

MENDIP RING LEG 5. Section 1. –Limerick Farm
Grid Ref ST 810 510 to Farleigh Hungerford School. 6.6 miles

1. Take the kissing gate leading to the A36. Go down the track and cross the A36. Walk up the embankment at the opposite side and through the kissing gate. Turn left down the old road to White Row Farm. Walk to the right of the farm shop and take the path across the fields to come out on Scotland Lane. Continue down the lane to Rudge and turn left at the T junction.

2. Continue to Upper Casley Farm and take the lane on the right then the path on the left. At the end of the field turn right and cross through two more fields to Casley Lane. Turn left down the lane and go past Castley Farm. At the end of the lane turn right. At the next field boundary turn left into Monkley Lane. This can be very wet in Winter Take the next path on your left and follow it all the way to the A361. Take care crossing this busy road and take Church Lane at the side of the pub down to Rode.

3. Continue on this road into High Street and. Pass the school and turn right into The Mead. Take the first path on your right and follow this until you come out onto Rode Hill and turn left. Cross over the bridge and turn right just past the Mill at Rode . Continue to Rocks Farm and take the path on the right. To Tellisford.

4. Turn left and take the first path on your right. Walk to the top right hand corner, over a stile and across two fields to join the Macmillan Way. Follow this to the road and turn right to Farleigh Hungerford

Points of Historical Interest

SECTION 1

The Frome Bypass was opened in 1990.

White Row Farm Shop has a café and is open every day.

On the right behind White Row Farm is a decorative 18th century Palladian gazebo.

It is in the grounds of Standerwick Court. It may be on the site of an early beacon.

The mound topped with fir trees in the field before Scotland Farm, is a reservoir. The word Scotland, as in Scotland Lane and Scotland Farm, may be a vulgarisation of Skutt land, from Edward Skutt who was known to hold lands to the north of Warminster in 1607. Alternatively it may be 'Scot' as in the Oxford Dictionary definition; 'payment corresponding to modern tax, rate or other assessed contribution'. However, areas called 'Scotland' and 'Ireland' are not uncommon in Mendip and West Wiltshire and may, like 'Limerick' in Leg 4, have simply been a jocular reference to physical remoteness.

The industrial chimney ahead is on the La Farge Cement Works, now closed, to the east of Westbury.

Rudge, originally called Ridge, is a small hamlet recording a population of just 100 at the Millennium. The Manor House, which may be marked on some maps as Rudgehill Farm, was built in the 17th century and refronted later. It is initialled and dated PSA 1692. There is a Methodist Chapel here and a Baptist Chapel, the latter with a school attached. Both were built in 1839.

SECTION 2

North of Castley Farm, the first greenway junction to the left is Duck Pool Lane. The 1839 Tithe map shows this as a proper road and the adjacent fields as Castley paddocks. These straight greenways started life as coppicing tracks through the forest.

Monkley Lane is the northern part of a larger trackway system. On the 1888 Andrews & Drury map this path continued south to Honey Bridge Farm.

To the left of the walk route here and off the footpath, is an Iron Age Long Barrow, known locally as The Devil's Bed and Bolster. It consists of a large number of sarsen stones, some fallen, which may have formed a long narrow burial chamber. It is a Scheduled Monument.

Towards Rode, the square church tower of the 14th century parish church of St Lawrence is ahead. It is Grade I Listed. There is a guide to the church in the church.

The A361 is the Beckington to Trowbridge road. Turnpiked by the Trowbridge Trust in 1752, the Day and Masters map of 1782 shows it as a minor road petering out onto the Common before reaching the Wiltshire border. It was a major road through to Trowbridge by 1880.

SECTION 3

The greater part of Rode, originally called Road, is a Conservation Area and the village has a network of beautiful old houses and cottages. The red brick brewery buildings are now apartments. Next door is the Methodist Chapel dated 1809. There is a strong non conformist tradition in Rode; John Wesley preached here in 1746 and the village school is Methodist Voluntary Controlled.

Rode has a Post Office and shop which has copies of the Rode Rural Walk leaflet, published by Mendip District Council. It includes a short history of the village.

The lane at Merfield Lodge, now called The Mead, was once Rockabella Hill.

Barrow Farm on the main road was until recently an edible snail farm.

To the right are the twin spires of Christchurch, built for that part of the village that in 1864 lay in Wiltshire. The County Boundary has since been altered.

Here also was Rode Hill House, now renamed, the site in 1860 of a notorious murder. Constance Kent aged 14, the daughter of the owner, gruesomely killed her four year old half brother. Five years later she confessed and pleaded guilty.

Because of her youth she was sentenced to 20 years in prison. On her release Constance went to Australia. She lived to be 100, dying in 1944. She is the only convicted murderer to have received a telegram of congratulation from a reigning monarch.

Mill House with its gazebo and stables is on the right before the bridge. Dating from the late 18th century they are Grade II* Listed.

Rode Bridge over the River Frome is a Scheduled Monument. It was built in 1777 for the Black Dog Turnpike Trust. The refuge contains a vertical slab inscribed 'North Bradley/Rode' because until 1937 the county boundary ran down the centre of the river. Rode Mill on the left was recorded as a grist and tucking mill in 1559 and as a cloth mill in the late 18th century. It is now a restaurant.

At Rocks Farm a stone quarry is shown on the 1903 map.

Tellisford is largely a Conservation Area. The village church of All Saints is to the west. Dating from between the 12th and 14th centuries, it was restored in 1854. There are memorials to several generations of the Crabb family who were major landowners in this area in the 19th century. There is a guide to the church in the church.

Crabb Hall is an early 18th century house.

Tellisford is one of the 'Thankful Villages'; those where every resident who set out to fight in the First World War returned safely. There are reckoned to be 32 such villages in England and astonishingly 7 of them are in Somerset.

A step aside moment

A cobbled packhorse way leads from Crabb Hall down to Tellisford Mill. The mill was recorded on this site at Domesday in 1086 and was in use for at least 800 years. The history of the mill and the processes of its present restoration are displayed on the fencing around the site. Tellisford Bridge is just beyond the mill.

SECTION 4

Manor Farmhouse, high on its bluff, dates from the early 17th century.

Here the walk coincides again with the McMillan Way last seen in Leg 2.

At the junction with Rode Lane, the old trackway which ran from Tellisford Bridge through this ford, called Matford in 1839, continued on across the front of Farleigh

House and up the rising ground behind Church Farm. It was turnpiked by the Trowbridge Trust in 1768 and disturnpiked in 1854.