



Snipe Walk 3 The QI Walk 2 miles (3.2km)

A 'quite interesting' walk around Snitterfield, concentrating on village history. Most of the route is on the road, with a couple of rural diversions. Please respect residents' privacy.

Start at telephone box near the crossroads of The Green, Smith's Lane, Bearley Road and School Road. Walk away from the crossroads up Smith's Lane. Just beyond Frogmore Road on your right is a large building with white painted walls: Manor House **1**. Once known as Frogmore House it has been much changed over the years and its origins are rather mysterious, but it was probably originally a farmhouse. There is a plaque dated 1699 on one of the dwellings but, as there is evidence of older timber frame construction, this date may refer to later extensions. The house was in the ownership of the wealthy Smith family (likely the origin of the name Smith's Lane) from the 18th century until it became part of the Snitterfield estate when the village was bought by the Philips family in 1816. In the 1850s Miss Jane Mash opened a boarding school for the 'Education of Young Ladies' here. The school had ceased to exist by 1861. The adjacent Frogmore Road was originally the kitchen garden for the house until the gardens were sold off and the modern houses were built. Manor House was divided into four dwellings in the early 1960s.

On the other side of the road is a large red-brick house called The Gables **2**. This handsome house, now two dwellings, was built in 1873. It was originally built by Mark Philips as the home of the architect of Welcombe House (later Welcombe Hotel) while he was designing this new property for the Philips. Later, when Sir George and Lady Caroline Trevelyan (Mark's niece) inherited the Snitterfield estate they converted the building into an 'Institute' for the village, including a news and reading room, library, billiards room and even a non-alcoholic bar. It was sold in 1929 and converted into three dwellings.

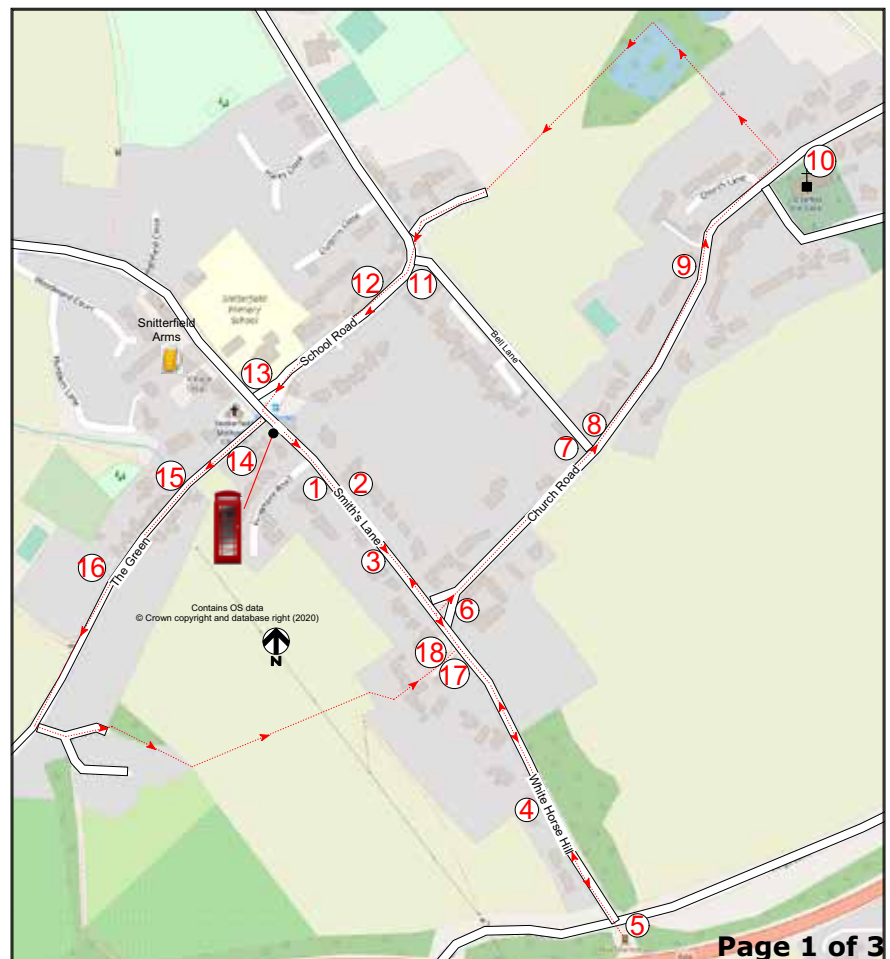
Continue up Smith's Lane and on the right you will see an old thatched building, now divided into Fernside and Fern Cottage **3**. Many of the properties on this road would have originally been thatched but this is the only remaining one. In the 19th century the estate owners, the Philips family, had the thatch roofs on the old cottages replaced with tile after a serious fire – how this cottage escaped being tiled is unknown! Other properties were demolished and replaced with the distinctive 'Philips houses' that can be seen throughout the village, with their stone mullions and lattice windows.

Keep walking uphill as Smith's Lane becomes White Horse Hill. On your

right you will pass The White Horse House **4**. Now a private house this was once one of Snitterfield's five village inns. There was an annual Lammas timber sale at The White Horse Inn at Lammas Tide (1 August). Ash poles and other timber from Snitterfield Bushes were cut down in the winter and stacked in a yard on the present site of the Snitterfield Arms. Many of the poles were exported to Ireland as hoops for barrels. Others were sold at the Lammas Sale and it was also the occasion of a fair and general merry-making with stalls, booths and shies for the children. On Whit Monday villagers met again at The White Horse Inn and marched to the church for a service, carrying banners and concluding with a village feast.

Walk to the end of the road, heading for the war memorial ahead **5**. There is no footpath here so be careful. Cross the road to look at the moving inscriptions and to enjoy the lovely view across the Avon valley. The memorial was unveiled in 1920. During a dreadful blizzard in 1946/7 the memorial was broken and a new memorial was erected, paid for by the villagers and with a further plaque commemorating those who fell in the Second World War. In April 1978 the memorial again blew down in a storm and was strengthened.

Walk back down White Horse Hill until you come to the Horse Chestnut tree (the Stocks Tree) on the right. This is reputed to be the site of both the village stocks and a busy market, dating back to



1257 when the Lord of the Manor received a royal grant for a 'marcate' to be held on Wednesdays and 'a faire once every year' in July. People came from far and wide and foreign merchants displayed their wares alongside local producers. Snitterfield's busy timber sale, market and fair may explain the need for five inns in a fairly small village!

Turn right into Church Road and on the corner of Smith's Lane and Church Road stands Park House **6**. In this house lived Mark Philips before he built Welcombe House. Thought to date from Elizabethan time, the house was enlarged by Mark Philips to include tennis courts and arboretum and the gardens extended. At the end of the 19th century it was lived in by Colonel Dugdale (equerry to the Duke of York) and Lady Eva Dugdale. They were visited by the Duchess of York (later Queen Mary) to whom Lady Eva was lady in waiting. To commemorate the visit a red hawthorn tree was planted by the Duchess in the grounds and a wrought-iron crown was put on the turret of the house over the bedroom in which the Duchess slept. You can still see this among the chimneys. The estate was later split up and the house is now divided into several properties.



Continue up Church Road. Just before the junction to Bell Lane stands Park View **7**. This lovely old house, whose nucleus is timber framed, has been added to several times over the years and is under restoration as this walk is being written. It is reputed to be the home, or on the site of the home and farm of William Shakespeare's grandfather, Richard Shakespeare, who settled in the village sometime before 1529. This has been extensively researched over the years and there is firm and credible reason to believe that this is indeed the site, although whether there are any remains of the original house is not known.

On either side of Park View are fine examples of 'Philips houses'. Jasmine House **8**, the Philips House on the far side of Bell Lane, was once a village bakery, run by Mrs Cooke, until it was sold (for £2,500) in 1954 and became a private house. During 1959 the new residents found hundreds of tiny hip flasks when digging in the garden. Their neighbour explained that as a boy he was required to visit one of the pubs on his way home from school and purchase a tiny flask of whisky for Mrs Cooke, who consumed it in the early hours while baking and then threw the empty flask out of the window into the garden. The next house is Tudor House, a 16th/17th century timber-framed listed

building which survived the Philips' rebuilding.

Walk on up Church Road, passing Field Place and on the left is a white-painted cottage called Mole End **9**. This was once a thriving grocery and general stores founded by Mrs White, which closed in 1955. Earlier in the century it was a tailor's

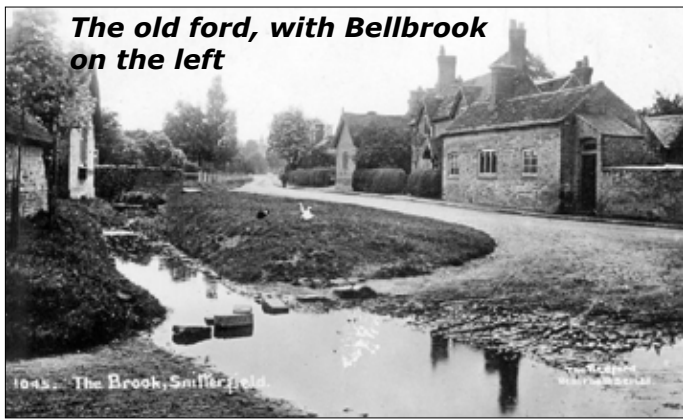


shop owned by a Mr Pearson, who provided suits in the days when villagers depended on their own crafts for supplies.

Continue up the road until you see St James the Great Church on your right **10**. Before you investigate it further look at the tall old walls on the right side of Cedar Drive. These date to about 1670 and are Grade II listed. The inclusion of a priest amongst the villagers of Snitterfield in the Domesday Survey of 1086 implies the existence of a church here at that time. Today's church originated with its chancel, built in the 13th century. The lengthy process of building the tower, twice halted because of the Black Death, ended in about 1400. A hundred years later the nave and oak roof were in place. While most of the medieval masonry frame remains intact and there are many historic items of interest within, including a 14th century font, the interior shows much evidence of major Victorian modifications. Richard Jago the poet became vicar here in 1754 and is buried under the centre aisle.

Opposite the church turn left down a waymarked unmade track. Go through a pedestrian gate and walk down a tree-lined path with views of a pond to the left and glimpses of another to the right. Turn right at a bridge and go through a wooden gate. Turn left to follow the edge of a ridge and furrow field, keeping the tree line and brook on your left. At the end of the field go through a rickety gate and along a narrow path to reach a made up lane (Brookside).

At the end of the lane cross the road, heading down School Road, with the brook and Bellbrook House **11** on your left. This is the site of another former public house: Bell Inn, which also brewed beer for the village - the malthouse can still be seen if you make a short detour onto Bell Lane across the bridge. During the Second World War and before she became a household name, Bellbrook House was lived in by TV cook Fanny Cradock and her husband Johnnie. To the left of the house is a bridge leading to Bell **Page 2 of 3**



Lane which was once a simple ford, crossed with stepping stones (see above).

Continue down School Road, passing Forge House **12**, on your right. This was the site of the village blacksmiths, which was discontinued in 1940.

When you reach the crossroads Snitterfield School is on your right **13**. It was built in 1837 and originally consisted of one large room, divided by a partition – with the average number of pupils being 100! There was no playground space. If



you make a short detour around the corner onto Bearley road you will see a plaque on the school wall, commemorating the 'munificence' of Robert Philips, who donated the land and enlarged the school in 1884.

Return to the crossroads and cross to go up The Green ahead, to the left of the former Methodist Church. If you look at the second cottage on the left, Stable Cottage, **14** you will see a stone inscription RMP 1877 on its façade. This is the site of a general stores, opened that year by Robert Philips (hence inscription) and still trading in the 1950s.

Further up The Green to your right, just before the turning to The Knob, stands Sharrow House **15**, another former shop, The Co-op, which opened in 1893 and was still in business in the 1950s. It is now a private house. Continue straight on, admiring the variety of architecture and rooflines and on the right you will see an elevated house behind a low hedge, Well Cottage **16**. This was once The Rag and Louse, one of the



village's five inns.

Walk on for about 300 yards, until you see a layby to your right by two road signs. Turn left opposite it, taking a tarmacked lane between hedges. Continue straight on, ignoring a road to the right. At the end, follow a waymark to turn right behind a conifer hedge onto a narrow path. At the end of the path veer left into a field, with the hedge line on your right and a telegraph pole to the left. When you reach the corner go right down a bank and through a metal gate (usually open). Continue on a gravel track towards Smith's Lane. On your right you will pass a small cottage, The Old Bakery, and the half-timbered Fern Bank **17**. This was the site of a grocers and bakery run by Mr Gibbs.

Snitterfield Stores **18** is on your left. On this site once stood a butchers and slaughter house. Until 1857 meat was supplied to the village direct from the slaughter house in the yard behind this site until the butcher's shop was built. Mr Ledbrook took over the business in 1911 and continued until 1951. He also sold petrol and villagers remember him filling tanks in his blood-stained apron. The shop became a grocers but Mr Ledbrook continued with the sale of petrol he had started in the 1920s. His son Ken ran a car and motorcycle repair business from the yard at the rear of his father's shop.

To complete the walk, turn left down Smith's Lane to the start point.

