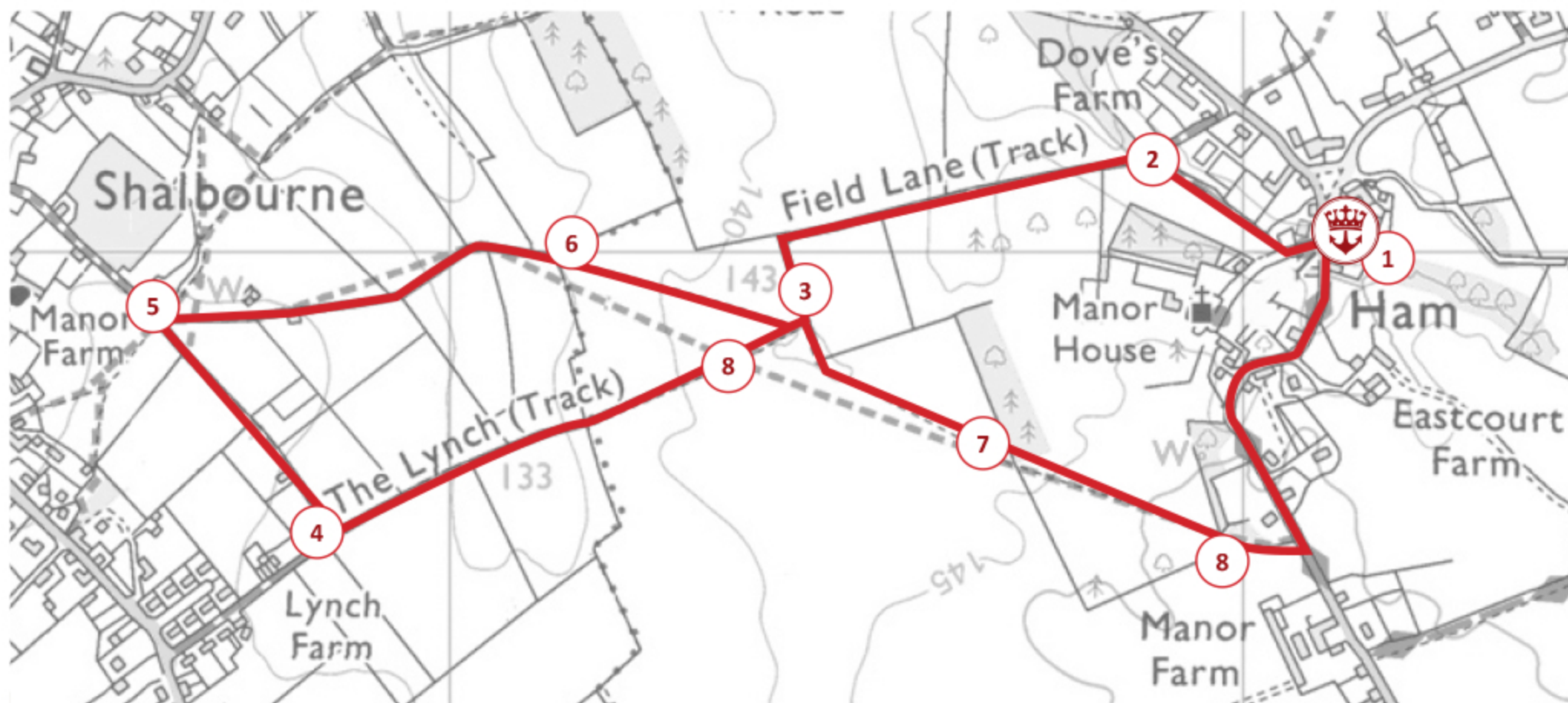


SHALBOURNE & HAM MANOR LOOP

2.5 miles 4.0 km: 1 hour

generally level: no stiles



1 From the Crown & Anchor pub car park turn left onto the road heading towards Buttermere. Immediately on the left is the 16th century Rose Cottage with its later well-winding gear outside it. Twenty metres further on turn right along Church Lane. Thirty metres further on there is a public bridleway sign to the right. Turn right through the gate marked Humphrey's gate, unless you decide to view the church then return to the gate.

The 12th century All Saints' Church was built by Henry of Blois, grandson of William the Conqueror and powerful Bishop of Winchester, who owned the village. The tower of the church is reputed to have been built in 1349 as a thanksgiving for the village surviving the Black Death.

2 Cross to the pedestrian gate on the far side of the field and turn left down the track known as Field Lane. Continue along the track for 400 metres and follow the track when it turns sharp left between hedgerows. Emerge from the hedgerows, with fine views of the downs ahead. The more dominant bridleway turns sharp right to the village of Shalbourne.

3 Turn right on the more dominant bridle path. After about 20m ignore a footpath signed to the right (you will return to this point later). There are views of the downs, of Ham Hill and Riva Hill to your left. Continue straight ahead along the path known as The Lynch for 650m until the path joins a gravel access road which skirts beside the first house reached.

4 Turn right on the gravel track keeping a post and rail fence along the boundary of a horse field with jumps and dressage arena to your right and passing a couple of houses on your left. After about 300m the gravel track narrows to a grass path until reaching another gravel track at the junction of several footpaths.

5 Ignore the footpaths at right angles to the path and turn sharply right through the 5-bar metal gate along a grass path between tall (usually trimmed) hedgerows on either side. Follow this path as it curves gently to the left and then slightly right until no longer fenced on either side.

6 The path crosses into a field alongside a disused stile. Continue diagonally across the field towards a large

oak tree where you will rejoin the path travelled earlier near the point mentioned in **3** above.

You now have a choice of return

Either return to Ham retracing the route of 1-3 above.

Or at **3** turn right along the fence line beside the field for 30m, before turning slightly left towards a kissing gate across the large arable field that extends to the foot of the downs.

7 Continue straight ahead to another kissing gate. Looking left as you cross this field there are views of Ham Manor, a fine old Queen Anne Manor House and to the right fine views of the escarpment.

8 The path now goes through the garden of Manor Farmhouse. After 50m turn left at the road, slightly downhill: shortly after successive bends, taking care with oncoming traffic, you will pass the lane to the village hall on your right and, to your left, Forge Cottage, once the blacksmith's forge. After a further 100m you reach the Crown & Anchor.