

The village of Upton Snodsbury is situated on the south side of the A422 Worcester to Stratford road, and can be reached from Pinvin on the B4082. Just down from the junction of these two roads is the church of St Kenelm, and it is from here that the walk starts. Cars may be parked below the church.

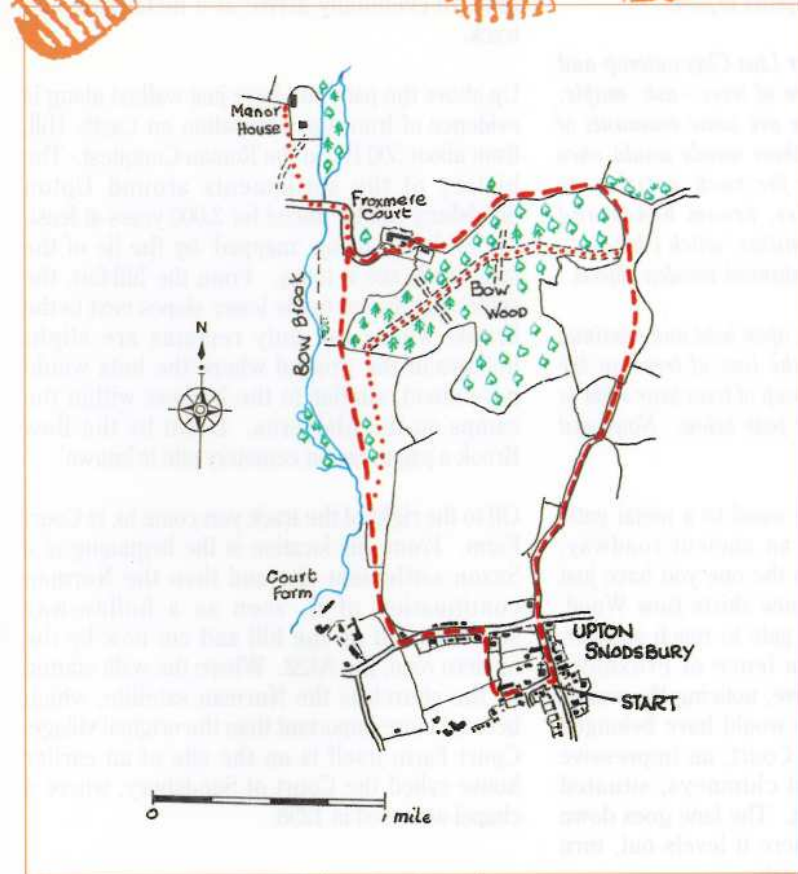
An attractive yew tree arch leads from the south entrance gates to the church, which is mainly restoration by W.J. Hopkins 1873-4. The west tower is Perpendicular and has the unusual feature of a clock face on each of its four sides. From St Kenelm's go to the T-junction at the main road and cross to the track opposite. This original ancient track running north/south through the village, and closer inspection of the surface in places reveals the stones characteristics set on end rather than laid flat. Keep on the track to a metal gate. In the field beyond, follow the sweep of the boundary with the hedge a few yards to the right, for about ¼ mile, then walk close to the hedge by a line of oak trees and fork left. For the main walk omit the next three paragraphs.

To follow the Bow Wood alternative route turn directly left to a wooden gate on the edge of the wood and follow the path through the wood, ignoring any tracks that cross or join it. The route is obvious, but be sure to pass through an old gateway where the path appears to fork.

Bow Wood lies on a Lower Lias Clay outcrop and has an interesting mixture of tress – ash, maple, hazel, birch, larch. There are some remnants of coppicing, evidence that these woods would once have produced timber for such articles as thatching spars, hurdles, broom heads and handles, besoms – the familiar 'witch's broom' – quite apart from more substantial wooden objects.

Eventually emerge into an open field and continue straight ahead, keeping the line of trees on the right. At the end of this group of trees bear right to join the main walk on the path below. Now omit the next two paragraphs.

WALK 8 UPTON SNODSBURY



This is a walk for aspiring landscape detectives in an area where sites of past settlements can be traced from their origins to the present village. The main walk skirts Bow Wood and passes Froxmere Court, whilst an optional route through the wood itself takes in the springtime display of bluebells.

Map reference of start SO 943 543

3 miles 2½ miles
OS Maps:
*Landranger 150
Pathfinder 996
(SO 85/95)*

Go round the side of the wood to a metal gate. The track here is also an ancient roadway, forming a T-junction with the one you have just come along. The path now skirts Bow Wood, passing through a metal gate to reach another, just beyond the garden fence of Froxmere House. Go along the drive, noticing the walled garden on the left. This would have belonged originally to Froxmere Court, an impressive house with magnificent chimneys, situated further along on the right. The lane goes down round The Park and where it levels out, turn back left through a metal gate.

(A) Here, if you look down to your right you'll see Bow Brook, a main tributary of the Avon, and a stream of considerable importance, draining the centre of Worcestershire. There used to be a weir located here, with water being transferred by a banked canal across the field to a mill. The route of the waterway can just be discerned from the edge of the brook, past a group of tress in the middle of the field to a chump of oak tress, beyond which would have been the site of a mill. The water

would have been raised four or five feet, sufficient to power an undershot mill-wheel. Go straight ahead now across the middle of the field to a gate on the far side and continue in the same line for about ½ mile, to eventually arrive at a metal gate and track.

Up above the path you have just walked along is evidence of Iron Age occupation on Castle Hill, from about 500 BC to the Roman Conquest. The history of the settlements around Upton Snodsbury can be traced for 2,000 years at least, the evolution being 'mapped' by the lie of the land as we see it today. From the hill-fort, the settlement moved to the lower slopes next to the brook, where the only remains are slight hollows in the ground where the huts would have stood, similar to the hollows within the camps on the Malverns. Down by the Bow Brook a pagan Saxon cemetery site is known.

Off to the right of the track you come to, is Court Farm. From this location is the beginning of a Saxon settlement site and then the Norman continuation of it, seen as a hollow-way stretching off up to the hill and cut now by the modern road, the A422. Where the walk started by the church is the Norman satellite, which become more important than the original village. Court Farm itself is on the site of an earlier house called the Court of Snodsbury, where a chapel was used in 1258.

Along the track, pass through another metal gate and go straight ahead to the main road. Turn left and then immediately beyond the garage workshop, turn right to a stile. At the end of the garden on the left are the remains of a moated site, partly destroyed now by the modern building. Originally, a timbered building would have stood on the site and would have formed part of one of the older village settlements. At the next stile go forward to a small gate just past a bungalow on the left. Notice the ridge and furrow in the open field – evidence of early agriculture. Beyond the gate keep to the wire fence, then go out on to the road which leads back to the church.