

Turn ◀ and pass under the old railway bridge and continue for about 200 metres to the junction with the private driveway to Snowford Hill Farm. Cross the stile to the right of the drive and cross this field obliquely ◀ to a waymark post and stile about 75 metres in from the left corner. Cross this stile and the next about 20 metres further on and continue in the same direction aiming just to the left of a power pole in the middle distance. At a point about three-quarters of the way across this field turn half ▶ and follow the line of the old ridge and furrow down to a stile and a railway sleeper footbridge across a large drainage ditch. Cross the stile and bridge and go straight ahead across the next field. There is a waymark post about 200 metres away which only becomes visible as you climb about a quarter of the way up this field. The waymark post marks the junction with a bridleway from the right. Take the track to the ◀ which is a public road and pass a Dutch barn after about 200 metres to reach one of the highest points on the Blue Lias Ring Walks, at an elevation of 86 metres. *Looking back down the track you can see the Itchen valley stretching away to the north. Turning in a clockwise direction Snowford Hill Farm comes into view to the right of the track with the west end of Long Itchington behind. The main part of Long Itchington is hidden by the shoulder of the hill. The chimney of the Cement Works dominates the view to the east. Continuing around, Bascote comes into view with Southam directly behind it. Southam College is clear on the ridge just to the right of Bascote. Long Itchington Wood and Ufton Wood are obscured by the overgrown hedge to the south but Print Wood is clearly visible to the west.*

Continue along the track downhill another 300 metres to the bridge over the canal. From the bridge the track is much better made. Continue along it for another 350 metres heading directly towards Long Itchington Wood, to the junction with another track and turn ◀. This is Pudding Bag Lane which is also a Public Road. Continue past a junction with a bridleway on the right and Bascote Lodge Farm on the left heading directly towards the Cement Works chimney. Follow the Lane around for about 500 metres up to its junction with the Bascote-Bascote Heath road. Turn ▶ and then ◀ at the finger post and go through the gate with a running wheel on the bottom. The path lies diagonally across the field on your right (if this is not accessible go up the concrete drive). At this point there are views ahead of the Cement Works chimney and Southam School. Turn ◀ off the concrete path at the way mark post, another high point on the walk at 97 metres, and go ◀ through the gateway into the field. Cross this field keeping the wire fence on your left to the waymark post in a former hedge line. Cross the next field to the wood where another waymark post is visible. At this waymark post enter the wood and walk down to a stile in the fence. Cross the road (Welsh Road West) to the waymark post opposite. *The Welsh Road from the Middle Ages to the middle of the last century was a drovers' road from north and mid-Wales to the markets of the Midlands and London. Cattle, sheep and even geese were driven along it, the geese being shod to protect their feet.*

Follow the path through a small copse, across a bridge and a stile and carry straight on. It then meanders through an area of trees and gorse before entering an open field at a stile. Go through this field past a gate on your left over a stile into the next field and carry straight on until you reach a gate. Passing through this gate, you enter the site of the Stoneythorpe Mill. *The mill belonged to the Stoneythorpe Estate; the entrance to the grounds over the mill-race can be seen in the hedge to your right. The wheel was about ten feet in diameter. The wheel pit is by the bend in the path before the weir.*

Follow the path to the weir, which is crossed by a concrete and metal bridge. This is the River Itchen which joins the River Stowe about 200 metres upstream. The path goes diagonally ◀ through the remains of an avenue of pollarded willow. Cross a stile to the right of a gate, and go diagonally to the right hand corner of the field to a double gate. The River Stowe is now on your right. The remains of a ford can be seen in the river about halfway across the next field. Cross the next gate to reach the Holy Well. *The Holy Well was mentioned in a Charter of King Ethelred in 998. The water was regarded as a cure for bad eye- sight and was also supposed to relieve various aches and pains. The water has been intermittent in recent years due to lower than average rainfall.*

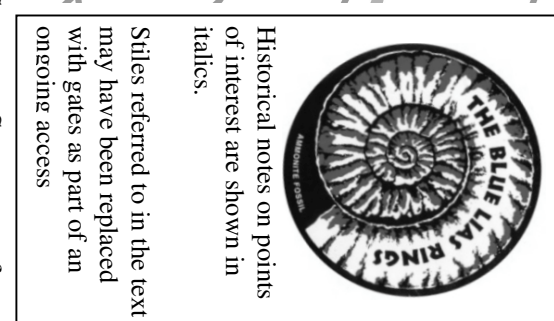
After passing through the kissing gates at the Well, cross the next field to a gate and into the next field with a small barn on the left, to a smallholding. Do not take the metal foot-bridge on your right which takes you up the bank to Warwick Road. Pass through the small-holding to a metalled road heading towards the recreation ground and turn ◀ up the hill and half way up go through the metal kissing gate into the recreation ground. Cross the recreation ground aiming for a point to the left of the spire to a metal gate into the churchyard. Carry straight on towards the church and turn ◀ and follow the path through an avenue of lime trees to come through the lych-gate and turn ◀ onto Park Lane. Turn ▶ into Little Park and go up the footpath on the right immediately after Victor Hodges House. Turn ◀ after the bungalows, go past the Scout Hut and come out onto Welsh Road West. Turn ▶ and then ◀ into Coventry Street.

OUTER LOOP B - At Stockton (extends the main walk by approximately 1 km). An alternative loop is available through the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust's Reserve at Stockton Cutting some of which is along permissive paths rather than public footpaths. To take the loop turn ▶ at the end of the path from Stockton and ◀ after 50 metres onto the concrete track. Carry on straight ahead until you reach the course of the disused railway line. Turn ◀ and enter the nature reserve where there are paths leading off to the left through the trees or straight ahead along the disused railway line. The wild flowers in the Reserve attract many different species of butterfly. Please respect the Reserve and do not pick any flowers or cause any damage. Both paths lead up to the main Rugby Road . Turn ◀ and after about 250 metres, cross over the road (**take care crossing**). Go down the bridleway which is to the right of the entrance to the Waste Disposal Site. Follow this track for about 400 metres, past Griffin House and straight ahead along the narrow path between the hedges. You rejoin the main walk just before the disused railway line.

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Printed for information on leisure activities and to promote healthier communities.

Blue Lias Rings - Main Walk and Outer Loop
Southam, Stockton, Long Itchington and Bascote
 A circular walk of 13½ km (8 miles). There are a number of optional loops that can be used to lengthen or shorten the main walk. Refer to leaflet **Blue Lias Rings - Inner Loops**.



POINT A - Starting From Southam. Head up Coventry Street out of Southam on the right hand side and after about 75 metres turn ▶ at the arrow marked "Stockton" onto a tarmac/crushed stone path leading eventually to a kissing gate and the by-pass. Cross carefully and go through another kissing gate opposite, straight across this field, heading for the houses in Stockton which are now visible. Once through the gap in the hedge directly ahead, go straight across the next field heading for the gap in the hedge 50 metres to the left of the large tree straight ahead. Once through into the next field, go straight ahead towards the corner and through over a stile in the hedge about 20 metres to the right of the corner. Keep the hedge on your left for about 150 metres. Turn ◀ and follow the hedge on your left for about 100 metres until you are in line with the two large trees on your right hand side.

The route continues on the inside of the leaflet.

Here cut across diagonally ► to a gap in the hedge which is just to the right of Stockton Church which is now visible. Go through the gap, over the sleeper bridge and follow the same line towards a telegraph pole by a metal gate, cross the ditch and pass through a gap in the hedge. Go across this next field towards the telegraph pole, crossing a farm track and along the wide, stony track with a deep ditch on the right. At the end of this track go over one stile and then another 50 metres ahead into the playing field. Keep the hedge on your left at the end of the path bear ◀ into Beck's Lane and carry straight on into Stockton village. There is an optional inner loop (A) here that reduces the length of the walk by 1 km (see other leaflet).

POINT B - Starting from Stockton Post Office. To continue on the main walk go to the end of Beck's Lane turn ◀ and follow High Street round to the ► past the Post Office and the Crown public house. *Where the road forks you will see a stone which was carried on a glacier from Mount Sorrel in Leicestershire in the Ice Age. This was originally sited outside the Church but was moved by the Rev. Tuckwell who objected to the*

noise caused by children playing on it. Also at this junction are two buildings that were constructed by Nelson's, the cement manufacturers who once worked the Stockton site. Stockton was very much a company village at the turn of the century and the first building, which until recently was a newsagents, was built as a working men's club. A new club, The Nelson Club, was opened in Napton Road in 1914. The next building, currently a chair-makers was originally a co-operative shop. The Village Hall was also built by Nelson's about 1900. Stockton was much better served for village amenities than Southam at this time!! As agriculture lost its importance in the middle of the 19th century due to cheaper foreign imports, employment in the area turned to quarrying of lime and the manufacture of bricks and cement. The disused quarries, many now filled with water, are seen on this walk. The houses in Victoria Terrace were built by Nelson's at the end of Queen Victoria's reign and on the other side, Napton Road about 15 years later. George Street further down was named after George Blyth who owned and managed Nelson's and Elm Row was named after the large elm trees that lined one side and were taken down in 1930 when they became unsafe.

Where the road forks go ► and cross over the main road and go to the end of Elm Row. Continue straight ahead with the garages on your right and follow the path to the end of the field where you reach a T-junction. There is an optional inner loop (B) here that increases the length of the walk by 1 km (see other leaflet). To continue on the main walk turn ◀ here and head through two metal kissing gates leading up the slight rise to the Southam to Rugby road. *The old Nelson's quarries are visible.*

When the quarrying relied on hand-digging many fossils were found in the quarries in the area, including a large Ichthyosaurus in 1898 which is now in the South Kensington Natural History Museum. The workmen also found Ammonites, Mussels and Belemnites.

Cross the road with care to a sleeper bridge and stile and go straight down the field with the wire and post fence on your left. Go over a stile next to a metal gate and at the bottom of the field cross the stile and go through the gap in the fence. Follow the path through the trees and cross over the disused railway line and then the canal. *This is the foot of the very impressive Stockton Flight - seven locks in all. Behind you on the other side of the bridge are the works of Dowdeswell Engineering who were renowned for making the largest agricultural plough in the world.*

Turn ◀ when you have crossed the canal bridge, ignore the towpath and follow the bridleway which forks to the ►. This goes past High Clays Farm on the right and joins the Stockton-Long Itchington road. Turn ◀ towards the Blue Lias Inn and just before the canal bridge go through the gate on the right onto the towpath.

The Warwick to Napton Canal was opened about 1800 and was a boost to the local lime, cement and brick industries as it was used to transport coal in and the products out.

Walk along the towpath away from the bridge and pass Shop Lock and the shop on your left. *On this stretch of the canal you will regularly find as many as forty narrow boats with some fine examples of the traditional canal boat painting. You pass Keyes Arm which used to be the cement works' direct link onto the canal and is now used by the Warwickshire Flyboat Company for building and renovating narrow boats mostly for the tourist trade.*

Continue along the canal for another 450 metres to Top Lock. The renovated cottage used to be the lock-keeper's home. After another 250 metres the towpath brings you to the Two Boats and Cuttle public houses. Pass under the bridge which carries the Southam to Coventry road and immediately turn ► and go over the

stile. Cross this field diagonally to the far corner where

a waymark post is just visible. A new track which is

fenced now cuts diagonally across the field. Use the stiles to get over the fences. Cross the small brick bridge over Cuttle Brook, a small tributary of the River Itchen, and bear ◀ across the corner of this field to the stile about 25 metres to the

right of the brook. Go diagonally across the next field towards the small group of three houses to

the right of the Church and climb the stile to the right of the gate. *For better views of Holy Trinity Church go along Thorn Way, through The Square and the churchyard. This route passes the site of the old smithy and wheelwright's shop on the left and the old Post Office on the right just before The Square.*

Although most of the church dates from the 14th century it actually stands on the site of at least two earlier ones. One was a Saxon church, of which there are no remains, and the other was 12th century, of which traces are left. The tower appears somewhat stunted because until 27 February 1762 it was topped by an elegant spire which was brought down in a thunder storm, leaving only the stump and some pinnacle stones. The roofs were replaced and the vestry and north porch built in the 19th century.

If you have not diverted to see the Church continue straight ahead along the path which appears to go through someone's front garden waymarked on a telegraph pole, past the front door and around the hedge on the other side. Here it becomes a more recognisable footpath going between two fences and leading to The Green in the centre of Long Itchington. Walk across the grass with the boundary on your left past an electricity sub-station and turn ◀ onto Church Road.

POINT C - Starting from The Green, Long Itchington. Leave The Green and go along Church Road for 125 metres, turn ► into The Limes Croft. Cross the road and go up the footpath between modern houses on your right and a terrace of three small houses on your left. Continue along the footpath leaving three bungalows to the left. This brings you to the junction with another footpath. Carry on straight ahead passing the cemetery on your right through the allotments and turn ◀ down to the road again. The Green Man Inn is 50 metres to the right along Church Road but the route is to the ◀ and then immediately ► into the Bascote Road. *Brook Turn Cottage dates back to 1861 and the nearby river bridge was, until the late 1960's, a ford impassable by car for 4 months of the year and 6 feet deep on some occasions.*

Cross over the river bridge and take the second of two stiles on your right hand side - your route is waymarked. Cross over the stile and aim across the field to the stile in the hedge on the other side which is about 20 metres in from the corner of the field directly ahead. Cross the double stile set into the next field and follow the wire fence on your left for about 125 metres and come to the junction with another footpath. There is an optional inner loop (C) here that reduces the length of the walk by 2 km (see other leaflet). To continue on the main walk at the junction of the footpaths go straight ahead across this field and cross the stile to the left of the bridge out onto Stonebridge Lane.

