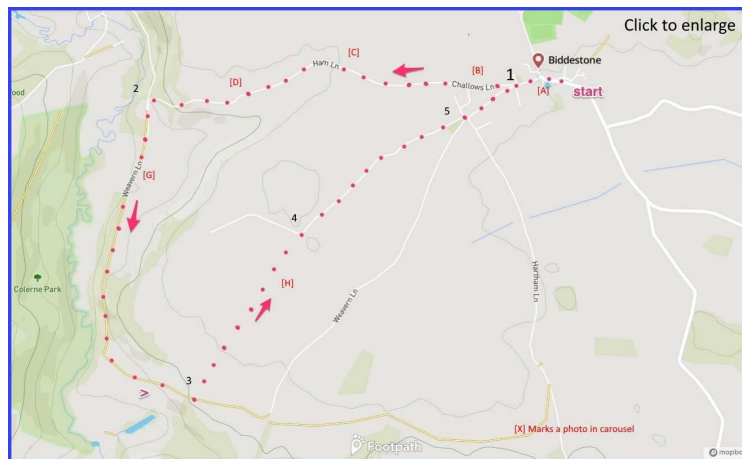




Biddestone

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SN14 7DG This is a 4 mile walk from a Full English Village. Some wooded paths may be muddy and some path incline. *Click here to enlarge map.* Water is blue, wooded green, contour lines show slopes. [Click for here](#) arial view. [Click here](#) to download/print PDF



(Routes suggested from each map point + metres to next point)

- 0:** Walk from the village green on Church Road. 200m
- 1:** At the Y-branch, take the right labelled Challows Lane (becomes Ham Lane) and walk to T-junction with Weavern Lane. 1.9km
- 2:** Turn left into this Lane which quickly becomes wooded (pic **G**). Walk forward. 1.9km
- 3:** Find a footpath entrance on your right gives to a large field (pic **H**) leading to lane gate. 950m
- 4:** Field Barn Lane leads you back to a road junction. 1km
- 5:** Join 'The Butts' and walk along houses to start. 450m

The pictures below are in the order things were seen on this walk. Clicking on any one will enlarge it (and the slideshow)



[B]



[C]

This village has not been voted the prettiest village in England (that claim belongs to nearby Castle Combe), yet in many ways it is a prototypical, biscuit tin 'English Village' – with houses gathered around the village

pond (no house later than 1700). Then there is the fifteenth century [church](#), the [Manor house](#), a [cricket club](#), and a [local pub](#) in the centre of it all. It even used to have a [hunt](#).

The village is of Saxon origin (4 dwellings in the Domesday Book), in Norman times it had two manor houses and two churches. Now, most buildings are late eighteenth century, reflecting prosperity in that period. There are some sixteenth century houses on Cuttle Street.

The village is best known for its much-photographed and ancient village pond with its large number of over-fed ducks. Watching ducks eat stuff thrown towards them seems to be satisfying to humans. Thanks to some sort of deeply shared understanding, the chosen 'stuff' is usually bread. Although evidence suggests that this is [bad for ducks](#). On the other hand, humans are less likely to be carrying those items that are *good* for ducks (suggested are sweetcorn, lettuce, peas, oats, rice). Try and go well equipped. Or simply watch ducks feed themselves.

[St Nicholas Church](#) (you pass on your right before Challows Lane) is modest – although entered through a fine 300-year old oak door. It is most notable for its unusual stone bell turret (1480). The Sanctus bell was rung three times a day so that workers unable to attend a service could cross themselves. Inside there are some eighteenth century high box pews. There is also an unusual gallery at the west end. This was built to house the folk from neighbouring Slaughterford whose own church had been destroyed by over-excited Cromwellian troops on their way to Ireland. A gallery was necessary (stairs now gone) because the two communities did not get on that well. Biddestonians apparently resented their intrusion. While those from Slaughterford might have been in a foul mood over the 2 mile walk involved.

Some say the graveyard is haunted by a man dressed in black. He is believed to have been hanged in or around the church.

The walk down Ham Lane is quite steep but affords good views of the surrounding countryside (pic 3). The subsequent walk through woods can be a bit challenging under foot. It runs alongside the River ByBrook which forms a rough boundary to the parish. ByBrook was once an important river for the wool trade in these parts providing fast and clear water for the mills. Its not clear how far Biddestone was part of this trade – although there is an [Old Wool House](#) on the Green.

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