

to the church in Icomb. **24** When you have explored the church and village, walk back down the farm drive the way you came, then turn right through a waymarked wooden gate in the hedge. **25** Follow the grassy path downhill between hedges, then go through a gate on the right into a farm track. **26** Turn left, and keep straight on at a junction with another track. Swing right and left around a lake. **27** Beyond the lake, follow the grassy field edge. **28** In the corner, a gate and footbridge leads into woodland. Pass through a tall wooden kissing gate and walk uphill to a similar gate near the top of the wood. **29** Follow the path ahead to emerge into a grassy track, where you turn left. **30** Cross the Oxfordshire Way and continue downhill. **31** At the bottom of the hill, cross a stream and turn right and then left into a wood. Follow the path up through the wood. **32** Just beyond a waymark post, you meet another path joining from the right; leave the wood via a wooden stile. **33** Cross the field to a stile in a fence, then continue to another stile leading into a belt of woodland. Exit the trees via another stile and cross to yet another, beyond which a short path leads out to a track. **34** Turn right and walk up the track, past an entrance with gateposts, and pass between cottages to emerge in Church Westcote. **35** Turn left and walk up to the church.

Now jump to step **10** of the **Church Westcote** walk for directions back to the Feathered Nest.



THE FEATHERED NEST

Nether Westcote, Oxfordshire OX7 6SD

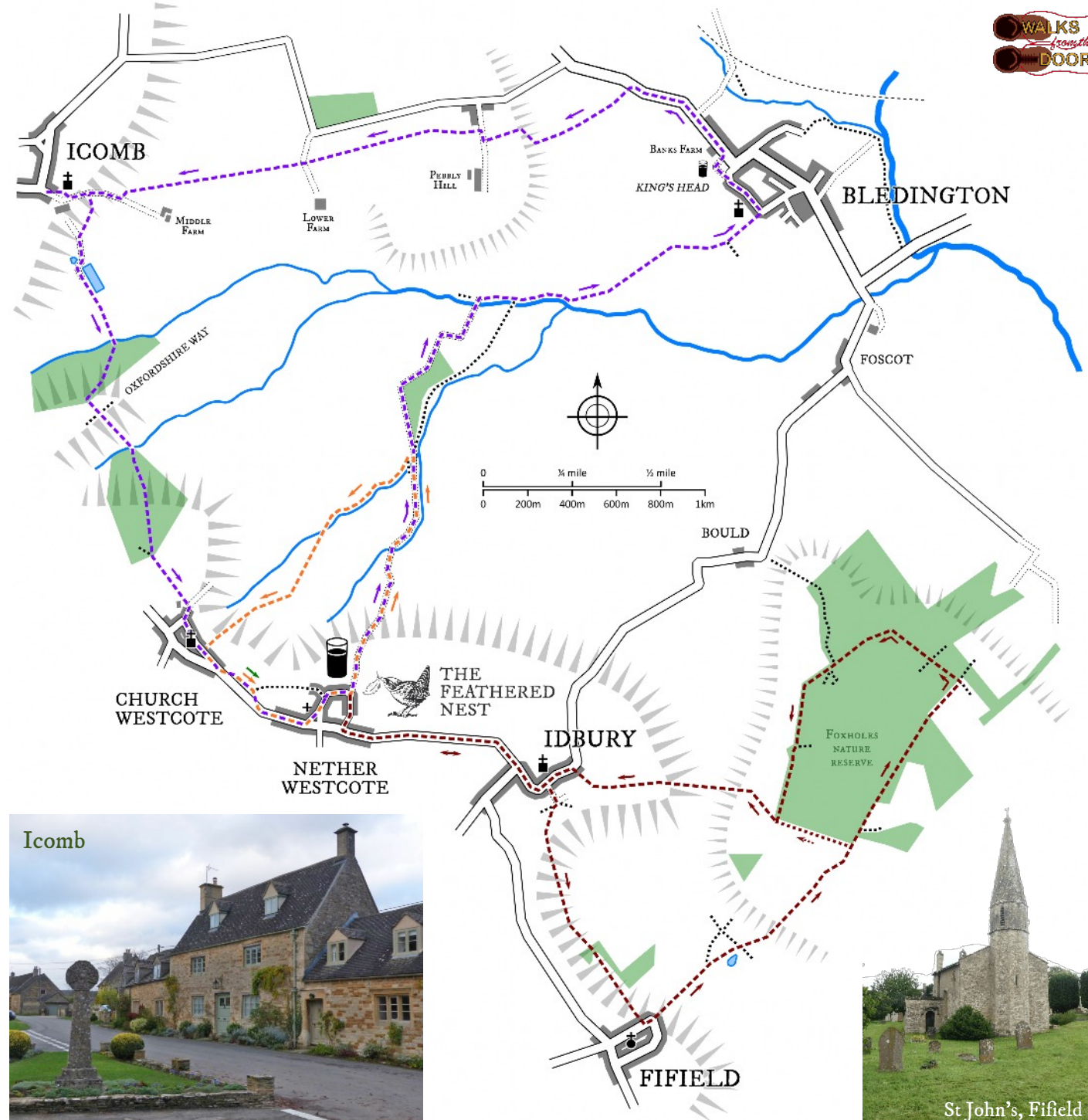
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three circular walks from



THE FEATHERED NEST



CHURCH WESTCOTE 2 miles: easy

A short walk via a shady bridleway and wildflower meadows to our sister village.

IDBURY, FIFIELD AND FOXHOLES 4 or 5½ miles: fairly easy

Two attractive villages with good views and an optional visit to a wooded nature reserve.

BLINGTON AND ICOMB 6½ miles: moderate

Two pretty Cotswold villages with medieval churches, the first with a possible pub stop.

CHURCH WESTCOTE (2 miles: easy)

Allow 1 hour. Paths may be muddy after rain, and overgrown in places. One moderate ascent.

1 From the front door of the pub, turn left and at the corner turn left into a track, with a new house on your right. **2** Ignoring entrances to right and left, continue down the bridleway. Pass a footpath on the left (which runs parallel to the bridleway). After a couple of field entrances, the track narrows and continues between hedges, curving left and right and gradually levelling off. **3** Three-quarters of a mile from the start of the bridleway, a grassy track crosses with fields on either side. **4** Turn left here (passing a short waymark on the left) and follow the left-hand field edge, initially with a gappy hedge separating it from the meadow. **5** At the far end of the field, bear right then turn left over a wooden footbridge with a metal handrail into woodland. **6** At the end of the wood, a wooden kissing gate leads into a field; follow the left-hand hedge. **7** A similar gate leads into the next field, beyond which the path leads diagonally uphill across the meadow towards Church Westcote. **8** Go through a series of wooden kissing gates dividing three paddocks with views over the valley to your right. **9** After a final kissing gate, follow a track through a couple of metal gates between gardens out to the road below St Mary's Church, and turn left. **10** Walk along the road past a war memorial and postbox to a road junction. **11** Follow the road ahead; a grassy area on the left offers an alternative to the tarmac until you rejoin the road on the approach to Nether Westcote. **12** Follow the road past the first houses of the village, then turn left at a junction, signposted to the Methodist Chapel and the Feathered Nest. **13** Pass the chapel on the left and follow the road between the cottages and farmhouses of the village back to the Feathered Nest.



Approaching Church Westcote

IDBURY, FIFIELD AND FOXHOLES

4 or 5½ miles: fairly easy

Allow 2–3 hours. To avoid a mile or so of lane walking, you could drive the short distance to Idbury, and start at step 4. The loop through Foxholes adds 1½ miles to the distance. Paths may be slightly overgrown in places, and muddy after rain.

1 From the front of the Feathered Nest, turn left and follow the road round to the right. **2** At a T-junction, turn left and walk half a mile to Idbury. **3** Continue straight ahead by a bus stop and follow the road left in front of Idbury Manor. **4** Opposite Church Farm, turn right down a no-through road with a footpath sign reading “Fifield ¾”. **5** Pass a row of cottages on the left then walk down a gravel driveway. On a bend, turn right through a metal gate into a field. **6** Bear right and follow a path that curves across the corner and then runs along the top of the field. **7** Pass through a hand-gate (left of a field gate) into the next field and continue to the next gate. **8** Cross the next field to a metal hand-gate. Drop down some worn steps, over a narrow wooden footbridge, and up steps on the other side. **9** Follow the path through newly planted trees then descend more steps to a kissing gate and footbridge, again climbing the steps on the other side. **10** After another kissing gate, follow the fence across a couple of paddocks to a gate with views over Fifield. **11** A fenced path follows through more fields, to a rusty kissing gate into a narrow path that runs between gardens and emerges through another gate onto the road in Fifield. **12** Turn left and pass the ball-headed gate-piers of a large house and follow the track ahead, to the left of a bench. **13** Shortly, when the path splits into three, take the right-hand path, through a field-gate. **14** The path leads down a narrow area with trees to either side. **15** After a waymark at a junction, the path continues pleasantly downhill, passing a newly constructed pond on the right (part of the Littlestock Brook Natural Flood Management Project). **16** Continue in similar fashion for a further half-mile until you meet a wide farm track at the corner of a wood. *For the shorter walk, turn left here and walk along the edge of the wood. When you reach the end of the wood, take the second path on the right (through the hedge, not into the wood) and skip to step 28 below.* **17** Otherwise, continue straight

ahead. **18** When the main track veers right, take the grassy ride ahead; both are waymarked with blue bridleway roundels. **19** Follow the shady ride for half a mile, ignoring any crossing tracks and paths to left or right, eventually emerging to run along the left-hand edge of a field. **20** In the corner, turn left past a waymark post into the Foxholes nature reserve. Follow the obvious path ahead, ignoring paths to left and right. **21** Carry straight on by a bench at a junction of paths. **22** By a nature reserve sign, turn left through a wooden barrier and turn right at a waymark post along a permissive path that winds pleasantly through the bracken woodland. **23** After a path joins from the right, you reach an information board. Take the right-hand path to the edge of the wood, then turn left and follow the path just inside the trees. **24** When the path splits into three, take the right-hand path, continuing along the edge of the wood. **25** Follow the narrow path for about half a mile, keeping generally close to the edge of the wood and ignoring any paths off to the left. **26** The path eventually reaches the end of the wood and emerges onto a track alongside the field edge. **27** Turn right and immediately right again, following the blue bridleway roundel through the hedge into another field. **28** Follow the path diagonally across the field to a gap in the far hedge, then follow the track beyond to a similar gap at the end of the next field. **29** At the top of the third field, go through another gap and follow the right-hand hedge of the next two fields. **30** Towards the end of the second, the path turns right through a gate then follows a fenced-off grassy area towards a farm and stables. **31** Follow the driveway out to the road in Idbury and turn left. **32** Walk past the church; if you have walked from the Feathered Nest, from now on you are retracing your steps. **33** Follow the road round to the right past Idbury Manor, and at the bus stop follow the road ahead, signposted to Westcote. **34** Keep along the road past a private track on the right, and after half a mile turn right after the first house in Nether Westcote. **35** Walk down the walled lane and turn left to return to the Feathered Nest.

bledington and icomb

6½ miles: moderate

Allow 3 hours. The King's Head in Bledington is reached after 2½ miles. For a shorter walk, return by the outward

route. Paths may be overgrown or muddy, and livestock may be encountered. Several stiles.

Follow steps 1–2 of the Church Westcote walk, above.

3 Three-quarters of a mile from the start of the bridleway, a grassy track crosses with fields to either side; stay on the main path, and a little way further on ignore a path leaving to the right through a kissing gate. **4** At a junction of paths with a field gate on your right, take the path ahead, which curves to the right. After 300m the path bends right, then left again. **5** Cross a footbridge to a farm track, and turn right. **6** When the track bends left, follow the footpath ahead, through a kissing gate. Follow the stream, ignoring a path and footbridge to the right after 100m. **7** After a further 200m, leave the stream diagonally left across the field. **8** Cross a footbridge in the far hedge and continue across the next field to a bridge and kissing gate. **9** Follow the field edge to a kissing gate and walk along the fenced path straight ahead. **10** This leads to the churchyard; walk out past the church to Church Street, where you turn left. **11** Cross the village green to a footbridge over the stream; the King's Head is on your left. **12** Continue to the far corner of the village green and follow the road left past Banks Farm House and out of the village. **13** About 300m beyond the last house, turn left through a kissing gate next to a field gate. **14** Walk up the field to the far right-hand corner, where you go through another kissing gate. **15** Follow the field edge for 100m, then go through a kissing gate on the right, immediately followed by a wooden gate into a paddock. **16** Follow the fenced path right, then turn left along the fence to a kissing gate into a driveway. **17** Turn right, then left through a wooden kissing gate next to a field gate on the left, just before some farm buildings. Follow the hedged path to a kissing gate into a narrow field. **18** At the far end of the field, go through a wooden hand-gate and cross a footbridge. Walk down the left-hand side of the field to a further kissing gate. **19** Cross the next field, heading slightly right, to a track at the end of a wall. **20** Go straight on, with the wall on your left, past a large new house, crossing the driveway halfway along. **21** When the wall ends, continue along the hedge to a gate in the far corner of the field. **22** Cross the next field, with a farm away to your left; a gap in the far corner leads out to a farm drive. **23** Turn right, ignoring a track off to the left, and follow the farm drive up