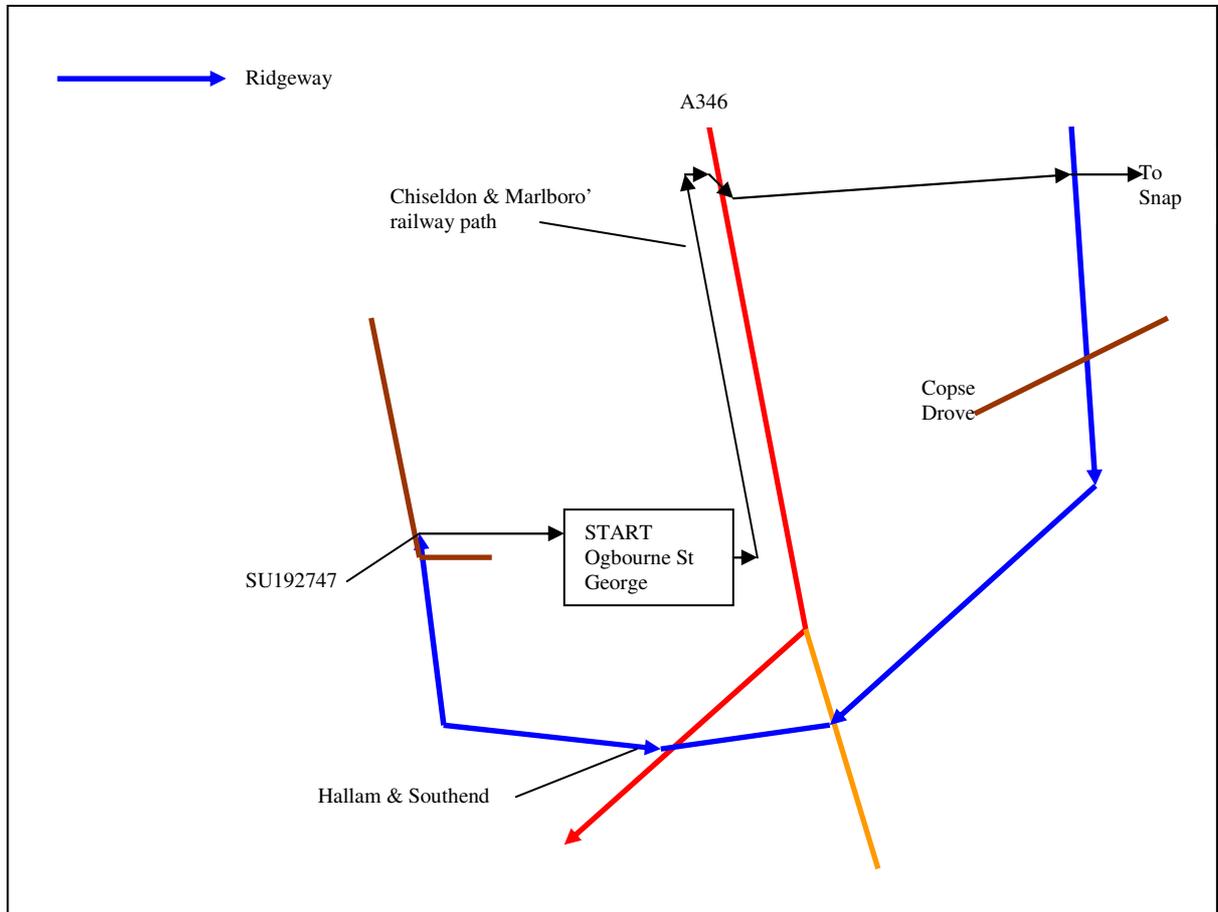


The Ridgeway. Part 23 from Snap crossroads (SU213765) to west of Ogbourne St George (SU192747). 14 September 2011

Map OS Explorer 157. A shortish stroll starting from Ogbourne St George to reach the Ridgeway at the crossroads where walk 22 went off to explore Snap. The walk then follows the Ridgeway in a 'J'-shaped loop to the E, S and W of Ogbourne St George to SU192747 before returning to the village. 10.5 km.



Starting from the village of Ogbourne St George, the route out takes the Chiseldon and Marlborough Railway Path roughly N to its junction with Gypsy Lane (at SU198766). The railway path – now a cycle track – is far more interesting than it promises on the map. The dappled sunlight filtering through the bush and tree-lined way is an ideal habitat for speckled woods. Red admirals are also in abundance this year and there is always the occasional sighting of small whites, commas, small tortoiseshells and painted ladies. The flowers are rather more sparse with each passing day, but meadow cranesbill, herb Robert and hedgerow cranesbill (stout geraniums all) are still to be seen amongst the field scabious, knapweed and rough hawkbit.

**Speckled wood,
Red admiral,
and Small white**





Meadow cranesbill



Hedgerow cranesbill



Herb Robert

Gypsy Lane leads E to the A346 – straight, fast and Roman – which you quickly cross to head S on its verge for a few metres to connect with the reservoir access road and byway E. This leads to the Ridgeway at SU213764 which is the Snap crossroads reached on walk 22. Head S here, keeping a lookout for toadstools (including little brown mushrooms – LBMs) which start to be more abundant at this time of year. Heaps of rocks are always worth an investigation for the fossils and fauna that they might reveal. One such heap of limestone revealed a bivalve fossil and a lurking parent bug



Rough hawkbit



LBMs (poss. *Marasmius* spp.)



Sharp-scaled parasol



Stump puffball

The Ridgeway passes Copse Drove before veering to the SW and looping to the E and S of Ogbourne St George. Buzzards seem to rule the skies here, rather than red kites, and their shrill calls are a prelude to the sight of their wheeling outstretched flight. The path meets the Chiseldon and Marlborough railway path again and then crosses the A346 to enter Southend and Hallam where you cross the rather disappointing (course of the) river Og – dry as a bone. The Ridgeway now swings N to the W of Ogbourne St George and we leave it at SU192747. The return takes the footpath E at this point passing the manor house and entering the church yard before returning to the centre of the village. Indications of the impending change of seasons are more clear day by day. Guelder rose (*Viburnum* spp.) is especially strident in its almost violent fall foliage with matching scarlet fruits. Thistles fill the air with the release of their floating seeds.



Bivalve fossil in limestone



Parent bug



Thistledown



Guelder rose