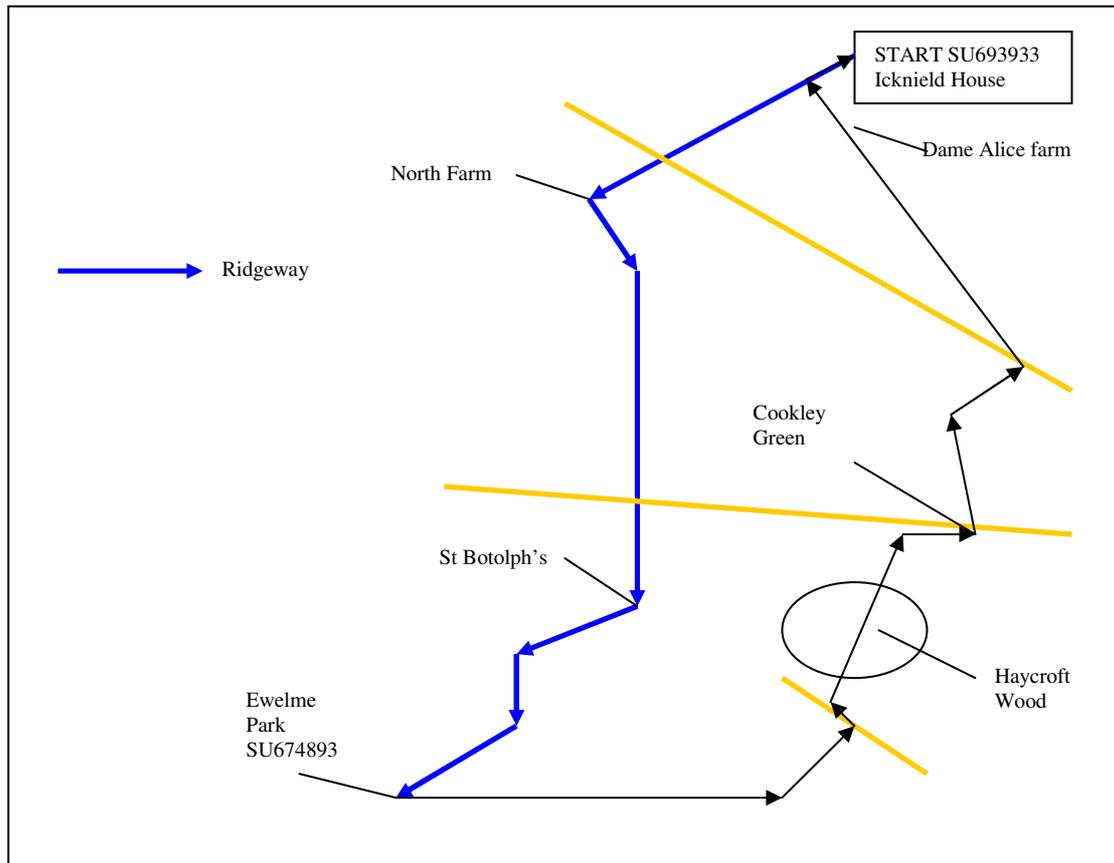


## The Ridgeway. Part 10 from SU693933 (Icknield House) to Ewelme Park (SU674893). 11 June 2011

Map OS Explorer 171. The Ridgeway changes direction during this walk, from heading SW on its straight-line trajectory, to plunging S to Ewelme Park. The return route leaves it here and circles back to the E via Cookley Green to arrive at the start point near Icknield House. 12 km.



This section of the Ridgeway starts out from the junction with the B480 at Icknield House (SU693933) and continues SW to North Farm where it heads off generally S to pass Swyncombe House and St Botolph's 11<sup>th</sup> century church.



Leafy hawkweed and Wheat at North Farm



St Botolph's 11<sup>th</sup> Century churchyard and apse



Swyncombe evidently is a name derived from the valley (cumb) of the wild boar (swyn). Perhaps one day we will see the boar reintroduced as successfully as the red

kites. If we can do it for beavers surely boar could be next? Eventually the Ridgeway arrives at the meticulously manicured Ewelme Park. At this point (SU6728892) the return heads E down the Park drive, with its glyphosated fence feet and tree surrounds, to reach a country lane which heads off NE through Haycroft Wood to a vantage point above Swyncombe House before swinging ENE along the Chiltern Way to Church Lane and Cookley Green.



**Cockchafer or May bug (not a bug) Forest bug (a true bug) Rob's pin cushion Rhododendron**

There is plenty of evidence of a thriving insect community throughout the walk. Cockchafers (or May bugs) bumble around at this time of year – and sometimes come to grief against speeding vehicles. Forest bugs seek out suitable trees, like this walnut, for their foraging. Wild roses are particularly susceptible to the attentions of a gall wasp which uses the plant to feed its larvae and creates the spectacular Robin's Pincushion gall in the process.

Someone is trying to control the Himalayan invader – rhododendron – in Haycroft wood. It won't be easy and while the plant resists, its flowers are still quite spectacular. Whilst still in Haycroft Wood, the route joins the Chiltern Way at (SU683901) where there is a good view back over Swyncombe House. The Chiltern Way to Cookley Green has sunken sections reflecting the number of feet that have passed this way – and some alarming erosion in places.



**Swyncombe House**



**Sunken way**



**Erosion under beech roots**

At Cookley Green (with its wild flower-rich village green) we take Shakespeare's Way N to pass Coates Farm, cross a country lane, and meander back NE to pass Dame Alice farm and return to the Ridgeway via the permissive path in the sheep field where the farm management has thoughtfully provided a welcome bench to sit and reflect on the agricultural and forested landscape before you,