

Route continued

10 Warings craft bakers

is a family business started in 1932 and is a fourth generation bakery.



11 The former Red Lion pub opposite the Post Office opened its doors in 1877. Above the doorway was inscribed 'Simonds Reading Ales and Foreign Wines & Spirits'. The pub closed in 1994.



12 The common

For the more adventurous, an optional return route through the woods and across the common via Kiln Lane is shown as a dotted blue line on the map. Kiln Lane is a rough bridleway and there are stiles at each end of the path across The Common.



Buildings and bricks

The population of the village increased from the 1850s when wealthy shopkeepers from Reading built new homes to benefit from the healthy air and small farms were set up to grow food for Thames Valley markets.

By 1900 the village had its own shops, post office, schools and churches. Village buildings clustered along the eastern edge of the Common, while two mansions (Stanbury and Highlands) were built on the west side surrounded by their parks and bordered by a belt of trees, mostly Scots pine. This border is still an important feature along the west side of the road and protected from being broken up by an official Tree Preservation Order.

Bricks were produced at a kiln on the far side of the Common. The site of the kiln was surrounded by ponds where London Clay was extracted to make the red bricks.



Houses along the road frequently display the craft of the bricklayers in using patterns and varied colour bricks. These decorated properties are a feature of the walk.

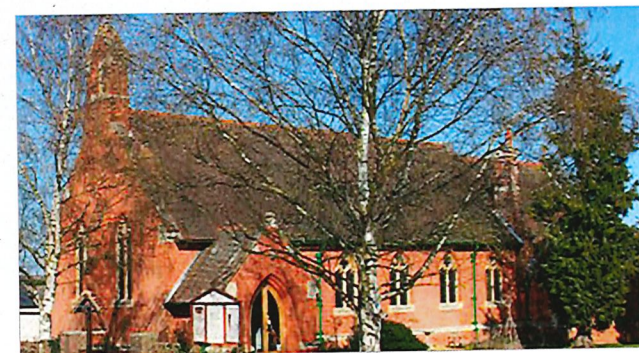
Any problems or queries should be directed to Shinfield Parish Council
0118 988 8220

E-mail: clerk@shinfieldparish.gov.uk

SHINFIELD PARISH EASY HISTORY WALKS FOR ALL

Nº 3: Spencers Wood

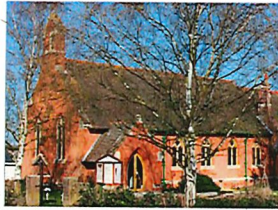
A map of 1790 shows the road to Basingstoke as a track across the empty space called 'Spencers Wood Common'. A four-mile stone was erected to indicate the route. There was no Spencers Wood community, and for historic reasons the land around was administered as a detached part of Wiltshire. Nearby farmland was still managed on the mediaeval open field system. Gradually new dwellings encroached onto the eastern side of the common, eventually reaching the road.



This linear walk is about ¾ mile long and takes about an hour. The paths are suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs, except for the optional return route which adds ¼ mile to the return journey. There is a seat in the church yard at the start of the walk and others along the route. Cars can be parked in the adjacent Clares Green Road. Buses stop outside the Farriers Arms. Check Reading Buses website for service details.'

1 This walk starts at the Church of St. Michael and All Angels.

This is one of the notable examples in Spencers Wood of the late 19th and early 20th century Arts & Crafts movement. St. Michaels opened for services in 1908.



9 The former nonconformist chapel,

behind the Milestone, is a distinctive building opened in 1905 and converted into apartments in 1999. Its special tower is a local landmark.



8 Old Milestone * just beyond the start of Chapel Lane; with barely discernible

Reading 4
Southampton 44
Basingstoke 12



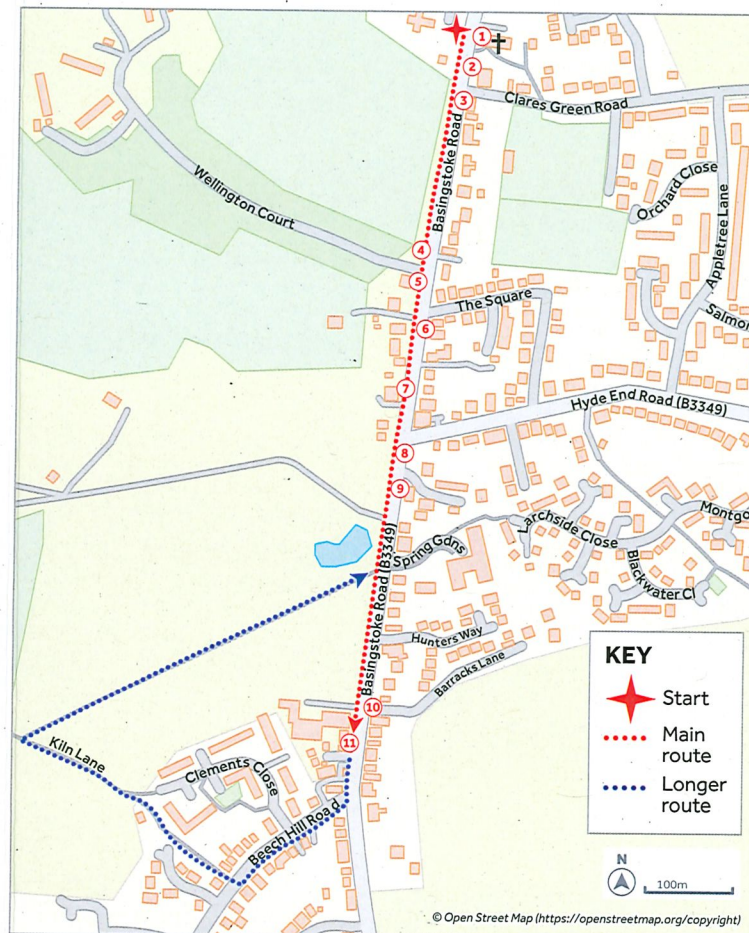
7 The Library *

Originally a school building provided by Mr Allfrey of Stanbury, with its home at the side for the headmaster. It opened in 1890, becoming a library in the 1970s. During the intervening years various forms of education were offered here including learning how to cook nutritious meals within the limitations of food rationing between 1941 and 1947.



2 The Village Hall *

was built in 1911 in the Arts & Crafts style. The Hall has always been busy. During WWII it was used by villagers and evacuees and provided entertainment for locals and prisoners of war. Since then, it has hosted plays and parties and been home for groups such as Brownies, Guides and WI.



3 The Farriers Arms began life as a small ale house for travellers. It was used by soldiers marching to the coast and prisoners on their way to Reading gaol. Before the M4 was built it was a coach stop and it was named after The Forge. It was briefly called the Cygnet when purchased by the owner of The Swan in Three Mile Cross.



4 Wellingtonia Avenue.

The Sequoiadendron trees were introduced about 1850 from California. They were planted as prize specimens in the avenue to Stanbury House. They are protected and can be seen from miles around. Until the 1960s



families made homeless by bombing in WWII lived in 'prefabs' beside the trees. Previously they had been occupied by German and Italian prisoners of war.

5 Opposite the Wellingtonias is one of two 100 year old **George V postboxes** with their own brick features still in use in the Parish.



6 The former forge on the corner of The Square dates back to 1890 and was occupied by a Farrier from Suffolk who set

up his fire and anvil to make and fit horseshoes for fine horses owned by the gentry and working horses owned by farmers and tradesmen.