

WALK 10 PIRTON

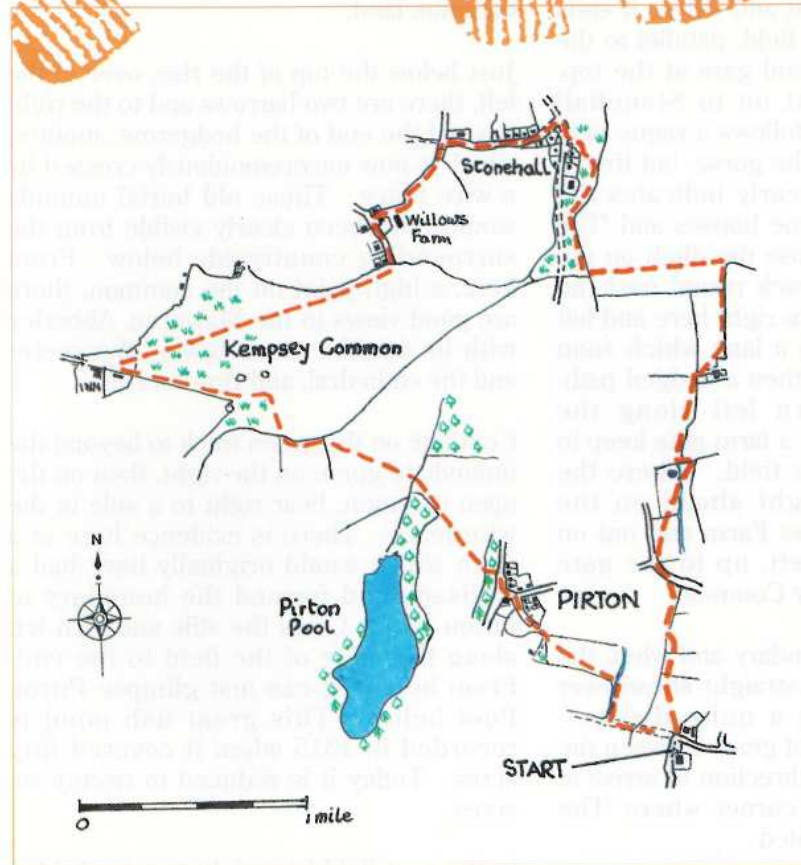
The ancient church of St Peter with its aisled, timber framed tower is the starting point of this walk. The route takes you north to stonehall common, then south-west across Kempsey Common and back through Pirton. Map Reference of start SO 885 469. 5 Miles

Pirton is a small scattered village 5 miles west of Pershore. It can be approached from the A44 Worcester to Evesham road via Wadborough or from the A38 (T) Worcester to Tewkesbury road via High Green. There is a wide grass verge next to the churchyard.

From the bend in the road go through the metal gate and cross the field diagonally to the far right corner, where there is a small gate and a couple of stiles. Walk by the left hedge, then in the field beyond the farm bridge, turn right and about 50 yards short of the hedge ahead, bear slightly left to a stile on to a lane. Pass Elm Farm on the left and at the road junction turn right and right again to a stile.

From here the path bears left to a prominent stile in the fence and then goes across the next field to the right of the pond to a gate in the top corner. Turn left and on re-crossing the stream, follow it to the right as far as a gateway. Go through a metal gate on the right and almost immediately bear left, making for the corner of the garden fence, and continue in the same direction to the hedge. Turn left. There is a noticeable amount of gravel and stone along here and it is possible that, at one time, this was a road or track.

Beyond the metal gate and ditch keep to the hedge on the right and where it ends turn left to go up the field, parallel to the hedge, to a small metal gate at the top. This brings you out on to Stonehall Common. The route follows a vague path to the right between the gorse, but then a broad grass track clearly indicates the way at the rear of some houses and 'The Fruiterers Arms'. Cross the ditch on the left and follow the track round past the



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OS Maps:

*Landranger 150
Pathfinder 1019
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pond on the road. Turn right here and left at the junction, down a lane which soon becomes a track and then a hedged path. At the bottom, turn left along the bridleway and beyond a farm gate keep to the right edge of the field. Where the field ends go straight ahead on the bridleway past Willows Farm and out on to the lane. Turn left, up to the gate leading on to Kempsey Common.

Keep to the right boundary and when the fence bears right, go straight ahead over the common, down a quite distinct, tapering, broad band of grass between the gorse. Maintain this direction to arrive at the bottom left-hand corner where 'The Farmers Arms' is situated.

This was once the Kempsey workhouse. Such institutions were established to relieve individual parishes of the financial burden of providing for the poor. The poor law reform of 1834 saw the amalgamation of parishes into unions and creation of boards of Guardians to administer the workhouses.

From the parking area follow the track up the hill on the edge of the common. Just off to the right is the site of the old allotments, now with a solitary fenced area left in the middle. The system of granting allotments was again a solution to the problem of provision for the poor, and this particular area was allocated from common land.

Just below the top of the rise, over to the left, there are two barrows and to the right beyond the end of the hedgerow, another, which is now unceremoniously crossed by a wire fence. These old burial mounds would have been clearly visible from the surrounding countryside below. From here, a high point on the common, there are good views to the Malvern's, Abberley with its familiar clock tower, Worcester and the cathedral, and Bredon Hill.

Continue on the green track to beyond the immediate gorse on the right, then on the open common, bear right to a stile in the wire fence. There is evidence here of a ditch which would originally have had a palisade and formed the boundary of Pirton park. Cross the stile and turn left along the edge of the field to the end. From here you can just glimpse Pirton Pool below. This great fish pond is recorded in 1315 when it covered fifty acres. Today it is reduced to twenty-six acres.

In the next field bear right to a footbridge that lies between the two woods. Go up by the side of the wood to a gate and keep the same direction up over the field and down to a stile in the hedge. Pass through the wood and out on to the road. Turn right, then left across the green to a track on the opposite side of the road. Beyond the metal gate the path goes to the right of the Severn Trent enclosure through another gate. In about 20 yards go into the field on the right and cross diagonally to a footbridge. Follow the ditch on the right to a kissing-gate in the corner. Turn left along the path to go through a gateway and up the track to the road.