

ASHMOOR COMMON
Approximately 4 miles

Start. Start in lower Old Road South near the A38 junction. Proceed down the road to the junction with the A38. There is a metal gate with a side stile immediately across the main road. This is the access to Ashmoor Common.

1. Go through another gate to the main Common. There is a wet area and pond to your right so keep to the left side and walk almost the full length of the Common with the hedge on your left. The path across the Common is not clearly defined and you may have to pick your way depending upon the state of the weather and conditions underfoot. This is a known wetland so is muddy even in the driest weather. At the top end there is a stream across the width of the Common, which can be crossed at the far right hand corner.
2. Having crossed the bridge, turn left and follow the stream almost to the field hedge. On the right hand side there is a stile. Cross this and walk straight ahead uphill over the grassland.
3. Head towards a house and stile. Ignore the stile and turn left keeping the house on your right hand side. Continue towards a row of trees and a bridge over a ditch. The path continues across turf towards The Nash and out into the Defford Road.
4. The stile is immediately over the Defford Road to the left of a metal gate. Two paths are indicated. Go straight across the paddock with The Nash on your right hand side. At the far side of the paddock there is a stream and a stile in a fence. Continue straight ahead across a gap and then keep to the right hand side of the hedge. The path crosses to the other side of the hedge at a large oak tree and waymark post. Continue in the same direction and, after passing the large house, the path goes diagonally to your left and down some fixed steps into Bestman's Lane.
5. The footpath is immediately opposite down an alleyway to the west side of Mount Emerald. This alleyway will take you towards Bannut Hill.
6. As you reach the first house along the alleyway, there is a gate and path to your left across a small paddock, out onto the main A38. Crossing over the major road, continue down Pixham Ferry Lane, over the crossroads and down towards the Lower Ham. As you reach the gateway you will see the reclamation works on the left.
7. Enter the Lower Ham and turn immediately left along the hedgerow. You are now heading south. Cross the stile by the willow tree and continue along the headland of the field. At the gap in the hedge climb up the bank and then turn right to continue along the headland of the field above the bank. The hedge is now on your right. You will see a white farmhouse over the field to the left. Take the path between the fields towards the farmhouse. This is a fisherman's path back to Old Road South, and your starting point to the right.

Start. It is recommended that you start the walk in Old Road South as the road is relatively wide here. The verges give some parking space.

- A. This is the old main road through the village. From this point views over the river to Clevelode and the Malverns can be seen. The junction with the A38 is the southern boundary of the village.
- B. Ashmoor Common is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, with many rare plants. In June and July particularly the area is well covered with wild orchids, which range in colour from white through a pale mauve to purple. The pond provides cover, food and a breeding area for many birds. The more common such as swans, mallard and moorhen may be seen all year round. Deep ditches, dykes and springs provide facilities for breeding frogs and in the springtime the grass appears to be filled with tiny little hopping creatures.
- C. Clifton can be seen to the right on a sharp curve in the main road. The dyke is deeper here with reeds and bull rushes. Rabbits, pheasants and the occasional partridge find a home in the brambles. There is a spring near the next stile, which is said to be on a ley line.
- D. You are now on the higher ground in the walk. Some of the best views of The Nash house are in front of you. To the right, east, are the Cedars of Lebanon trees of Rabbit Bank and to the west are the more extensive views of The Malverns.
- E. The oldest parts of The Nash date back to Tudor times (16th century).
- F. Pixham Ferry Lane continues from the hard road across the Lower Ham to the old Ferry landing. The ferry crossed over to the Callow End Ferry Lane. There is no ferry in operation now. It was last used by workers going to and from the hop yards in the Callow End area. There are just a few remains of the old Oak Inn along the headland and level with the white farmhouse. This was a public house for the bargees on the river bank. A few lilac, damson and plum trees and some stones are all that now remain.