



# Fourteen circular walks in and around

**RADSTOCK**  
Historic Mining Town

By Peter Bradshaw, Larry Cunningham and Sue Fraser  
for Radstock Museum

# THE WALKS

Walks 7 and 8 are two of the fourteen walks exploring the industrial heritage of and countryside surrounding Radstock in a book commissioned by Radstock Museum. There are four further books in the series:

***Twenty circular walks in and around Timsbury***

commissioned by Timsbury Parish Council

***Twenty circular walks close to Timsbury***

supported by Timsbury Parish Council

***Twenty circular walks not far from Timsbury***

supported by Wessex Water

***Twenty circular walks near Timsbury***

supported by The Sperring Charity and Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios

All the books are available from **Health and More** in Timsbury, **Radstock Museum**, **Farmborough Community Shop** and **Oldfield Park Bookshop** in Bath. Each book costs £6.00 Once printing costs are recouped all proceeds go to good causes: Radstock Museum, Timsbury Parish Council, WaterAid & The Avon Wildlife Trust. To order copies for postal delivery telephone Oldfield Park Bookshop on 01225 427722.

# WALKS 7 AND 8

## Writhlington-Single Hill-Stony Littleton-Foxcote

These circular walks are to the east of Radstock and highlight the industrial past of the area. There are defence features from World War II, the Neolithic long barrow at Stony Littleton and a literary connection with Sherlock Holmes. The route along the Wellow Brook valley provides good views.



	WALK 7	WALK 8
Distance	4.6 miles (7.2 km)	8.5 miles (13.7 km)
Stiles	2	7
Approximate Time	2 ½ hours	5 hours
Start/Finish	Radstock Museum	Radstock Museum
Start/Finish Grid Reference	ST 689549	ST 689549
Map	OS Explorer 142	OS Explorer 142
Terrain	Undulating walk with one climb, footpaths, fields, flat railway route, tarmac, tracks and lanes.	Undulating walk with several climbs, footpaths, fields, flat railway route, tarmac, tracks and lanes.

**1 / A RADSTOCK MUSEUM**

With your back to Radstock Museum turn left and walk along Waterloo Road. Continue as the road starts to gently climb and becomes Tynning Hill. After the last houses, the road flattens and there are open areas left and right. The area on the right was the site of Tynning Pit. Carry on until one of the Lower Whitelands Terraces comes into view. Turn right down a lane beside Lower Whitelands. At the end of the lane follow the concrete path straight ahead until you reach National Cycle Route 24. Turn left and then shortly after, take a right-hand turn and walk with the large grain mill on your right. After a few yards, the path widens and crosses a bridge over the Wellow Brook. Just after the bridge turn left onto a bridleway to the right of a metal gate. Continue on this clearly defined bridleway for 550 yards until you walk past the former St Mary Magdalene Church and reach a lane which is Church Hill. The woods on the right of the bridleway mark the batch of Upper Writhlington Pit.



*The parish church of Writhlington was dedicated to St Mary Magdalen. It has been designated by English Heritage as a Grade II listed building. The church has since been converted to a private residence. There are recent graves in the churchyard next to the church. The old rectory on the opposite side of the road dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is also a Grade II listed building.*

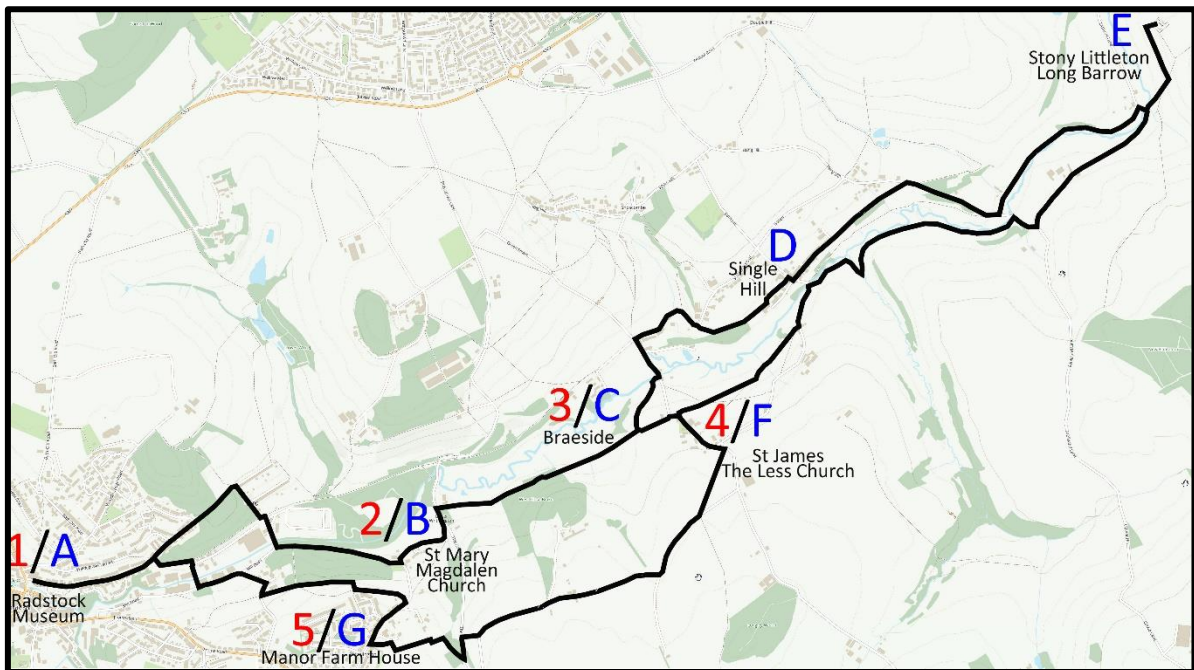
**2 / B ST MARY MAGDALEN CHURCH**

Turn left and walk down Church Hill. **BE CAREFUL OF OCCASIONAL CARS ON THIS ROAD.** Just below the church on the left-hand side was the site of Writhlington Manor House. The road bends to the right then to the left. Continue on, turning left when you reach a T-junction. Walk 60 yards and just before a metal farm gate take the footpath going right. The area directly ahead was Lower Writhlington Pit. Walk through the small copse to a metal kissing gate. Go through the kissing gate into large field. Continue ahead keeping the hedge on your left until you reach another



metal kissing gate which leads into woods. Carry on straight ahead through the woods following the clearly marked path close to the left-hand fence. The woods mark the site of Foxcote Pit spoil heap. Cross a wooden stile as you leave the woods. Continue straight ahead to a metal kissing gate. Go through the gate and go uphill to the metal

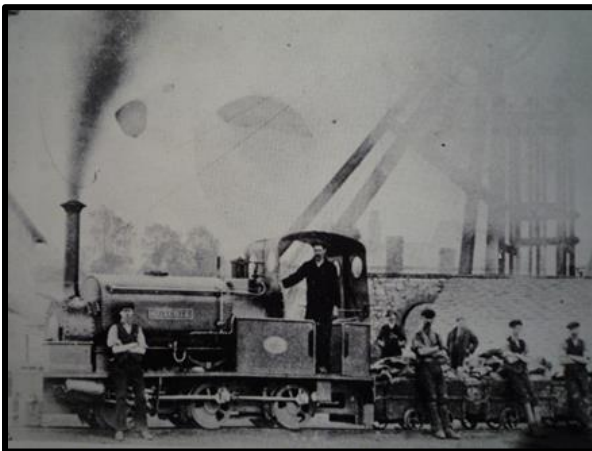
kissing gate ahead. Go through and bear left walking gently upwards, keep the hedge on your left until you reach another metal kissing gate.



See Main Map on Pages 4 & 5 for map source and copyright details

*The Fairfax family lived at Writhlington Manor House and were friends with George Washington, the first US President. In 1927 it was described as a very interesting specimen of Charles II period architecture. It was pulled down after World War II*

*Lower Writhlington and Kilmersdon were the last two mines in the Somerset Coalfield to close. Both pits stopped production in 1973 after Portishead Power Station was converted from coal to oil.*



*Foxcote Pit dates from around 1853 and the shaft was 1212ft deep. Coal was moved either to Lower Writhlington Pit or by tramway to a depot near Turner's Tower. In 1864 there was an eighteen-week strike at Foxcote, Writhlington, and Braysdown Pits. It started over a dispute at Foxcote Pit over the exact quantity of coal each miner sent to the surface. Output ceased in 1931 and the pithead was demolished in the 1950s.*

**For the shorter walk continue with 3. For the longer walk go to C.**

### **3 BRAESIDE**

After going through the gate, immediately turn right and then left and walk ahead with a hedge on your right and a wire fence on your left to a wooden stile. Beyond the stile the path narrows as it passes alongside a garden/building and then leads onto a road. Turn right and walk along the road to St James the Less in Foxcote.

**For the shorter walk continue with 4 / F**

## C BRAESIDE

After going through the gate, immediately turn left and go through a wooden gate. Then walk diagonally right down the hill towards the houses. About half way across the field Foxcote Mill comes into view. Aim for a metal field gate in the bottom corner beside the Wellow Brook. Go through the gate and walk beside a small building



and join the lane in front of the mill. Turn left and continue on the lane, cross the bridge over Wellow Brook and then uphill and pass the former Shoscombe viaduct to reach a crossroads. Turn right in to what is St Julian's Road with houses, Railway Terrace, on your right and open fields rising on your left. The road initially curves to the left and then to the right and is on the line of the Somersetshire Coal Canal. The road gently climbs and then curves to the left. As the road bears left there is an old metal kissing gate on your right beside the grit bin. Go through and then turn left with the hedge and metal fence on your left until you reach another metal kissing gate. Go through and walk along an enclosed path until you come out onto a grassy patch. On the left is a metal kissing gate. Go through the gate, turn right and walk with the hedge on your right until you reach a metal kissing gate. Go through and walk along a path with a conifer hedge on the left and a wooden fence on your right until you reach a junction with a road and houses. This is Single Hill. Turn right and walk down until you reach a crossroad. On the right is an information board on Shoscombe and Single Hill Halt.

*There has been a mill on the site of Foxcote Mill for 900 years. In 1742 Robert Pobjoy, yeoman of Wellow, and Mary Rossiter, spinster of Foxcote, married at Great Elm near Frome. Robert and Mary and their descendants owned the mill. The mill closed in the 1930s. It is a Grade II listed building.*



*Shoscombe viaduct was built of blue engineering brick, and until the railway closed in 1966, carried the Somerset and Dorset Railway over the lane between Shoscombe Vale and Foxcote. In 1988 there was partial demolition of the viaduct by removal of the main and span across the lane and later the conversion of the remaining arches into a residential property.*

*The construction of the railway, housing, expansion of the colliery sites and a return to agriculture through infilling after its closure in 1898 resulted in the line of the Somersetshire Coal Canal being very fragmented.*



*Shoscombe and Single Hill Halt was a small railway station on the Somerset and Dorset Railway serving the villages between Wellow and Radstock. The station was the last to open on the Somerset and Dorset main line, with services beginning on 23 September 1929. It closed with the rest of the line on 7 March 1966.*

*Shoscombe Halt also appears in one of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories. Dr Watson describes how he and Holmes travel to Shoscombe in *The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place*. Arthur Conan Doyle's sister lived in Dunkerton, so possibly he used the location following a visit.*

#### **D SINGLE HILL**

Turn left into Single Hill No Through Road. Go along to the end, passing and line of cottages including Magpie Cottage and the Primitive Methodist Chapel on your left, and continue straight ahead for 175 yards on a footpath. Carry on to a metal kissing gate, then straight ahead, pausing to enjoy the views to the right towards Faulkland, to another metal kissing gate which brings you onto Hang Hill. Turn right and cross the bridge over the old railway line and Somersetshire Coal Canal. **BE CAREFUL OF OCCASIONAL CARS ON THIS ROAD.** Continue ahead and down until you reach a lane going left. Go along this quiet lane, passing Brook Cottage and a brick-built pill box on your left, until you reach a parking area and a sign and information board for the Stony Littleton Long Barrow on the right. (If you are not visiting the long barrow, cross the footbridge, turn right and join the walk at **E**) Cross the footbridge and turn left to cross a wooden stile. Walk ahead and up, keeping the hedge on your left. Take the stile on the left signposted to the Long Barrow. Continue ahead with the hedge on your right until you reach another stile on your right which leads to the Long Barrow.



*Single Hill first appears on the 1840 Tithe Map and is mostly built in a long line on the bed of the Somersetshire Coal Canal. The Primitive Methodist Chapel was built in 1849. The Chapel closed at the end of the 1980s. The Magpie pub closed in the 1960s and was well known for its quoits team.*



*The GHQ Line (General Headquarters Line) was a defence line built during World War II to contain an expected German invasion. Lines of pillboxes and tank defences were built as Stop Lines to act as a defence of Bristol should the invaders break out of their bridgehead.*

*Stony Littleton Long Barrow is one of the country's finest accessible examples of a Neolithic chambered tomb. Dating from about 3500 BC, it is 30 metres long and has multiple burial chambers open to view. The barrow seems to have survived intact until about 1760, when the owner of the site, a local farmer, broke into the chambers in search of building stone. In the years that followed, most of the contents were stolen.*



### **E STONY LITTLETON LONG BARROW**

After visiting the Long Barrow, retrace your steps back to the large footbridge. Don't cross the footbridge, but go straight ahead keeping the Wellow Brook on your right. Gradually climb towards the farm. Go through the field gate to the farm and join the farm drive. Continue ahead until you reach a road. Turn right, and then walk down the road to the river. **BE CAREFUL OF OCCASIONAL CARS ON THIS ROAD.** Just before the bridge, go through a Bristol Gate on your left. Continue ahead keeping the Wellow Brook on your right until you reach a metal kissing gate. Go through and walk ahead keeping the metal fence on your right to another metal kissing gate. Continue ahead still keeping the river on your right to reach a footbridge with a metal gate. Cross and go right and through a small metal gate; then turn right, keeping the river on your right, to a second footbridge and then a metal kissing gate



which leads onto a road. Beside the Wellow Brook are some large concrete triangular anti-tank structures which were also part of the GHQ line from World War II. Turn left and walk up the lane and just before a house on the right turn right on a marked footpath. Continue ahead through a wooden gate into a field. Carry on in the same direction to another wooden gate. There are good views across the valley towards Shoscombe. Go straight ahead, passing over a small stream, to a wooden kissing gate aiming to the right of the church tower in the distance. Go through another wooden kissing gate, then walk upwards and straight ahead aiming to the right of the farm buildings to a low stone wall with field gate which leads onto the lane in Foxcote. The shorter walk joins from the right. Turn left and walk along the road, passing an open area with large stones on the left, to St James the Less Church.



*During the 19<sup>th</sup> century Foxcote was also known as Forscote. The open area with stones had a long building on it during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. On the tithe map it was described as Court Orchard.*

*St James the Less was rebuilt in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century incorporating a 15<sup>th</sup> century bell turret. It is a Grade II listed building. Regular services take place each Sunday.*

#### **4 / F ST JAMES THE LESS CHURCH**

Continue straight ahead and walk gently upwards along the lane, past Foxcote Farm



immediately on your right and the Old Rectory on your left, to where another lane joins from the left. Shortly after this junction and the entrance to The Tythe Barn there is a public footpath on your right opposite a metal field gate. Go through the field gate on the left and walk diagonally right across this field to a wooden kissing gate in the corner of the field. Go

through to join a lane. Turn right and walk along this lane. Continue on the lane, with wide-ranging views on both sides of the road, passing a collection of three houses and then a turning on your right signposted The Retreat. The houses at The Retreat mark the site of Foxcote Pit. Continue along the lane for a further 350 yards. As the lane curves to the left there is a narrow path going straight ahead. Follow

the path down until you reach a lane. Turn left and walk along the road to a small metal gate beside a wooden field gate on the right. Continue on a path through the woods which climbs gently. After coming out of the wood the path forks; take the left fork up the slope to a wooden kissing gate to the left of a wooden fence and right of a large tree stump. Go through, turn right and then left. Then continue ahead with gardens, buildings and a wooden fence on your right. This is Combe Farmhouse. Keep the tall conifer hedgerow on your right as the path turns right and then left to reach a metal kissing gate. Go through the gate and walk ahead to join the road. Turn right and pass the Old School House on the left and, opposite St Mary's Rise, Manor Farm House on the right.



*The Old School House was built and opened as a school in 1846. In 1901 the school moved to a new building at the Old Frome Road in Writhlington and the old school building became a Sunday School. In 1959 the parish sold the former school and schoolhouse and was converted into a single dwelling and named The Old School House.*

*Manor Farm House dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is a Grade II listed building and was thought to have originally been part of the Ammerdown Estate.*

### 5 / G MANOR FARM HOUSE

Continue down the road, which is Church Hill, and about 15 yards after the last house on the left there is a Bristol Gate on your left. **TAKE CARE AS THERE IS OCCASIONAL TRAFFIC ON THIS ROAD.** Go through the Bristol Gate and continue ahead keeping the houses on your left. After for 275 yards there is a crossing path. Turn right and walk down to the trees. Just before the trees, turn left and walk with the trees on your right to reach a metal kissing gate into the woods. Turn left after the gate and walk along the path until you reach a quiet lane. Turn right and follow the lane down until you reach a junction with Mill Road. Turn left and walk along the road for 200 yards and turn right. Where the road turns to the right, go straight ahead to reach National Cycle Route 24. The tree lined batch of Tynning Pit is immediately in front of you. Turn left and walk along the cycle path until reach Waterloo Road. The buttress wall by the cycle chicane and information board carried a tramway across the railway line. Turn left and walk back to Radstock Museum passing Pines Way and Pines Court on the left.

*The houses in Pines Way lie adjacent to the perimeter area of the former Radstock Wagon Repair Company. The Engine Shed fell into disrepair in the late 1970s and was demolished in about 1980 and replaced by Pines Way and Pines Court. An embankment formerly ran along the back of Pines Way and Pines Court on which a tramway ran taking waste from Middle and Ludlows Pits to Tynning batch.*

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