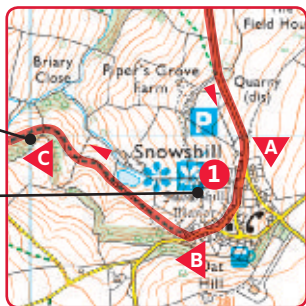


# How to use this book

This book contains route maps and descriptions for 20 walks, with areas of interest indicated by symbols (see below). For each walk particular points of interest are denoted by a number both in the text and on the map (where the number appears in a circle). In the text the route instructions are prefixed by a capital letter. We recommend that you read the whole description, including the fact box at the start of each walk, before setting out.

Route instruction denoted by a capital letter in the text

Point of interest denoted by a number in the text



## Key to walk symbols

At the start of each walk there is a series of symbols that indicate particular areas of interest associated with the route.



Birdlife



Other wildlife



Wild flowers



Good views



Historical interest



Woodland



Geology



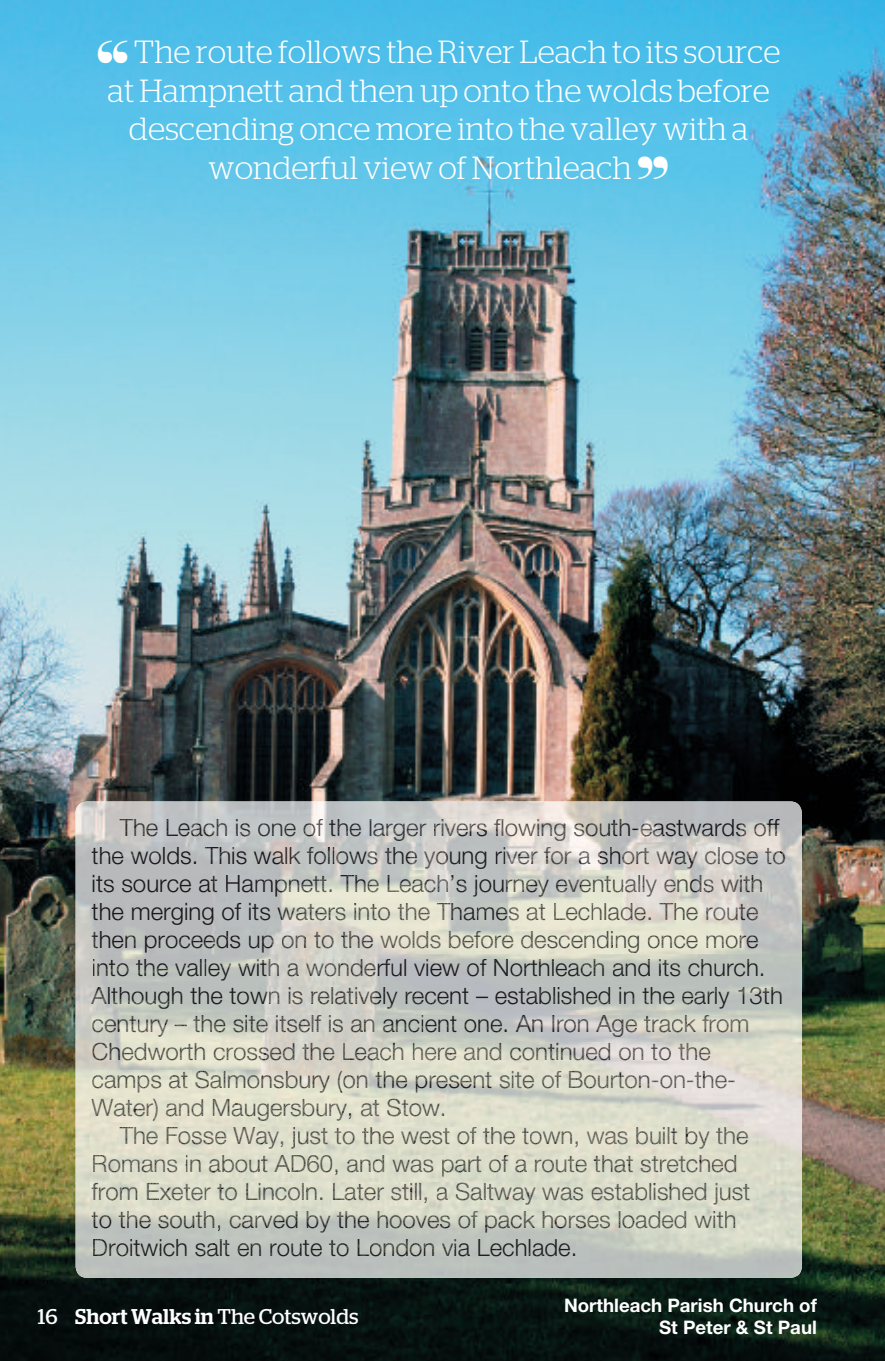
Literature

**SCALE 1:25,000**



Please note the scale for walk maps is 1:25,000 unless otherwise stated. North is always at the top of the page.

“ The route follows the River Leach to its source at Hampnett and then up onto the wolds before descending once more into the valley with a wonderful view of Northleach ”

A photograph of Northleach Parish Church of St Peter & St Paul, a large Gothic Revival church with a prominent square tower and multiple spires. The church is set in a green landscape with trees and a clear blue sky. The image is used as a background for the text on the page.

The Leach is one of the larger rivers flowing south-eastwards off the wolds. This walk follows the young river for a short way close to its source at Hampnett. The Leach's journey eventually ends with the merging of its waters into the Thames at Lechlade. The route then proceeds up on to the wolds before descending once more into the valley with a wonderful view of Northleach and its church. Although the town is relatively recent – established in the early 13th century – the site itself is an ancient one. An Iron Age track from Chedworth crossed the Leach here and continued on to the camps at Salmonsbury (on the present site of Bourton-on-the-Water) and Mangersbury, at Stow.

The Fosse Way, just to the west of the town, was built by the Romans in about AD60, and was part of a route that stretched from Exeter to Lincoln. Later still, a Saltway was established just to the south, carved by the hooves of pack horses loaded with Droitwich salt en route to London via Lechlade.

# Northleach & Hampnett



Hampnett

## Route instructions

**A** Park in the town centre. Head north-westwards along the main street, and continue over the A429 to a gate on the right just past the museum.

**1** The parish church of Northleach is one of the three great Cotswold wool churches. There are similarities with the church at Chipping Campden that suggest the work of the same master mason. It is partly 12th century, built on the site of a previous church, but owes much of its 15th century grandeur to the wealth of local wool merchants. The exterior is as notable as the beautifully light and airy interior. Of particular note is the 15th century porch and stone

pulpit, and the collection of famous brasses – among the finest in England.

**2** The Old Prison, built in 1790 by the prison reformer Sir George Onesiphorus Paul, was a model of its time with exercise yards, baths, and medical care. The historic courtroom is open to the public. The building now houses a rural life collection, including agricultural implements and wagons and is one of the largest publicly-owned regional collections of country life anywhere in the country. The workhouse built at the other end of town led to the saying that Northleach began in prison and ended in the workhouse.

## Plan your walk



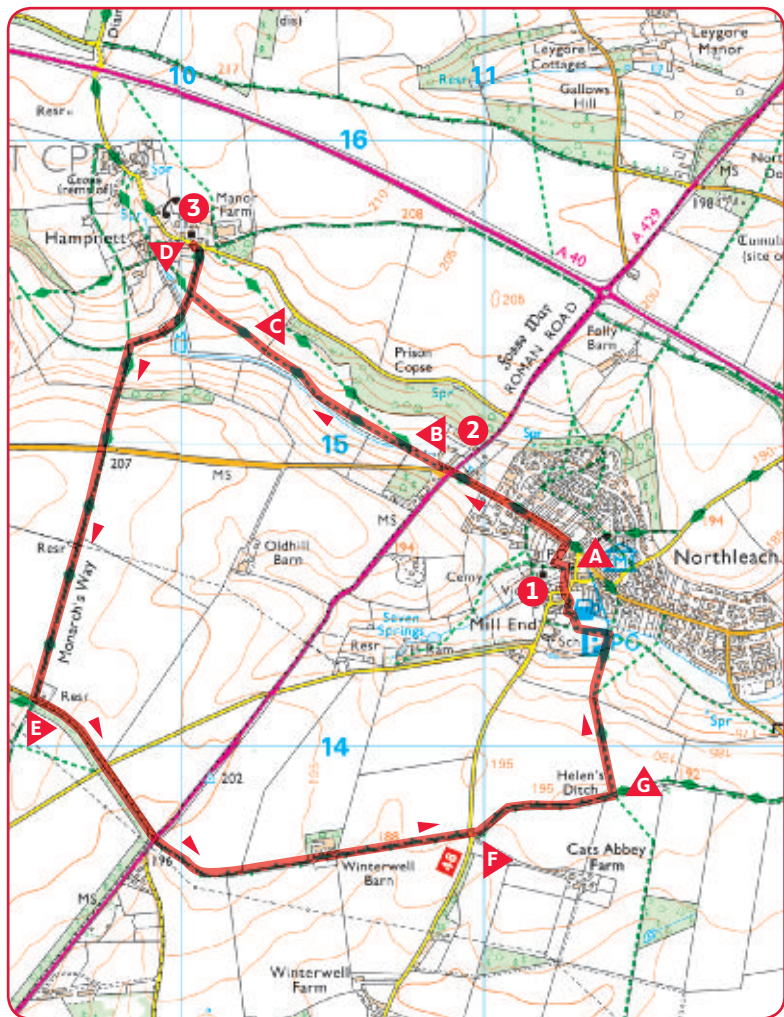
**DISTANCE:** 4 miles (6.5km)

**TIME:** 2 hours

**START/END:** SP113145 Northleach

**TERRAIN:** Easy

**MAPS:**  
OS Explorer OL 45;  
OS Landranger 163



**B** Go through the gate and bear half-left to the corner. Cross the Leach and turn left to the gate at the end of the field. Pass through the gate, and continue straight on to the next gate.

**C** Go through the gate and head across the field (it may be under cultivation) aiming just to the right of the big house. Go through another gate and turn right up the track to Hampnett Church.

# Northleach & Hampnett

**3** The interior of the church was restored in 1868 and it is certainly striking. In the 18th century the rectors were notorious for marrying couples without asking too many questions.

**D** Leave the church and return down the track. Cross the river and turn left, uphill, at the junction. Pass through a gate halfway up the hill and go straight on at the road. Follow the right-hand field boundaries to the next road.

**E** Turn left, go straight on at the crossroads and, at the A429, continue straight over the main road onto a path in-between two fields. Follow this path on to a

track, passing through farm buildings and on to a tarmac drive to the road.

**F** Continue ahead along the left-hand dirt track as far as the first gate on the left.

**G** Turn left through the gate and follow the left-hand field boundary downhill. Continue through another gate, heading straight on keeping the boundary on the left. Go through a further gate, past the tennis courts and cut across the playing field heading towards the church. Join a wall-lined path, then turn right at the end onto a road to return to the town centre.



Hampnett Church

Northleach was once the centre of a large area of sheep production and owes its existence and much of its appearance to the wool trade. It was granted a market in 1227 and, by the 14th century, had become the principal wool market of the central Cotswolds. The Abbey of Gloucester owned the land and planned the town around a triangular market place with 80 plots of land laid out along the north and south sides of the market. Many of these plots have since been combined but can still be seen from high vantage points or detected in the roof lines visible from the market place. The local wool traders became incredibly wealthy, especially those who progressed to become Merchants of the Staple. These were a group of middlemen who held the monopoly of wool export from the Crown and several diverted part of their fortune into the construction of fine buildings including, of course, the magnificent church. Unfortunately, the local industry was tightly controlled by the guilds who proved unable, or unwilling, to adapt to new methods of production and, after the middle of the 16th century, the centre of the trade shifted to Stroud. The Industrial Revolution passed by Northleach and the town has remained relatively untouched for more than two centuries.