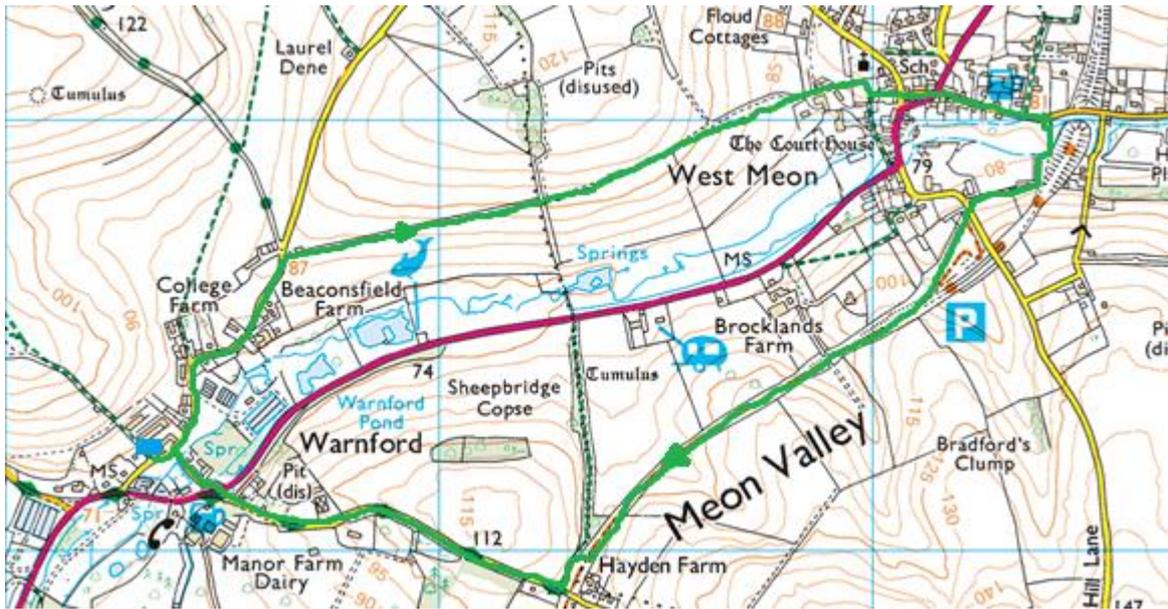


Walk 1 – West Meon & back (2¾ miles; three stiles; easy walking)



Follow Lippen Lane northward through the centre of the village and up a gentle hill through a cutting.

Just before North End Cottages, follow the steps up the bank on the right, over the stile and across the top of a big meadow, full of wild flowers in the spring. In the bottom of the valley on the right is the winding course of the Meon, leading to Moorhen Trout Farm. The big pond is fed by natural springs.

At the end of the field a stile takes you across the parish boundary – here formed of a big bank, well dug over by badgers. In Saxon times this was a “herepath” or military road, coming from Bramdean and crossing the river at Sheepbridge to ascend towards the South Downs Ridgeway.

Keep straight on along the footpath, which widens into a track. The tower of West Meon church rises up straight in front of you, with a good view of the village away to the right. If you are lucky there will be poppies along the edge of the field.

Keep on down the hill towards Floud Lane and the Courthouse Barns. Turn right at the bottom, then follow the signed path immediately on the left, which squeezes between fence and wall, then winds round and crosses West Meon churchyard wall by a stone stile.

Go diagonally across the churchyard and down the passage which brings you out at The Cross. Cross the A32 (with care) and walk down West Meon High Street. Pay a visit to the Thomas Lord or Springs Café if you have time.

Keep going along the High Street. After 300 yds a signed footpath on the right takes you across the millstream and then the Meon, often dry here in summer. Follow the path behind the grounds of West Meon House until it comes out in Station Road.

Turn left and then immediately right and up the old station approach. The station building is long gone, but you can see the platforms and the cattle loading dock. The old railway track is now the

Meon Valley Trail. It leads straight on into a short cutting, followed by an embankment with views through the trees. The trail crosses an occupation bridge, with the very secluded Brocklands Farm caravanning club site below to the left. Across the valley to the right the fields crossed on the way to West Meon come into sight.

The line enters a cutting and curves to the left. Towards the end of the curve leave the trail, climbing up the bank on the right by the marked footpath. Towards the top of the bank Warnford Footpath 15 merges from the right. This is on the parish boundary, following the old road crossed before.

At Hayden Lane turn right and back to Warnford. Take care on the sharp bend half way down the hill. Immediately before the A32 you cross the leat which once carried water from Warnford Pond to the water meadows further down the valley. Cross the road and down River Lane. This is the oldest part of the present day village. Old Forge Cottage, the George & Falcon and Hunts Farm buildings remain, but here once were the village post office, a couple of shops and a mill. In front of you the ford which gave Warnford its name has carried ridgeway traffic for thousands of years, the old bridge being a recent addition in comparison.