
How to get there

Selborne is on the B3006 which links the A31 at Alton and the A325 at Greatham. Follow brown heritage signs for Gilbert White House. There is a public car park behind the Selborne Arms. The nearest railway stations are Alton (4 miles) and Liss (6 Miles). There is a limited country bus service - details from the Alton Tourist Information Office Cross & Pillory Lane, Alton (01420 88448)

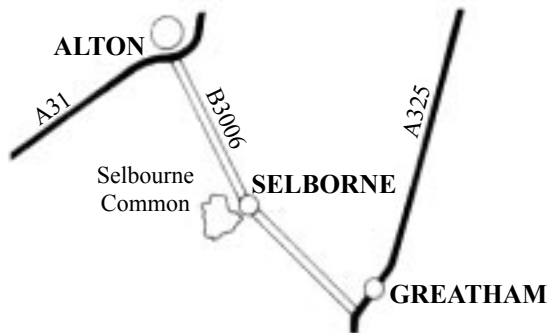
Places to Visit in Selborne

Gilbert White's House and The Oates Museum. Turn left out of the car park. Usually open daily from 1st January to 24th December but in **2003** open from 1st April to 24th December with Garden and Parkland only open from 1st January to 31st March. Tel: 01420 511275

A complete range of books and unusual gifts are on sale in the shop at Gilbert White's House.

Refreshments. A range of snacks to full meals in the two pubs which also have seats in the garden and light refreshments including lunches at the Tea Parlour in Gilbert White's House. Also village Post Office.

MAPS - Ordnance Survey Pathfinder 1244 - Alton and Four Marks (1:25,000). A detailed map of footpaths on National Trust land is sold in the village.



Credits: This leaflet was prepared by Dr June Chatfield for East Hampshire District Council.

Literary walks in East Hampshire



Selborne, home of the
Rev. Gilbert White
author of the world famous classic
*The Natural History and Antiquities of
Selborne (1789)*

Points of literary interest

With references to *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*

- a The old butcher's shop opposite Gilbert White's House. Two of the four lime trees planted by White in 1756 survive (*Garden Kalendar*). The front view of Gilbert White's House has changed much, but the dormer windows are contemporary. The local malmstone is used in buildings and the mortar lines decorated with pieces of ironstone - seen in side of butcher's shop and Plestor House. Pavement of blue rag. (Letter 4 to Pennant).
- b Plestor means "play place" - fairs and markets were held there. There is an oak and old sycamore the latter possibly planted by White's brother Thomas. The Plestor was illustrated in the original edition of *Selborne* (Letter 2 to Pennant; 28 to Barrington and 10 in *Antiquities*).
- c White described the ancient yew in Letter 5 of *Antiquities*: it has inspired other writers - Thomas Bell, William Cobbett and W H Hudson. The story of the hornblower or trumpeter (grave below yew) is in Hudson's *Hampshire Days*. The yew tree was blown over in a gale in January 1990 and was pollarded before re-erection. To the north of the church (signposted) is Gilbert White's simple grave stone. The church is 12th century; transitional Norman - the naturalist's grandfather was Vicar, his tombstone is in front of the altar. A stained glass window with birds was erected for the bicentenary of White's birth in 1920 and another window commemorated his death in 1973. White describes the church (*Antiquities* Letters 3 and 4).
- d Gilbert White refers to the two streams in *Selborne*, Wellhead being the most reliable (Letter 1 Pennant).
- e White (*Naturalist's journal*) gives the origin of "lythe." as Saxon for steep slope. In his time the Short Lythe was a pasture and the sunny bank occupied by field crickets. Mole crickets were in the banks of the stream. (Letters 46 and 48 to Barrington)
- f *Selborne Priory* was a house of Augustinian canons (1233-1486). The buildings were demolished and the stone re-used locally. The site was excavated (1953-1971) and finds are on display in *The Gilbert White Museum*, White's *Antiquities* tells the story of the priory.
- g The track from Priory Farm to *Selborne* is an ancient road, the *Via Canonorum*. White recorded the Green Hellebore: it is still in Dorton Wood and flowers early in the year. (Letter 41 to Barrington)
- h White refers to Toothwort in *Church Litten Coppice*. A parasite on hazel roots, it is still seen as you leave Dorton Wood; it flowers in April (Letter 41 to Barrington).
- i Huckers Lane is a sunken land in the malmstone (upper greensand) - part way up is an exposure in the bank.
- j By the telephone kiosk near the car park is an old standpipe - the system for piping water from Wellhead to the whole village established in 1894.
- k The Great Mead at the foot of the Hanger was part of Gilbert White's property.
- l The zigzag path up the Hanger was cut by Gilbert White and his brother John in 1753. Note the sarsen or wishing stone on top.
- m *Coneycroft* derives its name from, a former rabbit warren (*Antiquities* Letter 26). Look out for roe deer.
- n The road junction is the site of the *Selborne Riot* of 1830 on the workhouse - *Fishers Buildings*.
- o Gilbert White describes the hollow lanes as "one of the singularities of this place" (Letters to Pennant).

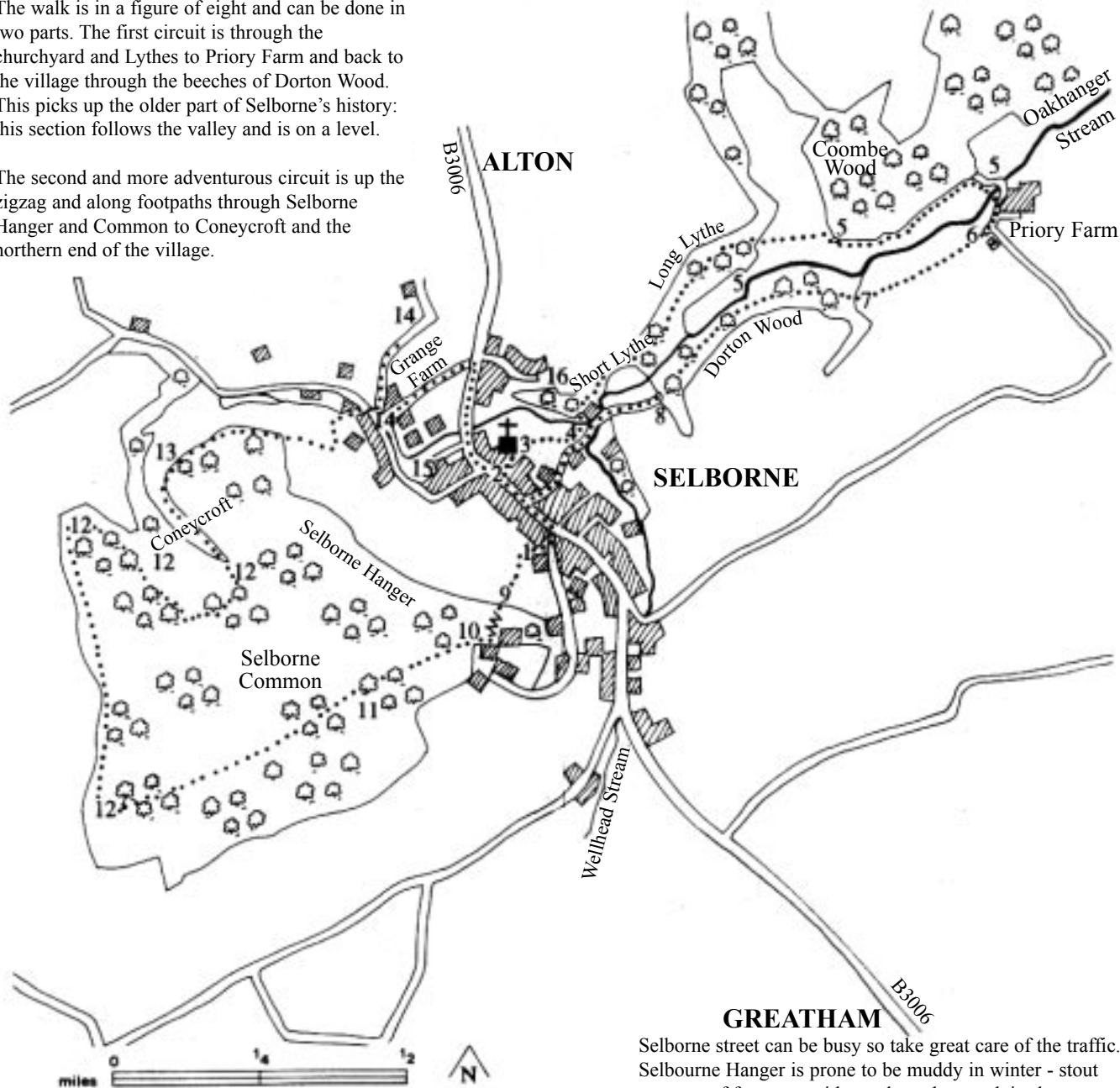
Route

- 1 The starting point is the public car park behind the Selborne Arms. Turn left out of the car park, along The Street to the Queen's Hotel. Cross the road and stop to look at the old butcher's shop and Gilbert White's House opposite. (See a)
- 2 Cross The Plestor, a small area of grass - a scene little changed since White's time. (See b)
- 3 Enter the churchyard - this area is full of interest and worth making a detour (See c). Leave the churchyard at the kissing gate and notice the view with the deep valley below.
- 4 The land for the next stretch is owned by the National Trust. Cross Church Meadow, the stream and follow the path at the foot of the Short and Long Lythes. (See d and e)
- 5 Leaving the National Trust woods, cross Coombe Meadow and enter Coombe Wood by stile (immediately opposite and to the right). Continue to the end of the wood, then along the field edge to stile, turn right, straight across field to footbridge (by old oak).
- 6 Turn right into a trackway, past a bungalow and along the top of the field with hedge on left, enter Dorton Wood. This is farmland so be sure to close any field gates you open.
- 7 Follow trackway through the beeches of Dorton Wood with the stream in a deep valley to the right (See g and h).
- 8 At the end of Dorton Wood follow the track that links with a surfaced road past Dorton Cottage and back to the Street (See i). Turn left to the car park (See j) and at this point you can either finish the walk or continue.
- 9 From the car park take the footpath signposted to the zigzag and follow this between a field and a woodland strip. Enter the Hanger at the gate (See k).
- 10 Selborne Hanger and Common is National Trust property. Ascend the zigzag path to the top and stop to admire the fine view (See l).
- 11 Follow the path leading off (right) behind the seat across the top of the wood to the open common.
- 12 At a junction of paths follow that to the right, along the edge of the wood. At the other end turn right, look out for a right turning at a blue NT waymark sign and end of field on left (See map). Continue along some distance to a T junction, turn left down a gully and left again to bottom of valley and Coneycroft field (See m).
- 13 At the end of Coneycroft follow waymarked path at the edge of the wood to Wood Lane and the northern part of Selborne (See n).
- 14 At road junction take the second left (no through road) to see one of the hollow lanes. Return to the new houses no the Grange Farm site and follow a footpath sign left along the edge of the development and into another hollow lane - Cow Lane - which is unsurfaced and gives the impression of lanes in White's time. Continue to the end and the B3006 (See o).
- 15 Cross the road and turn right and here you can either end the walk and continue along to the village centre or make another detour along the top of the Short Lythe.
- 16 Pass the road leading to Goslings Croft and at the end of the houses take a left footpath (by school sign) which leads along the top of the Short Lythe and descends to the path at the foot of the Short Lythe. Turn right back to the church.

Map

The walk is in a figure of eight and can be done in two parts. The first circuit is through the churchyard and Lythes to Priory Farm and back to the village through the beeches of Dorton Wood. This picks up the older part of Selborne's history: this section follows the valley and is on a level.

The second and more adventurous circuit is up the zigzag and along footpaths through Selborne Hanger and Common to Coneycroft and the northern end of the village.



Selborne street can be busy so take great care of the traffic. Selbourne Hanger is prone to be muddy in winter - stout waterproof footwear with good treads are advised.