

MENDIP RING LEG 4. Section 2. – East Woodlands Church. 7 miles to Limerick Farm
Grid Ref ST 789 441.

1. Walk down the hill from the church, past the village hall and go straight across at the cross roads and continue up Shepherd's Lane. Go past the woods and take the path on your right. At the footbridge, just before the ford, take the permissive path on your left to High House Farm. Follow the stream to Mill Lane, turn right cross the ford. Bear left to the top of the lane and continue to Lane End and cross the main road.
2. Follow the sign to Corsley and after about 200 yds take the path on the left just before Court Lane. Follow the path over stiles and left to the gate to the main road, Lane End Hill. Be careful here as it is a 60 mph road Turn right and take the next track on your right – marked Frith Farm on Jole's Lane. Walk to the pedestrian gate by the cattle grid and bear right 45 degrees to group of trees at the end of the field on a level with the house.. Go through the kissing gate and across the field to the next kissing gate. Keep to the hedge walk to the fence and follow the sign right by the fence. Go over the stile at the bottom and go straight ahead across the bridge. Walk to the stile to the left of the gate Follow the path past Heath House Farm and take the track up to the Chapmanslade road
3. Cross over and turn left towards Frome. After a few yards, just past a house, take a path on your right and immediately turn left into the woods. There is no sign but the path is well marked. Walk along the ridge between trees. Follow the track to meet the path that comes in from Lodge Hill. And continue down through the woods past a tree with a swing. Exit over a stile on the left If you come to Private sign then you have gone too far. Turn right to cross a field to another stile into Ridge Copse. Go through this wood and exit via a stile into a field. Cross to a kissing gate onto Berkley Street. Turn right for a few yards and cross the road to take the path opposite.
4. Follow the path to Rooks Lane. Turn right to Berkley Marsh and at the junction turn left down Berkley Lane. Go over the railway bridge and turn right into Dark Lane. This is often used as a rubbish dump so take care where you walk. At the end of the lane turn left into Pot Lane

5. The path is in the corner of the field on the right. Follow the path to a gate to the right of a barn. Do not go through the gate but continue along the hedge way in the field. And exit at Limerick Farm. If this path is not open then walk down Pot Lane and take the next turning on the right and walk down the lane to Limerick Farm

Points of Historical Interest

SECTION 1

The east-west route at the cross roads was turnpiked by the Frome Trust in 1772. The toll house is over the hill to the west, on what was once a ford beside the Horse and Groom public house.

At the top of Coles Hill the stile on the left is a reminder of an old road that followed a direct route between Coles Hill and the ford at East Woodlands.

On the right is Hales Castle believed to be an Anglo-Saxon ring motte with an associated field system. Rising behind it is the large Iron Age hill fort of Roddenbury.

The Iron Age is generally regarded as being from about 800BC to the arrival of the Romans in 43.

In 1631 'Rattenbury' and its coppices were said to cover 400 acres. The name Rodden continues in Rodden Manor and the Rodden stream later in this Leg of the walk.

SECTION 2.

At the top of Lanes End Hill is the A362, the Frome to Warminster Road. At Domesday this area was in the Manor of Warminster and within Selwood Forest; today it is part of the Longleat Estate. Lane End is a group of cottages built at the crossroads from the common land of Corsley Heath sometime after the 16th century. The road was turnpiked here at the Shire Stone Gate, the dividing line

between Somerset and Wiltshire, by the Frome Trust between 1756 and 1772. The stone is noted on the 1782 Day and Masters map. The White Hart is shown as an Inn on the Andrews and Drury map of 1887. On the side of the pub there is an Edward VII post box.

Frome is now well in view. This is the largest and the most easterly of the five towns in Mendip. It began life as a junction of trackways on a ford in the river. St Aldhelm founded a monastery and the church of St John in about 685 and the settlement was a Royal Manor and a market town before the Norman Conquest. For many generations wool was the staple economy. At the time of the Monmouth Rebellion in 1685, the Duke and his troops stayed in Frome for two nights on the 28th and 29th June. Recently Frome has developed as a centre for Arts and Crafts. Many professional craftspeople have individual workshops in the town with specialities from designer jewellery to musical instruments. Frome has a Tourist Information Office and a Museum.

The origin of 'Joles' in Joles Lane is unknown. Tits Wood was so called before 1849.

The stream behind Frith House, previously Freeze House, is the Rodden Brook, which rises in Cley Hill and travels east to west into the River Frome. It shares its name with the ancient manor of Rodden a mile to the west. The steep hill up to Chapmanslade - Shapmanslade in 1773 - is The Gore.

SECTION 3

The A3098 between Frome and Westbury was turnpiked by the Frome Trust between 1756 and 1772. The antiquarian, Sir Richard Colt Hoare, referred to it in 1812 as the 'great road leading to Frome'.

Chapmanslade has a long High Street which runs along an east-west ridge reminiscent of Walton in Leg 1. Below the escarpment to the north is Dilton Marsh, an area drained only in the 19th century, using prisoners from the Napoleonic wars

as the labour force. The woodland on the north side of the road, now Black Dog Woods, was Gibbett Wood in 1773.

Waterman's House has nothing to do with fishing or boating; until recent times it was a water pumping station.

On Lodge Hill the small tower shaped building on the track through the woods is The Pheasantry. It is dated 1581 with a second floor extension dated 1783. The window catches are in the shape of a clenched fist; a feature of all the buildings on the Berkley estate. It is said to have been used as a Quaker Meeting House. N.B. This Berkley derives its name from the OE berchellie meaning birch trees and has no connection with the Berkeley family mentioned in earlier Legs of the walk.

Woodman's Hill, with its feel of an ancient trackway through the woods, was Wdemanneshulle before 1212.

SECTION 4

At Berkley Street there are long-standing traditions of ghosts being seen on the road. Berkley Lodge, to the right, is the mid 18th century entrance to Berkley House.

There was an earlier village of Berkley, see Pot Lane below, where a small settlement was recorded at Domesday. It was a part of the estates of the Earl of Arundel (Leg 3) and included 70 acres of woodland. This village was closely associated with another hamlet called Fair oak or Fayroke and a chapel there was dedicated by the Bishop of Bath before 1153. Fair oak Farm, on the junction of Rook Lane and Kemp's Lane in Berkley Marsh, now represents this settlement and aerial photographs show vague earthworks around the farm. The farmhouse itself is probably 16th century. The window catches here are also in the shape of a clenched fist.

The railway bridge on Marsh Lane is over the Great Western main line between Westbury and the South West.

SECTION 5

Pot Lane is believed to be the site of the original Berkley village, the word Pottle meaning a street of houses. The remains of a pond, still visible in wet conditions, were adjacent to the church. On the clay belt and in an area described even in the 18th century as 'the Fen', this cannot have been an ideal choice of land for settlement and like East Lydford in Leg 2, persistent flooding may have been the cause of the move to higher ground.

The National Grid pylons overhead here will be overhead again in Leg 9.

At Newlands Farm, an archaeological excavation was undertaken in the summer of 1986 and identified a small scale, possibly defended, Roman-British settlement or farmstead. On the northern side of Limerick Lane there is an associated field system of four small rectangular fields with divisions running from north to south,

Limerick Lane and Limerick Farm. Neither the present nor the previous owners of the farm know the reason for this name.

There is another area called 'Limerick' on the far side of Frome. In times past it was far outside the town and it has been suggested that the name may have been a humorous reflection on its remoteness, rather than as having any connection with Ireland. Perhaps this may be the case here. Who knows?