, which acts as both parish and county boundary. Most of the walking is on footpaths through fine hilly country; one of them actually crosses a working airstrip.

Three of the villages mentioned are in Oxfordshire, and are referred to in an old local rhyme:

Hornton in the Valley
Horley on the Hill,
Snotty little Drayton
And Bloody Anull 'Ill

(Drayton is to the south, nearer Banbury. The reference in the last line is to the battle of Hanwell Hill during the Civil War of the 1640s.)

Shotteswell to Horley

Start at the junction of Bury Court Lane and Chapel Lane. Go up the former, and after a minute on the right you'll find a beautiful grass passageway between the cottages which leads up hill to the church. Just before the church you come out onto a little lane, the cottages either side forming what is almost a 'close' for the church. Straight ahead are some steps and a little gate leading into the churchyard; beyond, again seeming to form a close, is the old, eastern face of Church Farm.

Once in the churchyard turn right, pass the end of the church on your left and then turn immediately left up the footpath. Just as you turn left notice the squat portion of the church's north-eastern corner, with its narrow oblong window of only two inches in width. The door to the church is just a little further on, on the northern side. By now you will have been walking for about 3 minutes.

Shotteswell church, enlarged several times during the Middle Ages, is a gem, containing some of the earliest Norman stonework in the country. Thanks to an incomparably lucid guide (find it inside), it is possible to trace the development of the church with great clarity.

Immediately inside the door you find an atmosphere of great antiquity. This is particularly evident if you look into the chapel on the left, behind the 14th century wooden screen. Ahead is the door to the vestry, the squat section you passed on the outside. This was probably the original church, a cell of the Benedictine Priory at Warmington, possibly pre-Norman. Under the east window is an old altarstone with five consecration crosses. This cell was enlarged during the 11th century to form the chapel mentioned earlier; against the north wall you can still see the old seating (now with a later wooden top) Opposite is a 13th century oak chest. The pillars in the north aisle belong to a later enlargement, perhaps

of about 1100, when pillars were built without capitals (causing much stress in the stonework). The font belongs to this period, although one of its supporting stones has the wheatsheaf shape characteristic of Anglo-Saxon times.

In the late 13th century the church was further enlarged, with a south aisle and tower in the west. Belonging to this period are two stone carvings of grinning faces at the base of the arch by the tower. Finally, a wooden screen and some seating date from an enlargement of the 14th century.

From the church door proceed left up the hill, emerging into another little court between cottages. Pass Church Farm on the left, then Church Lane. The field on the right was known as Pound Piece. Just past the telegraph pole you see a footpath sign to the left of the road. A track with farm buildings to the right goes through a metal gate. Take this track and go straight ahead through another farm gate, keeping the hedge to your left, towards the new barn ahead.

All the fields in this vicinity were named on the Warks. County Council Survey of 1934-5, which used the services of local primary schoolchildren (see Walk 9). The field you are walking in was Stone Pit and described as grassland. Beyond the hedge to the left was Home Ground.

A Draft Inclosure Map of c. 1794 also named some furlongs in this vicinity. The footpath seems to have gone ~~over~~ Windmill Balk Furlong. Balk, from Anglo-Saxon *balca*, usually refers to unploughed land at or near a boundary.

After about 5 minutes you pass a gate to the left of the barn, and carry straight on between the barn and the hedge on the left. You are now in New Ground; the 1794 map has Furlong and Mill Way. After another 3 minutes you come to a stile on the left just before an old stone barn ahead. Go over and turn right into pasture land, which after the gate soon drops away to the left towards a pond. This field, appropriately enough, was named Waterland in the 1930s. Keep to the fine raised grassy track just to the left of the hedge. There are fine views down into the valley now dominated by the M40.

After another 3 minutes, before you get level with the pond, you see a stile on the right. Go over and straight across the arable field, which soon gives way to an airstrip. Take care!

This field was known as The Butts (it was Butt Furlong on the 1794 map); the footpath seems to trace the course of a former boundary with the next field, Hanwell Field. The hedge on the far side of Hanwell Field marks the parish and county boundary with Hanwell in Oxfordshire. By a field known as The Gogs (probably from *quagmire*) this boundary follows the course of a stream flowing into the Sor Brook; at the confluence of streams the adjacent field is Mary Brook (again, from *(ge)maere*, boundary.

After another 4 minutes you come to a stile leading out onto the main road. At the stile a sign warns that you have crossed the airstrip at your own risk! Now you must cross the Banbury -Warwick

road, until a few years ago the A41, which was turnpiked in 1725. Take care again!

Once over, turn left and walk along the grass verge, coming after a few yards to a track on the right. This track leads to a barn; the field was known as Barn Ground. The footpath sign directs you to the left of the track diagonally across the field.

On the hillside ahead you have a fine view of Horley, with its church tower, and, to the right, the early 19th century Georgian Horley House, perhaps built for a local landowner.

After 5 more minutes you come to an ash tree in the Hanwell boundary hedge. To the left of the ash is a low hawthorn hedge; to the right the hedge is higher and less neat, looking much older. Turn right alongside the hedge with its elder, haw- and blackthorn, hazel, and ash trees. After a couple of minutes the hedge is seen to accompany a ditch with a small stream; the ditch gets gradually deeper and wider as it carries on downhill marking the edge of Horley Field towards a stream, across which is Horley parish.

You now have to be careful not to lose the path, which crosses the ditch. Look out for young conifers planted on the far side. When they come into view you will see the path which plunges steeply down into the ditch, up the other side and over a stile into a field (usually arable). You are now in the parish of Hanwell.

Hanwell was spelt *Hanawege* 'Hana's way' in the Domesday Book. Hana would have been a local leader; the form *wege* has been replaced by *w(i)elle* 'well'.

Hanwell parish used to belong to the Duchess of Dorset, for whom a beautiful book of estate maps was produced in 1799 by one William Leonard. All the field-names were recorded. The field you are walking through was part of Hally Bridge Furlong (*Hally* may be a variant of Horley). Roman coins have been found in this vicinity; an adjacent field, Blackman Furlong, is possibly a mutation of Blackland, a field-name sometimes associated with archeological discovery.

Once across the field you come after another 5 minutes to a metal farm gate. Go through and straight ahead; after another couple of minutes go through another gate onto a road. Turn right and cross the Sor Brook (presumably this was Hally Bridge), and after another 6 minutes you come to a road-junction in the village of Horley, with the Red Lion pub in front of you.

The Red Lion is the one remaining pub; there were four in 1841, when the population of Horley peaked at 425. In 1961 the population was not much over half that number. Now concentrated around two road-junctions which form a parallelogram at its heart, the village is less scattered than it once was (settlement extended south-east of the present village, in what was called Town Gore).

The Domesday spelling *Hornelie* suggests that Horley derives from the Anglo-Saxon *horn* or perhaps *horna*, meaning a tongue of land (Horley lies between two streams; the one you have just crossed joins the other to the south-east of the village); and *leah*, a clearing. Edith,

queen of Edward the Confessor, had manorial rights here before the Conquest. In 1086 there were two large and two small estates which included both Horley and Hornton. Today both flourishing villages are still in the same ecclesiastical parish; Horley is the smaller of the two. Its water-mill, to the south of the village, was mentioned in in The Domesday Book and was closed as recently as 1920.

Both villages had separate open fields until Inclosure in 1766. An Inclosure map gives some fieldnames. By that time the two main manors (see below) had been managed jointly for more than a century, and there were a number of fairly wealthy landowners rather than a single dominant one. The soil in the parish is good for agriculture (it has a reputation for turnips and barley) and also stock; most farms were traditionally mixed. In 1851 there were 21 farmers, in 1939 only 9. One problem for farmers was the steep slopes of many fields, which made ploughing difficult. Another disadvantage used to be the distance, over hilly roads, from the market town of Banbury, which made the carrying of produce and manure difficult. But this also encouraged the persistence of small trades such as tailors, plush-makers, clock- and watch-makers, and stonemasons: a number of famous quarries, such as Hornton quarry, are in the parish.

Turn left, then right up a narrow lane. There are ironstone cottages and an old stone wall on the right. Very soon you will notice a large old stone house and outbuildings on the left, with a drive and a sign marked Bramshill Manor. This building is impressively ancient-looking.

Bramshill Manor is the manor house of one of the two larger Domesday manors. Parts of the present building date back to the 16th century, although the remains of a medieval hall and an 11th-century Norman arch have been found inside. The house seems to have been much larger before the 17th century, when the house was occupied by the Puritan Danvers family; a fire - perhaps started by Royalists in the Civil War - consumed a northern part. In the 18th century, when it was the most notable house in Horley, the owners were the Cope family of Bramshill in Hants (hence the present name). It was then a farmhouse associated with a farm of 2000 acres.

To the west of the manor is evidence of medieval village settlement; fish-ponds are still marked on Ordnance Survey maps).

Opposite Bramshill Manor to the right of the road is a drive. On the far side of it, behind a beautiful beech tree, is the magnificent early 18th century facade of the other of the larger manor houses associated with the Domesday estates.

This manor was the *prebendal* manor of Horley. In 1086 it was held by Robert, Count of Mortain, the Conqueror's half-brother. In the 12th century it was linked with Lincoln Cathedral, to which it supplied revenue. In 1552 it became the property of the crown, and in 1741 it was sold to Edward Metcalfe, who at the time of Inclosure was known as the only Lord of the Manor in Horley. The rest of the building dates from the 16th and 17th centuries: the mullioned windows can be seen from the lane.

Turn right into the drive way, passing the house on the left. A beautiful walled footpath winds off to the left and then

abruptly turns right. On the left it is bounded by a long thatched stone barn (which is wooden on the far side). On the right is a yard with 17th century cottages and a schoolroom.

The thatched part of the schoolroom dates from the early 17th century, when like its counterpart in Hornton it was first endowed. The school first admitted girls in 1820, when it also became a National School. Lessons were free for all parish children over 6; those from neighbouring parishes paid a fee. The proportion of the latter group gradually rose as schooling came to be seen by the local people as less effective. Subsequently enlarged, the school was administered by the Board of Education in 1918 and in 1962 it became Horley Endowed School.

Carry on along the footpath. Directly ahead you see Horley church. The footpath goes directly into the churchyard up to the entrance in the south porch.

Horley church is one of twelve in England dedicated to St Etheldreda, abbess of Ely in the 7th century. The unusual position of the 12th century tower between the chancel (also 12th century) and the 14th-century nave suggests the church was built over an earlier, possibly Anglo-Saxon one. Carved stone heads of possibly this period have been found.

There is much to view in this beautiful church, but it's impossible to avoid seeing the enormous painting of St Christopher on the north wall in front of you. Dated 1450, the saint is depicted carrying the tiny Jesus across a river and remarking on his weight. Jesus's explanation is that he is 'ye kinge of Blys'. The artist has painted dog fish in the river with some of the features of dogs!

Today it is difficult to imagine that at several times in its history the church was in a ruinous condition. Indeed, between 1758 and 1810 the administration of ecclesiastical affairs in the parish was a local scandal, owing to neglect by the vicar. By the time a devoted and resident vicar was appointed in the 1850s a growing population and dissatisfaction with the church made the living difficult. In the latter half of that century it was reckoned that non-conformists (Methodists, Primitive Methodists and, since the 17th century, Baptists) constituted $\frac{2}{3}$ of the parishioners; but plans to separate Horley from Hornton into different parishes to aid administration came to nothing.

Horley to Hornton

You can leave the church by the main door to the west. Take the path straight ahead down to the lane and turn right. Turn left at the T-junction and go up the lane.

Some of the fields from this point onward were named on the Inclosure Map of 1766. Where the new houses on the left are built was a field named Mr. Medcalfe Old Inclosures, named after one of the main beneficiaries of Inclosure, who from 1741 as lord of the manor lived in the prebendal manor house just south of the church .

Just before you reach the speed de-restriction sign at the edge of the village you see a track on the left with a footpath sign and a sign to Bramshill Park Farm. Join the

track, which is called Clump Lane. This is about 6 minutes' walking time from the Red Lion.

As you proceed, the field to the left was Wood Hill, to the right Beggar Bush Hill. *Beggar* in field names often refers to worthless, scrubby land likely to be the haunt of beggars.

Clump Lane is a beautiful hedged track. After about 6 minutes you start to descend, and a minute later you see a stile on the left. After another 2 minutes the track bottoms out into a fine valley and starts to veer leftwards. On the right is a barbed wire fence which makes a detour round a dead ivy-clad old stump and an ash tree. Look carefully and you'll see a stile. Go over it and head across the field (often used for hay) towards the barn on the hill ahead. The path has first to cross a stream.

The hill ahead is Hadsham Hill, the barn Hadsham Barn. It is possible that *Had-* derives from Anglo-Saxon *heafod* meaning head(land). To the right a fine combe winds in a N direction up to Corts Hill; the fields at the combe's bottom are Corts Hill Leys (perhaps from Anglo-Saxon *cot*, cottage). The Inclosure map marks a Furzemill (hill?) Lake to the left. There is no sign of this today, but there are ponds to the right, under Corts Hill, which you see later on the walk. It seems that the stream has been dammed higher up since the map was made (the OS Pathfinder map shows neither) .

After 4 minutes you come to a stile in the fence ahead; go over and down and cross the stream by a wooden bridge. See a metal farm gate straight ahead.

These fields were marked as Step Rick Pens. The first element may be either a variant of *steep* or of Anglo-Saxon *stubb*, meaning land cleared of trees. The second element may refer to land containing a stack (*rick*) of corn or hay.

After 3 minutes go through the gate and carry on straight ahead, keeping to the left of the hedge. To the left is the beautiful valley of a stream which marks the boundary with the neighbouring parish of Wroxton.

After about 4 more minutes you see Hornton in the valley ahead.

The field here was named Entercommon on the Inclosure map. This may be a variant of *intercommon*, meaning common to all. Beyond the stream to the left was Sutton Hill (Sutton was a local surname).

After another 7 minutes the path goes through the boundary of the *civil* parish with Hornton, a wide hedge, like a spinney. Go straight through the hedge, over a bank, over a stile, and into grass land with a pond on the left.

The earliest recorded forms of the name from which Hornton derives are *Hornigetun* and *Horningtun* at the end of the 12th century. These spellings suggest the name denoted 'the *tun* of the Horningas', presumably the people who lived in the tongue of land at Horley (see above). So Hornton may have been a secondary settlement by people

from the neighbouring village,

Since Hornton and Horley had separate open-field systems in the medieval period, the boundary mentioned above may have been connected with this.

See a metal farm gate ahead; go over the stile to the right of it and carry on straight ahead. After 5 minutes the footpath starts to run parallel with a hedge on the left; there is a metal farm gate ahead. Look out for a stile on the left in the hedge; go over it and turn right through a field (usually arable), keeping the hedge on the right. The path is usually through the middle of the field, but it may be necessary to walk round the edge on the right-hand side. Hornton village is clearly visible in the valley ahead; there used to be a windmill to its SW.

You pass a sewage works on your left. After 6 more minutes you reach a stile ahead, which takes the path into a small paddock with horses.

From the outskirts of Hornton to Corts Hill

The way now is up to the top of the hill on the right, skirting the edge of the village. Go over the stile and turn right up the hill through the grass land, making for a dying elder tree at the corner of the hedge. You'll see a stile by the remains of a drystone wall. Cross the stile and carry on uphill, keeping the wall on your left. You are passing little grassy closes on the eastern edge of the village. There are fine views to the right over the valley you have just walked beside.

After another 9 minutes you see a stile in the hedge ahead; go over and keep straight ahead. There is a footpath sign on the wooden fence to the right of the wall and hedge coming in on the left ahead. Go over the fence, keeping the barn on your right, and see the footpath sign on a post ahead to right. Turn right, keeping the barn on your right. You are passing through Eastgate Farm, and back into Horley parish. Then go through the metal kissing gate. After a further 2 minutes you'll see another footpath sign ahead by the telegraph pole between metal farm gates.

Go through the gate, keeping the fence to your left. The track bends abruptly to the left. Follow it and see a stile over the hedge. Go over, keeping the hedge on your right. After another 4 minutes you come to another stile leading out onto the road. You have been walking for about an hour since the Red Lion in Horley.

Turn right along the road. You are now heading back in the direction of Horley; this section of road takes about 16 minutes to walk.

The field on the left was Upper Kiteswell on the Inclosure map. This may refer to the bird of prey, the kite (Anglo-Saxon *cyta*), not uncommon in field names. Beyond was Squitchy Piece (*squitch* is a local name for couch-grass, the agriculturalist's nightmare). On the right

was Grindon Furlong - perhaps a contraction of *Greendown*, green hill. This name, like many of those discussed below, is difficult to interpret.

The road soon bends to the left, round Lower Kitewell. In the valley to the right was Catball Butts, the meaning of which is obscure. The hill on the far side of the valley is Ang(e)re Moor/Mare Hill, possibly derived from a putative Anglo-Saxon word **anger*, meaning grassland. A little further along, on the left, is a field named Meat Lands (*meat* used to mean food in general).

As the valley to the right becomes more marked you will notice a wooded strip within it. This conceals a stream rising from a spring, marked on the Inclosure map as Ludwell, perhaps from Anglo-Saxon *lud*, loud.

The ponds you will soon see in the bottom of the valley are not marked on any map. Presumably too recent for the Pathfinder map to record, they must also post-date the Inclosure map, which as noted above marks a Furzemill Lake lower down the stream near Clamp Lane

Soon the road curves to the right where there is a largeish beech to the left and a big, damaged old oak on the right. The slope of the valley here is very steep; there are a number of fine old trees. This is Corts Hill; from here the valley curves down to the footpath you took earlier.

The verge widens on the left, and the road is joined by a track on the left at an acute angle. Look out for a footpath sign.

As you turn onto the footpath the field to the right was named Lock o Way Turne. There was a Long Lockway to the NW. *Lock* here may refer to scraps of wool which could be gleaned by villagers.

From Horley road to Shotteswell

Take the path across a field (usually arable), which often has a scarecrow so life-like that I have taken fright on at least two occasions! After 3 minutes you come to the remains of a hedge. Go through, then turn right, keeping the hedge on the right. This field, once long and narrow, was known as Long Lockway. You are now beginning the gradual descent into the valley of the Sor Brook, which separates Horley parish from that of Shotteswell. After another 3 minutes you come to a junction of hedges; go through and over the wooden fence. Go down the hill, making for a point in the valley below where the hedge on the right meets the fence.

The lovely valley of the Sor Brook is in view ahead. Straight ahead on the skyline was Redmoor Hill (named after the colour of the soil), with the remains of Slated Barn. Farther along the valley to the left was Langcomb Hill (*lang* is probably a variant of long). As might be expected, many of the brookside fields - at least on the Shotteswell side - are named as meadows; another is The Fenns (a marshy place). On the Horley side the footpath traverses Shipcorn (*ship* may be a local pronunciation of sheep) Plain and The Plain.

After another 4 minutes go over the wooden fence and keep right alongside the hedge with its accompanying stream. After

3 more minutes you see a gap in the hedge on the right. Go through it, keeping the hedge and stream to your right, across a long narrow field. This is The Plain. After 3 more minutes you come to a wooden footbridge by some old willows. You have now reached the Sor Brook, the boundary between parishes and counties, and a crossing that feels wonderfully remote. Cross the bridge and turn right, keeping the stream on your right. The field you are in was Little Common. Turn left following the hedge and after a couple of minutes you'll come to another little bridge on the right. This leads into a field called The Common. The footpath goes diagonally left across this arable field. After 5 minutes you'll see a stile in the hedge ahead.

This field was known as Bower Ground and Blatchmore. The 1794 form Bleachmoor Furlong suggests that cloth used to be bleached here.

Cross the field diagonally to the left under the power lines for 3 minutes until you reach another stile. Go over and turn left.

The field you are in was The Slade. On the right was Sheep-cut Hill. This could be a spelling of *Sheepcote*; however, *cut* is a common form in Oxfordshire (it also occurs elsewhere), meaning much the same as lot or dole, referring to land distributed by lot.

You'll see a metal farm gate ahead and Slade barn behind on the steep hillside, with terraces to the right. The footpath goes to the right of the barn up to the top of the hill.

To the left of the barn used to be a field known as Well Head, which in 1794 was Shotteswell Head Furlong, suggesting the presence of a spring here (there is none marked on the Pathfinder map. The hill to the right was Dixie Hill, with the field at the top known as Top Dixie. The latter names are hard to interpret.

After 10 minutes, and a steep climb, you come to the main road. Turn right, along the verge, then cross the road at the first left-hand turning, signposted Shotteswell.

To the left the field was Little Each (obscure); to the right Pound Piece.

Carry on down the lane, passing a close of newish stone houses. The road then forks on the edge of Shotteswell village; Back Hill to the left, Coronation Lane to the right. Take the latter, passing Middle Lane (notice old pub-sign) on the left, then School Lane. After about 10 more minutes you'll see the church on the left.