



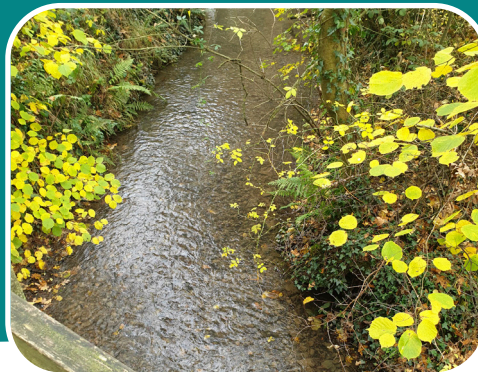
EVENLODE CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP PROJECT WALKS

Our vision is of an Evenlode with improved water quality, better flood management, more wildlife and greater community engagement

Milton-under-Wychwood – Natural Flood Management

A short history of Littlestock Brook

The river's natural shape has been drastically altered over the years. It has been redirected, straightened, and dredged to increase run-off capacity, possibly for powering a mill or aiding crop production after the fields were converted from floodplain to arable land post-WW2. Roughly 80 years ago, you used to be able to watch the trout spawning here.



Natural glacial cobblestone riverbed

The straightening and dredging of the river increased the speed of the brook. In heavy rain, the power of the water would carry the natural glacial cobblestones downstream, blocking the river and worsening flooding. Villagers once collected a skip-load of cobbles from the pile-up under the bridge annually!

Community willow spiling project

Willow spiling is a traditional technique to stop bank erosion. As the willows put down roots, they matt together, holding back the soil. In 2019, local volunteers used this natural river restoration method to stop the banks of Littlestock Brook eroding and you can still see their efforts.



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Follow our walk on the next page



Discover the project on this self-guided walk

Accessibility

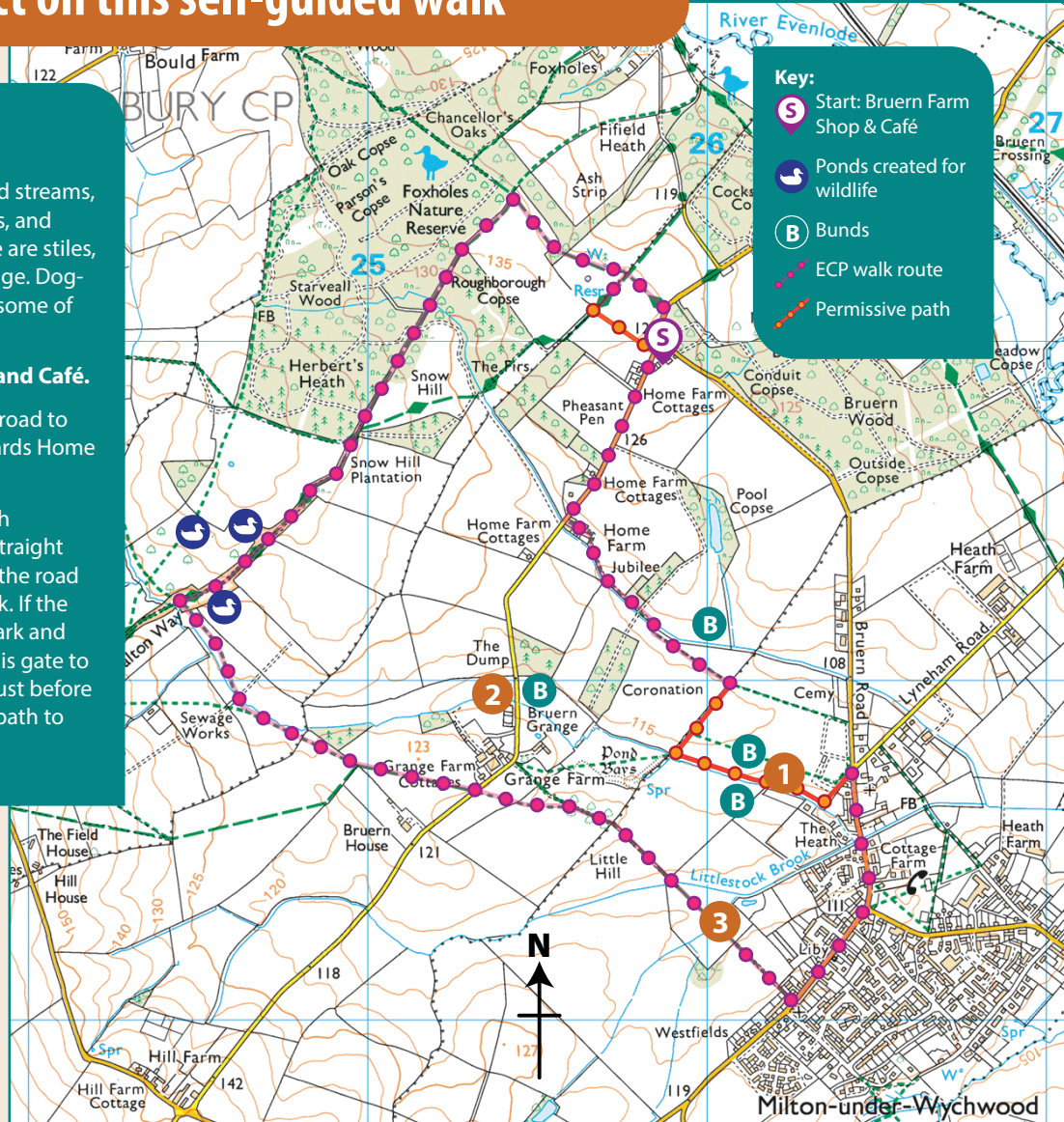
Route: 4.7 miles (7.6 km)

This walk includes fields, woodland and streams, and uses a combination of minor roads, and public and permissive footpaths. There are stiles, kissing gates and a small, wooden bridge. Dog-friendly, but there may be livestock in some of the fields, so keep dogs on leads.

Start the walk at Bruern Farm Shop and Café.

Option 1 (clockwise): Start down the road to the left when exiting the car park towards Home Farm Cottages.

Option 2 (anti-clockwise): Go through **Foxholes Nature Reserve** first; head straight out of the car park entrance and cross the road to walk down the permissive farm track. If the gate is shut, turn right out of the car park and follow the road round the bend. There is gate to your left, with a public footpath sign, just before the next bend in the road. Follow this path to Foxholes Nature Reserve.



Key:

- S** Start: Bruern Farm Shop & Café
- P** Ponds created for wildlife
- B** Bunds
- ECP walk route
- - -** Permissive path

B Bunds

A bund is a bank created by piling up earth. It is used for two main purposes depending on the placement of the bund. They are mainly used for holding back water and sediment from field run-off, but can also be used to divert the rainwater run-off away from areas at high risk from erosion or flooding.

1 Natural Flood Management

To restore the brook, the ECP and local volunteers put in a natural-bed-check-dam to stop the cobbles going downstream and to slow the water flow. Water storage bunds have also been put in to prevent surface water running off into the brook in high rainfall. Since these measures were taken, there has been no flooding and no skip needed.

2 Pond and swale

This pond naturally appeared and instantly became popular with dragonflies. The pond is possibly fed from medieval gravel beds underneath the surface. Dragonflies are not only beautiful, but also beneficial as they feed on insect pests. Their presence in a pond is an indicator of a healthy ecosystem as they need clean water to thrive.

3 Citizen Science

Along this footpath there is the chance to use the phone mounts (one by the pond and one overlooking a wetland). These photos go onto our database to show how the habitat changes over time. We are hoping that we will see an increase in biodiversity over the next few years as these habitats attract wildlife.

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