

Shortly after my husband and I moved to the village, coming up to 9 years ago, we got our dog Jam. This opened up the world of “dog people” and walking routes in the village and local area, and it’s through dogs and walking that I met Eric Hartley. Eric was incredibly welcoming to us all, he shared a lot of brilliant information on local walks and history and, despite his jokes about trying to steal our dog (she’s yellow, his favourite colour of Labrador), we regularly caught up on walks and around the village.

Over the lockdowns Jam and I tested out a few of his documented local walks to check if any updates were needed before they were uploaded to this website as a resource for everyone. Doing those walks, and reading his descriptions alongside them gave me so much more of the historical context of our area and enjoyment of the routes.

So I’ve decided, over the next year, to walk them all again, taking photos as I go and providing a few thoughts on the wonderful views and nature we are so lucky to have on our doorstep here!

Walk 1 - The Village - September 2026

All of Eric’s walks start and end at the magnificent “bell mouth entrance” where Manor Road joins the High Street at the centre of the village. A frequent stopping point of mine as I swap my most recently read crime drama with a different one! The bright red phone box that houses the book swap (& defibrillator) looked wonderful on this warm and sunny autumn day.



Strolling down the High Street from there you really feel a sense of the age of the village and buildings here. Some wonderful houses, flint and brick work and a lovely view - if you can catch a moment with no on-coming traffic! Passing the Greyhound (which Jam would always rather we went in than go past) you turn into another bell mouth entrance - this one leading to the church.

A lovely quiet loop if you are looking for a more relaxed way to the toll bridge at busy times.



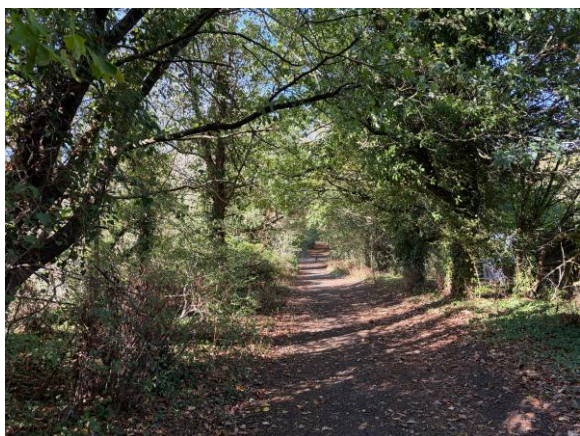
I always love walking through the church yard, the old oak and yew trees are a wonderful presence and the church itself is often open for a sit down and quiet contemplation. The church is a beautiful building, especially with its new roof glowing in the autumn sun! Walking down the narrow walled path takes you out to near the Mill, where there is a small

public access point to the river with steps accessed through a metal gate.

Whilst one of the most photographed views in the village is from the bridge back to this backwater and the mill and church, I also really love the opposite view, from these steps back to the bridge. And on this calm still day it made for wonderful reflections too!



Cross the road by the tool booth and after a quick jaunt to the middle of the bridge to check out the up and down stream views go back into the village and past the Ferryboat. Turning down Eastfield Lane takes you down the now wonderfully smooth road. As you pass the narrow section you can get a lovely view down the tree lined road past Cedar Lodge care home. The verge on the right is ideal for walking on if you like grass under your feet and, not far before you get to the school, you get to another of my favourite village views: over a wooden gate into the fields to see an old Oak tree



framed by the trees in the field hedge.

By the school, head left onto Muddy Lane, which has been so appreciated by me over this incredibly hot summer as a cooler, shady place for Jam to have a 10 minute leg stretch on. With the dappled sunlight on the path it again makes for lovely pictures. Just off to the right before the end of the gradual up hill of Muddy Lane there is the Maze. Another place I often find myself just sitting, relaxing and listening to the birdsong. Plenty of fun to be had by attempting the maze itself too!

When you head back onto Muddy Lane your next destination is Hardwick Road, the large beech and lime trees create a wonderful corridor of green. Although this year's bumper crop of beech nuts made for crunchy walking today. Heading left on Hardwick Road all the way down to its junction with the High Street takes you through the decades, from 1950s and 60s housing through to much older buildings as you reach the end of the road. The cluster of gorgeous cottages at the junction and the Art Gallery is always a lovely view. Head left down the High Street to reach your start point again, or possibly a little further to visit one of the village pubs!

