



Gold Hill

**A** **Shaftesbury Abbey.** Founded in about 888AD by King Alfred the Great, the abbey housed a convent of nuns, the first abbess installed by Alfred being his daughter Aethelgifu. The abbey was dissolved in 1539 by order of Thomas Cromwell, minister to King Henry VIII during the English Reformation. The site of the abbey is now used to host events including open air viewings of films, drama workshops and performances.

**B** **Gold Hill.** Perhaps still best-known as the setting for the television advertisement in 1973 of a well known brand of bread, Gold Hill lies just off Shaftesbury High Street. Offering stunning views down the street and across the Dorset countryside, the 5 minutes that it takes to walk down the hill (perhaps a little longer to walk back up!) is a fun experience and one that you can tell your family and friends about. In early May each year, a Food and Drinks Festival is held with a Cheese Race. Competitors each have to carry a truckle of cheese up the hill.

**Points of Interest on this route**  
(see map overleaf for locations)

**C** **Wincombe Park.** This Grade II listed private house dates from the 1820's. The gardens are occasionally opened to the public under the National Gardens Scheme to raise money for charity. For opening dates and times search <https://ngs.org.uk/gardens/wincombe-park-sp7/>.

**D** **Middle and Higher Coombes.** The very pretty hamlets of Middle Coombe and Higher Coombe contribute to the outstanding natural beauty of this almost completely hidden landscape that one of the highlights of this walk.

**E** **Hardy Way long-distance footpath.** Between Middle Coombe and the centre of Shaftesbury this walk shares its route with part of the Hardy Way, a long-distance path that explores the Wessex of the author Thomas Hardy. The path starts at his birthplace near Dorchester and leads through Dorset and Wiltshire to the churchyard at Stinsford where his heart lies buried.

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Three circular farmland walks, all starting and finishing in Shaftesbury Town Centre. Footpaths and tracks with gates and stiles through fields and woods and over streams. Some short sections on quiet rural roads.

**Start Point:** The Bell Street car park in the centre of Shaftesbury. OS Explorer 118 | Grid Reference ST862230 | W3W: parkway.index.distanced

**Parking:** Bell Street car park (long stay pay and display) in the town centre. Maximum stay 4 hours. NB: The estimated time to complete the longest of the three walks is 3.5 to 4 hours.

**Terrain:** Roadside footways from the town centre to reach countryside paths. Field paths and tracks of varying width with one long steep climb at Great Hanging. Stiles and gates.

**Length:** Full circular 6.5miles / 10km. North circular: 5.3 miles / 8km. South circular 4.2 miles / 6.75km.

**Approximate time:** Full circular 3.5 to 4 hours. North circular 3 hours. South circular 2.5 hours.

**Dogs:** Please keep dogs on a lead wherever livestock are present.

**Good to know:** There are public toilets in the Bell Street car park..

**Refreshments:** Good choice of cafes, restaurants, pubs and shops in Shaftesbury.

*The information is only intended as a general guide. Please check local arrangements.*



Respect everyone  
Protect the environment  
Enjoy the outdoors  
Follow advice and local signs

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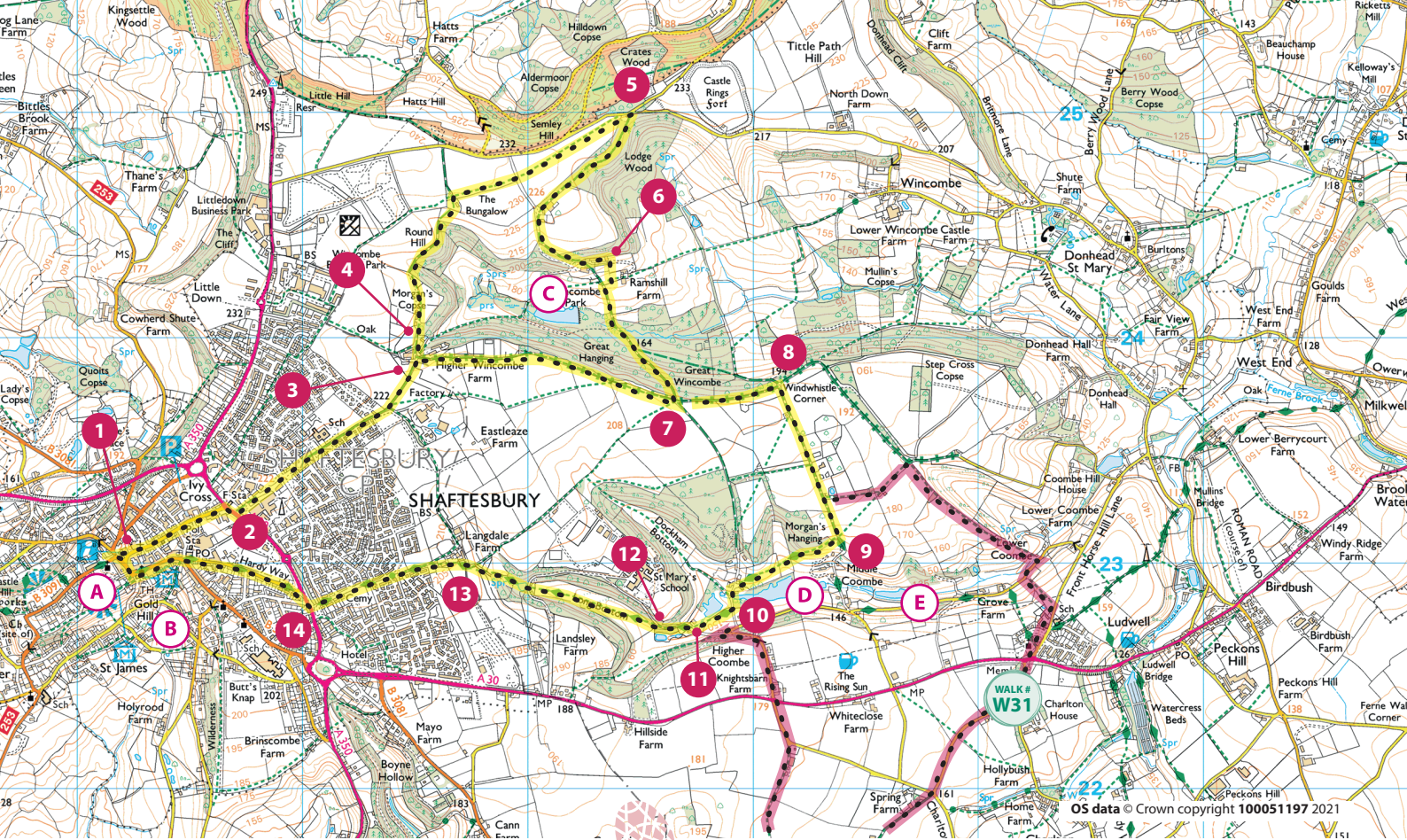
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**Shaftesbury, Wincombe and The Coombes**  
3 in 1 Circular Walk

**WALK #**  
**W30**







## Directions

**1** For all three walks, leave the Bell Street car park by the lane alongside the Morrisons' supermarket to Bell Street. Turn left along Bell Street, continuing along Barton Hill until reaching the A350.

**2** Cross the road into Wincombe Lane, with the Fire Station to the left. Continue straight ahead through the industrial estate and past the Shaftesbury Church of England Primary School on the left. Continue straight ahead through the housing estates, along Wincombe Lane and then along the track and downhill until reaching farm buildings on the left.

**3** Here is a choice of which of the three walks to take.

**For the southern circular, turn right along the track that follows the edge of the fields. Do not go along the drive into Higher Wincombe Farm. Stay on this track for approximately 1.5km, with the woodland of Great Hanging to the left, until reaching a junction of tracks. You have now reached Point 7 on the route map, so continue along the track straight ahead and follow the directions at points 8 through to 14 to complete the walk.**

**For the full circular and the northern circular walk, continue straight ahead past the farm buildings at Higher Wincombe Farm.**

**4** Keep left to the gate and stile and follow the track uphill to pass a barn on the left. Follow the track to and along the edge of a wood and then around to the right to skirt the garden of The Bungalow. Cross the driveway and over a stile and along the edge of the field. Cross another track and follow the line of the telegraph poles until reaching a road.

**5** Turn right along the road and then right again between the twin stone pillars of a gateway into woodland. Keep to the left of the house and continue along the waymarked track inside the edge of the wood. At the tarmac drive, turn left down the hill and keep left to pass Wincombe Park.

**6** As the view across the valley to the hills ahead opens up, turn right at a waymarked post onto the bridleway along the field edge, into a sunken lane. Cross the stream and follow the lane up the steep bank through the woodland of Great Hanging.

**7** At the top of the hill is a junction of three tracks. This is where the southern circular route re-joins.

**To complete the full circular and the southern circular, turn left and continue along the ridge, with views across the valley to the village of Donhead St. Mary, to reach point 8 on the map.**

**To complete the northern circular walk, turn right onto the track along the edge of the wood, which leads back to Higher Wincombe Farm and point 3 on the map, returning from there to the centre of Shaftesbury by going back through points 2 and 1.**

**8** If you have continued along the full or the southern circular walks, turn right at the junction of tracks onto the signposted bridleway at Windwhistle Corner. Pass a farm on the left, then look for a gate on the right into woodland at Morgans' Hanging.

**9** Follow the path downhill to a stile. Cross the field to a gate and stile and keep straight ahead through the next field to the houses at Higher Coombe. Turn left along the lane.

**10** At the second of two signposted footpaths on the right, take the path fenced on either side to a stile and steps down to a lane at Upper Coombe.

**11** Turn right along the lane, passing the house on the left to a gate into the valley of Long Bottom.

**12** Walk uphill through the valley, at the end of which a gate on the right takes the path up to a lane. Turn left down the hill and onto a signposted footpath on the right, past a pond. Continue uphill between fences to the road at Mampitts Farm.

**13** Turn left to follow the road through a modern housing estate and shops. Keep straight ahead past the cemetery until reaching the A350.

**14** Cross the A350 and go to the right, then left into Coppice Street, which leads back to the town centre. At the end of Coppice Street continue straight ahead along the road. Just past the Town Hall, on the left, is Gold Hill. To return to the Bell Street car park, follow the road around to the right.