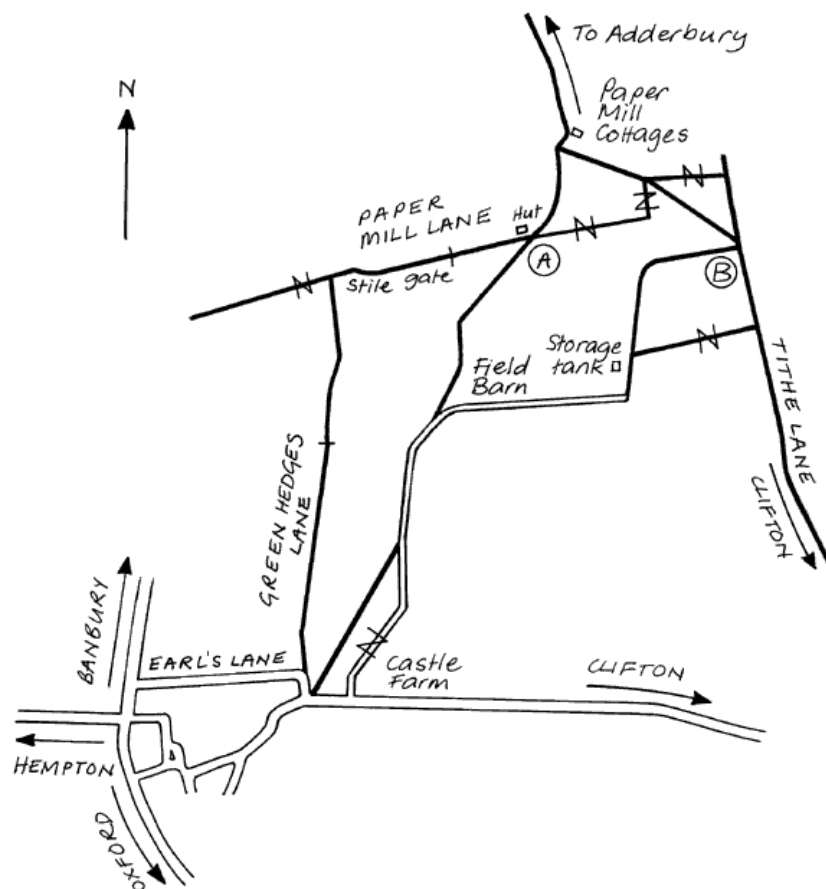


Ralph Elsley's Walks: Pastures New



This walk largely covers new ground though there is some overlap with the last section of the Grand Tour, No.3 in the series. I have indicated the routes with a dotted line and provided what may seem rather tedious detail, but one has to watch out for rights-of-way which are not always very obvious.

At the end of Earl's Lane to the left is a track of just under half a mile with hedges on either side, not surprisingly known as Green Hedges Lane. A stile beside a metal gate leads into a large field in which cattle sometimes graze. It descends very steeply, but it is well worth pausing to admire the view on the way down. Towards the bottom is a spring on your left and in the right hand corner is a metal stile. Take the path to the right - Paper Mill Lane (M. Fuller's lane to the left is not a right-of-way).

After a short distance you come to a gate and then a rather rough path takes you along the side of a field from which the Stilgoe Farm is clearly visible over to your left. In the growing season nettles can be something of a problem here. Go right on to the corner to a metal gate. On your left is a large disused hut (A) with a slate roof and corrugated asbestos front and just past this a wooden gate on your right. You will find a track on your left beside a deep ditch and high hedge. At the corner, bear off to the right towards the opening into the lane up

to Paper Mill cottages. The entrance here is liable to be churned up, but diverging from it to the right is a track which leads you on to a metal gate. You come out in front of a large field and should take a path diagonally across it to the right. You will then be in Tithe Lane and should make your way back going up by the hedge to the right in the adjacent field. I have marked this point as (B).

You are now on the final section of the Grand Tour. A helpful landmark is the conspicuous black storage tank on the corner. It is not exactly a thing of beauty but if you turn your back on it you have a distant prospect affording quite a feast of ecclesiastical architecture: the spires of King's Sutton, Adderbury and Bloxham and the tower of Deddington. I reckon it is the best part of four miles and I should allow about an hour and twenty minutes. If you prefer a shorter walk of about three miles, when you reach the hut (A), instead of turning left you can take a path back across the field on your right. It is very steep but the views are magnificent.

In a dip in the top corner is a wooden stile into a field where horses may be grazing. Another stile further on near the end of the Field Barn buildings brings you to a metal gate near the corner of the concrete road and thus back on to the Grand Tour route. This walk should take about an hour. You will find that Roger Nobbs has obligingly cleared the three rights-of-way across his fields with generous channels through his crops.