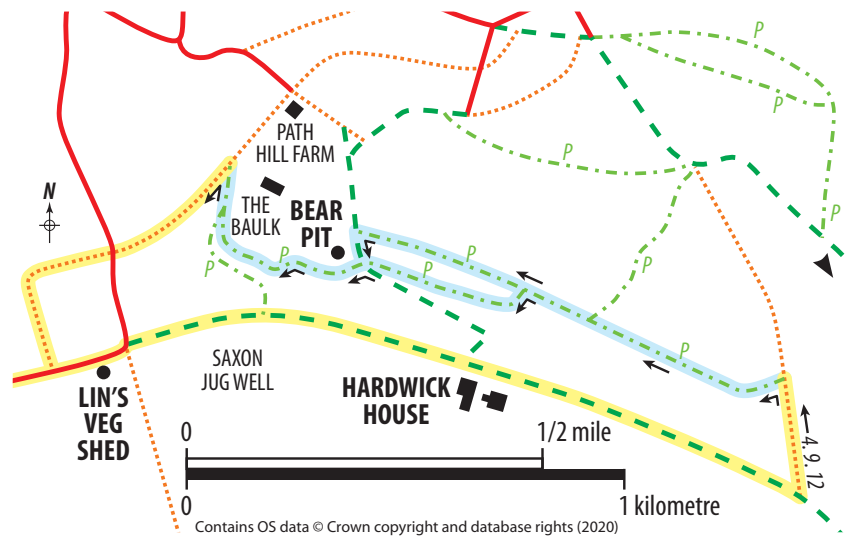


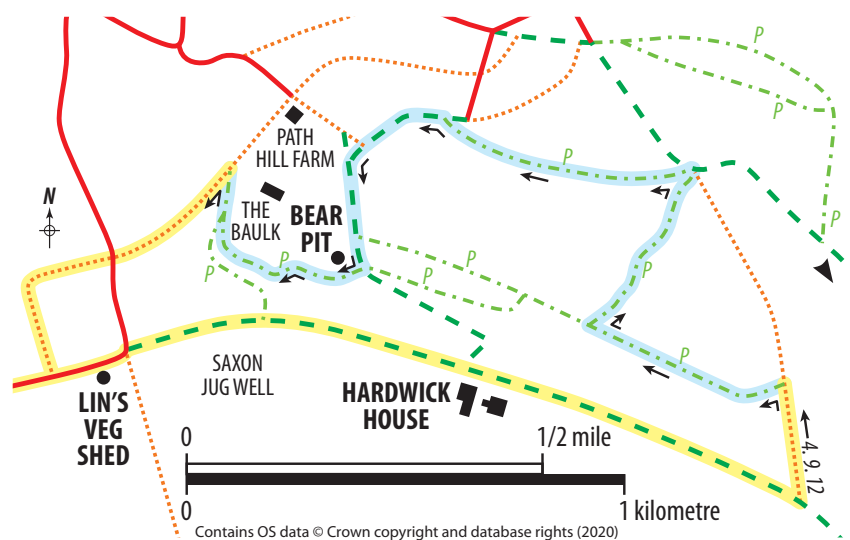
The Short Walks - THE PERMISSIVE PATHS

The new permissive paths (marked P) provide a number of variations on any walk in these woods. I have suggested some routes below. Once you have located and used these paths they should allow you to vary any of the adjacent main walks by incorporating them.

1. On Walks 4, 9 and 12 after the second set of black gates I have directed you up the hillside with a view of Mapledurham. Follow this route again but when you go through the kissing gate at the top go down the left-hand path to join and follow a wide path. Follow the curve of this broad track as it contours pleasantly above the valley and through the woodland. There is another, less obvious, marked broad path on your left (if you miss it just go straight ahead to meet the main bridleway leading down to Hardwick House) and turn left and then right below the Bear Pit. However if you do spot it drop down left onto this lower level parallel path, this permissive footpath has a number of horse barriers across it in a vain attempt to stop its abuse. Follow this delightful path when it crosses the main bridleway to reach the path below the Bear Pit. Just before you reach the Outdoor Centre sign turn left and drop down an incline, at the bottom of the incline the path swings right and then straight ahead on a broad plateau to bring you out below the new wooden garden fence of the Baulk. Follow the fence until you meet another path, turn right onto it alongside the garden hedge and walk up until you meet the path rising to the Baulk on your left. Turn hard left at the marker and down to return to the village.



2. Again if you go up the same hillside and through the kissing gate and turn left on the wide path and follow its curve right, you will pass a marker post and carry on (if it is wet you may have to divert onto a path on your left which allows you to bypass the morass) until you meet a newly marked track on your right (If you are on the bypass path you will see the marker post and your new track just behind you on your right as you near the main path). Turn right and go down it until you meet four other paths at a junction (you will no doubt recognise them from previous walks). In the valley floor take the marked broad path on your left, this will lead you to a 'T' junction (Walks 8 and 4). Turn left and up the slope to cross a path and reach a main bridleway. Turn left onto it and as it starts to drop turn right below the entrance to the Bear Pit. Now follow the same route as above.



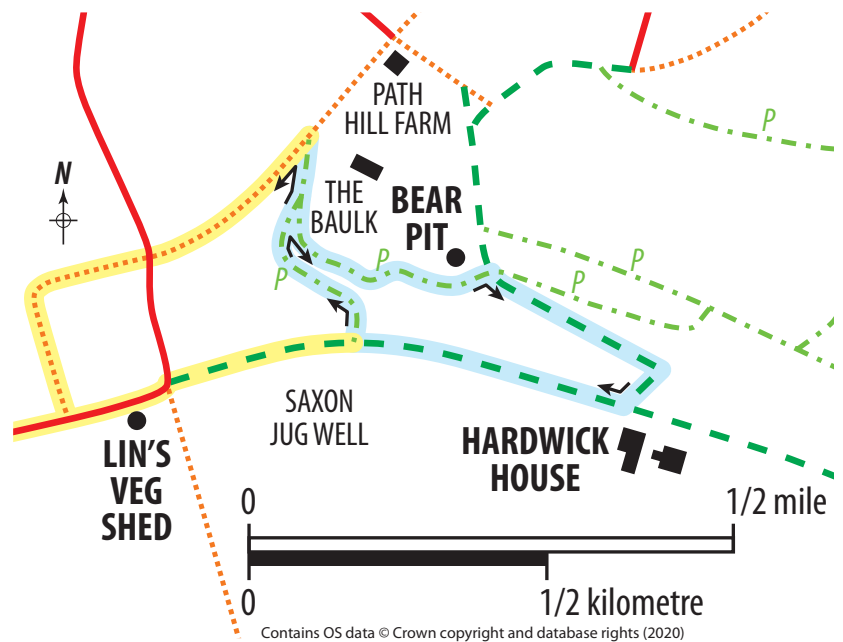
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The Short Walks - TO THE BAULK AND BACK

Walk through the first set of black gates leading onto the Hardwick Estate. The house on your left and the one in your right are the West lodges of the estate, one presumes that one or both had the duty of opening and closing the gates on demand from the main house.

To your right you have a good view of the horse paddocks and the damp patch showing the location of the Saxon jug well in the meadow below. The drive is lined with Maple trees, which are gradually being replaced.

Shortly, on your left, you reach the Victorian Stud, built by Sir Charles Day Rose and originally occupied by his racehorses. The next building is the multi-chimneyed Stud Farmhouse and just after that the start of your uphill walk. On your left a rather weather beaten notice indicates the access to a permissive path, ascend briefly onto a horse trodden path and then follow the path as it turns right and then immediately left for your uphill climb above the farmhouse and the Stud buildings. The climb is not too steep and as it reaches the top you have a choice of routes. On your right is another permissive path which will lead you along a pleasant plateau until it too climbs left up a short but steep slope to reach another plateau path which will bring you to the Bear Pit and then the main chalk bridgeway which drops down to Hardwick House, the Tuddingway and your return route.



A shorter return path is to walk up a little further by the side of the unusual house sitting on the hilltop – the Baulk. The story is that with its towers it was mistaken for a church by an eloping couple – sadly they were ‘balked’ in their attempt to be married. Your uphill journey soon ceases as you reach a short joining path on your left that allows you to turn left onto the footpath to drop downhill to Path Hill. The copse you pass on your right was the scene of the discovery of a cache of IRA small arms some years ago. As you drop down stop for a moment to gaze at the hillside opposite and the obvious entranceway to the Iron Age encampment on the plateau above. The sloping hillside is called ‘Bec Tythe’; its tithe was paid to Bec Abbey in Normandy by Milo Crispin the incoming Norman lord who displaced Wigod – the previous Saxon lord of the Manor.

Take care as you drop down onto the road below, you can return by turning left down the road to the corner and its junction with Hardwick Road. Or cross the road with care to the kissing gate opposite and follow the hedge to the distant kissing gate, go through onto the narrow fenced path which then turns left to meet Hardwick Road and your right turn for home.