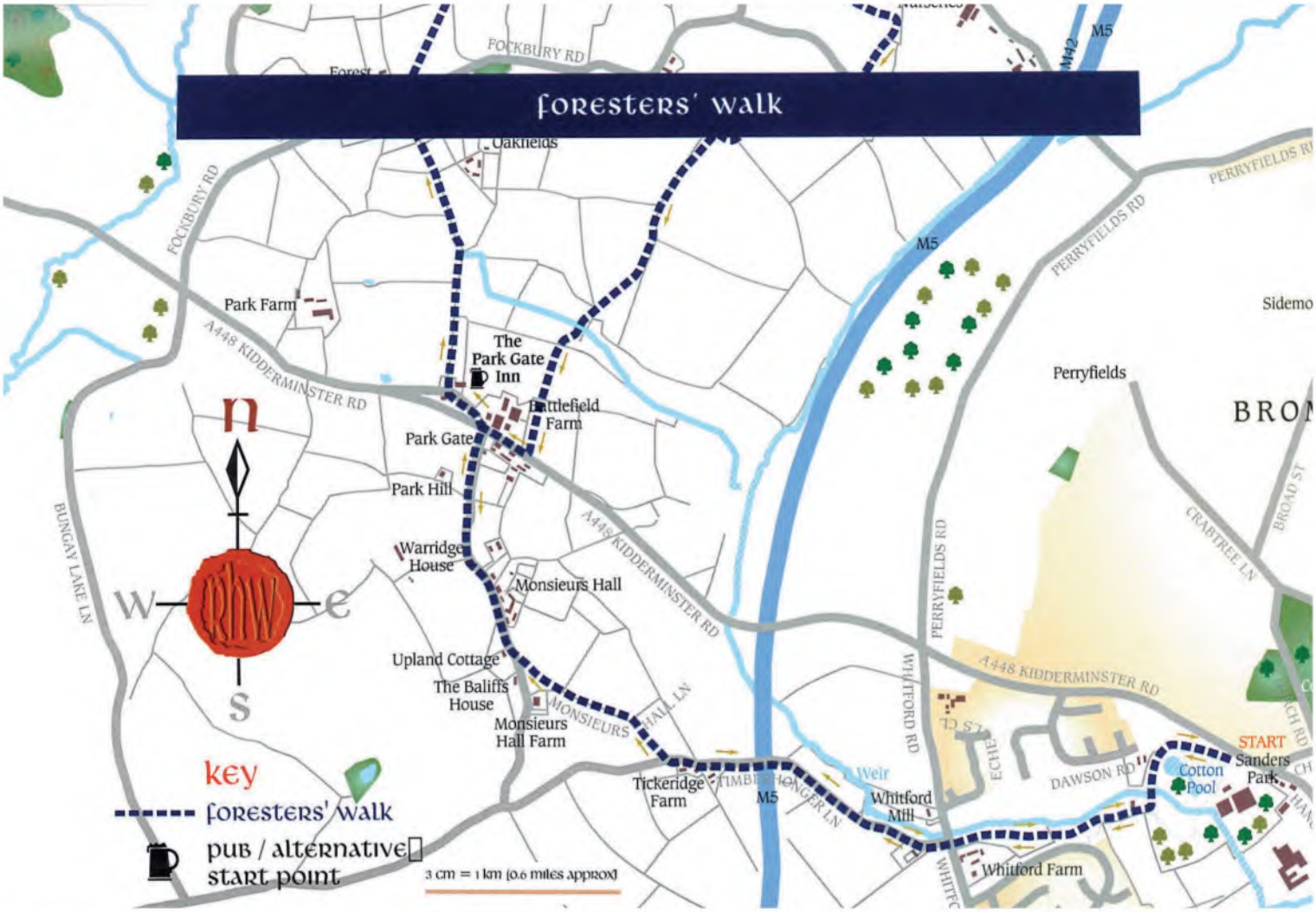
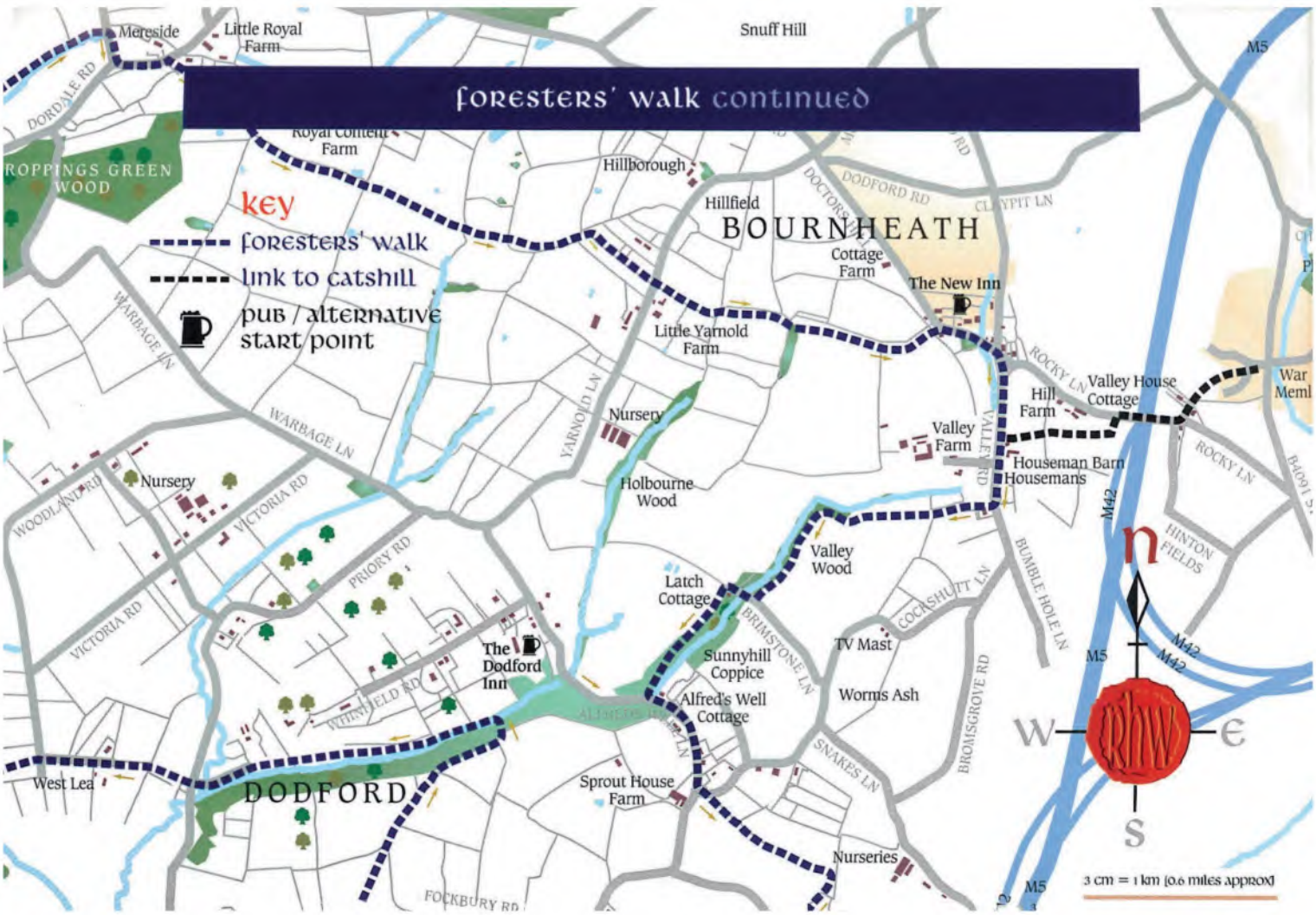
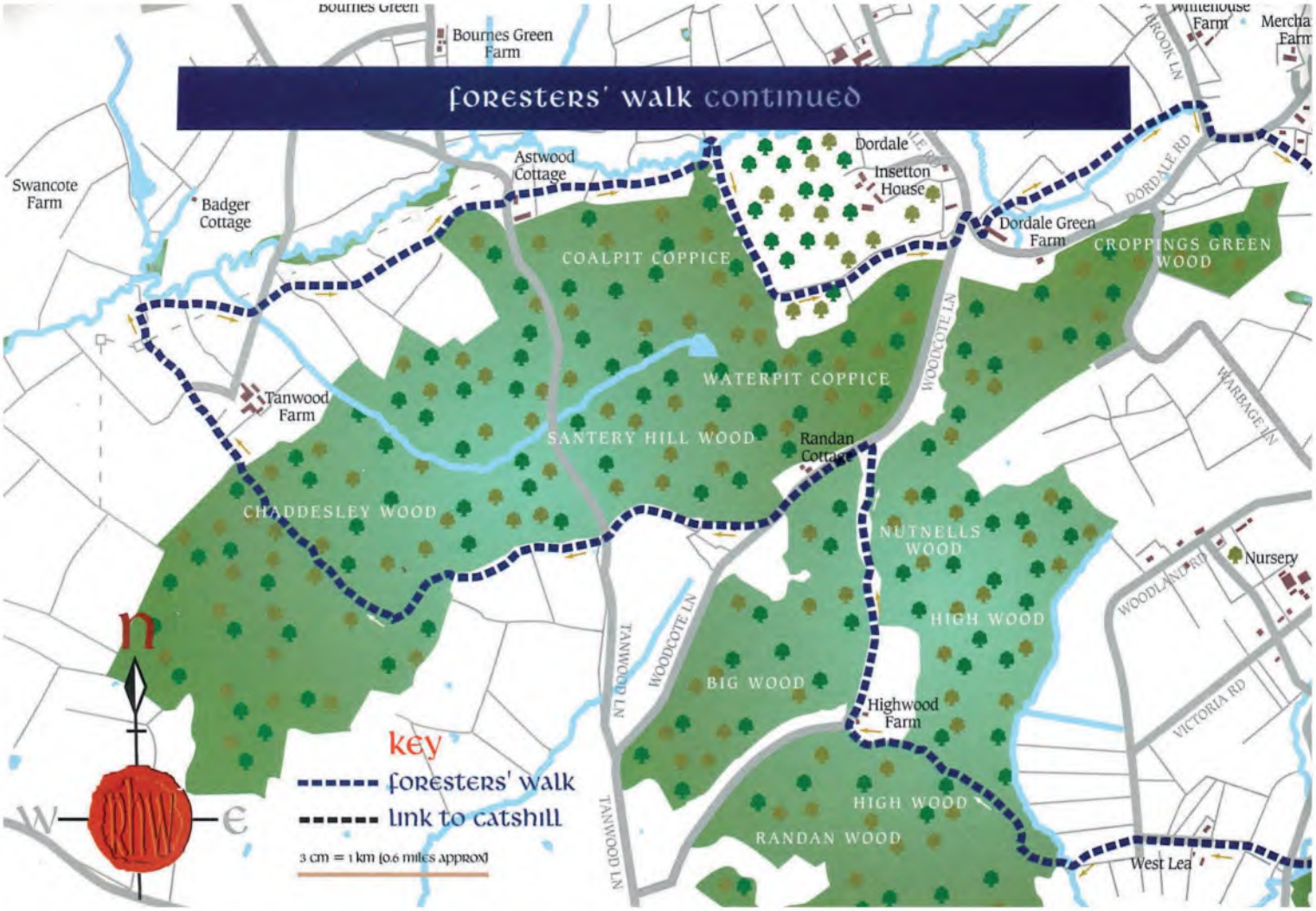
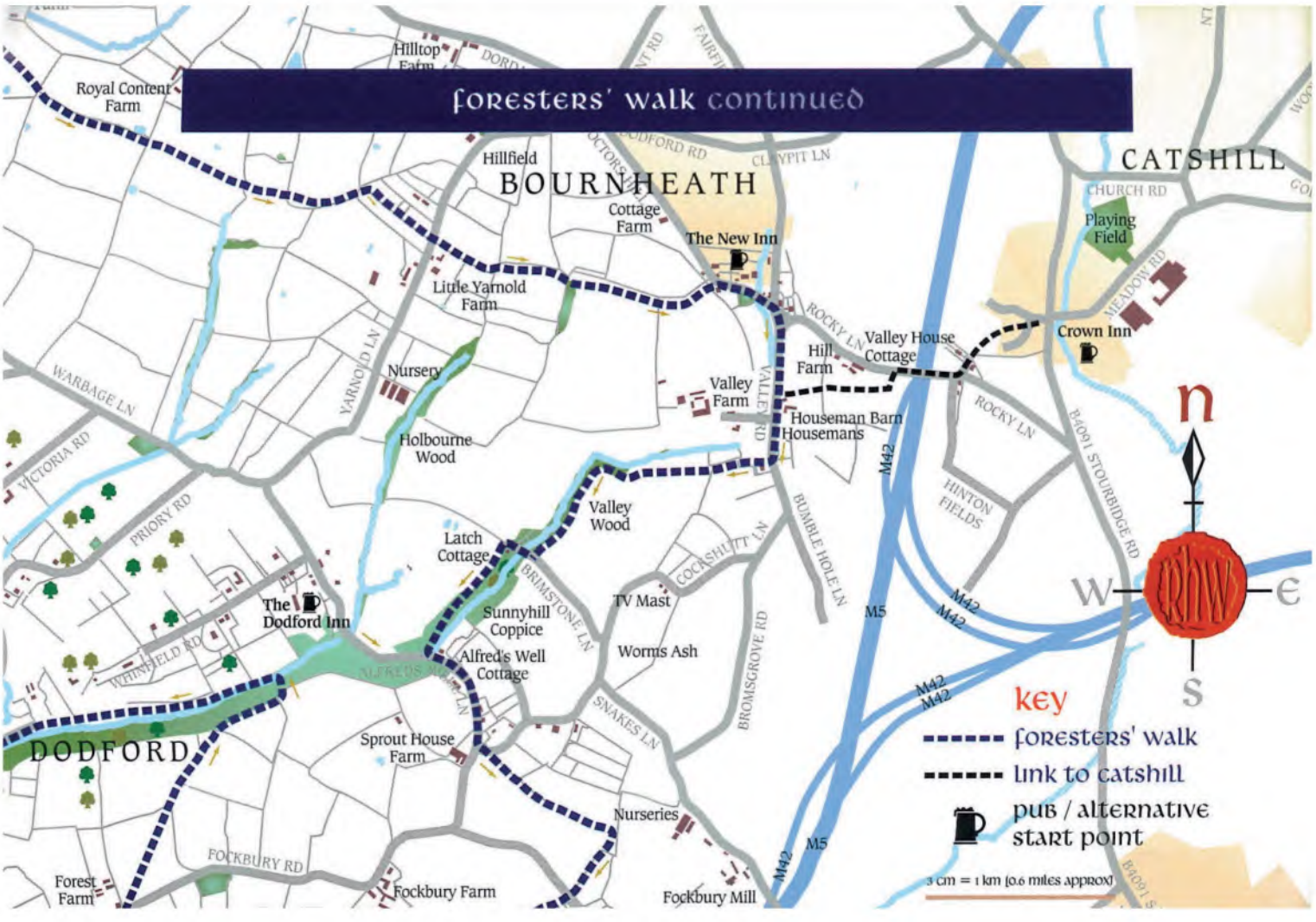

foresters' walk
FOCKBURY RD
Forest
Oakfields
M5
M42
PERRYFIELDS RD
Sidemo
Park Farm
A448 KIDDERMINSTER RD
The Park Gate Inn
Battlefield Farm
Park Gate
Park Hill
Perryfields
BRO
BUNGAY LAKE LN
Warridge House
Monsieurs Hall
CRABTREE LN
BROAD ST
Upland Cottage
The Baliffs House
Monsieurs Hall Farm
MONSIEURS HALL LN
WHITFORD RD
Tickeridge Farm
TIMBERHONGER LN
Weir
Whitford Mill
DAWSON RD
START
Sanders Park
Cotton Pool
Whitford Farm
key
foresters' walk
pub / alternative start point
3 cm = 1 km (0.6 miles approx)


foresters' walk continued
Mereside
Little Royal Farm
Snuff Hill
M5
DORDALE RD
Royal Content Farm
ROPPINGS GREEN WOOD
Hillborough
Hillfield
DODFORD RD
CLAYPIT LN
BOURNHEATH
Cottage Farm
The New Inn
key
foresters' walk
link to catshill
pub / alternative start point
WARBAGE LN
Little Yarnold Farm
ROCKY LN
Valley House Cottage
Hill Farm
War Meml
Nursery
YARNOLD LN
Valley Farm
Houseman Barn
Housemans
Nursery
WOODLAND RD
VICTORIA RD
Holbourne Wood
M42
HINTON FIELDS
PRIORY RD
Valley Wood
BUMBLE HOLE LN
Latch Cottage
COCKSHUTT LN
BRIMSTONE LN
TV Mast
The Dodford Inn
Sunnyhill Coppice
Worms Ash
WHINFIELD RD
Alfred's Well Cottage
BROMSGROVE RD
SNAKES LN
West Lea
DODFORD
Sprout House Farm
Nurseries
FOCKBURY RD
3 cm = 1 km (0.6 miles approx)


foresters' walk continued
Bournes Green
Bournes Green Farm
Swancote Farm
Badger Cottage
Astwood Cottage
Dordale
Insetton House
Dordale Green Farm
DORDALE RD
COALPIT COPPICE
CROPPINGS GREEN WOOD
WOODCOTE LN
WATERPIT COPPICE
Tanwood Farm
SANTERY HILL WOOD
Randan Cottage
WARBAGE LN
CHADDESLEY WOOD
NUTNELLS WOOD
Nursery
WOODLAND RD
HIGH WOOD
TANWOOD LN
BIG WOOD
Highwood Farm
VICTORIA RD
HIGH WOOD
RANDAN WOOD
West Lea
key
foresters' walk
link to catshill
3 cm = 1 km (0.6 miles approx)


foresters' walk continued
Royal Content Farm
Hilltop Farm
Hillfield
BOURNHEATH
Cottage Farm
The New Inn
CATSHILL
CHURCH RD
Playing Field
Little Yarnold Farm
ROCKY LN
Valley House Cottage
Crown Inn
Hill Farm
Nursery
Valley Farm
Houseman Barn
Housemans
WARBAGE LN
YARNOLD LN
VICTORIA RD
Holbourne Wood
ROCKY LN
B4091 STOURBRIDGE RD
PRIORY RD
Valley Wood
HINTON FIELDS
Latch Cottage
BRIMSTONE LN
COCKSHUTT LN
BUMBLE HOLE LN
M42
M5
The Dodford Inn
TV Mast
Sunnyhill Coppice
Worms Ash
Alfred's Well Cottage
BROMSGROVE RD
SNAKES LN
DODFORD
Sprout House Farm
Nurseries
FOCKBURY RD
Forest Farm
Fockbury Farm
Fockbury Mill
key
foresters' walk
link to catshill
pub / alternative start point
3 cm = 1 km (0.6 miles approx)

Foresters' Walk starting point: Sanders Park car park on the A448 Kidderminster Road. 12 miles (6-7 hrs)

The walk begins at the information board at the far end of the car park at Sanders Park, along Kidderminster Road in Bromsgrove. From the car park with the bandstand in front of you, turn right and follow the wide tarmac path to the play area. Turn right after the play area and loosely follow the stream, leaving the tarmac path to meet the road. (In the absence of roadside verges, take care against approaching traffic along this lane, which leads forward to pass beneath the M5 motorway).

Beyond the motorway continue until just past Tickeridge Farm you can leave the lane through a kissing gate on the right. Head up the ensuing field to a hedge corner, and through a field gate, keep forward along a rutted track through another field gate into the next field.

A kissing gate in the hedge gives onto a narrow lane. Turn right, and continue to the A448 at Park Gate. Bear left, crossing the road when it is safe to do so.

Bear left following a tarmac path which leads past the front of **The Park Gate Inn** public house. Turn right crossing the car park to a gate. Beyond this walk up the right-hand field edge.

Maintain the same direction across fields and paddocks, to a road (Fockbury Road). Cross the stile opposite, and in the ensuing field, head for a field gate in the far corner.

Beyond go through an area of rough and overgrown ground, and turn left into a lightly wooded area cloaking a steep embankment, with the path following its top edge as far as a flight of steps.

Turn down the steps, taking care crossing protruding tree roots, to a footbridge giving into rough grazing. **(Hedgelayers' Walk leaves Foresters' Walk here)** Immediately after the footbridge, turn left along the bottom of sloping pastures, roughly keeping a parallel course with a sluggish stream on the left.

The on-going route is clear through a succession of fields and gates leading eventually to a concrete driveway (Rose Lane) near Priory Cottage. Turn left and walk down the driveway to meet a road. At the road, the walk continues forward, but a brief diversion to Dodford church is worthwhile.

At the end of Rose Lane, cross to a gate opposite giving onto an enclosed path. Continue ahead, through a gate and go straight ahead, between substantial hedgerows. This leads up to a surfaced lane.

Keep forward along the lane, and when it bends right, leave it through a gate. In the ensuing field go forward to intercept a grassy path descending gently towards a footbridge. Over the bridge, keep right to a gate a short distance away. The gate gives into the edge of High Wood.

Part of the route through High Wood comprises ancient woodland, a woodland that has had continuous tree cover since at least AD1600. Before this date, planting of woodland was uncommon, suggesting that if a woodland was present in 1600, it was more than likely there for some time previously, and may be a remnant f the original wildwood that once covered most of Britain. The continuity of woodland cover provided a habitat for many plants and animals, and so ancient woodlands are often found to be rich in wildlife and to have undisturbed soil profiles and natural water features.

There are two types of ancient woodland; semi-natural ancient woodland, namely that which has been continuously wooded since 1600 and is comprised of native tree species which have not previously been planted, but which may well have been managed at some period during history; and replanted ancient woodland, which has been continuously wooded since 1600, but where the former tree cover has been replaced with planted trees such as conifers. This has generally taken place over the last 200 years.

Keep forward into the woodland on a clear path as far as a waymark post. Here, turn right. A clear path leads through the woodland, to its far side, and then bears left along its boundary, finally meeting a pronounced track. Turn right and cross a short stretch of rough ground to emerge on a rough lane near a redbrick cottage.

Keep right and walk past the cottage to the middle one of three gates giving onto an enclosed bridleway along a woodland edge. At the far end of the enclosed path, the walk goes into woodland once more, and along a stone track to a lane. **(Chartists' Walk leaves Foresters' Walk here)**

Emerging onto the road, turn left and follow it for about 300 yards. Leave the road on a track leading up to an isolated house called 'Randan'. Go past the house and alongside its garages to enter Chaddesley Wood National Nature Reserve.

Chaddesley Wood National Nature Reserve was once part of the extensive Royal Hunting Forest of Feckenham. The broadleaved part of the reserve is managed as a valuable remnant of ancient woodland with important species of plants, animals, birds and insects. There are areas of grassland which have retained their flower-rich plant communities, through traditional grazing management. The planted conifers are being felled to allow natural regeneration with native tree species.

Go forward into the woodland on a clear path that soon runs along the woodland boundary.

Oak trees dominate the woodland. Sessile oak (quercus petraea) is the main species where the soil is acidic, and the pendunculate oak (q.robur) on the loamy clays, although both species do often occur together. Where sessile oak is the dominant species, it is often associated with rowan and birch, with hazel and hawthorn forming the understorey, and bracken, bilberry and bluebell the principal ground cover.

The on-going track eventually descends into a holloway and continues to meet a road.

Holloways are simply a form of sunken lane, and may or not may not be especially ancient. Many are very deep and appear to have been cut through solid rock. One of the reasons why sunken lanes appear sunken, derives from the practice of throwing manure from the bottom of the lane onto the base of adjacent trees and hedges. As the hedgerows flourished, the lane, in effect, sank even more.

Cross the road and go through a kissing gate opposite, then ahead along the edge of a pasture following a woodland boundary that climbs gently. Towards the top of the climb another distinct, if brief, holloway is encountered on the right.

Beyond the top of the holloway, the walk continues to a kissing gate giving into Chaddesley Woods once more. Turn left along an agreeable woodland path flanked by beech, birch and scots pine.

Scots pine are beautifully hued trees that today are only natural in the British Isles in Scotland. At the end of the last Ice Age, about 10-11,000 years ago, Britain was largely treeless, but was still connected to continental Europe by dry land. As the climate became more suitable, trees and plants crossed into Britain. Birch formed the basis of the original wildwood, but this was ousted about 7500BC by a similar expansion of pine, and that followed by hazel, elm, oak and alder, all of which spread rapidly throughout Britain, except the far north of Scotland.

The path eventually forks, near a waymark post. Here branch right, following a clear path deeper into the woodland. At a cross-track, keep forward, now gradually descending and finally reaching the boundary of the woodland.

Go through a gate and forward down the edge of the ensuing field, passing through a kissing gate into the next. and keeping to the same direction to pass beneath overhead powerlines.

Before reaching the bottom of the field, turn right through a kissing gate. Keep forward along the bottom edge of a field, ignoring a footbridge on the left, and go through a hedge gap. Bear right to go back under the powerlines then across a bridge. Continue ahead and then through a kissing gate.

Cross the farm track and through a gate bear left to another gate at the foot of an electricity pylon. Bear half-right on a field path to a hedge gap from which cross the next field, then walk alongside a hedgerow. In a field corner go through a gate into scrubby woodland on a path that leads to another gate. Go forward along a field edge path before cutting across to a kissing gate beside a gate giving onto a lane.

Turn left, and just after passing a cottage boundary, turn right through a kissing gate and follow a grassy route across three fields. On the far side of the third field go through a kissing gate to re-enter Chaddesley Wood. Cross a nearby footbridge, but before reaching a second, turn right following a clear path into the corner of a field partially planted with young trees. Go forward along the right-hand boundary, passing a small pond edged with bulrushes.

As the field edge bends left, cross a bridge and turn left to follow a path beside a ditch. At the end of the ditch, go through a gate and continue along the left-hand edge of the ensuing field, alongside a substantial blackthorn hedge.

The path meets a lane. Turn left to a road junction with Dordale Road. Turn right onto the road for Catshill.

After 30 yards leave the road by turning left through a field gate at Dordale Green Farm. Bear left down a field edge and through two metal field gates beside a pond.

After the second gate, go forward into the next field and then aim for a stile in a hedge on the other side.

Cross the stile, the ditch immediately beyond, and then the next field before walking along a field edge to join a vehicle track leading out to a road. At the road turn right, and at a road junction a short way further on, turn left, once more into Dordale Road.

Walk for about 150 yards, then leave the road by turning right over a ditch crossing and through a kissing gate, just before farm buildings. Cross a small yard to a gate in the corner, and then head straight across the next large field to a gate. Into the next field, walk forward up the slope with a hedgerow on the left. At the top of the field, cross a bridleway, go forward through a kissing gate, and follow a hedgerow along the edge of two fields, passing through a kissing gate in between.

Through another kissing gate and over a board walk, head across the middle of the next two fields, passing through a gate in between. Cross the corner of the next field, passing through two kissing gates and turn right to follow the next field edge, through two more kissing gates to meet a lane.

Cross the lane and go through the kissing gate opposite. Continue forward along the right-hand field edge, then descend to a gate at the bottom of the field. Go up the left-hand edge of the next field to locate a kissing gate at the top, near a small pond. Go down the next field to join and follow a hedgerow brimming with holly .

Holly grows in profusion in this part of Worcestershire, often providing high and very substantial hedgerows. It is the only evergreen tree regularly found in hedgerows, and can grow to a height of 50 feet, although it is not deciduous - its leaves fall and are replaced throughout the year. The holly has two types of leaf, the familiar spiked leaf, which appears lower down on the tree to deter browsing animals, and leaves without spikes higher up. In early days, the young shoots of the holly were collected and dried to provide winter food for cattle. Indeed, wild animals had more than likely already discovered the nourishing properties of holly before it evolved its spiny leaves.

Early Christians commandeered the use of holly from an earlier pagan ritual, believing that it stopped demons from entering homes or sacred ground. The berries, of course, are popular at Christmas time, but they do not occur on all trees, as might be supposed. Holly trees have male and female flowers, although many trees are single-sexed. But if a female tree does not have a male tree close by, then there will be no berries.

There are numerous hedgerows throughout these walks, many of substantial age. Hedges were often used as parish boundaries, and they can be dated by using a simple formula developed by Dr Max Hooper. who studied hedges over many years as part of an investigation into the effects of pesticides on bird life. He determined that the most important factor in calculating the age of a hedgerow is the number of shrubs, i.e. those that would grow to become trees or strong bushes, found growing in it. His technique was to count the number of hardwood species -hawthorn, blackthorn, elder, holly, as horse chestnut, etc. - growing in a 30ft stretch of hedge, and to multiply by 100. One species put the hedge's age at 100 years, two at 200 years, and so on.

Go through a gate and follow the hedge to a field gate. Go through, onto a track to the lane. Turn right. Go down past **The New Inn**, and shortly tum right into Valley Road.

Link to Catshill joins here.

Continue for 300 yards, passing the birthplace of A.E Housman on the left, to a path on the right which goes past a bungalow to a kissing gate. Through a gate, go forward across a large undulating and trackless field aiming for steps which lead up to a kissing gate on the other side at the edge of Valley Wood.

The path keeps to the top edge of the woodland, and eventually emerges at a narrow lane. Turn right and walk to and past a cottage (The Latch) to gain steps beyond leading into woodland. Very soon, turn left up more steps to a kissing gate giving into the corner of a field. Go forward along the left-hand field edge, with woodland on the left, and substantial amounts of holly.

At a kissing gate on the left, cross into the top edge of the woodland, onto a gently descending path that comes out to meet the road at Alfred's Well Cottage. **(Hedgelayers' and Chartists' Walks join here)**

Turn left, passing Alfred's Well House and climb gently to a road junction. Turn left at Top of the Hill (signposted to Bournheath), and after 20 yards, turn right onto a sandy track along a field edge.

Follow the sandy track, which switches through a hedgerow, continuing right, along a field edge. At the bottom of the field, through a gate, turn immediately right and cross the corner of a field to a kissing gate.

Beyond the kissing gate, continue forward parallel with a fence on the right, to reach a kissing gate in a field corner giving onto a rough track. Cross the track and go through the gate opposite to gain the edge of an arable field. Walk left along the field boundary until the hedgerow abruptly changes direction.

Here, head straight across the field aiming for a gate about 100 yards left of distant metal barns. Go through a metal gate and turn right and walk towards the barns, to a waymark post. This indicates the direction of the route, left, aiming for three distant trees, across the next field, eventually reaching a waymark post at a gap at the hedge corner.

Go through the gap into the ensuing field, and forward along the left-hand field boundary. Continue to the end of a hedgerow on the left, and from it go forward towards farm buildings in the distance, to locate a kissing gate in the hedgerow on the far side of the field.

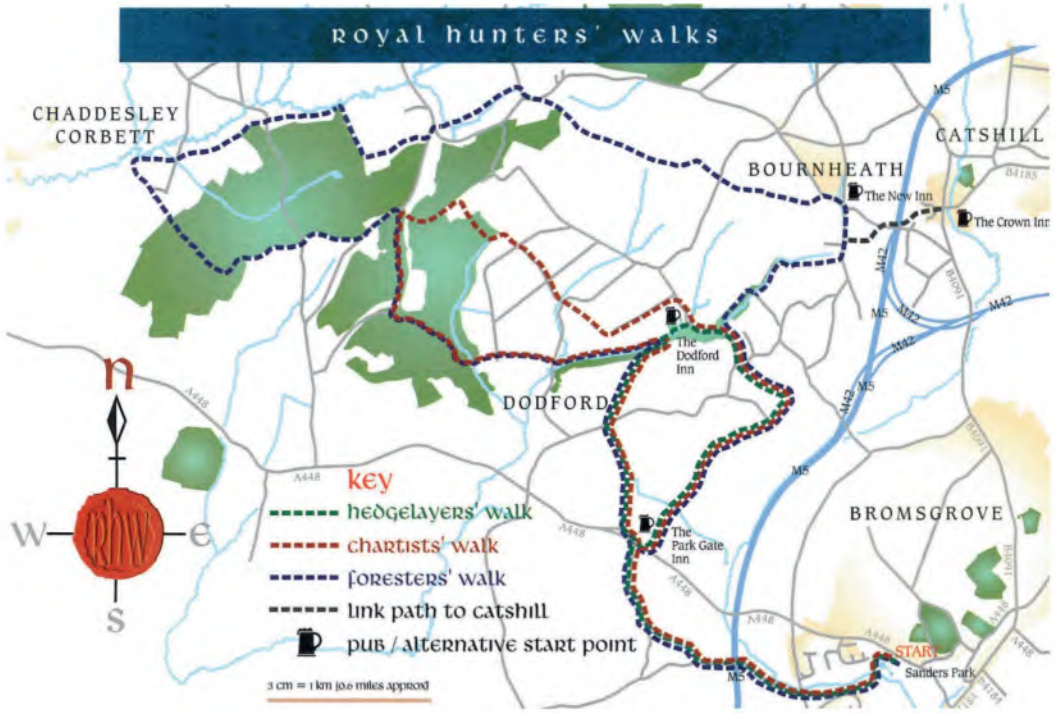
Through the kissing gate, cross a ditch crossing and keep left crossing fields to rejoin the A444 at Park Gate.

Turn right, past Battlefield Farm, and to return to Sanders Park, cross the A444 with care **(to return to start points other than Sanders Park do not cross the road but follow the tarmac path past the front of The Park Gate Inn)** to take the first turning on the left (Monsieurs Hall Lane), here joining the outward route.

Continue past Monsieurs Hall, and go down the lane until, opposite Upland Cottage, the walk returns through a kissing gate, right along a track and through a gate into the next field.

Now simply continue to retrace the outward route to Sanders Park.

To find out more info about the Royal Hunters' Walks, please visit www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



worcestershire county council

Bromsgrove District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk