

SHEARWATER



LONGLEAT

Shearwater Lake, a haven for fishing and sailing, lies in the Longleat Estate - at the centre of which is Longleat House, a splendid stately home open to the public along with its gardens and safari park. The first part of this walk takes you around the edge of the Lake and through established open woodland. The second part is across open fields and through green lanes offering a wealth of wild flowers, butterflies and birds. The walk finishes by re-entering the estate, passing through a plantation in which there are magnificent beech trees among the conifers.

The walk

1 Start

Starting at the car park cross the road and enter Shearwater. Follow the track around the lake until just past the north-west corner where you turn L on to a gravel track at the signpost saying "Nockatt Coppice 2.75 km, 1¾ miles". Stay on this track until a T-junction is reached after about 1½ km (1mile).

2 2km/1¼ miles

Turn L. Continue, keeping to the L, until the path bears L 60m before Swancombe Cottage where a

notice says PRIVATE - No entry to vehicles or pedestrians. At this point turn R onto a grass track through Manswood, bearing L at the end, to emerge onto the Crockerton to Maiden Bradley road, opposite the entrance to Shute Farm. (Note: the paths up to this point are permissive paths, not rights of way).

3 3.5km/2 miles

Turn R. Follow road to Lower Shutes Cottage and turn L into the drive (signposted bridlway). Go through field gate, keeping field

boundary on your L. Cross two fields to the gate onto the Longbridge Deverill to Maiden Bradley road. Take sunken green lane opposite. Continue along the lane until you reach the bridge gate at its end. Pass through bridge gate, then immediately bear L and after 100m join farm track leading to field gate.

4 5km/3 miles

Keep straight ahead with Rye Hill Farm on your L. The lane eventually becomes more open and after about 1km the lane

meets a crossing path. Turn L and follow path back to the road by Wing Farm (initially there is a field on the L and hedge to the R, then after crossing a boundary, a hedge on the L and field to the R).

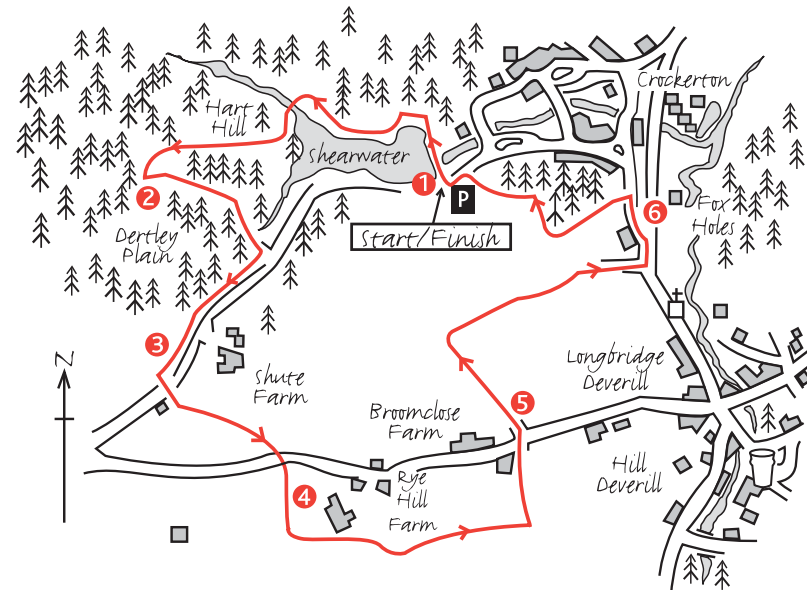
5 6.7km/4¼ miles

Turn R, then almost immediately L, onto a wide stony farm track (signposted bridlway) going slightly uphill. After about 700m of gentle ascent the track enters a field. Just before this take the R-hand fork, then after a few metres, just before the facing field gate, turn R onto the narrower undulating grass track.

Continue until the A350 road is reached. Turn L and follow footway past cottages, and then road to Foxholes House (on the R) where you then turn L (signposted Restricted Byway).

6 8.8km/5½ miles

Follow the rising path along the inside edge of the Foxholes Plantation. The path eventually turns into the plantation, and after a short distance a wide track comes in from the R. Join it bearing L and continue straight ahead. At the top of the rise, turn L at the T-junction. Then take the R-hand fork down the hill back to the start.



IS THIS WALK FOR YOU?

Terrain: Woodland, farm and lakeside tracks, fields

Stiles: 0

Suitable for: Average walkers

PLANNING

Start/parking: Car park at ST855420

Nearest town: Warminster

Refreshments: At start/finish; Fisherman's Rest Café; Bargate Thatch Tea rooms, Shearwater; The Bath Arms, Crockerton

Public toilets: None. But toilets can be found at all the facilities mentioned above

Public transport: Bus no.57, (run by Bodmans) runs 2-3 hourly (Warminster to Kingston Deverill). For further details contact Traveline, tel 0871 200 2233

MAPS

Ordnance Survey Explorer 143 Warminster & Trowbridge, Westbury and Mere.

ACCOMMODATION

If you would like to find somewhere to stay in Wiltshire, please go to www.visitwiltshire.co.uk, Where to Stay.