



## Walk 101. Kingston St Mary and Norton Camp.

- 8.2 miles, ascents and descents of 150 metres. 3 hours continuous walking, allow 4 hours or just over.

Terrain: Roads, paths and fields, generally straightforward, with mud a possibility and occasional flooding, particularly on the shorter walk. Keep a lookout for vehicles on the narrow lanes and when crossing the busy A358.

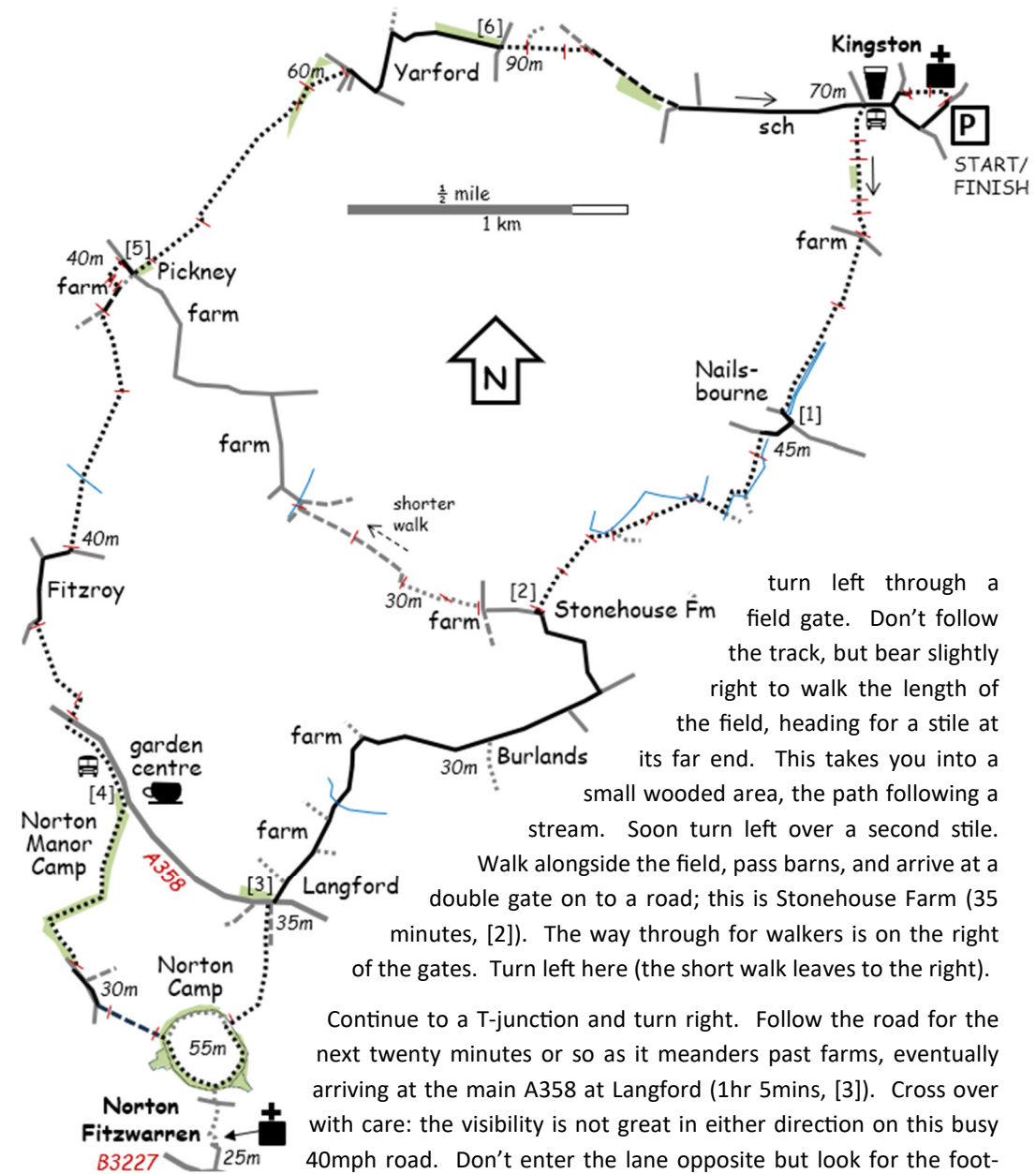
Access: Start from the church car park in Kingston (ST 223 296, TA2 8JP). On Sundays when there is a church service an alternative is opposite the school (ST 218 296, TA2 8QQ), but do not park here on school days. By bus, weekday route 23 from Taunton allows just enough time to do the walk; it stops outside the Swan Inn. Alternatively by bus start from Otter Garden Centre: frequent bus 28 (less frequent on Sundays) connects Taunton and Minehead, stopping just outside the entrance to Norton Manor Camp.

Map: OS Explorer 128 Taunton and Blackdown Hills.

Refreshments: Pub in Kingston St Mary, tea room just off the route at Otter Garden Centre (involves an additional crossing and recrossing of the busy A358).

KINGSTON ST MARY IS A PLEASANT VILLAGE at the foot of the Quantock Hills just to the north of Taunton, already encountered in walks 97, 99 and 100. This walk heads south-west from the village, taking in a gentle landscape of fields and lanes interspersed with small hamlets. The route crosses the main A358 to visit Norton Fort or Camp, a Bronze Age hill fort that is now carpeted in tall oxeye daisies in season. The return passes modern Norton Manor Camp, a Royal Marines base, and Otter Garden Centre where there are convenient halfway refreshments, then through more fields and lanes past Fitzroy, Pickney and Yarford back to Kingston.

From the church car park turn left along Church Lane, pass the village hall and then turn right at the T-junction. Follow the road around to the left past the Swan Inn and ascend some concrete steps next to a fingerpost on your left (if you have parked at the school, walk back into the village and the steps will be on your right diagonally opposite the corner of the inn). Follow the path behind houses and pass a small recreation ground on your right. Continue through a series of gates, the fifth one bringing you to a road. Cross over and walk along the right-hand field edge on a wide verge or track. Before the end of the field continue ahead through a pedestrian gate, joining an enclosed path alongside a small stream. Soon arrive in front of houses; turn left on the drive, then right on the road (20 minutes, [1]). This is Nailsbourne. Turn left on a signposted footpath in front of a house that faces you. Cross a small paddock and go through a gate. Continue ahead and walk along three sides of the field; the third is bounded by a dense conifer hedge. Now cross a footbridge, then almost immediately



turn left through a field gate. Don't follow the track, but bear slightly right to walk the length of the field, heading for a stile at its far end. This takes you into a small wooded area, the path following a stream. Soon turn left over a second stile. Walk alongside the field, pass barns, and arrive at a double gate on to a road; this is Stonehouse Farm (35 minutes, [2]). The way through for walkers is on the right of the gates. Turn left here (the short walk leaves to the right).

Continue to a T-junction and turn right. Follow the road for the next twenty minutes or so as it meanders past farms, eventually arriving at the main A358 at Langford (1hr 5mins, [3]). Cross over with care: the visibility is not great in either direction on this busy 40mph road. Don't enter the lane opposite but look for the footpath to its right, that runs parallel with it along the edge of the field.

Pass some attached houses and continue ahead and slightly uphill with the hedge now on your right. Go through a gate to enter Norton Camp, turning left to walk clockwise around the perimeter. Ignore the first path to the left (this descends to Norton Fitzwarren). Soon pass a large gully on the left, then go through a gate on the left and walk downhill on a broad

track; after a second gate turn right on the road. Continuing ahead come to the entrance to Manor Lodge and turn right through a kissing gate on to a signed footpath. Walk along the field edge to the corner; continue up to the high fence of Norton Manor Camp, then turn right so that you are walking between the perimeter fence and the hedge. The path will bring you back to the A358 (1hr 35mins, [4]). The garden centre (and tearoom) are on the opposite side; if you want to visit them, cross directly and then cross back again to return to the main walk. This is also the alternative start using the no. 28 bus.

To continue the walk turn left on the wide grass verge and pass the entrance road to the camp (if you have got off the bus, this is on the Norton Manor Camp side of the road, heading away from the garden centre). Just after the 50mph signs cross over and walk through a wide gate into a field. Continue ahead and turn through the first gate on your left. Follow the right-hand field edge to a gate leading on to a road at a group of houses (Fitzroy); continue ahead on the road. Pass the entrance to Lower Portman Farm as the road bends right, then look for a gate with a footpath sign on your left. Follow the path directly across the field, coming to a stream; turn left, then cross the stream just before the field corner. You are now aiming for a stile beneath a solitary tall tree slightly to the right, roughly in line with a white house in the distance; it may however be easier to follow the line of the crop directly ahead and turn right at the far side of the field. Cross the stile and continue along the right-hand edge of the field until you come to a gate. Walk towards the white house, but just before you arrive at it turn left through a gate. Go over a stile, cross a small paddock which may have some friendly alpacas in it, then go over two stiles in succession and turn right. Pass the farm and come to a road. Turn right here and walk back past the farmhouse, then opposite high stone gate pillars turn left on to a footpath (2hr 5mins, [5]). The shorter walk rejoins here.

Go over a stile and keep to the right-hand side of the field. After the gate, the official route is straight on but you may need to turn right then left to avoid the crop. Head for a belt of trees, bearing left to walk along its edge. Turn right through a gate, then keep left on an enclosed path. A gate brings you into a field; head diagonally left, then another gate brings you to a driveway. Bear left then turn right on to the road. This is Yarford. Take the first road on the left, bending to the right and climbing for only the second time on the walk. You are on the edge of the Quantock Hills, with views to the right to the Blackdowns; Taunton nestles in between. When the road bends right and downhill at a house (2hr 35mins, [6]), cross to the left and enter a waterworks. A narrow path continues between the gates and a single-storey wooden building. This takes you through a gate and across a field; after a second gate bear slightly right to come to a stile, turning right on to a narrow road. This is the driveway for Tetton House, approached more closely in walks 97 and 99. At the end of the driveway turn left on to a road. This brings you past houses, the village school, and after a junction to the Swan Inn. An alternative way back to the church is to take the first left turn after the Swan (Lodes Lane), turn right in front of a driveway, go through a metal kissing gate, cross

another driveway, then follow an enclosed path to the churchyard. The gate on the far side of the church takes you to the car park.

**Shorter walk: Kingston, Nailsbourne, Pickney and Yarford** (● 5.4 miles, ascents and descents of 90 metres). Follow the main walk to the 35-minute point ([2]), turning right on the lane. In about three minutes the road bends sharply right at Higher Yarde Farm: go through a field gate directly in front of you. Walk along the left-hand boundary, but about halfway along cross over a stile on the left to continue with the hedge now on your right. Go through a gate and turn right then left, soon joining a concrete trackway. Go through a gate, then at the corner of the field turn right and left on to a farm lane; this floods easily, but it is usually passable with care in boots. Turn right when you arrive at a road. Pass a farm and turn left at the T-junction. Arrive into Pickney, a hamlet of well-spaced houses and farms. Pass Grove Farm on your right, then just before a house on the left with a high stone wall turn right on a footpath. You are now back on the main route at the 2hr 5min point ([5]).



*Norton Camp*

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