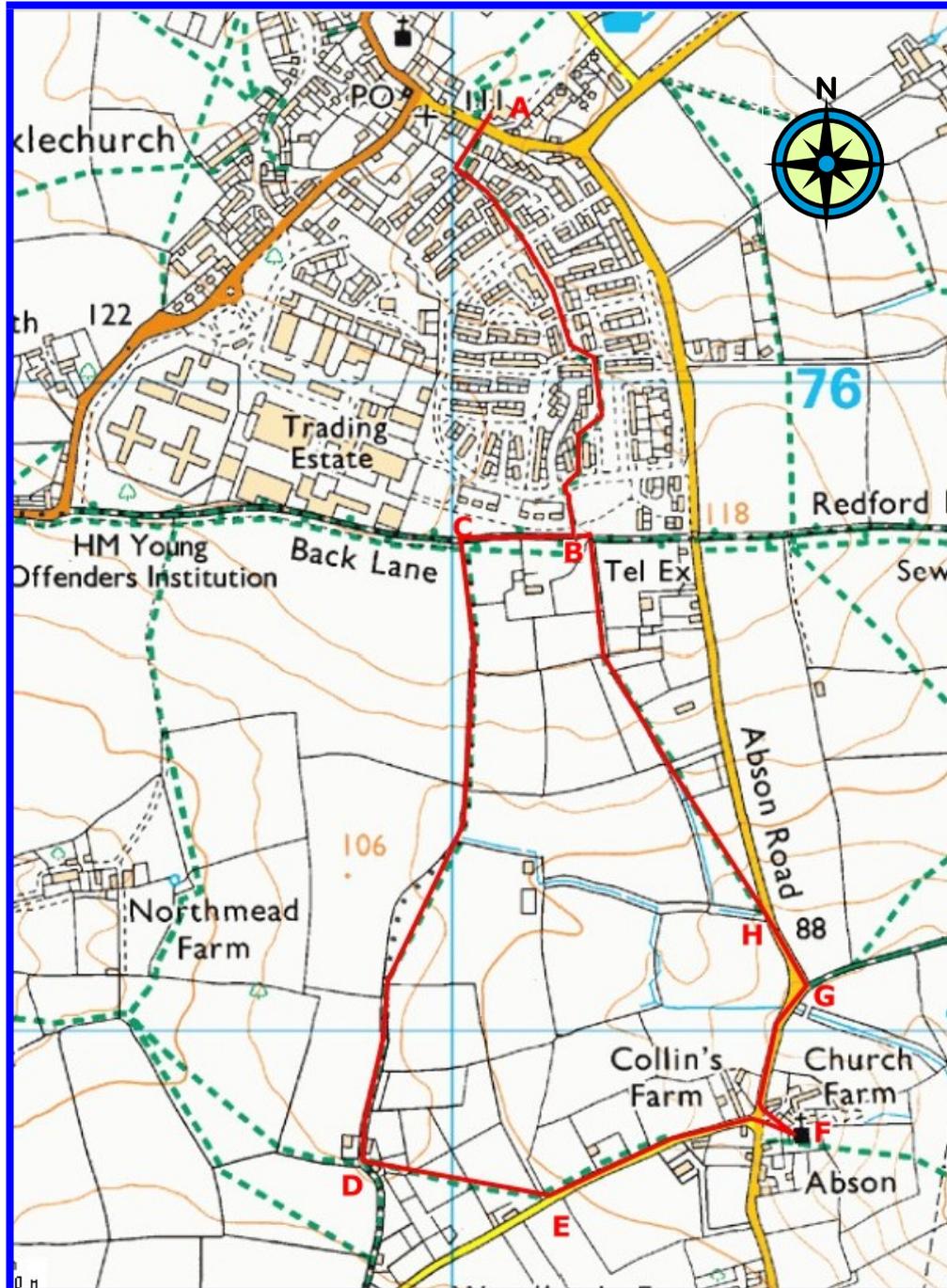




Walk #5: Community Centre to Abson Church

4.5km (2.8 miles), about 1½ hours – a circular route that includes multiple stiles, walking on roads, and possibly some very muddy stretches

This walk leads you to St James the Great in Abson, a beautiful 12th-century church with some interesting features.



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From the Community Centre car park (A), cross Abson Road at the zebra crossing and go through the passageway into the estate. Turn left at the T-junction and follow the pathway through the underpass. Where the pathway splits at a triangle of grass, take the left fork towards the children's play

area, and walk to Oaktree Avenue. Cross the road and head straight across the open space. The area of scruffy grass on the right is Pucklechurch's historic barrage balloon mooring site. Go through the gap in the trees (B) and onto Back Lane.

Countryside Access Walks

Walk #5: Community Centre to Abson Church



Turn right and walk up Back Lane about 100 metres to a footpath on the left (C). Go over (or around) the wooden stile and follow this tree-lined path over wooden stile. Continuing on, you'll climb yet another wooden stile that leads into an arable field. Stay close to the hedge on your right and go through the gap in the fence to another field. At the end of this field, cross the small bridge with gates at each end. The next field is a horse paddock. If there's an electric fence up, be sure to close it behind you. Still keeping close to the hedge on your right, walk on and through the metal kissing gate.

The next section of the route can be extremely muddy if it's been raining, especially once you pass the hollow oak tree in the middle of the path. The footpath soon opens out onto a lane with a stable on your left. After about 200 metres, look for a wooden stile on the left (D), just to the right of a stableyard gate. Here the footpath runs next to the hedge on your left and goes through a gap into a horse paddock. From this gap, head diagonally right (about 2 o'clock) to the small metal gate in the middle of the hedge on the opposite side of the field. In the next field, head diagonally across the field to the small metal gate in the top right corner, which leads out onto a farm track and then onto Lodge Road (E).

From here you can either take the footpath that carries on parallel to the road on the inside of the hedge for about 200 metres

Church of St James the Great and Its Special Carvings

The Grade I listed Abson church has 12th-century origins, with the bell tower dating from the 15th century. The outside walls incorporate two fragments of carved knotwork masonry, which may have come from an earlier Saxon structure. High on the east wall at the back of the church to the left of the three long windows is a Sheela Na Gig of a rampant male. Sheela Na Gigs are quasi-erotic stone carvings, most commonly of women, found on Romanesque churches dating from Norman times.

before coming out onto the road or walk in Lodge Road itself. The footpath is heavily overgrown and has several stiles and gates. You choose. Either way, continue to where

Lodge Road ends in the hamlet of Abson. Cross Abson Road and go up the drive into the churchyard of St James the Great (F). Explore this lovely, old church and its carvings before continuing your walk.



After you've had a gander, head right on Abson Road. Take care on this stretch, as the road is curvy and visibility impaired by the hedges. When you get to the sharp bend, there is room to walk on the lefthand verge. About 200 metres from the church, there is a private drive on the left (H). Turn up this drive and go through the metal kissing gate on the right, next to the gate to the stable. The footpath leads diagonally left up through a horse paddock to a metal gate. There is an unlocked pedestrian gate built into the farm gate. From here continue diagonally up the field to the kissing gate in the top left corner. Follow the path straight on past several horse paddocks. Go through another kissing gate and into the leylandii tunnel beyond. Deer are sometimes seen here. The path ends at a kissing gate that lets out onto Back Lane. Turn left, go past the bollards, and then turn right up into the gap (B) leading onto the village green.

Cross Oaktree Avenue and take the walkway between Partridge Drive and Goldfinch Way. When you pass the play area and get to a junction, go left and then immediately right down the path that leads through the underpass. After the underpass, continue straight on until you come to the cut-through on the right that leads to Abson Road and the Community Centre (A).