

# HESTER'S WAY & SPRINGBANK LOCAL HISTORY WALKS

I was originally inspired to produce two small booklets of walks for the groups that meet at the Neighbourhood Projects. I have reproduced here my original format: that is why the Introductory paragraph appears again half way through.

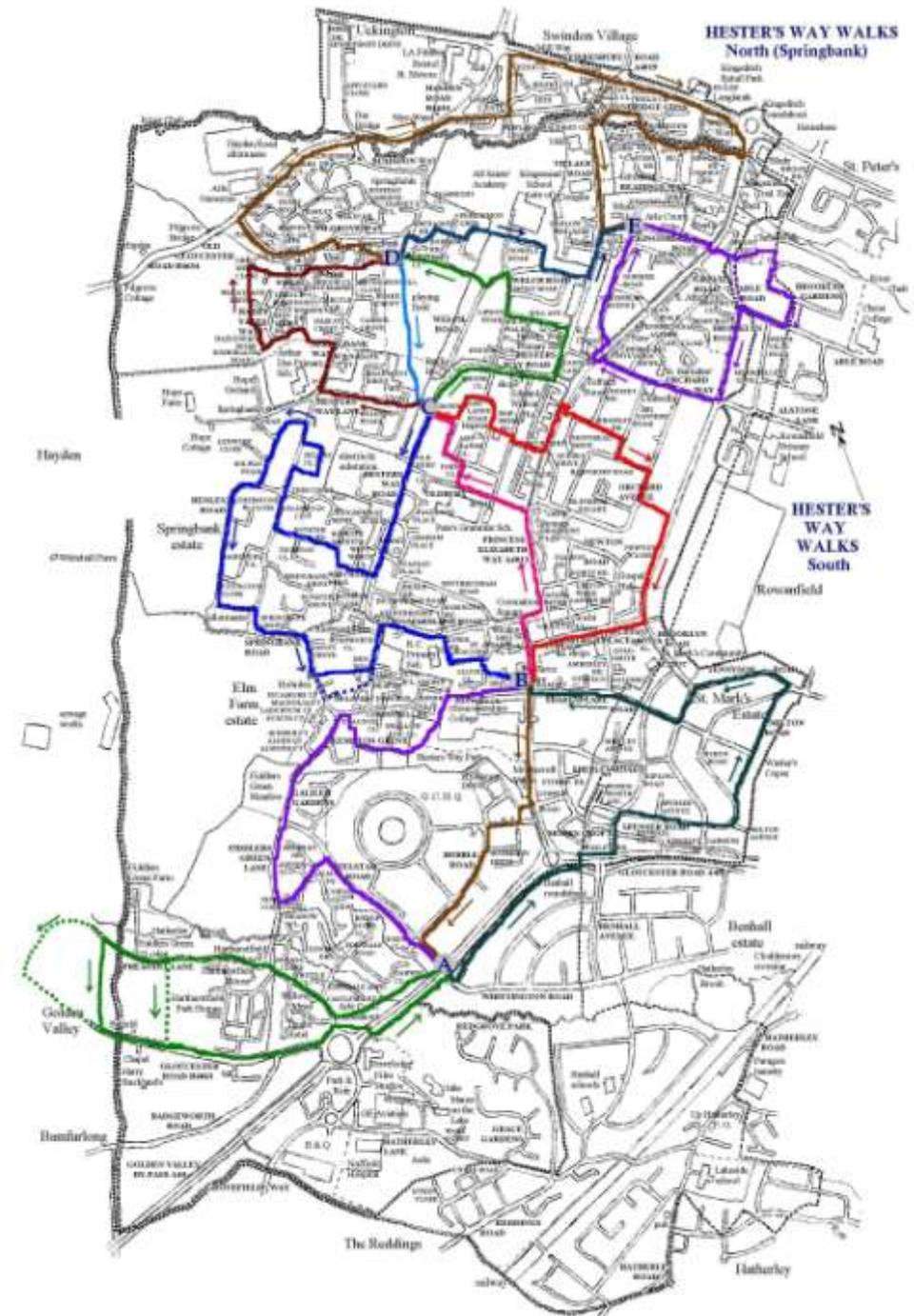
Between them, the walks cover almost every significant location in the area, except Arle Mill.

Readers are welcome to copy, quote and adapt these in any way they see fit.

This is as correct as I could make it as at July 2015. Readers who have comments or corrections can email me on [davidnedgar64@gmail.com](mailto:davidnedgar64@gmail.com).

Picture below: Hester's Way Road, see Notes 60 & 61.

The 1928 electricity substation building. To the left is the former M.E.B. offices, now St. Silas. Behind are the transformers. To the right is the pub sign of the "Goat & Bicycle."  
(DE 1997).



## HESTER'S WAY & SPRINGBANK LOCAL HISTORY WALKS

See the maps for the location of the points that I've labelled as A, B, C, D and E, which are from south to north up the estate. B is the Hester's Way Resource Centre, D is the Springbank Resource Centre. For convenience, I've produced two booklets, for north (Springbank) and south (Hester's Way).

The routes provide you various options. I've alternated the directions of the routes to encourage circular or figure-of-8 rambles. My route information may seem unnecessarily detailed, as if you had to find your way in thick fog after the road signs had all been taken away! But this is to make sure that you don't interpret historical information about a road as an instruction to follow that road. Also, to help you when following the route in the reverse direction.

Distances were measured by GPS. You might normally cover 3mph or more if you aim to break into a sweat, but bear in mind (if time is a factor) that if you keep stopping to read out notes, you may only manage 2mph. Regrettably, many routes are not suitable for wheelchairs: some may suit pushchairs.

Every street has a history. Dates are given for many roads (that is, the date when people began to move in to the houses, to within a year either way. I've extracted many dates from the electoral registers). Where I have used the word 'ancient' for a highway, it existed way back, in the form of a farm-track: I would guess most of these to date from the Norman era, about 900 years ago. Some may be even older.

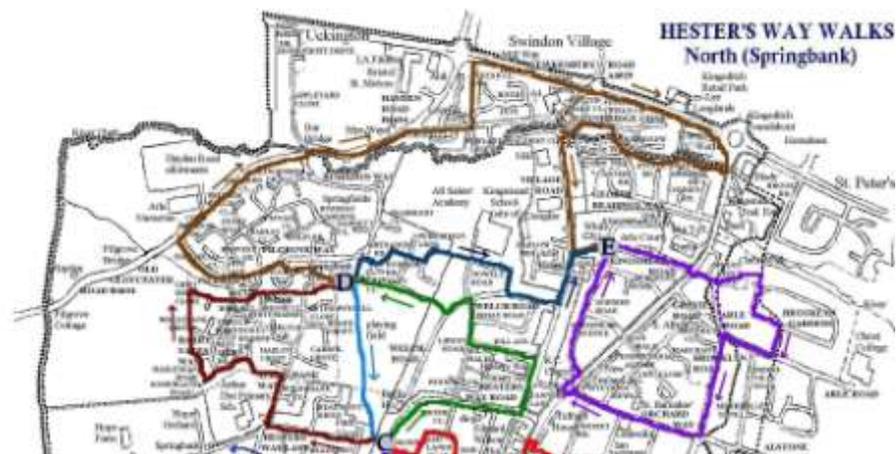
Likewise, anything else I've described as 'ancient' is probably around 900 years old. (It seems most likely to me that the

Normans, c.1070-1100, reorganised the English landscape hugely. In our area, they probably left the Saxon parish boundaries intact, and maybe left alone some of the existing lanes and pastures in the Fiddlers Green area, but all other local highways, and all other field and property boundaries, were probably altered).

I wouldn't recommend boring your walkers by reading out every historical detail. In particular, beware of gathering them round to listen on the verge of a busy road. Anyone who has extra information, corrections, or burning questions that they want to send me can email me at [davidnedgar64@gmail.com](mailto:davidnedgar64@gmail.com).

The First Edition was printed in December 2013. This Second Edition of July 2015 contains few changes to the history notes, but several corrections to the route instructions.

- p.3 D to E LONG ROUTE
- p.13 D to E SHORT ROUTE
- p.19 E to E LOOP ROUTE
- p.25 D to C SHORT ROUTE
- p.27 C to D WEST ROUTE
- p.31 C to D EAST ROUTE



## D to E LONG ROUTE.

**THREE PARISHES PATH. Distance: 3.43km / 2.1 miles**

**(or suggested short-cut is 2.54km / 1.6 miles)**

At S.C.R.C. (Point D), notice the Ron Smith Pavilion. See Note 1.

Proceed 80m across car-park to Springbank Shopping Centre. (See Note 51).

Proceed 50m through shops, through the gap to the left of clock-tower.

Proceed 60m along the carpark access drive to the roundabout on Pilgrove Way, where turn left. Stay on the left-hand pavement.

Proceed 170m along Pilgrove Way to the next roundabout, where go straight ahead. See Note 2 about the estate here, and Note 3 about the name Pilgrove.

Proceed 120m passing the playground to where a path joins from your left (an ancient right of way).

Proceed a further 80m, passing the zip-wire, to the end of Pilgrove Way to emerge on Old Gloucester Road, where turn right. See Note 3.

Proceed straight along Old Gloucester Road for 210m (walking on grass verge to your right if preferred). (Notice the Allotments on far side, opposite the footpath to right).

After a further 190m along Old Gloucester Road, come to the traffic lights at Blaisdon Way. Cross over and continue straight ahead. See Note 4 here.

**Note 1** I don't know everything! If anyone knows who Ron Smith was or is, I'd be interested to know! Also if anyone knows when the pavilion was built: probably about 1980.

**Note 2** Pilgrove Way dates from 1983. The housing estate to the right, along Bushy Way, generally known as the Arle Farm Estate, was built in 1984-87. The shrubby road-names may appear to have no significance, but derive from local field-names, as is more fully described on another walk: see Note 50. Fullbrook Close was added in 1994 and Pilgrove Close in 1995.

**Note 3** Observe Arle Nursery opposite, here since the 1960s. Note also Pilgrove Bridge (behind the Sewage Pumping Station) nearby. Hayden Road / Old Gloucester Road is a very ancient route, possibly of Saxon origins, devised by monks travelling between the abbeys at Gloucester and Winchcombe. Hayden itself is an ancient hamlet: its existence is clearly indicated with its own entry in the Domesday Book of 1087 (even though it was not recorded by name in surviving documents until 1220). Pilgrove is another name which is probably ancient, first documented here in 1654 ('Pillgrove').

**Note 4** Cheltenham Fencing Supplies opened in 2004; a similar but less formal business had operated here before, until about 1995. Blaisdon Way replaced the Eagle Star office block and computer centre which stood here from 1986 to 2001. The new housing here and along Old Gloucester Road dates from 2003-5. Appleyard Close and the traffic lights here date from 2009. As stated in Note 3, Hayden Road / Old Gloucester Road is an ancient highway, and Bar Bridge is an ancient bridging point across the River Chelt, rebuilt in about 1985.

After a further 40m, cross Bar Bridge over the River Chelt. Look out for fish, ducks, kingfishers (in summer), etc. The highway is now called Hayden Rd, & is in Uckington parish.

Continue straight ahead on Hayden Road for 190m. (Pass Enterprise rent-a-car on right and Sports Ground on left).

Another 100m further on, (passing the bungalow Mye-Waye and then Ford car sales on left), where the road divides, bear right. See Note 5 about the housing in this area.

Continue past Coppice Gate and Attwood Close. After 150m cross Newland View at mini-roundabout. You are now in Swindon parish. Stop here and observe the old house (nos.8-10 Newland View) behind you, described in Note 6.

Turn left at the mini-roundabout into River Leys, and almost immediately (after 40m) bear straight ahead into the alleyway marked Yeend Close (cul-de-sac). See Note 7.

**Note 5** On your right, Warners showroom dates from 2001 and Enterprise rent-a-car from 2014. The metal access bridge went up in 2005 and the 7 new houses either side of it (The Gables through to Ty-Ni) were built in 2001. Attwood Close was built in 1992 named after Mr Attwood who lived at the house known as Uckington Gardens which was previously on this site. Coppice Gate was built in 1989, the spur leading off Hayden Road in 1993, Bristol Street Motors showrooms in 1994.

**Note 6** Domesday Book of 1087 is the first written record of the place-names Swindon and Uckington. It also recorded the existence of a water-mill in the parish of Swindon, almost certainly at the exact location of the Tudor-style cottage at

nos.8-10 Newland View. (Obviously it was rebuilt, I would guess about 1600). There was certainly a mill here by 1220, when (according to documents which still survive) the mill's owner donated it to a charity hospital in Gloucester – (yes, donated the whole building along with its land). In a later era, the charity became more concerned with the mentally ill, at a time when the most famous hospital for that purpose (in London) was known as Bedlam. By association, the building here became known as Bedlam Mill, also more recently known as Bedlam Farm. (See also Note 9 regarding Bedlam Forge, which still stands further up the road). The modern street called Newland View was developed in 2005.

**Note 7** Yeend Close is an ancient parish boundary (between Swindon and Uckington). The Saxons divided the English landscape into parishes, so, many of our parish boundaries date to the Saxon era, that is, at least 1000 years ago. Yeend Close follows the line of a path that followed (and still follows) the boundary between Swindon and Uckington parishes, so has been a highway for 1000 years or more. Millway House, originally called Millfield, was a smallholding built in 1905 by farmer Walter Yeend. The modern developments River Leys and Yeend Close were built in 1985/86.

**Note 8** Tewkesbury Road is probably an ancient highway, that is, existed in Norman times, though upgraded in the days of the Turnpikes, the 1700s, into a route suitable for stagecoaches. At that time, the Cross Hands would have appeared as a roadside inn, with facilities for travellers, perhaps by 1760 although not documented by name until 1804. The old pub was completely redeveloped as a Motel in 1959. The big chestnut tree at the front possibly dates to around 1896.

After 140m reach the far end of Yeend Close; emerge onto Tewkesbury Road through concrete bollards near Millway House. Turn right. (Observe Sainsbury's on opposite side of dual-carriageway).

Proceed 330m along Tewkesbury Road towards town, then to and across the traffic lights. Notice near the junction the Cross Hands and its chestnut tree, described in Note 8, and opposite, the thatched Apple Tree Cottage - see Note 9.

((At this point, for a short-cut, turn sharp right here back into Hayden Road for 90m, then left at mini-roundabout into Village Rd. Notice Bedlam Forge. Proceed 70m down Village Road, crossing Bedlam Bridge, back into Cheltenham Parish, to junction with Glynbridge Gardens, see \* below. This will shorten your route by 0.89km / 0.5 miles)).

Proceed towards town along Tewkesbury Road. After 40m notice (by the speed-camera) a short tarmac path disappearing into hedge. This was the entrance to a smallholding called Swindon Gardens, see Note 10.

Proceed along Tewkesbury Road, passing the Texaco service station after a further 70m.

Pass Curry's and PC World after a further 210m. See Note 11.

**Note 9** A forge, for replacing horse-shoes etc, would have been a useful facility for travellers too: hence Bedlam Forge appeared opposite the Cross Hands Inn. The forge originally operated from the thatched Tudor building (1600s or

thereabouts), now called Apple Tree Cottage, a listed building. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the forge moved into the small building on the opposite side of the turning to Village Road, beside the bridge, the building which is still called Bedlam Forge. (Bedlam Forge has a stone on the far end inscribed 'WY 1905' on it. Walter Yeend – the farmer who built Millfield, see Note 7 - extended an existing building here, which had possibly been used in the early-1800s as a turnpike gatehouse. See Note 6 regarding the word Bedlam).

**Note 10** Until the 1970s, there were still smallholdings in this area. One was called Swindon Gardens, which was built around the 1860s. The Glynbridge Gardens housing estate, which we visit later in the walk, was built in 1974 in the former grounds of this. The old house is still there behind the hedge (now re-addressed no.3 Summerfield Close). Its coach house is the brick building you've just passed at the traffic lights (now re-addressed as no.10 Patterdale Close).

**Note 11** Another smallholding was called Arlebrook, built around 1850. Its lands are now occupied by PC World and Curry's. Two other small dwellings in this area had once been lodges marking the entrances to the Arle Court Estate, dating from around 1800. One of these, sometimes known as Lodge Gardens, stood near the present filling station. The other, sometimes known as Riviera Gardens, stood close to where the plaque is on Princess Elizabeth Way, next to the River Chelt, which we pass later in the walk (Note 14). Riviera Gardens survived until the mid-1950s (when Princess Elizabeth Way was built), Arlebrook and Lodge Gardens survived until the early 1970s (when Tewkesbury Road was widened). PC World and Curry's replaced Lex Rover car showrooms in 1999.

After a further 80m along Tewkesbury Road, turn right at Kingsditch Gyratory. (Pedantic observers of the Highway Code might enjoy discussing why the term 'roundabout' is incorrect here! See Note 12).

Proceed 70m along Princess Elizabeth Way. Regarding the Audi showroom opposite, see Note 13. Notice the plaque by the bridge - see Note 14.

Cross the River Chelt out of Swindon Parish and back into Cheltenham Parish, along Princess Elizabeth Way for a further 20m.

Immediately after the river, turn right into the footpath. This riverbank walk is sometimes named Keirle Walk. Follow this along the riverbank for 170m, to a point between nos.44 & 59 Frank Brookes Road, then see Note 15.

Continue straight ahead along riverbank path for another 180m. Turn right at the footbridge crossing the river (opposite no.137 Carter Road).

Follow the path between houses for 40m, (emerging opposite no.21 Glynbridge Gardens). Turn left. (For the story of Glynbridge Gardens, see Note 10).

**Note 12** Kingsditch Roundabout is on the site of an ancient meeting of four highways; these would have become turnpike roads in the 1700s. A turnpike gate stood towards where Dunelm is now. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Pike House Garage was located until 1997 where Marks & Spencer is now. The junction has become perhaps Cheltenham's busiest junction, and in 2007 was altered to incorporate traffic lights. (Since there are no 'give way' lines at the point where traffic enters the roundabout, it is strictly-speaking no longer a roundabout, but rather a small circular one-way system!)

**Note 13** The Audi showroom completed at the end of 2013 replaced an earlier car showroom of 1998. This had replaced Andy's Candys Ltd. The building which housed this sweet-factory looked like a Cotswold village hall, slightly gothic in design, and had more recently been used as a social club by Smiths Industries, before being demolished in 1997.

**Note 14** The plaque beside the river bridge indicates its opening in 1957, although it was completely rebuilt in 2001. (If 1957 seems surprisingly late for the opening of PE Way, compare Note 57 below).

**Note 15** Note the remains of a Victorian bridge here to your right (just beyond no.59 Frank Brookes Road) and note also the path to your left (in front of nos.79-97 Joyner Road). There used to be an ancient track which led from Tewkesbury Road (at Lodge Gardens, see Note 11 above) to cross the Chelt at this point, and continued southwards across the fields through an impressive avenue of elm trees, leading to the water-mill known as Arle Mill, and to the mansion in Kingsmead Road known as Arle Court. The elm trees, perhaps planted around 1550, went long ago, although the line of it is marked by the path in front of nos.79-97 Joyner Road. (Arle Mill was a medieval water-mill, but its full story will have to wait for another occasion).

Around 1970 as Hester's Way Estate was still developing, the fields here were originally taken by the County Council to build a Technical College, before being re-acquired by the Borough Council to build these streets in 1978, Frank Brookes Road, Carter Road, etc, an area sometimes known as the Arle Home Farm Estate. These streets are generally named after Cheltenham councillors and mayors.

Proceed 170m along Glynbridge Gardens. Emerge onto Village Road, close to the bridge over the River Chelt. (The short-cut mentioned above picks up the main route here \*). See Note 16 concerning the buildings around here (and Note 9 about Bedlam Forge, just over the bridge), and Note 17 about Village Road itself.

Proceed along Village Road. After 50m notice The Gara (no.141 Village Road) on the left, and to the right the NHS building. See Note 18.

After a further 70m, observe Arle (End) Cottages on the right.

After a further 30m, notice Douglas offices on the right, and the footpath [leading to the site of Arle Mill] on the left.

A further 90m on right is the site of Arle Farm. See Note 19.

**Note 16** Observe here the bridge where Village Road crosses the Chelt, named as Bedlum Bridge on a map of 1776; it was rebuilt in 2001. (Notice Bedlam Forge beyond it, with caravan, described in Note 9, whilst the name Bedlam is explained above in Note 6). Note also the site of Waldrist, a house of the 1890s where no.150 Village Road is now. It was demolished at the end of the 1970s and replaced by Waldrist Close in 1990. Another old house was called Arle End, here since at least the 1830s, also demolished in the late-1970s, the site of which is now the location of no.149 Village Road.

**Note 17** Village Road is an ancient highway, perhaps not Roman (as I suggested in one of the History books) but probably Norman (900 years old). The name refers to Arle Village, not Swindon Village. The community of dwellings

called Arle was strung out along and around this highway in medieval times. The existence of a place called Arle is documented much further back, in surviving Saxon documents: it existed at least 1,250 years ago; (see also Note 25)

**Note 18** The NHS building opened as Ardent Works in 1972, originally a factory making plastic and rubber trimming, employing people with disabilities. The factory closed in 2002 and the NHS Trust moved in in 2004. The Gara opposite, at no.141 Village Road, was built about 1934.

**Note 19** Arle Farm was the influential factor in the north end of Village Road. There was probably a farmstead here from medieval times, or longer. It became a major dairy farm from 1810 onwards, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century owned by the Wood family. Although the row of eight cottages look similar to each other, nos.1 & 2 were built at the same time as the farmhouse, around 1806, whilst the others nos.3-8 were added around 1890 in order to house more workers on the Wood's farm. The Woods also built a house called Waldrist for themselves, at the north end of Village Road, as mentioned in Note 16 above.

Arle Farm was a major dairy, but the Council compulsorily purchased all the farmland in the 1950s. The Wood family continued to own the farmyard, and developed it for industry. Companies based here included Kingston Caravan Co Ltd, A.S. Brewer Plastics Ltd, Griffiths & Diamond Paints, and The Sherry Box wine merchants. Douglas Equipment moved here in 1963, makers of vehicles requiring heavy-duty cable or hydraulic parts such as towing tractors for aircraft, road-sweepers, etc. The old farmhouse itself was demolished in 1986; it stood right up against Village Road. Douglas was taken over in late-2011, but retained its name.

After a further 10m, notice The White House on your left: see Note 21. Regarding Village Mews on your right, see Note 20.

After a further 70m, arrive at the junction of Kingsmead Road and Village Road – see Note 20, opposite Arle House care home (see Note 27).

Even if you are not going to follow the “E loop route” it’s worth turning left here, and proceeding 110m along Kingsmead Road to a point just beyond Kingsmead Close. (Point E). Observe The Gables behind you to the left: see Note 22. And observe Arle Court House ahead of you to the left: see Note 31. For the significance of Kingsmead Road see Note 30.

## D to E SHORT ROUTE

### ALL SAINTS' PATH (Distance: 1.02km / 0.6 miles)

From S.C.R.C. (Point D), take the footpath leading below the pylon line. This path was laid down around 2007, and could easily be widened into a road to link up the two estates: a subject for discussion! After 110m emerge at the roundabout on Pilgrove Way. Turn right into Grenadier Road.

Follow Grenadier Road’s zig-zag for 150m (ignoring footpaths and other turnings into Bodnam Road and Graveney Court). See Note 23.

Follow the Persimmon Gardens zig-zag for 150m keeping left, through the even numbered houses. ((If following this route in the reverse direction, take care as you’ll find the road-names are not marked! Keep right when in Persimmon Gardens, then follow Grenadier Road)).

**Note 20** Village Mews was built in 2004 in the gardens of the old Arle House. (Arle House is described in a separate walk, see Note 27 below). A small octagonal residence here (close to Village Road and Arle Farm) was called Arle House Lodge, occupied until 1958.

The road junction where Village Road meets Kingsmead Road was recorded as having the name Arle Cross in 1692, perhaps signifying that a memorial stone cross of some sort once stood here.

**Note 21** The White House is a listed building; now purchased by New Dawn Homes who have it currently under restoration and are building New Dawn Place in the grounds. It was built in about 1810, when it was known as Arle Villa. It was renamed The White House around 1907. Industry moved into the gardens in 1952: Tungum Hydraulics were here from 1955 until 2007.

**Note 22** The Gables is an old smallholder's cottage, built perhaps about 1876. It replaced an earlier cottage (or pair of cottages), sometimes known as Arle Gardens, which had stood where the house no.43 Kingsmead Road is now.

**Note 23** Grenadier Road was built in 1995. Grenadier, like Bodnam, is the name of a variety of apple. Bodnam Road was built in 1995 (odds) and 1997 (evens). Nos.1,2 & 4 Bodnam Road (of 1997) were demolished in 2007 to enable access to Persimmon Gardens (named after the building company Persimmon Homes), built in 2007 on what had been Howell Road Allotment Site.

Proceed straight ahead for 170m on the path / pavement that starts opposite no.40 Persimmon Gardens, and proceeds between the Academy to your left and the sewage pumping station and housing estates to your right. See Note 24 about the Academy and Note 25 about the archaeology here. Reach the huge oak tree by no.29 Howell Road, where turn right. (You might like to estimate the size or age of the tree by seeing how many people it takes to encircle it, holding hands!)

Proceed 60m to the entrance of the cul-de-sac (Howell Road) opposite no.91 Welch Road. Turn left into Welch Road. See Note 56 regarding the street-names Howell Road and Welch Road. (Also Note 27).

Follow Welch Road for 140m to reach Village Road at the mini-roundabout (opposite no.71 Village Road). This is the location of The Old School House, also Bank Cottages and Arle Gardens. See Note 26 regarding these buildings.

**Note 24** Arle Secondary School opened here in 1959: it was renamed Kingsmead Comprehensive in 1995. This closed down in 2009, and was rebuilt as All Saints' Academy in 2011, having joined forces with the former St. Benedict's school in Arle Road.

**Note 25** You may have heard of the archaeological dig which happened in 2010, when Kingsmead School was being replaced by All Saints' Academy. The most interesting discovery was two complete human skeletons, which by carbon-dating (in the USA) were dated to the period 640-680, an era when the Angles of central England and the Saxons of southern England were still fighting it out in this part of the

world, physically or politically. It was also the era when Christianity was moving in (or moving back in, to be dogmatic). The burials here were pagan in style, whilst the culture and ancestry of the two people were perhaps Saxon (or even Celtic) but influenced by Anglian politics (and language?). [The place-name Arle is first found in writing about the year 750, but the archaeology suggests the village existed even earlier than that].

**Note 26** In the Victorian era, the children of the villagers who worked for the Welch family had no village school. The Welch family put up the first school in 1860, on the site of some old farm buildings next to Village Road. This school probably didn't last long, because a state school went up in the Rowanfield area in the 1870s. The school building was adapted into four cottages, known as 1-4 The Old School House, which survived until the 1950s. They were located near the mini-roundabout at the junction of Welch Road, near no.64 Village Road.

Opposite them was a pair of old cottages called Bank Cottages (site is now nos.59 & 61 Village Road), and next to them a smallholding called Arle Gardens, (site is now no.51 Village Road), which were also demolished in the 1950s. Bank Cottages were probably built about 1870; their name derived from their location, raised up on a bank above the highway: you can still observe that the modern houses on their site, nos.59-61 Village Road, have a few steps leading up from the pavement. Arle Gardens was an old smallholding, here by 1830 at least; the site is now no.51 Village Road. (Regarding the name Arle Gardens, note that there were at least 4 different properties locally with this name, which must have caused some confusion for the postal service).

Turn left into Village Road and proceed ahead towards its junction with Kingsmead Road. Note after 90m Barlow Rd on your left, on the site of old Arle House: see Note 27. See also Note 28 regarding Dunelm Close on your right.

After a further 40m along Village Road, notice Yew Tree Cottage on corner: see Note 29.

Turn right into Kingsmead Road and proceed 110m to cross the junction with Kingsmead Avenue to reach point E.

**Note 27** As mentioned in Note 17, Village Road was an ancient route, which became the centre of the village of Arle. Arle House was a mansion developed in 1806, owned by the Welch family. (Hence Welch Road). The family died out, and in 1945 the mansion was sold to the Borough Council who

adapted it into flats, but then demolished it in 1960. In 1961 the site was redeveloped: the County Council care home called Arle House is located on the front lawn of the old mansion, whilst the Borough Council's wardened flats of Barlow Road occupy the site of the mansion building itself. The care home closed in 2012; its function was moved to the new Monkscroft Care Centre in Shelley Road. It reopened in 2015, privately run, as Wentworth Court.

**Note 28** Dunelm Close is not named after the department store! There used to be a bungalow called Dunelm on this site, built around 1927, replaced in 2005 by this short street.

**Note 29** Yew Tree Cottage at no.95 Village Road is reputed to date from about 1680, and to have been a bakery. It was around 1880-1934 the Arle Post Office. There was also a pair of old cottages which used to stand behind Yew Tree Cottage – these dated back to the 1830s at least. They were sometimes known as Post Office Terrace. They were demolished in 1963 and replaced by the present buildings nos.38-42 Kingsmead Road.

**Note 30** Kingsmead Road is an ancient highway, part of the original route from Cheltenham to Arle, named as Church Lane on a map of 1776. The name 'Kingsmead' applied to this road is recent, adopted in 1967 (although nearby Kingsmead Avenue was so called a little earlier, in 1952). Nos.6-36 Kingsmead Road were originally addressed as 232-262 Arle Road when they were built in 1952. The road-name was derived from a historic location Kings Meadow, a field-name documented in 1629. However, the field called Kings Meadow was a short distance away from here, on the north side of Old Gloucester Road, where the Hayden Road Allotment Site is nowadays.

## E to E LOOP ROUTE

### PARKSIDE PATH (Distance: 2.09km / 1.3 miles)

(Options: shorter route 1.71km / 1.1 miles; longer route 2.63km / 1.7 miles)

Start at Point E, the junction of Kingsmead Road, Kingsmead Avenue and Kingsmead Close. Notice The Gables in Kingsmead Close (see Note 22). Regarding the name Kingsmead, and the highway itself, see Note 30. Proceed along Kingsmead Road towards town. After 90m, on your left notice Arle Court House. See Note 31.

After a further 50m notice on your left the boundary between the final house (no.9 Kingsmead Road) and Baylis showrooms. See Note 32.

After a further 40m notice the big chestnut tree and Chestnut Tree Ho (no.2 Kingsmead Road) on your right: see Note 33, and Baylis showrooms on your left, see Note 34.

After a further 40m reach Princess Elizabeth Way (near nos.7-12).

Cross at the traffic lights and return to a point opposite Kingsmead Road: another 80m.

Proceed down the pathway beside the block of flats (nos.210-228 Arle Road) 70m to the park entrance. See Note 35 regarding this path.

**Note 31** No.23 Kingsmead Road is a listed building, in fact by far the most historic building amongst the Hester's Way Estates, being the remnant of a Tudor mansion called Arle Court. In medieval times a mansion was built: there was also a Chapel with a graveyard here then. What remains in Kingsmead Road is not medieval, but dates from about 1550 when a new mansion was built more or less on top of where the Chapel and graveyard had been. The aristocratic families who lived here over the centuries included the Lygon, Grevil and Dormer families. You can see how the nearby modern road-names Lygon Walk, Dormer Road and Grevil Road were derived. Some books say that Arle Court was virtually demolished in 1880, but you can tell that what is still standing here still contains some very old brickwork. For example, the way that several windows are bricked up shows that the frontage you can see was already standing in the days when there was a Window Tax, that is, before 1851.

In Victorian times, the owner moved himself to a new mansion that he made by redeveloping an old farmhouse called Redgrove off Hatherley Lane: this was renamed Arle Court, hence the two buildings of the same name. This is also the significance of the street-name Redgrove Road near here.

After 1880, Arle Court was just a farmer's house, with a range of farm buildings opposite. The farm buildings, including a dairy, were demolished in 1951 to enable the construction of new houses: nos.6-12 Kingsmead Road are now on their site. Nos.9-41 Kingsmead Road and Kingsmead Close were built in the garden of the old house in 1963.

((The following route crosses the grassy park. If the grass is exceptionally wet or boggy, an alternative shorter route would be sticking to Arle Road for 150m as far as its junction with Brooklyn Road. A longer and drier alternative would be to enter the park 130m further north along PE Way beyond Providence Park flats, and continue along Chelt Walk for 460m to the steps, then at the top of the steps turn right to follow the ancient footpath (beside the empty school site) for 210m, then turn right again at Arle Road. In Arle Road, after 90m notice no.136 Arle Road (see Note 36) on the left, and proceed a further 110m to junction of Brooklyn Gardens. The shorter route reduces your walk by 380m / a quarter mile, the longer route increases your walk by 540m / 0.4 miles)).

Proceed 140m across grass of park: keep generally to the right, cutting across the first corner but entering the second corner, where a lamp-post indicates the presence of a footpath entrance.

Follow the narrow tarmac pathway for 30m to emerge by no.50 Brooklyn Gardens.

Keep right (but don't enter the maisonettes at Brooklyn Court). Follow the zigzag of Brooklyn Gardens (even numbers from 40 down to 2) for 220m to emerge at Arle Road. Notice Merriville (no.160 Arle Road) roughly opposite: see Note 36. Regarding Brooklyn Court, Gardens and Road, see Note 37.

Turn right into Arle Road ((pick up longer diversion at this point)) and proceed 140m to the junction of Brooklyn Road. ((Pick up shorter diversion at this point)).

**Note 32** The boundary between no.9 Kingsmead Road and Baylis's car showroom corresponds to an ancient track, which led northwards to Arle Mill. This ancient watermill was located behind the Big Yellow Storage Co site. The story of Arle Mill will have to wait for a different set of walks.

**Note 33** No.2 Kingsmead Road is a farm cottage, probably built around 1922, and sometimes known as The Chestnuts because of the huge tree outside (which itself has been dated no later than 1885). Houses nos.7-12 Princess Elizabeth Way were built in its garden in 1962.

**Note 34** Baylis Vauxhall dealership opened in 2008. Previously on the site were British Bakeries in 1961, makers of 'Mother's Pride,' followed by Burton's Model Bakery. They were followed by printing companies Linotype Paul and then Itek Colour Graphics.

**Note 35** The path between the flats is part of an ancient highway, which included Arle Road and Kingsmead Road. The flats to the left, Providence Park, went up in 2005, on the former site of Parkside Adult Opportunities Centre, a day centre run by the Council since at least 1965. The flats 198-228 Arle Road are of 1956.

**Note 36** Brighton Gardens at 136 Arle Road was an old smallholding. The house dates from 1876. Nearby, Merriville at 160 Arle Road was another old smallholding (1920 or earlier).

Notice no.252 Brooklyn Road at the corner here, and Grevil Road: see Note 38. Turn left into Brooklyn Road. Proceed along Brooklyn Road for 140m, where you can notice on your right the absence of no.218 Brooklyn Road (where there is a footpath to Marchant Close between nos.216 & 220) – see Note 38.

Continue a further 150m along Brooklyn Road, then turn right at the mini-roundabout into Orchard Way.

Proceed along Orchard Way. After 180m notice St Barnabas' on right and Umbrella on left: see Note 39 regarding these.

Continue along Orchard Way a further 180m to PE Way.

Divert slightly to your left, and cross PE Way at traffic lights, totalling 40m. Notice Tanners Lane ahead, see Note 40.

Turn right, and proceed along Princess Elizabeth Way 70m to the junction of Kingsmead Avenue, passing the Catholic Church, see Note 41. Auckland House and New Zealand House are opposite you.

**Note 37** Brooklyn House was the name of a Victorian house and smallholding (here by 1891). When Brooklyn Road was being built, it took its name from this market garden. Even though in 1921 when the road was commenced only a few houses were built at the far end, off Tennyson Road (see Note 100), it was always intended that this new road would extend north as far as Arle Road and eventually continue to Tewkesbury Road, passing Brooklyn House. This would have created a western bypass for Cheltenham, something which was only later achieved in 1957 when PE Way was completed. As it turned out, most of the houses in Brooklyn Road were built in 1937. North of Arle Road, the grounds of Brooklyn House were covered with a new housing estate

named Brooklyn Gardens in 1946. The old house itself still stood within the estate until about 1970, when it was replaced by the eight dwellings called Brooklyn Court.

**Note 38** Grevil Road was developed between 1952-7, and is named after the local aristocratic family of Arle Court: see Note 31. (Grevil was usually spelled Grevell at the time, or Greville in more recent centuries). No.252 Brooklyn Road is an old smallholder's house, once known as Ashley Gardens, shown on the 1884 map but probably here by 1844. Another old smallholder's dwelling was Bungalow Gardens (1921 or older), which was addressed as 218 Brooklyn Road until Marchant Close was built on the site (about 1990).

**Note 39** Orchard Way was laid out for housing in 1938, following the line of an ancient footpath which connected Alstone Lane to Tanners Lane. It was around Orchard Way and Orchard Avenue that the Council started building work on the Hester's Way Estate after World War II, because this is where commercial builders had had to finish as the War began. Some individual houses were even left half-finished in 1940, due to a lack of materials and labour, and were then completed in 1951

The public house itself was about to be built before the War, and its building materials were left on-site carefully cordoned off. A new design was made in 1948, but opened in 1954 temporarily in the building which is now the skittles alley at the back. The name is said to commemorate the umbrella of Neville Chamberlain. St. Barnabas' Church was established in a temporary building in 1946; the present permanent building dates from 1973, with a Hall added in 1991. Speed bumps in Orchard Way were installed in 1997. Pennsylvania Avenue dates from 1952-3.

Turn left into Kingsmead Avenue and follow it. Notice after 180m Dormer Road on your right.

Then after a further 140m notice Redgrove Road on your right. See Note 42 regarding these street-names.

Proceed a further 50m along Kingsmead Avenue to reach point E.

## D to C SHORT ROUTE

### BRICKWORKS PATH (Distance: 0.49km / 0.3 miles)

Exit S.C.R.C. (Point D), turn right. Observe the history board at the entrance to the park, see Note 43 for other facts. Keep right, on the tarmac path diagonally across Springfield Park. After 100m notice the information board on wildlife.

After a further 50m notice the wind turbine.

After a further 190m notice another copy of the history board. Notice also at this point Challis scrapyard's site to your right, see Notes 44 & 47, and the sawmill / brickyard's site to your left, see Note 45. The tarmac footpath which crosses to your left and right here (at the history board) is an ancient path.

After a further 120m emerge on Hester's Way Lane, beside Park View. Notice the site of the original St Silas (Note 44).

Turn left and proceed 50m to the mini-roundabout at the junction of Hester's Way Road (Point C).

**Note 40** Orchard Way was built along the alignment of an ancient footpath. At the Village Road end of that path were several cottages in Tanners Lane, an ancient highway. Two of these old cottages have survived: Elmhurst and Woodbine

Cottage. Woodbine Cottage dates from around 1840. Elmhurst was built in 1919 on the site of an earlier smaller dwelling Elm Cottage, which had been here since at least 1830. Both were empty for many years before being renovated in 2002.

**Note 41** The Catholic Church congregation first met here in the Hall in 1962. The large car-park is the location of the hexagonal church building proper, with a glass-fibre spire, which opened in 1966, but closed in 2010, and was demolished in 2011. The congregation now meet in the Hall again. Auckland House and New Zealand House are from 1954.

**Note 42** Kingsmead Avenue, Redgrove Road and Dormer Road date from 1952-3. See Note 31 regarding the significance of the road-names.

**Note 43** The diagonal path was created in 2003, as were the two little playgrounds, one by the Ron Smith Pavilion and one in the middle of the park. The Resource Centre opened in 2007, when Welch Road Playing Fields were renamed Spring Field Park. The turbine went up in 2010.

**Note 44** A short way along Hester's Way Lane, St. Mark's Church established a Mission Hall in 1885 for the local people of the Hester's Way area. Locally known as the Tin Church, it was officially named St. Silas in 1952. In 1985 the congregation moved to the present site further along Hester's Way Road, and the houses called Park View were built on its site in 1990. The plot behind this was Challis's scrapyard (see Note 47 below), and it was in this area behind Beaumont Drive that a Tiger Moth plane crashed in 1959, when the pilot 'Max' Maxwell struck a power cable whilst crop-spraying.

## C to D WEST ROUTE

### FIELDS PATH (Distance: 1.45km / 0.9 miles)

From the junction of Hester's Way Road and Hester's Way Lane (Point C), proceed 50m along Hester's Way Lane (to entrance of path across park). See Note 45 regarding Hester's Way Lane.

Proceed a further 40m along Hester's Way Lane. Notice Park View (on St Silas site) on your right, as described in Note 44. On the left are shops, see Note 46.

Continue along Hester's Way Lane. After a further 80m notice a house called Clenver on your right (no.21 Hester's Way Lane). See Note 47.

After a further 180m reach the junction of Springbank Way. At this junction see Note 48.

Turn right into Springbank Way, and follow this for 120m. See Note 49. Stop when you reach the bus-stops by no.15 Springbank Way. This is the division between the 1970 and 1980 development. An ancient footpath crosses here. Turn left into this footpath.

**Note 45** Hester's Way Road is an ancient highway (compare Note 59). In 1869 an entrepreneurial farmer decided to develop the area. He created two long driveways, and divided up the fields either side of them into smallholdings, which people could buy and build a house on. The two tracks have become Hester's Way Lane and Springbank Road. The development was a mixed success. A plot on the corner of Hester's Way Road and Hester's Way Lane was taken not for market gardening but for quarrying. The soil had the right

quality for brickmaking, and a kiln was set up on the site around 1880 (behind where Bayliss House is now). The brickmaker's cottage stood at the far corner of the brickworks (see Note 47 below), then later a bungalow stood nearer the junction around 1922-1961. In the 1930s to 40s, a sawmill operated here.

**Note 46** A plot opposite the brickworks / sawmill site was occupied by a smallholding called The Poplars, built around 1900, which more recently also acted as a grocer's shop. In the fields around The Poplars a huge encampment of cabins and caravans stood briefly in 1952, where builders Wimpey housed hundreds of migrant workers who worked on building the main Hester's Way Estate. About 1965, The Poplars was replaced by the existing shops on the same site, now Champion Chippy (formerly The Seagull) and Nisa Store. The modern housing along Hester's Way Lane here with Beaumont Road went up in 1965-66, and Beaumont Drive added from 1967.

**Note 47** Some cottages developed in the 1920s/30s alongside the Chapel described in Note 44. The first house, no.15 Hester's Way Lane known as 'Old Silas' was originally called Charmion, and was built about 1927. A Mr Challis lived here and operated a scrapyard behind the house until the 1960s, on the site of the Victorian dwelling known as Brick Kiln Cottage, now part of the park behind. The next three houses were developed by a Mr Grace about 1937. The first of these, Bredon Hill View, was for a long time the home and headquarters of Thomas Hopkins, who delivered milk locally until at least 1975, originally by pony and trap. The builder Mr Grace went on to live in the third house here called Clenver; his wife was still living here up until 1997.

After 100m of path, emerge into Somergate Road – crossing diagonally the tarmac parking area.

Follow for 160m the left-hand side of Somergate Road, (nos.55 down to 1).

((An alternative route is to follow the ancient footpath running behind nos.55 to 1 Somergate Road, beside the school playing field. This is longer by 40m. Emerge into a concrete parking area and turn right beside no.1 Somergate Road. Notice here the ancient right of way heads out into the fields: there is a stile within the hedge, but that path is for serious walkers only! The stiles are a bit dodgy)).

In Somergate Road, opposite no.1, take the path leading between nos.16 & 18. Follow this for 40m to emerge by no.9 Hazledean Road.

Keep ahead in Hazledean Road for 90m, passing in front of nos.36 to 20 and then left across the concrete parking area to the left of no.18, towards a red bin in the far corner.

Follow the tarmac path (which is an ancient right of way) beside the open fields for 140m. Turn right where there is a hole in the wooden fence, (not the first gap, but the second) leading into the bottom of cul-de-sac Gristmill Close, between nos.35 and 26.

Follow Gristmill Close straight ahead for 120m. Regarding this street-name, see Note 50.

**Note 48** Near the junction of Hester's Way Lane and Springbank Road can be seen some of the other smallholders' cottages that were developed. At the junction is a cottage of about 1910 called The Homestead: it's a bit hidden by a willow tree and can be seen more clearly on one of our other walks. Between The Homestead and the Primary Academy

can be seen leading westwards the tail end of the original track laid out in 1869. This leads to a cottage called Springbank, which you might just be able to see beyond the school. (Whether or not this is the origin of the name of this locality is discussed in Note 63). Beyond that lie two more old dwellings, now known as Hope Cottage and Hope Farm: see Note 65.

**Note 49** Springbank Close dates from 1966, but many of the houses in Springbank Way are later, from 1968-71, whilst further along they date from 1979/80. The school here opened in 1971. Originally called Arthur Dye School after a former mayor who had also been Chairman of the Cheltenham Education Committee in the 1940s, it was renamed Springbank Primary Academy in 2011.

**Note 50** When a housing estate is developed, road-names have to be invented. One idea which is often used by Councils and developers is to look at an old farm map, on which the fields had names, and then to adapt the field-names into road-names. This is what happened on the Cavendish Park and Arle Farm Estates around 1983-5. However, the map they used was not of farms in the Hester's Way area (although such maps do exist) but rather of the Swindon Village area. The names borrowed in this way for the Cavendish Park Estate include Wheat Land, Shepherd Close, and Grist Mill, whilst on the Arle Farm Estate they made use of Corn Mead, Barley Close, Rye Meadow and Bushy Close.

Some actual old field-names of this vicinity (which ought to be used for road-names in any upcoming development around here) include The Shallows, Rump of Beef, Shoulder of Mutton, Fox's Close, Snapes Piece, Gotheridge, Toghills, etc.

At the entrance to Gristmill Close on Harry Yates Way, proceed straight across. This leads into the bottom of the short cul-de-sac Shepherd Close. Follow Shepherd Close for 40m.

Continue straight ahead in Willowbrook Drive for 60m, to its junction with Watermoor Close.

Opposite Watermoor Close, take the footpath which bears left, along the frontages of nos.15-25 Willowbrook Drive. Follow this for 100m.

Emerge at Springbank Way roundabout near the bus-stop. Cross the roundabout and the Resource Centre car park for 130m, keeping to the right. See Note 51.

Arrive at S.C.R.C. (Point D).

## C to D EAST ROUTE

### DIGNITARIES PATH (Distance: 1.23km / 0.8 miles)

Start at Point C, the mini-roundabout by no.68 Hester's Way Road, the junction with Hester's Way Lane. Follow Hester's Way Road northwards, as it curves to the right. After 230m notice the old oak-tree at the junction of Home Close: see Note 52. Notice also Pennington Court opposite.

Continue along Hester's Way Road, after 90m passing the Post Office.

After a further 100m turn left into Village Road. At this junction, notice Edward Wilson House behind you (see Note 73), and old houses nos.1-7 Village Road, see Note 53.

**Note 51** The roundabout at the end of Springbank Way dates from 1986, as part of an urgently-seen need for facilities for the new estates: the buses were rerouted along here, and the Shopping Centre built. At the time of writing, the Sunrise Chinese Takeaway, here since 1990 at least, is the only shop functioning. A surgery and pharmacy were also here by 1990, but have since moved into the Resource Centre. Other shops included a Post Office, from 1996-2003.

**Note 52** Home Close was the starting point of the main Hester's Way Estate development in 1952. (See also Note 87 for the significance of the street-name Home Close). The shops and nearby houses were built in 1952, with the Post Office surviving here since then. The Co-op has been here since 2008. Other shops previously here included a chemist's, fishmonger's and butcher's.

Pennington Court was added in 2001: I'm not sure whether the street was named after former mayor (and freeman of Cheltenham) James Pennington, or if it commemorates councillor Andrew Pennington who was killed earlier in that year in a vindictive assault at his party political offices. Maybe both.

**Note 53** Village Road and Hester's Way Road are both ancient highways. Village Road had various cottages along its length whilst Hester's Way Road was merely a farm track through the fields. At the junction of the two highways was once a small green, of which the west side has been absorbed into the school playing field. The east side of the green was in around 1760 occupied by a cottage called Box Cottage which still stands. Nos.1-7 Village Road, built about 1934, occupy part of the garden of Box Cottage. So do Tanners Cottages, built right up against Box Cottage in about 1882.

Proceed along Village Road 80m, notice on your right Box Cottage, Tanners Cottages and Tanners Lane. Regarding other old cottages nearby see Note 54 (also Note 40).

Continue a further 70m along Village Road, then turn left into Dill Avenue, by Hester's Way School. See Note 55.

Follow Dill Avenue for 190m, then turn right into Lipson Road. Regarding these road-names, as well as Milne Walk and Ismay Road, see Note 56.

Follow Lipson Road for 110m, then turn left into Welch Road.

Follow Welch Road for just 80m, then turn right into the car-parking area (between nos.54 and 56 Welch Road).

Follow the path straight across Springfield Park: after 50m notice the small embankment that you climb over: see Note 57.

After a further 230m reach S.C.R.C., point D.

**Note 54** Other old cottages also stood near here, including a pair called Brown's Cottages which were here by 1830, just north of Tanners Lane until 1951, where nos.25 & 27 Village Road are now. Another pair of cottages had the names The Rose Trees and The Woodbines: they dated from around 1860, but were replaced about 1962 by the present nos.35 & 37 Village Road (directly opposite Dill Avenue). The Woodbines incorporated Arle Post Office, roughly from 1935

to 1953.

(Why were some old cottages demolished and not others? Some went for road-widening, others were probably riddled with dry-rot due to lack of maintenance).

**Note 55** Hester's Way Junior School opened in 1966, with infants added in 1967. Another old feature of Arle Village that used to be in this area was a pond, a sort of village pond, known by the locals as The Sitch. It stood behind where nos.3-5 Dill Avenue are now.

**Note 56** Welch Road and the adjoining streets were developed between 1952 and 1957 (mostly 1954-56). The roads in this area are named after people. Welch Road is named after the Welch family, who owned the mansion called Arle House and also the land on which this part of the estate is built. See also Note 27. Other roads were named after people who had acquired the title Freeman of the Borough of Cheltenham. Some of these were of military significance: Major General Lord H.L. Ismay, wartime staff officer to Churchill and Field-Marshalls Lord Milne and Sir John Greer Dill. Some were local dignitaries: former mayor John Howell and former mayor and M.P. Daniel Leopold Lipson.

**Note 57** In the mid-1950s when the Springbank Estates did not yet exist, this embankment marked the edge of the Hester's Way Estate. It actually covers a sewage pipe, but the plan was to run a by-pass just beyond it, running from Gloucester Road to Tewkesbury Road. At that date Princess Elizabeth Way had not been finished and there were even disagreements (in Parliament) over whether it would be finished. Welch Road Playing Fields were renamed Spring Field Park in about 2007.

# HESTER'S WAY LOCAL HISTORY WALKS

See the maps for the location of the points that I've labelled as A, B, C, D and E, which are from south to north up the estate. B is the Hester's Way Resource Centre, D is the Springbank Resource Centre. For convenience, I've produced two booklets, for north (Springbank) and south (Hester's Way).

The routes provide you various options. I've alternated the directions of the routes to encourage circular or figure-of-8 rambles. My route information may seem unnecessarily detailed, as if you had to find your way in thick fog after the road signs had all been taken away! But this is to make sure that you don't interpret historical information about a road as an instruction to follow that road. Also, to help you when following the route in the reverse direction.

Distances were measured by GPS. You might normally cover 3mph or more if you aim to break into a sweat, but bear in mind (if time is a factor) that if you keep stopping to read out notes, you may only manage 2mph. Regrettably, many routes are not suitable for wheelchairs: some may suit pushchairs.

Every street has a history. Dates are given for many roads (that is, the date when people began to move in to the houses, to within a year either way. I've extracted many dates from the electoral registers). Where I have used the word 'ancient' for a highway, it existed way back, in the form of a farm-track: I would guess most of these to date from the Norman era, about 900 years ago. Some may be even older.

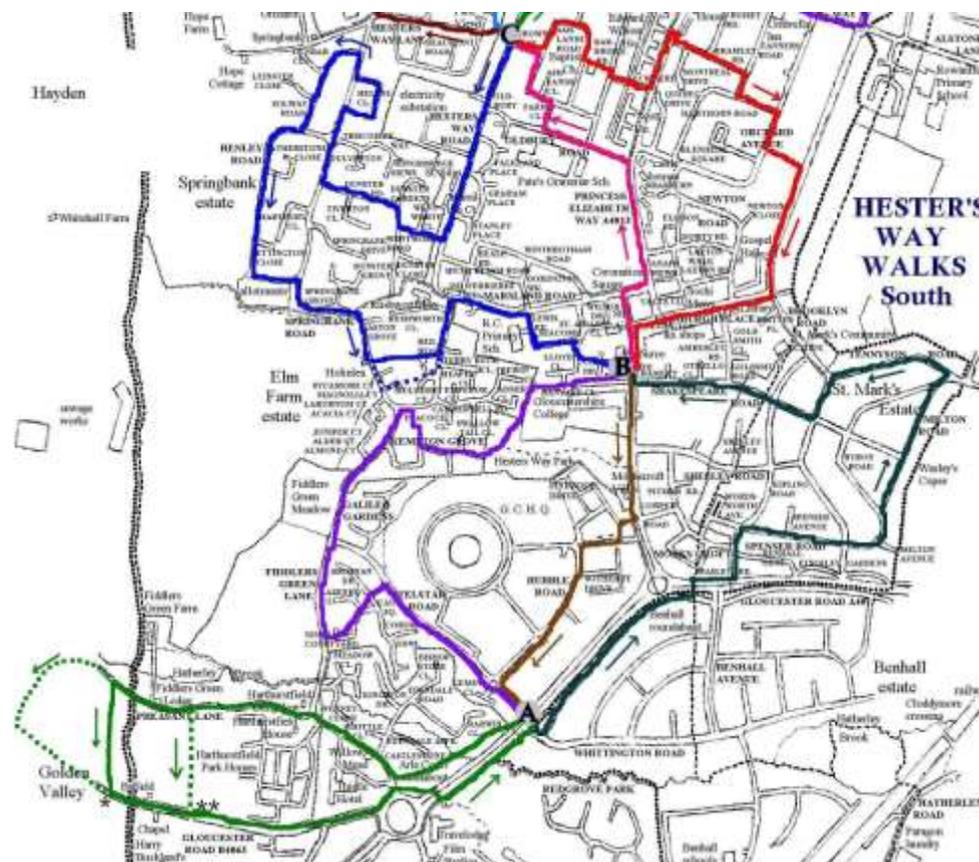
Likewise, anything else I've described as 'ancient' is probably around 900 years old. (It seems most likely to me that the Normans, c.1070-1100, reorganised the English landscape hugely. In our area, they probably left the Saxon parish boundaries intact, and maybe left alone some of the existing lanes and pastures in the Fiddlers Green area, but all other local highways, and all other field and property boundaries, were probably altered).

I wouldn't recommend boring your walkers by reading out every historical detail. In particular, beware of gathering them round to listen on the verge of a busy road. Anyone who has extra information, corrections, or burning questions that they want to send me can email

me at [davidnedgar64@gmail.com](mailto:davidnedgar64@gmail.com).

The First Edition was printed in December 2013. This Second Edition of July 2015 contains few changes to the history notes, but several corrections to the route instructions.

- p.3 C to B WEST ROUTE
- p.11 C to B EAST ROUTE
- p.15 B to C SHORT ROUTE
- p.17 B to A SHORT ROUTE
- p.21 A to B EAST ROUTE
- p.25 A to B WEST ROUTE
- p.29 A to A LOOP ROUTE
- p.37 A to A LOOP ROUTE LONGER ALTERNATIVE



## C to B WEST ROUTE

### SMALLHOLDINGS PATH (Distance: 3.21km / 2.0 miles)

Start at the junction of Hester's Way Road and Hester's Way Lane (Point C).

Proceed uphill along Hester's Way Road: see Note 58. After 180m, notice Oldbury Road to your left. (The name Oldbury is explained in Note 87). Observe also to your right a driveway to various houses, see Note 59.

After a further 110m along Hester's Way Road, notice Falkland Place on your left, and new flats on your right, on former site of pub: Note 60.

After a further 50m, notice the electricity substation site on your right; Note 61.

After a further 90m, notice St Silas and Hamilton Court on the right.

After a further 110m (opposite no.170 Hester's Way Road), turn right into Wentworth Road. See Note 62.

**Note 58** Although this street is an ancient highway, the first use of the name "Hester's Way Road" I've found recorded is in 1943. Most of the housing here dates from 1955. This includes the side roads, whose names follow a theme used throughout the Estate of Commonwealth countries and

capitals: Falkland (Islands) and (Port) Stanley. Graham Place of 1956 presumably derives from Graham Land, a territory near the Falklands.

**Note 59** In the late-1860s, new tracks were laid across the farm fields west of Hester's Way Farm, and the land was divided into plots of a couple of acres with the intention that smallholders' cottages would begin to develop along these sections of road. (Compare Note 45). This attempt at redevelopment was not a great success – Cheltenham was not growing at that date. Some market gardens developed along Hester's Way Road itself, which we pass here. Others were on the newly laid-out tracks, which we will come across later in this walk. One was called The Rockeries, built by 1921 and demolished around 1964: its driveway survives as the drive opposite Oldbury Road, which now leads to a couple of more modern houses. Another smallholding was called Rothdale or Revells, also built in the early 1920s, demolished around 1959. It was replaced by the MEB offices, now where St Silas is.

**Note 60** The Tankard & Castle was a pub built in 1959. It had various changes of name, being the Goat & Bicycle from 1988, and Winners No.1 from 1997. It closed down finally in 2002, and flats and houses have been built on the site, apparently named Silas Court (2013).

**Note 61** The electricity substation moved here in 1928, and the building (of somewhat art-deco style) which housed the transformers survived here until 2003. The MEB's office buildings were built adjoining in 1961, where Revells had been (see Note 59). After these became unused, one block was converted into housing, Hamilton Court, in 1988. The other building became St Silas Church in 1985 (see Note 44).

Proceed 120m along Wentworth Road. At the end, turn right at the junction with Dunster Road (opposite no.22 Dunster Road).

After 40m, follow Dunster Road round its left-hand bend (opposite no.7 Dunster Road).

Follow Dunster Road for a further 180m to the end. Emerge onto Springbank Road opposite no.65 Springbank Road, see Note 63. Turn right into Springbank Road.

After 110m go straight on at the roundabout at the junction of Triscombe Way.

After 80m along Springbank Road, turn right into the footpath leading between nos.44 and 46 Springbank Road. (This is opposite no.35 Springbank Road, see Note 63).

Follow this footpath for 60m into the tail end of Helens Close, and bear left.

Follow Helens Close for 130m back to Springbank Road, into which turn right.

After 50m, notice no.20 Springbank Road on your right, see Note 64. Notice also The Homestead visible further up ahead to your right, see Note 48. However, at this point cross Springbank Road and take the left-hand turn into Solway Road.

Follow Solway Road for 220m.

**Note 62** The turning of Wentworth Road off Hester's Way Road is the site of Tichborne Cottage, which was perhaps the first of the batch of smallholders' dwellings that sprang up on

the west side of Hester's Way after 1867 (as mentioned above, Note 59). Various market gardeners lived here. It was last inhabited in 1962. The houses around Wentworth Road went up in 1964. Those of Dunster Road went up between 1964 and 1966 (with Dunster Gardens added in 1988).

**Note 63** Springbank Road was developed in the late-1960s, but the highway follows the route of one of the tracks laid down in the 1869 to encourage smallholders to move in. (See Note 59). The Turner family were one of the first to do so, they had a dwelling called Ivy Cottage, which continued to be inhabited until 1958, then was demolished about 1965. It stood about where no.65 Springbank Road is now, these houses having been built on its site in 1968. Another cottage once stood roughly where no.35 Springbank Road is now. Here by 1911, it was called Spring Cottage or Springbank Cottage, and is therefore apparently the origin of the street name and therefore of the area name. (Although, just to confuse these matters, there was another nearby dwelling called Springbank. This was older, of about 1880, and it still stands near Hope Farm, but it does not appear directly to have been the source of the road-name).

The houses around no.35 Springbank Road, including those along Solway Road and Helens Close, date from 1966. Triscombe Way and the nearby houses date from 2004.

**Note 64** Reputedly built from an old railway carriage in about 1936, no.20 Springbank Road was a smallholding known as The Brow.

**Note 65** At the far end of the original track called Hester's Way Lane are two of the original smallholders' dwellings, Hope Farm from about 1871, Hope Cottage by 1891 (although the latter was rebuilt about 1990).

At the end of Solway Road, turn right into Henley Road. For preference, cut 100m across the grassy space from no.21 Solway Road towards no.22 Henley Road, between the pylons: this also gives a better view of Hope Cottage and Hope Farm across the fields to the right: see Note 65.

Follow Henley Road (on either side: pavement or verge) for 340m, noting fields to your right, and Terry Ashdown Allotments at the bend (by no.86 Henley Road).

Stay in Henley Road (on either side) as it bears left, and follow it for a further 120m to its junction with Springbank Road. At Springbank Road turn right. See Note 66.

Follow Springbank Road for 60m (crossing over either at the start opposite no.96 Springbank Road or at the end by no.104 Springbank Road). Where the road bears sharp left, notice an ancient right of way in front of you and leading off to your right beside the allotments.

After a further 140m, just beyond Springbank Store, note where the same ancient path leads off to your left (between four concrete pillars).

Continue downhill on Springbank Road for a further 130m, and notice the entrance to a house on your right, signposted 'Holmlea Farm Caravans'. See Note 67.

Two alternative routes from this point (the red bin at the bottom of the park):

If the grass isn't too soggy, turn left and proceed 160m along the bottom of the playing field, to emerge through the small gap in the hedge into Fiddlers Green Lane (opposite Royal Court). ((Or you can also cross the park diagonally uphill, which saves 30m)).

((Alternatively if the park is too muddy, cut through the Elm Farm Estate (Note 68), that is: continue a further 70m along Springbank Road, taking the second turning on the left (opposite the phonebox) into Magnolia Court. Follow Magnolia Court for 80m, taking the path leading straight ahead; this leads in front of no.19 Mulberry Court. Continue 60m straight ahead across Redwood Court (passing nos.21 and 2). Emerge on Fiddlers Green Lane opposite Terry Ruck Close. Turn left. Proceed 30m up Fiddlers Green Lane to the small gap in the hedge at the bottom corner of the playing field, where meet up with the main route. This alternative is only 80m longer, totalling 2.1 miles)).

**Note 66** Henley Road and its offshoots date from 1969, whilst the last houses in Springbank Road including Springbank Store date from 1970. However, the last section of highway itself, linking to Fiddlers Green Lane, dates from about 1974.

**Note 67** The street Aston Grove dates from 1981. The house called Holmlea which you can see through the gateway was built in about 2008, but it replaced a much older cottage here, shown for example on a map of 1834.

**Note 68** The Elm Farm red brick courts date from 1977. Terry Ruck Close dates from 1988 (as indicated by a plaque on no.2).

**Note 69** Royal Court dates from 1987, and Wychwood House behind it from 1989. Rushworth Close (1972-3) and Rushworth House (1974) opposite were built for the Schoolmasters Association Ltd.

Proceed up Fiddlers Green Lane for 70m to the top edge of the playing field. (This is probably a good place to cross over Fiddlers Green Lane). See Note 69.

Proceed a further 60m to the mini-roundabout at the end of Fiddlers Green Lane, at the junction of Hester's Way Road and Marsland Road (and opposite De Ferrieres Walk). Turn right into Marsland Road. See Note 70.

Follow Marsland Road for 180m. Turn right (opposite Dorington Walk) into Lewis Road (by St Thomas More School). See Note 71.

Follow Lewis Road for 80m, and at the end turn left into Seacome Road.

Follow Seacome Road for 90m, then turn right into a pathway. (This is not the first pathway, near Lewis Road, but the second one, opposite flats 27-37 Seacome Road).

Follow this path for 40m into Lloyd Close (by no.12 Lloyd Close).

Bear left on a path in Lloyd Close (by no.9 Lloyd Close). Follow this path for 50m (to near no.6 Lloyd Close). Emerge into Cassin Drive. See Note 72.

Cross Cassin Drive, and diagonally cross the car-park for 60m, to the back door of Hester's Way Resource Centre (Point B).

**Note 70** De Ferrieres Walk of 1954 commemorates Baron Charles de Ferrieres, a Dutchman, who had been the mayor of Cheltenham in 1876, and later the local M.P. Most of the housing on Marsland Road dates from 1953 (Shaftesbury Court and Glevum Court date from 1989). Marsland Road is named after Gilbert Marsland, who was the Surveyor for the Borough Council between 1933 and 1960, and was therefore responsible for the layout of the Hester's Way Estate, as well as Whaddon, and also designed Sandford Lido in 1935. He was also responsible for the landscaping work including the tree-planting.

**Note 71** Dorington Walk of 1953 commemorates Sir John Dorrington, a member of a long-established Cheltenham family. Lewis and Seacome Roads date from 1953, and are named after magistrate David Lewis, and Cheltenham's town clerk (between 1903 and 1941) Robert Seacome. St. Thomas More School opened in 1975.

**Note 72** Monkscroft Secondary School opened in 1956. Later, the buildings were used by the girls of Pate's Grammar School, then closed around 1990. The large site was redeveloped in 2002, including the construction of the Community Resource Centre and adjoining Youth Centre and Police Station, as well as the housing of Cassin Drive and Banyard and Lloyd Closes, these three streets being named after local councillors.

## C to B EAST ROUTE

### ORCHARDS PATH (Distance: 2.06km / 1.3 miles)

Start at point C, (the junction of Hester's Way Road and Hester's Way Lane).

Turn into Brown Close, and follow it for 80m. At the end, turn left into Ashlands Road, (opposite no.55 Ashlands Road).

Follow the right-hand curve of Ashlands Road. After 130m notice Home Close to your left. (For Home Close see Note 52).

After a further 100m, turn left into a footpath between no.104 Ashlands Road and the Baptist Church (see Note 73).

Follow the path for 80m, emerging by no.26 Barbridge Road. Cross Barbridge Road and proceed roughly straight ahead into Lechmere Road.

Follow Lechmere Road for 100m, between Edward Wilson House to your left and Scott House to your right. See Note 74.

Emerge onto Princess Elizabeth Way. Turn left. Follow the main road for 130m.

Opposite you is Bramley Road, which is where you want to be. If (as usual) the main road PE Way is busy, divert 90m to use the crossing island by Telford House.

Proceed up Bramley Road. After 40m, notice Montreal Drive on your right. See Note 75.

Proceed another 160m along Bramley Road. At the end, turn right, into Tanners Road (opposite no.34 Tanners Road). See Note 76.

**Note 73** Hester's Way Baptist Church was built in 1957, established by house-groups from Salem and Cambray churches in town.

**Note 74** These estates were built in 1953. Lechmere Road was named after a local landowning family, squires of Boddington and Staverton. Scott and Edward Wilson Houses commemorate Dr Edward Wilson of Leckhampton who accompanied Capt. Robert F. Scott on his expedition to the South Pole in 1910, and died with him there two years later. For the significance of the other street-names here (Brown, Ashlands, Barbridge) see Note 87.

**Note 75** Telford House was built in 1960. The flats of Canada House, and flanking it Quebec and Montreal Houses, were built in 1953-4. They were demolished in 2001 and replaced by housing. Montreal Drive was built in 2003.

**Note 76** Bramley Road was built 1951-2, Russet Road in 1953. Like other road-names here, they continue the 'orchard' theme, reflecting the earlier land-use here, by using the names of apple varieties. (E.g. Blenheim, Newton, Laxton). Hawthorn represents the main hedging plant used to divide up the old orchards. Hawthorn Road and Tanners Road were started in 1938-40 and further developed in 1951-2.

Follow Tanners Road for 60m. At the end, turn left, into Hawthorn Road (opposite flats 26-36 Hawthorn Road).

Follow Hawthorn Road for 100m. At the end, turn right, into Orchard Avenue (opposite nos.72-78 Orchard Avenue).

After 80m along Orchard Avenue, turn left into a narrow path (alongside no.106a Orchard Avenue, or opposite no.89 Orchard Avenue).

Follow the path for 110m. Emerge from the footpath, between no.104 and 112 Brooklyn Road. Turn right along Brooklyn Road, uphill. (Note 77).

Proceed up Brooklyn Road. After 180m, notice on the right houses nos.66a & 66b: see Note 78.

Proceed a further 70m up Brooklyn Road. Notice Elgar House flats on the right. See Note 79.

Proceed a further 80m along Brooklyn Road. At corner, notice King George V playing fields on left, Britten Place up ahead, Edinburgh Place on right, and Coates House on far right. See Note 80.

Turn right into Edinburgh Place. Proceed 100m ahead. Notice Library. (It's probably best to cross Edinburgh Place here, just beyond the Library).

Continue ahead 180m along Edinburgh Place, passing the shops. See Note 81.

Continue into Coronation Square roundabout, passing more shops and keeping left, for 60m.

Bear left along Princess Elizabeth Way for 40m to the pedestrian crossing by Tasmania House (Note 82), where cross over and turn left. (For the mosaics here, see Note 83).

Proceed 90m along PE Way to Hester's Way Community Resource Centre (Point B).

**Note 77** Most houses in Brooklyn Road date from 1937, see Notes 37 & 100. However, the row on your left as you emerged from the path, numbered upwards from 112-126, were built - probably by the Council - in the 1950s.

**Note 78** Nos.66a & 66b Brooklyn Road stand where the entrance drive was into Pates Playing Fields in the 1930s/40s. In the early 1930s, Pate's Grammar School was still in the town centre, where there was no space for playing fields. They established new playing fields here, with the entrance off Brooklyn Road. A substantial pavilion building stood where Sochi Court was later built. The playing fields were compulsorily purchased in 1952, causing arguments which resulted in the resignation of the Headmaster. But most of the area purchased was not built on until the end of the 1950s.

**Note 79** Elgar House of 1961 is named after Worcestershire composer Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934), best known for his 'Enigma Variations' and 'Pomp and Circumstance.'

**Note 80** Edinburgh Place is named after the Duke of Edinburgh, the road-name having been proposed in 1953 in connection with the Princess Elizabeth and other Commonwealth themed road-names nearby. Coates House seems to have been the first of the musicians blocks, which date from 1961-2, and some of which were demolished in 2000 including Novello House which stood where nos.2-12 Edinburgh Place were built in 2001. Hester's Way Library opened in 1962.

## B to C SHORT ROUTE

### FARMHOUSE PATH (Distance: 1.11km / 0.7 miles)

From the front of the Hester's Way Centre (Point B), turn left towards Coronation Square. After 40m, notice the mosaics on your left: see Note 83.

After a further 90m, enter Coronation Square (with St Aidans on your left: see Note 84), where proceed straight ahead.

After a further 90m, reach the junction of Marsland Road. Turn right along Coronation Square.

After 60m turn left into Princess Elizabeth Way.

Proceed 70m along Princess Elizabeth Way. Notice to your right Annecy Court, Dowty Road and the 'castle' houses: see Note 85.

Proceed a further 240m along Princess Elizabeth Way, then turn left into Oldbury Road. (It's probably best to cross Oldbury Road here). See Note 74 regarding Scott House.

**Note 81** The shops were built in 1960: a plaque just inside Gresham Court notes the commencement of building in April 1959. Among the most successful businesses must be the fish-and-chip shop, here since at least 1963, now called The Codfather, in Goldsmith Road nearest the Library. The first shop to open was perhaps The Galleon Wine Co, in unit 48 Edinburgh Place, which is now BetFred bookmaker's. Unit 56 has been a chemist's since 1961, currently Lloyds. The main supermarket (unit 62-66) opened in 1960 as Burtons, later becoming Fine Fare, Solo, Somerfield and finally the Co-op. Another persistent business is Greggs bakers, which opened in 1963 as Leopold & Son.

On the north side of Edinburgh Place, the four blocks of flats

that formed Sochi Court were built in 1964-5, named after Cheltenham's twin-town (and venue of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Russia). The flats were demolished in 2003 and replaced with housing in 2004 including Sochi Mews.

**Note 82** The pub The Royal Toby which opened around 1965, was renamed The Lion around 1997, then the Gold Cup from 2002-5. Tasmania House dates from 1958.

**Note 83** The mosaics were installed in 2008. The mosaic maker has agreed with the interpretation that the place-name Hester's Way signifies the Way to the Ash Tree. You might like to discuss this, since many other meanings have been put forward, as well as recalling any versions of the Hester the Ghost or Witch story that you know of. The earliest documentation of the place-name (so far found) is in 1708 with the spelling Heisters Way, and then in 1721 as Haysters Way.

**Note 84** St. Aidan's Church was established in 1954 in an old army hut. The present building dates from 1959.

**Note 85** Annecy Court flats were built in 2006, replacing the Valley Service Station. This had been here since the early 1960s, run by Elf, though taken over by Total shortly before it closed in 2001. The six small blocks of flats named after castles were built in 1956.

**Note 86** Pate's Grammar School was founded in the town in 1574, and moved here in 1965 as Cheltenham Grammar School, when it was still for boys only. The girls' school, first at Pittville and then at Monkscroft, merged onto this site in 1986. The new buildings here opened in 1995, followed in 1996 by the demolition of the old dark building with a dome, which stood a little closer to P.E. Way.

After 110m along Oldbury Road, see Note 86 regarding Pate's School on your left, and Note 87 regarding road-names including Barbridge Road on your right.

After a further 120m along Oldbury Road, turn right into the footpath called Farm Close.

After 60m along the Farm Close footpath, emerge into Ashlands Road (opposite flats 11-23 Ashlands Road). This is the centre of Hester's Way: see Note 88.

Turn left at Ashlands Road and follow the curve of the road for 160m.

Turn left into Brown Close (opposite no.55 Ashlands Road). Follow Brown Close for 70m. Arrive close to the junction of Hester's Way Road and Hester's Way Lane, a few yards to your right (point C).

## **B to A SHORT ROUTE**

### **DO'NUT PATH (Distance: 1.02km / 0.6 miles)**

Exit the front of the Hester's Way Resource Centre (Point B), cross Banyard Close using the crossing and follow Princess Elizabeth Way southwards.

After 100m, notice Gloucestershire College on the right (described in Note 72), and Hobart House opposite on the left.

After a further 130m, notice the plaque at the entrance to Hester's Way Park, indicating its opening in 1957.

Add 50m to visit the oak tree planted by the Queen, just inside the park: see Note 89. Return to park entrance.

**Note 87** When it came to choosing road-names on our estate, some ideas were gleaned by referring to the names of the former fields which were being built over. Ashlands, Oldbury and Barbridge are three such ancient field-names, although the fields in question were not located in this exact area. Barbridge Field adjoined Bar Bridge, (that is, in the area between Old Gloucester Road and Village Road, centred on All Saints' Academy). Oldbury Meadow was in the north of that same vicinity, (where Waldrist Close is now). Ashlands Meadow was located in the area where Kingsmead Avenue is now. Field-names generally stayed the same for centuries, e.g Barbridge Feeld is recorded in 1606, Oldebury as far back as 1320. Ashland Field was documented in 1617.

Farm Close of course is named after the farmhouse. On many farms, the field closest to the farmhouse is known as the Home Field or Home Close, which supplied the street name Home Close nearby. One-time owners of the farm were the Brown family, hence the street-name Brown Close. All these streets date from 1953. (Ashlands Close was added about 1986).

**Note 88** This location (behind nos.1 & 3 Farm Close to be more precise) is the site of the original Hester's Way Farmhouse. An 1873 write-up by estate agents described it as "a Brick-Built Farm House, with Cottage adjoining, with yards, garden, stabling, cow byres, cider mill, piggeries and other useful out-offices." The last farmer here was Edgar Fletcher, up until 1951.

**Note 89** The tree planted by the Queen in 2004 has its own plaque too. The original tree of 1951 that it replaced was at a location near the junction of Hubble Road.

Continue along Princess Elizabeth Way. Notice Monkscroft Villas on your right, and Australia House opposite on your left. See Note 90. After 100m, the grass verge on your right opens out. Turn sharp right taking the rough path under a willow tree, which soon turns to tarmac. ((This verge can be muddy and slippery. If preferred just stick to Princess Elizabeth Way and turn right into Hubble Road: this would be just 10m extra)).

After 50m emerge between nos.25 and 27 Pinewood Drive, that is, opposite no.19 Pinewood Drive. Turn left.

Proceed 70m to the end of Pinewood Drive, bearing to the right of Tibbett Court flats. Turn right (downhill) into Hubble Road (but not sharp right into Pinewood Walk). Notice Sotherby Walk opposite. See Note 91.

Proceed 70m along Hubble Road, to the roundabout, where turn left.

Along Hubble Road, notice after 70m Sotherby Drive. After a further 90m along Hubble Road notice the GCHQ car park.

((Walking directly past GCHQ along Hubble Road can feel inhibiting. If anyone feels unable to do so, they can stick to the main roads, which is actually 80m shorter. Alternatively, descend either through Sotherby Walk, which saves 50m, or through Sotherby Drive which adds 90m compared to the suggested route, to emerge up some steps by a bus-stop on the A40 Gloucester Road. Or, at this point, you can follow the grassy path to the left of the GCHQ car park (& nature reserve) here, up to Gloucester Road, which adds 110m. These longer routes total 0.7 miles. Gloucester Road can then be followed to Point A: although it's a busy road, you can walk on the grass verge here)).

**Note 90** Hobart House with its distinctive central arch dates from 1960. Monkscroft Villas date from 1957. Australia House is from 1954.

**Note 91** The housing estates here were dubbed North Court and South Court. North Court was built in 2006, where the street-name Pinewood Drive appears to have been inspired by the nearby film studios in Hatherley Lane. South Court contains Sotherby Drive, built in 2007.

**Note 92** In 1940 the Ministry of Works bought up about half of Benhall Farm and built six single-storey office-blocks near Gloucester Road. When the London Blitz began, War Office staff moved into these. In 1942, the War Office staff returned to London, and in moved the 'Services of Supply' for the US Army. In 1944 they were replaced by the Ministry of Pensions. When they moved to Blackpool, G.C.H.Q. moved in in 1950 and slowly developed the site. By the mid-1970s, G.C.H.Q. was entirely based in Cheltenham. Redevelopment commenced in 2000 and was completed in 2004. The original 1940 office-blocks along Gloucester Road were demolished in 2004, followed by the last of the older buildings – (the large central tower, which had been built in about 1981).

**Note 93** The traffic lights at the junction of Gloucester Road and Telstar Road (Point A) were provided in 2001, although Telstar Road did not open as a through route to Fiddlers Green until 2003, and Hubble Road was not opened through to P.E. Way until 2005.

After a further 110m along Hubble Road, go straight on at the roundabout (at GCHQ's main entrance). Regarding GCHQ see Note 92, (but don't stand around for too long here!)

After 140m reach the roundabout with Telstar Road. Turn left. See Note 93.

Proceed 90m along Telstar Road to the junction with Gloucester Road. (Point A).

## A to B EAST ROUTE

### POETS PATH (Distance: 2.58km / 1.6 miles)

Cross the Gloucester Road at the crossing, for 40m. Take extreme care when crossing the Benhall slip road! Turn right.

Follow Gloucester Road for 40m, then turn left into Whittington Road, then immediately left again into Miserden Road.

((At this point, notice that there is a path leading between The Summerfield Nursing Unit opposite, see Note 94, and no.56 Whittington Road. This makes a pleasant grassy riverside walk, for future reference.))

Proceed along Miserden Road for 500m (you can use the grass verge for the first 220m if preferred). Continue until you have passed Edgeworth flats on your right, immediately after which, take the path to your left. See Note 95 regarding the Benhall Estate.

Take the steps leading down to the subway for 30m.

Go through the subway, then climb the steps to your right for 40m. Emerge on Gloucester Road near Monks Croft flats. See Note 96 regarding Monks Croft.

**Note 94** Amber Wood Care Home was built in 2010, renamed The Summerfield Nursing Unit in 2013.

**Note 95** I haven't studied the Benhall estate, which dates from the late 1950s. When this area was being constructed, old rails were found buried, remaining from the mid-1800s when a tramline ran along the south side of Gloucester Road. (See Note 114). Regarding the name Benhall, see Note 97.

**Note 96** Monks Croft is an ancient field-name, used as a road-name in 1953-4. The actual fields called Monks Croft were however located a bit further west, where Australia House and Hester's Way Park are now. The flats called Monks Croft are actually located within what was Benhall Wood (Note 97).

**Note 97** Benhall is an ancient place-name, recorded in writing in 1230 as the "wood called Benhale." The northern edge of the wood became a market garden, recorded in the 1850s, known as Benhall Gardens, the home for a century (at least 1881-1981) of Silas Wasley (senior and junior). The flats now called Benhall Gardens are on part of the site, built in 1960/61. Wasley Road is on another part of the site, built between 1953 and 1960. The houses nos.5-15 Wasley Road dating from 1985 are on the site of the old smallholder's cottage which still stood until 1983.

**Note 98** Wordsworth Avenue was built in 1934. William Wordsworth (1770-1850) in his travels perhaps came closest to here when he visited Tintern near Chepstow.

Proceed 110m along Gloucester Road (towards town). Turn left at the tarmac path leading into the end of a cul-de-sac (Wasley Road). Notice Benhall Gardens flats nearby.

Proceed along Wasley Road for 80m. Notice (opposite Pitman Road) some modern houses, nos.5-15 Wasley Road on your right: on the site of an old cottage, see Note 97.

After a further 40m along Wasley Road, at the junction with Wordsworth Avenue (see Note 98) turn right into Spenser Road.

Proceed along Spenser Road 260m to its end. Cross straight over Tennyson Road and continue into Milton Road opposite.

Proceed 480m along Milton Road through its initial zig-zag and then its long straight to its end. (Would suggest using the right-hand pavement).

Turn right into Byron Road for 20m and immediately left into Tennyson Road. See Note 99.

Proceed up Tennyson Road. After 150m notice the new development Guinevere Road on your right: see Note 100.

Continue on Tennyson Road for a further 140m, to the mini-roundabout with Brooklyn Road. See Note 100. Bear left at the mini-roundabout, so as to stay on Tennyson Road.

Proceed 110m along Tennyson Road to the mid-point of the row of shops. Turn right here into Shakespeare Road.

For preference use the left-hand pavement in Shakespeare Road. Proceed along Shakespeare Road for 200m. At this point the 1930s estate ends and the 1950s estate begins.

**Note 99** The junction of Tennyson Road and Byron Road is the point at which development began on the geometric horseshoe of roads that form the centre of the St. Mark's Estate, built by the Borough Council between 1921 and 1938, that is, predating the main Hester's Way Estates. Tennyson, Byron and Milton Roads were generally complete by 1927. (Milton Avenue is an addition of about 1955). Spenser Road and Avenue are a little later, from 1925-30. Kipling Road is from 1929-30.

Some of the 'poets' commemorated in the street names had local connections. Alfred Lord Tennyson lived for a time (1844-50) in Cheltenham (St. James' Square). John Milton (1600s) had associations with Eyford near Stow-on-the-Wold. Lord Byron lived for a time in Cheltenham High Street (early 1800s). William Shakespeare (around 1600) in his travels certainly came as close as Tewkesbury. Other roads commemorate Edmund Spenser (1500s) and Rudyard Kipling (around 1900).

**Note 100** Guinevere Road was added in 2013, on the site of Spirax Sarco's Central Machine Shop which closed in 2011. This industrial site had originally been used by Smiths Systems Ltd before World War II for making office furniture, but was used for making wings for Mosquito fighters during the War.

A few houses at this southern end of Brooklyn Road were built in 1921, although most of it dates from the 1930s. Notice Jesse Mary Chambers almshouses here, dated 1924. The mini-roundabout at the junction of Tennyson Road and Brooklyn Road dates from 2005.

After a further 40m along Shakespeare Road, notice Walton House on your right, and the former Monkscroft Primary School site on the left, now partly occupied by Monkscroft Care Centre: see Note 101.

Continue for a further 220m to the end of Shakespeare Road, emerging by the crossing in Princess Elizabeth Way.

Proceed 80m using the crossings of Princess Elizabeth Way and Banyard Close back to the front door of Hester's Way Resource Centre (Point B). (Notice Tyler Court opposite, Note 101).

## A to B WEST ROUTE

### JAMES BOND PATH (Distance: 2.14km / 1.3 miles)

From the lights on Gloucester Road (Point A), proceed up Telstar Road: the left (west) side is probably best. After 120m at the roundabout with Gemini Close, go straight ahead.

Continue along Telstar Road (with GCHQ on your right) for a further 380m.

Turn left into the housing estate (so-called Charlecote Manor). See Note 102. After 50m cross straight ahead into the little lavender garden in the centre of Caine Square.

Take the path slightly to the left and cross the garden for 30m.

Cross straight ahead into street called Niven Courtyard. Proceed ahead for 50m.

At the next little courtyard garden, proceed directly ahead, that is, on the path diagonally across the garden for 40m.

Take the cul-de-sac slightly to your right for 40m, which becomes a path between nos.14 and 15 Niven Courtyard.

**Note 101** This section of Shakespeare Road (west of the shops) was built in 1934, then extended into the Hester's Way Estate with a series of blocks of flats in 1958-59.

Walton House dates from 1961/2: the name is probably one of the 'musicians' theme, that is, 20<sup>th</sup> century British composers, in this case commemorating Sir William Turner Walton, best known for a cantata called 'Belshazzar's Feast'. Goldsmith Road is probably a continuation of the 'poets' theme, commemorating playwright Oliver Goldsmith of the mid-1700s.

The one block of flats on the left near PE Way remains still standing, but the five blocks of flats of five storeys on the right were demolished in 1997, and replaced with Othello and Hamlet Closes in 1998 (road-names relating to Shakespeare's plays). The final three houses are dubbed Tyler Court, on PE Way, which presumably commemorates Tony Tyler, a member of the redevelopment team, who died about the time the buildings were being completed. (These flats were not the first of Hester's Way's modern buildings to be demolished: already gone were the flats of Beale Walk and the domed Grammar School building).

Monkscroft Primary School opened in 1954 but was demolished in 2010, and replaced by the Monkscroft Care Centre, which you can see the back of, in 2012.

**Note 102** Gemini Close dates from 2008-9. Gemini, Hubble, Telstar and Galileo are all satellites I think. The estate dubbed Charlecote Manor includes Caine Square of 2002 and Niven Courtyard of 2003. The movie actors commemorated in the street-names of this estate all played James Bond.

Emerge onto Fiddlers Green Lane. Turn right (uphill). After 70m, notice through the gap in the hedge to your left the view across the fields towards Fiddlers Green Farm (Note 111).

After a further 180m, go straight ahead at the roundabout. Note 103.

Continue a further 180m up Fiddlers Green Lane, between “Fiddlers Green Meadow” to your left and a new car-park to your right. Enter the housing estate, where the first house on right is no.72 Fiddlers Green Lane: see Note 104.

Continue along Fiddlers Green Lane a further 220m to the mini-roundabout with Springbank Road. Turn right here. Observe on your right no.14 Fiddlers Green Lane, approximate location of an old cottage: see Note 105.

After 40m, turn right along the pathway between nos.8 and 10 Fiddlers Green Lane. This leads into Kempton Grove.

After 60m turn left into the pathway between nos.46 and 44 Kempton Grove.

Follow this path round its corner for 60m to emerge beside no.54 Kempton Grove. Turn left (uphill).

Continue uphill 130m to the end of the road, entering Hester’s Way Park on the path between nos.105 and 80 Kempton Grove. Note 106.

In the park, after 100m observe the Listening Stones and the explanatory plaque to your left.

Stay on path which bears slightly left for 50m out of the park.

**Note 103** The roundabout at the junction of Telstar Road and Fiddlers Green Lane dates from 2005 (as do the speed humps).

**Note 104** The meadow on the left here was the site of a protest camp in 2000 as GCHQ threatened to cover it with tarmac and turn it into a car-park. The small car-park on your right appeared in 2013. No.72 Fiddlers Green Lane is approximately the location of Elm Farm house. Elm Farm was a dairy farm. The farmhouse was shown on a map of 1834; it was last inhabited in 1962 and was demolished soon after.

This is the heart of Fiddlers Green: whether the original occupant was called Fiddler by surname or by occupation is unknown, but the area was known as Fythelers as far back as 1430. The name Fiddlers Green was recorded in 1695. The highway was called the Fiddlers Green Road in 1834 and Fiddlers Green Lane in 1911, but the route undoubtedly existed in Norman times as a farm lane, more probably Saxon (see my introductory notes). Archaeology of the period 1300s/1400s was found in 1975 where Kempton Grove was about to be built. Kempton Grove was built in 1976, and the houses 2-72 Fiddlers Green Lane in 1975. Opposite, Beverley Croft is from 1977/8.

**Note 105** Another old cottage once stood nearby, where no.14 Fiddlers Green Lane is now: very little is known about it, it never had a name, it was thatched, it was shown on the 1834 map and was still standing in 1911. Note also whilst at this location the plaque regarding Elm Farm Estate, opposite the roundabout, indicating its construction in 1977.

**Note 106** Hester's Way Park opened in 1957. The stone sculptures were added in 2005.

**Note 107** You are here at the top of Camberwell Road and Frewin Close, built in 1988.

Stay on path leading straight ahead, above housing estates (Note 107) for 90m. Turn right into small path by no.14 Banyard Close.

Continue straight ahead on path for 80m. Go straight ahead at roundabout with Lloyd Close. (This area is described in Note 72).

Proceed 170m straight ahead passing Gloucestershire College to your right, and CBC Homes offices to your left, back to the front door of Hester's Way Resource Centre (Point B).

### **A to A LOOP ROUTE**

#### **BROOKLANDS PATH (Distance: 2.67km / 1.7 miles)**

**(shorter route available is 2.19km / 1.4 miles)**

From the junction of Gloucester Road and Telstar Road (Point A), head 60m westwards along Gloucester Road.

Where the verge opens out on the right, head downhill across the grass for 170m, tending to the right, through the trees. You'll notice a red bin at the top of this slope, and you are heading for a second bin at the bottom. ((If the grass is too wet, adventurous walkers might try walking on the concrete plinth (same distance); otherwise just stick to the pavement along Gloucester Road next to the bus-stop which is an extra 20m)).

By the second red bin is an old brick footbridge over the Hatherley Brook. Cross this. Then head uphill across the middle of the grass space 130m. See Note 108. Keep a little to the right at first, then further left over the ridge towards the concrete plinth.

**Note 108** The open space here between Gloucester Road and Castlemaine Drive / Darwin Close is the site of the back

gardens of two old houses / market gardens which dated from about 1840, and were demolished around 1967-9 for road-widening. They were named Grove Field Villa and The Brooklands. The little bridge perhaps originally connected the garden of The Brooklands to the fields behind it. The Brooklands was for a long time – about 1853 to 1904 – the home of the Beetham family, well known chemists in Cheltenham. Later – about 1910 to 1950 - it was occupied by the Dobell family, well known wine merchants. Lastly it was used as stores by Dowty Equipment Ltd around 1952-63.

**Note 109** The housing along Edendale Approach dates from 1978-85. The street-names here have Australian connections, apparently because the builders were called Canberra Developments Ltd.

The hamlet name Harthurst is ancient, recorded in 1287. The Tudor cottage Willow Mead is perhaps on the site of a building which existed in Norman times: for the evidence for this see History of Hester's Way Volume 5 (pages 59,60). It has been known by various names including Nesley Croft, Redgrove and Stoneleigh Cottage. Despite a fire in 1929 enough of the original building remains for it to be 'listed.' A beam inside is marked with the date 1660, and a fireplace with the date 1690. A similar old black-and-white cottage stood nearby until the mid-1970s, where Harthurstfield Bungalow stands now. Harthurstfield House has a Regency appearance (1800-1820) and is perhaps on the site of earlier farm buildings, shown on a map of 1759. The sprawl of caravans or mobile homes seems to have started in 1939, but generally Harthurstfield Park Homes date from the early 1960s to early 1970s. Park Stores are from the early 1970s.

Near a third red bin (opposite the Thistle Hotel entrance), turn right into Fiddlers Green Lane (staying on the grass verge if it's dry, behind the telephone box). Proceed 100m along Fiddlers Green Lane. Notice on the right Edendale Approach and on the left the old cottage Willow Mead: see Note 109.

Continue a further 180m along Fiddlers Green Lane. Notice Park Stores etc on the left.

At the road junction, cross (carefully) into Pheasant Lane. Proceed 30m along Pheasant Lane. Notice Harthurstfield House (Regency farmhouse) to your left and Harthurstfield Bungalow to your right.

Proceed a further 230m along Pheasant Lane, being wary for traffic. See Note 110. Notice the public footpath arrow signpost, and the small wooden footbridge to your left.

((There is a possible short-cut here, which reduces the distance by 480m / 0.3 miles. The following route crosses farm pasture fields: if this is unsuitable due to weather, aversion to horses, etc. stick to the main route. Note that the hedge here tends to grow across the stile, so you may have to fight through. Cross the wooden footbridge and stile. Keep to the left-hand side of the fields. Cross a first stile after 150m, another after 80m, and a third after another 70m. There is often a horse in these fields. Note house called Cotswold across the field. Emerge onto Gloucester Road, where turn left \*\*)).

Rather than turning off Pheasant Lane here into the footpath, continue a further 170m along Pheasant Lane. To your right, notice Fiddlers Green Lodge and the entrance drive to Fiddlers Green Farm. See Note 111.

**Note 110** The ancient narrow lane was officially labelled Pheasant Lane in 1989: it was marked as Golden Valley Lane on a map of 1823. Pheasant Lane was closed to through vehicles in 2003, but retained as a cycle-path. The little wooden footbridge is roughly the site of the entrance to a barn, which was at some times (1800s) adapted as a dwelling called Cherry Cottage.

**Note 111** Fiddlers Green Farm maybe dates from the 1870s and Fiddlers Green Lodge from the 1880s. These two buildings were perhaps intended as replacements for some much older cottages which had stood south of the lane, opposite where the Lodge is now (marked on the 1834 map).

**Note 112** Pheasant Cottage was, reputedly, the original local inn, before the Pheasant on Gloucester Road was built (see Note 118). I haven't studied Staverton Parish in any depth.

**Note 113** 'Byfield' dates from 1928, and 'Cotswold' was here by 1933. The bungalow between them, Hill View, is on the site of a smithy, perhaps established about 1830, and perhaps rebuilt about 1914. Opposite, The Old Chapel House was a baptist chapel, dating from 1880 or earlier, which closed in 1967 and was converted to a dwelling in 1992. Harry Buckland's scrapyards has been here since 1938: the house here, called Cotswold View, looks to date from around 1980, but replaced an earlier Cotswold View, earlier known as Poplar Cottage around 1881.

Continue a further 40m along Pheasant Lane. Notice the Parish and Borough boundary stone to your left: you are here entering Staverton Parish. (Notice also group of four old cottages, Brook View Cottages).

Continue a further 40m along Pheasant Lane. See Note 112 regarding Pheasant Cottage on your right. Find here a footpath sign pointing to your left, just beyond the last of Brook View Cottages. Turn left into this footpath. ((If a route on tarmac is preferred, see the longer route “Golden Pheasant Path” described below, but bear in mind if hoping to avoid damp ground that the alternative is still liable to flooding)).

Follow footpath. First 100m is narrow and sometimes overgrown.

Next 70m of footpath runs along the right hand edge of a paddock.

Next 100m of footpath follows a drive beside some sheds. Emerge on Gloucester Road, beside Golden Valley Cottages, where turn left. ((If following this route in the opposite direction, take the second entrance into Golden Valley Cottages. This section looks a bit odd, as it appears that you are walking up the driveway of no.4 Golden Valley Cottages. Be assured this is the right of way! Hence the sign advising that dogs should be on leads)).

\* Proceed along the pavement of Gloucester Road towards town. After 70m notice the parish boundary stone on your right, bringing you back into Cheltenham Borough.

After a further 50m along Gloucester Road, note the house called Byfield on your left, and the old chapel house on your right. See Note 113.

After a further 30m along Gloucester Road, note the cottage

Hill View on your left, and Harry Buckland’s scrapyard on your right.

After a further 30m along Gloucester Road, note the house Cotswold on your left.

After a further 80m meet up with the shorter route above \*\*, where the footpath meets Gloucester Road.

Follow the pavement along Gloucester Road towards town. For some history of Gloucester Road, see Note 114. After 230m, notice the original Briarfields building on your right, see Note 115 (and the tail end of Harthurstfield Park Homes on your left).

**Note 114** Gloucester Road is a piece of early-1800s engineering: the need for an alternative to Old Gloucester Road had long been apparent. A Turnpike Road and a tram-line (for horse-drawn trucks) were built at the same time and parallel to each other in 1810-11. The tram line went on to Gloucester docks, where heavy goods, especially coal, were collected, and stone from Leckhampton was delivered. Surprisingly, the first experiments to replace horse-power with steam locomotion took place on the road, not the railway. However, due to the stone road surface being damaged by the weight, engines were quickly banished to the rails. The tram line was dismantled in 1861, and its course brought within the highway to make it wider.

**Note 115** 'Briarfields' was recorded here by 1926, but appears to have been earlier known as Brighton Villa, here by 1891. It's use as a Motel or lodgings began in 1970.

After a further 60m along Gloucester Road, notice the junction of Badgeworth Road on your right. See Note 116.

After a further 110m along Gloucester Road, reach Arle Court Roundabout.

Follow footpath / cycle path beside Arle Court Roundabout for 90m. Cross Fiddlers Green Lane by the entrance to the Thistle Hotel. See Note 117.

Stay on the pavement-cyclepath going downhill for 90m.

At the bottom of the slope, turn right for 40m under the underpass.

Emerge into daylight. Notice Arle Court Lodge above you. Turn left up the ramp, signposted Benhall. Follow the leafy cycle track for 290m to the junction of Whittington Road. ((NB. This cycle path may be closed at some point in the near future for road-widening: if so, you'll have to follow Gloucester Road back on the other side))

Cross Whittington Road, proceed a further 40m on Gloucester Road to the crossing. (See Note 94 regarding The Summerfield Nursing Unit).

Cross 40m back to Point A. Take extreme care when crossing the Benhall slip road (especially if following the route in the opposite direction)!

**Note 116** Badgeworth Road was built in 1825 as a turnpike, a shortcut built by surveyor Charles Baker of Bristol, linking the Bath Road and Gloucester Road. (He had built the Bath Road – now the A46 – the road from Cheltenham to Prinknash in 1819. He also built in 1825 Lansdown Road, a smaller shortcut also connecting those same two roads). Valley Roundabout Nurseries, visible up the lane, is based at a small bungalow, originally called Omaha when built about 1923. The Keltruck entrance at the road junction is the site of a dwelling called Hill View House, last inhabited in 1988. This dwelling was so called by 1881, and was apparently a former pub, recorded in the 1840-60s as the Stag and Hounds (probably dating from about 1831). Hill View House changed names many times, also being known as Hope Cottage, Norchard House and Appletree Cottage. Just visible nearer to Arle Court Roundabout within the Keltruck site is another old dwelling, recorded in 1923 as The Bungalow, last occupied about 1978 but still standing. It was a site being used for commercial vehicles by 1975.

**Note 117** As stated in Note 114, Gloucester Road was built in 1810, forming a cross-roads where it intersected the old country lane leading from Harthurstfield to Hatherley. In 1969, this crossroads was expanded into the Arle Court Roundabout, being the terminus of the new dual-carriageway the Golden Valley By-pass. The Thistle Hotel was the Golden Valley Hotel until 1999, which had a period of fame as the location of the exterior shots of the Motel in the TV soap 'Crossroads' in the late-1970s. The Hotel had replaced a house called Stoneleigh, here by 1891, and last used by Dowty's publicity department in 1959-68.

Arle Court Lodge dates from around 1830.

## A to A LOOP: LONGER ALTERNATIVE

**GOLDEN PHEASANT PATH (Total distance: 3.32km / 2.1 miles)** (650m / 0.4 miles longer than the original loop route).

If wishing to stick to tarmac, from Pheasant Cottage, continue along Pheasant Lane. After 50m, notice Ash Cottage on the left, JEB Plant Hire on the right. Continue down the narrow road between the concrete blocks. This highway is very narrow and has now been closed to traffic except bicycles. Although it has a tarmac surface, it is liable to flood and can get muddy.

After 90m, notice the footpath to the right leading over an old brick bridge (over the Hatherley Brook) towards Hayden Green.

After a further 290m reach the end of Pheasant Lane, where it widens out at Swanbrook's site. (Notice in April / May to your right along this section an unusual wildflower I think called Toothwort).

Keep left for a further 50m, to emerge at Gloucester Road. Turn left (signposted Cheltenham).

Notice old houses such as Hayden House to your left, and, after 70m along Gloucester Road, The White Bungalow to your right.

After 210m, pass The Pavillion on your left. See Note 118. (Notice also on your right, on the opposite side of the main road, an old stone water trough).

After a further 160m, reach the point on Gloucester Road where the footpath emerges (\* above)).

**Note 118** Where and what is Golden Valley? A very old farmhouse stands a bit nearer the motorway, known as Valley Farm. It is not in a valley as such, but is located on lower ground than the neighbouring farmstead (Hayden Knoll). In 1810, the new turnpike road was built (see Note 114), passing Valley Farm on its way from Staverton to Cheltenham. One of the many pubs that quickly developed for travellers was called the Golden Pheasant, which became the centre of a small group of houses, mostly in Staverton parish but overflowing into Cheltenham parish. It is this hamlet that became known as Golden Valley, it seems by combining the names of the two buildings (i.e. Golden Pheasant and Valley Farm. This is my theory, anyway). The Golden Pheasant soon became known as the Pheasant Inn, renamed as The Pavillion [sic] Indian Restaurant in 2011, and then the Chang Siam restaurant in 2014.