

A local woodland footpath perfect for an 'anytime' stroll



A woodland footpath through Denmead Copses - (from Copseside opposite the High Street junction with the A30 to Shave Lane). May 2020

Known as Footpath 6 (FP6) on the Wiltshire 'definitive footpath map' this path is another ancient trackway which once linked two huge parish Medieval Open field systems – **East Field** with **Sheaf Field** off Shave Lane.

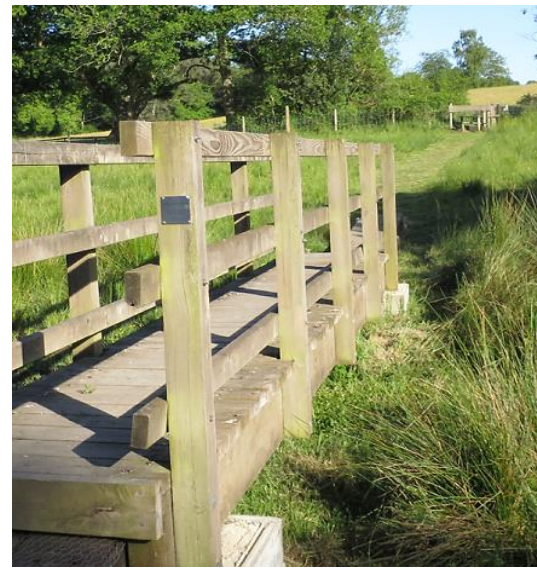
In recent years this footpath was largely inaccessible because no-one walked it! It was blocked by a sea of nettles and brambles and saplings and in winter it was boggy as well!

A few years ago, new landowner Rob Beale successfully obtained planning permission to deviate the path by just a few metres in order to garner space to expand his business site.

Rob promised he would upgrade the path with judicious landscaping and the result is as you see: a marvellous resource for local walkers! In spring it is a delight because the woodland area is noted for its stunning bluebells. And it doesn't flood! Rob also does the bulk of maintaining this footpath and we applaud him for his efforts.

We hope to do a series on our Ansty Trackways and how to 'read our landscape' in the near future.

Now the 'lockdown' is easing, take the opportunity to re-discover more of your own parish footpaths!



PLEASE NOTE: One footpath is currently not accessible due to danger from a fallen tree. We are in the process of trying to get it removed. The footpath is FP2 (from the Maypole to Swallowcliffe. Check on the photomap on page 5

Local footpaths kept clear by volunteers and landowners.

During the lockdown several of our footpaths became badly overgrown. As in previous years our local volunteer group have been able to resume the necessary maintenance to allow villagers and visitors to walk our 6 miles of pathways unhindered. Some local landowners have been very helpful in several locations too – dutifully keeping the pathways clearly defined on their land or removing large trees that had fallen across the footways. Many thanks to them.

Without such constant maintenance our footpaths would very soon become impassable or at the very least difficult and unpleasant to walk. So we thank them all for their endeavours and long may it continue. It is indeed a pleasant civic duty to keep these footpaths open for all throughout the year. Most of them have been in place for hundreds, if not thousands of years and remain an important connection to our rich historical past – connecting the early open field systems and common lands connected and allowing access to the drove roads across the hills and downs to other towns and villages.

One footpath still remains closed: **Footpath 2** from the Maypole access off the High Street to Swallowcliffe due to a fallen Ash tree at the top of the steep slope rendering it dangerous and unstable. Landowners have been consulted and progress is being made on how to tackle this problem but it is slow moving.

Footpaths of note: Footpath 5 from Shave lane (via Ansty Down to the Berwick St John) is now cleared with refurbished stiles; Footpath 6 – access off Copseside/A30 to Shave Lane via a beautifully kept footpath (by the landowner) through Denham Copses ; Footpath 7 from Hillside to Newbarn is now easy to access after the tree was cleared by the landowner and overgrown vegetation has been cleared; FP 8 from Hillside to Kings Lane crossing green fields and via 'Aileen's Bridge' to Squalls and beyond and lastly most of the footpaths through the ancient green field 'closes' of Ansty Coombe and 12 Acre Copse area are also easy to access.
Enjoy!



Far Left- Footpath from Hillside, Ansty Coombe Lane to Newbarn, showing fallen tree blocking the way.

Left- Tree removed and the way out on to the field beyond is now completely clear.



The FP7 Holloway from Hillside to Newbarn is really ancient and once linked Ansty village with the open field system of Hillfield (or Westfield) that had existed since Saxon times.

Linking in with Shave Lane it the afforded access to another large open field known as 'Sheaf Field' and then on to Alvediston and Berwick St John – both former drove ways or bridle-roads linking with the Herepath on top of the Downs. The word 'Shave' in Shave Lane is a corruption of the word 'Sheaf'.

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Walk part of the ancient bridle road from Ansty to Berwick St John!

One of Ansty's 'challenging walks' is FP 5. This path follows the line of an old bridle-road from Ansty to Berwick St John.

Technically this is still a bridleway but access is now impossible due to the slumping of the former chalk pit at the foot of the picture.

You can still pick up remnants of the road track as you ascend the slope on the way to the byway (former herepath) at the top. The views are out of this world!

Access to this section is via Shave lane but you do have to climb over 7 stiles to get to the top!

Summer clearance has taken place by our Footpath Maintenance group and access is now 'good' but it is steep and quite strenuous to climb that slope!

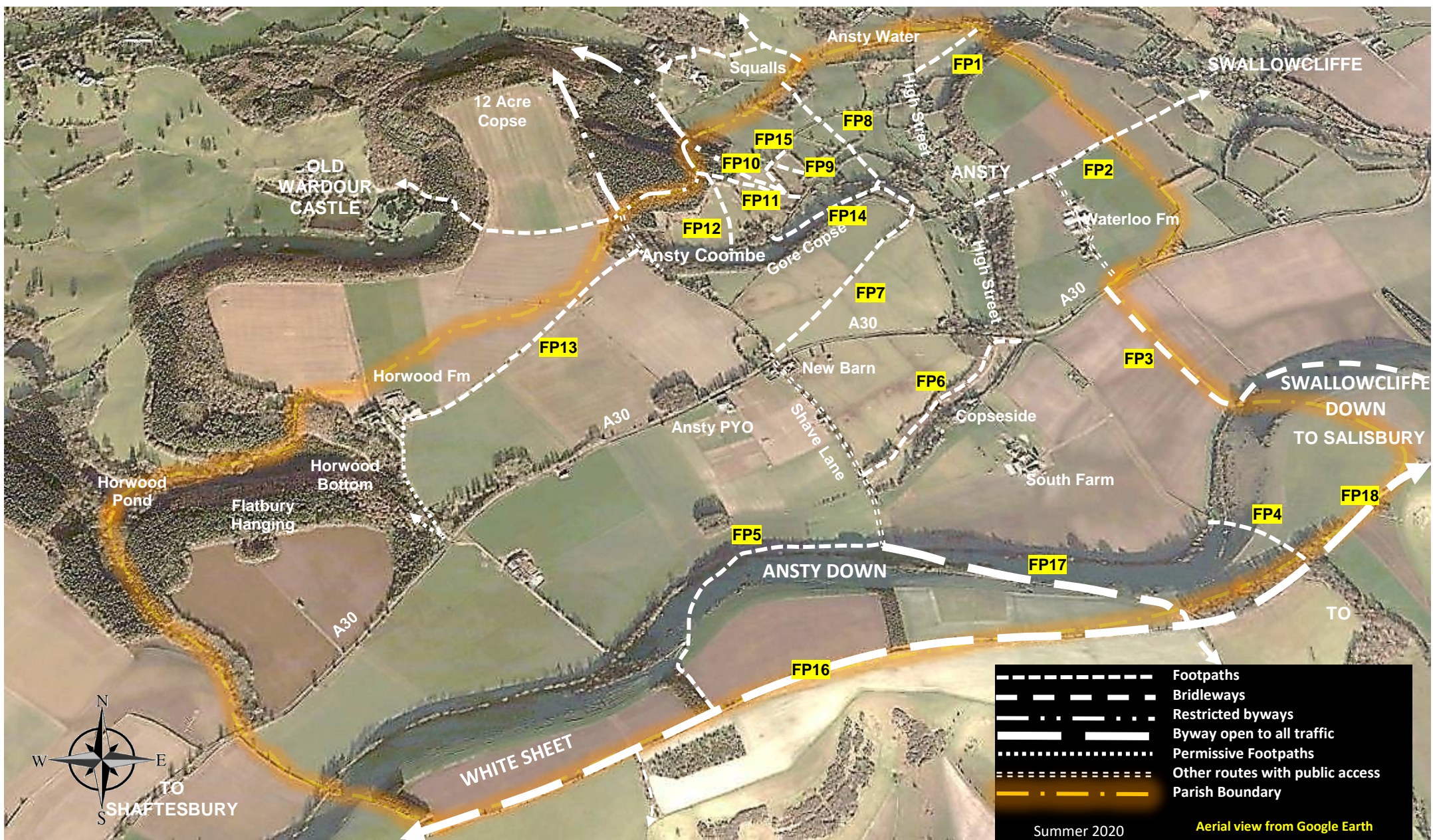


Photo Map to show the many 'public rights of way' footpaths (FPs) in the parish of Ansty, near Salisbury, Wiltshire

