

WALKS IN THE VALE OF PEWSEY



CIRCULAR WALK

WILCOT AND THE KENNET & AVON CANAL

3.6 miles / 5.75 km

1 hour walking

A peaceful and easy to follow level route with lots of interest and wildlife.

Suitable for wheelchairs and buggies, but can be muddy in places.



THE VALE OF PEWSEY WILTSHIRE

Imagine quintessential England.
Rolling countryside, thatched cottages,
country lanes, white horses on chalk hills.
Welcome to the Vale of Pewsey,
one of the most beautiful
and unspoilt places in the UK.

Readily accessible by road and rail, the Vale
is located in the North Wessex Downs
National Landscape and on the Great West Way.



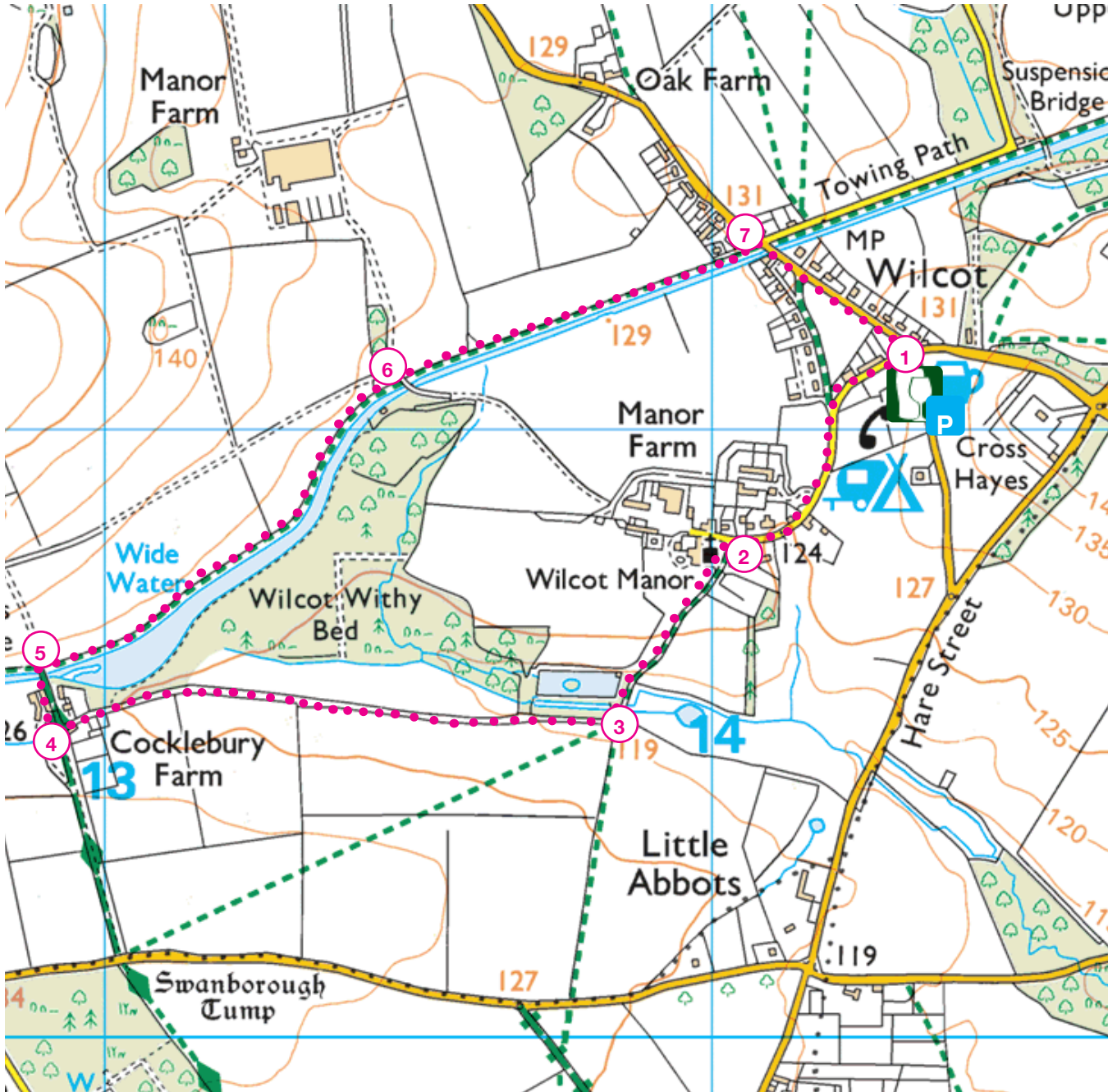
Traversed by the Ridgeway
and Kennet & Avon Canal,
served by a network of ancient footpaths,
tracks, and bridleways, the Vale of Pewsey is ideal
for walking, riding or cycling, with welcoming
places to stay, friendly and atmospheric places to
eat, drink and shop, and local events
to enjoy throughout the year. Once you are in the
Vale, use the Wiltshire Connect on-demand bus
service to travel throughout the area.

For more information go to
www.visitpewseyvale.co.uk



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- 1 From the Golden Swan pub, turn left down Church Lane. The lane bends to the left slightly and you can see that this part of the village used to be the village centre. Ahead of you is Holy Cross Church, which is worth visiting.
- 2 Turn left at the Church (so that the Church is on your right) down a very pretty lane. The area to your right is the Wilcot Withy Bed where reeds were once grown for thatching and which is now a wildlife haven.

The Withy Bed was part of the original monastic settlement in the 12th century, together with a fish pond and an excellent vineyard.
- 3 Continue down here and just past a babbling brook which runs under the path, turn right at the metal field gate.
- 4 Go along this track until you get to Cocklebury Farm and turn sharp right which takes you over the grassy track of Ladies' Bridge and the Kennet & Avon Canal.
- 5 Turn right and go down on to the towpath and turn around to look at the ornate stonework of the bridge.
- 6 Continue along the towpath and the next bridge you encounter is Bowden's Bridge (see cover). Shortly after this, you will see the site of the old swing bridge (below) for moving cattle over the canal.



- 7 Continuing along the towpath, you come next to Wilcot Bridge, where you leave the towpath and go up on to the road.

Turn right to cross over the canal bridge and walk down the east side of the village green, passing the Village Hall and Cricket Pitch on your left.

At the end of the village green, you will be back at The Golden Swan.

ALONG THE ROUTE



Holy Cross Church The parish was first mentioned in 964 in a grant made by Edmund the Elder of the Manor of Pevesie (Pewsey) to Hyde Abbey. In the Domesday Book, Edward of Salisbury held

Wilcot from the King and the estate included 'a new church; a very good house; a good vineyard'. On 11 April 1876 the building was gutted by fire, leaving the main walls and tower and was then rebuilt in the same year by AJ Style.

A Jacobean Fruit Trencher commonly called the 'Wooden Paten' is set into the south wall of the chancel and dates from about 1610 - and it has a very interesting inscription. The church also has a 'squint' between the chancel and the aisle to provide a view of the ceremony to the congregation. Holy Cross Church is now Grade II* listed.



Ladies' Bridge The Kennet and Avon canal crossed the parish in 1807. When the canal was built, it ran through land owned by the Wroughton family who lived at Wilcot Manor. Access

to build on their land was permitted on the conditions that the canal should be widened to create an ornamental lake, now known as Wide Water, where it passed near their house and that the company build an ornamental bridge over it. The bridge, built by John Rennie and known as Ladies' Bridge, is listed. The ladies referred to were Susannah Wroughton and her daughter, also Susannah.



The Golden Swan From the mid-18th century, Wilcot had a pub which was called The White Swan which stood at the southern corner of the village green. The pub was moved to

its current location on the eastern corner of the green in 1859 and at that time, changed its name to the Golden Swan.

This pretty pub boasts the steepest thatched roof in Wiltshire. The Pearce family of Wilcot have been famous for generations in the county as Thatchers and family tradition demands that babies in the family are taken on a ladder up its steeply pitched thatch.