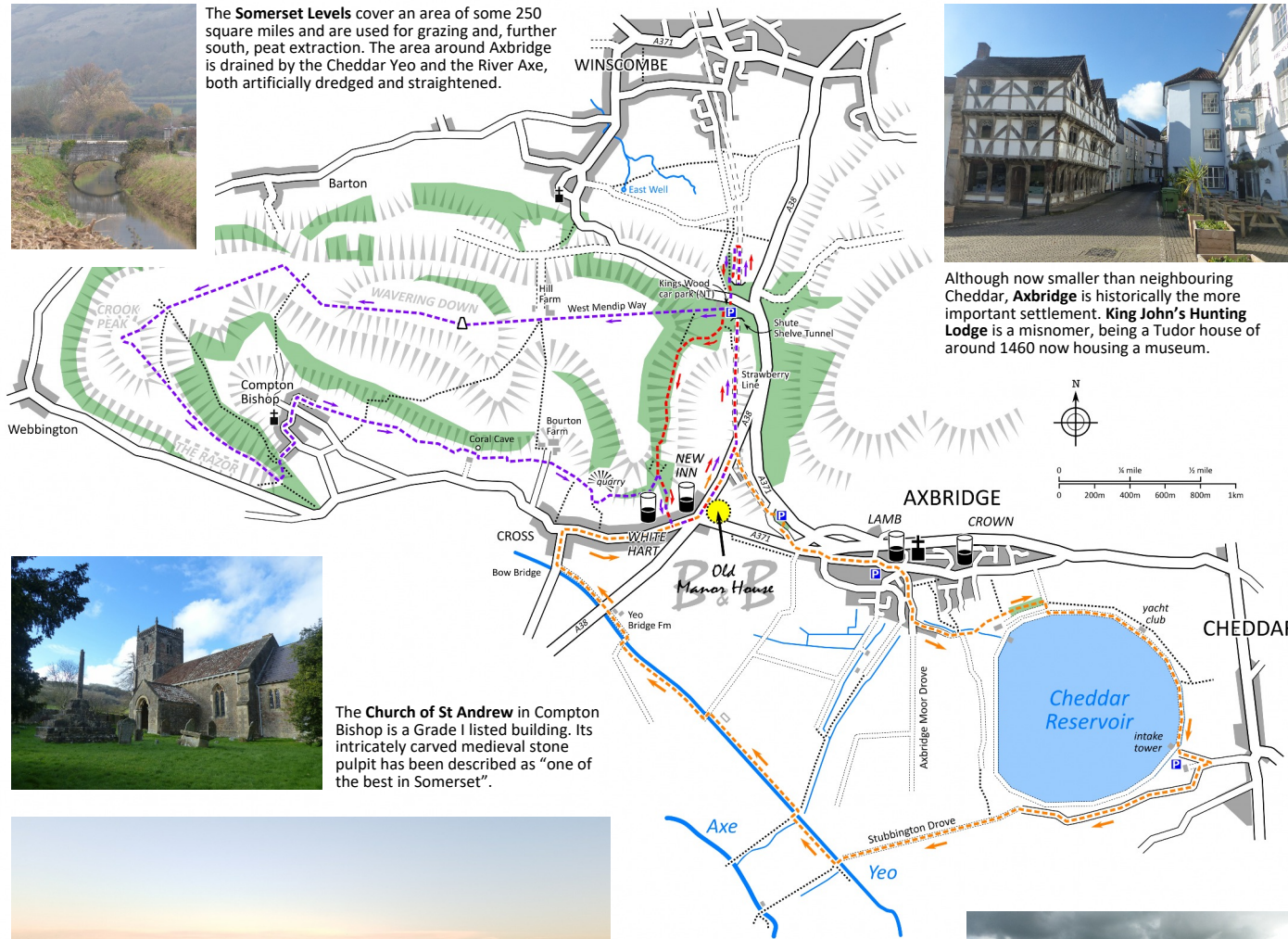




The **Somerset Levels** cover an area of some 250 square miles and are used for grazing and, further south, peat extraction. The area around Axbridge is drained by the Cheddar Yeo and the River Axe, both artificially dredged and straightened.



The **Church of St Andrew** in Compton Bishop is a Grade I listed building. Its intricately carved medieval stone pulpit has been described as "one of the best in Somerset".



The views from **Wavering Down** and **Crook Peak** are spectacular, extending over the Levels to Cheddar Reservoir, Glastonbury Tor and Brent Knoll.

Cheddar Reservoir was completed in 1937 and has a surface area of 260 acres. It is an important wildlife site, particularly for wintering wildfowl and gulls, including storm-blown rarities.



Although now smaller than neighbouring Cheddar, **Axbridge** is historically the more important settlement. **King John's Hunting Lodge** is a misnomer, being a Tudor house of around 1460 now housing a museum.

THREE WALKS FROM THE

Old Manor House & B



KING'S WOOD
2¼ MILES: FAIRLY EASY
A disused railway and tunnel, a local nature reserve with orchids and ancient trees, and a wooded return.

AXBRIDGE & CHEDDAR RESERVOIR
6½ MILES: MODERATE
Visit our historic local town, returning via a bird-rich reservoir and a section of the atmospheric Somerset Levels.

CROOK PEAK & COMPTON BISHOP
6 MILES: FAIRLY STRENUOUS
Superb views from a rocky hilltop, returning via a pretty village and a path below the Mendip ridge.

THE OLD MANOR HOUSE

Cross Lane, Cross, nr Axbridge, Somerset BS26 2ED
tel +44(0)1934 709542
website www.oldmanorhouse.net

- Free Wifi
- Free Parking
- Non-Smoking
- Family Rooms

KING'S WOOD

2¼ MILES: FAIRLY EASY

Allow 1–2 hours. Some road-walking to start, and the tunnel (180 metres) is unlit but can be bypassed. The wooded return path may be muddy and uneven in places.

- 1 From the Old Manor House entrance, turn right and right again along the A38 in the Bristol direction, along the right-hand pavement.
- 2 After quarter of a mile, cross the entrance to Wavering Down Rise and continue to a bus stop.
- 3 Cross the main road at the traffic island, turn briefly right on the other pavement, then turn left onto the Strawberry Line.
- 4 Follow the former railway for half a mile, at which point the Trail passes through Shute Shelve tunnel (180 metres). (A couple of hundred yards before the tunnel is a signposted shortcut on the left to King's Wood car park – if you take this, turn left at the top to a gate and skip to step 11).
- 5 Beyond the tunnel, continue for 250 yards then turn left off the Trail up some steps into Slader's Leigh Local Nature Reserve.
- 6 After a kissing gate, turn left along the path along the left-hand edge of the reserve.
- 7 Beyond the old lime trees at the top, bear right through a gate to a sunken track.
- 8 Turn left and walk up the track, crossing the road into King's Wood car park.
- 9 Exit the car park via the gate on the right and turn immediately left.
- 10 At the junction with a path up from the Strawberry Trail, keep right to a gate within the wood.
- 11 Follow the main path into the wood, bearing right and climbing a little before descending and bearing left back to the lower edge of the wood.
- 12 Continue along the bottom of the wood to a gate in a fence and follow the blue waymark, still along the forest edge.
- 13 The path climbs beside the mossy remains of a wall then enters a more open, scrubby area as it starts to descend. Ignore paths to right and left until you reach a wooden hand-gate in a corner.
- 14 Follow the rough path beyond down to the road in Cross village.
- 15 Turn left past the New Inn back to the Old Manor House.

AXBRIDGE & CHEDDAR RESERVOIR

6½ MILES: MODERATE

Allow 3–4 hours plus sightseeing time in Axbridge. Paths on the Levels may be muddy (or even impassably flooded) after rain.

- 1 From the Old Manor House entrance, turn right and right again along the A38 in the Bristol direction, along the right-hand pavement.
- 2 After quarter of a mile, cross the entrance to Wavering Down Rise.
- 3 Just beyond a bus stop, turn right onto the Strawberry Line and follow it for quarter of a mile, with views over the Levels, until you meet another road.
- 4 Cross into the car park opposite and walk to the end where, beyond some boulders, a narrow path drops into the trees on your right descending past a shallow rock shelter to the road.
- 5 Turn left and walk down to a junction.
- 6 Turn left to a crossing point at the end of a railing, cross over both roads to a bus stop, then turn left.
- 7 Follow West Street past Compton House and then between pastel-painted cottages and past Axbridge Methodist Church to the dramatic King John's Hunting Lodge and the Square in the centre of Axbridge.
- 8 Having explored the town and visited the church, leave via Moorland Street, passing the Almshouse Tea Shop. Pass a school on the right and then the former police station (renamed Peelers Court).
- 9 Beyond the entrance to Bailiffs Close, turn left by Moorland Farm.
- 10 Pass Walnut Farm on your right then, when the track bends right, go through the gate straight ahead, heading initially towards the embankment of Cheddar Reservoir.
- 11 Shortly, go through a gate on the left, crossing a drain, and head half-right across the field, close to the right-hand edge.
- 12 A metal gate leads into a strip of woodland, then through a kissing gate into a reservoir access road.
- 13 Turn right and walk up the road to overlook the reservoir.
- 14 Turn left and follow the reservoir perimeter, passing the yacht club, until you reach the intake tower.
- 15 Leave the reservoir here, following the access road past a car park on your right.
- 16 After a set of metal gates, turn hard right into a narrow hedged lane that bends left past the entrance to a business premises, then curves right to run parallel to and below the reservoir embankment.
- 17 The tarmac ends at a parking area, where you turn left, away from the reservoir, onto a rough track (Stubbington Drove).
- 18 After a straight half-mile, the track reaches the Cheddar Yeo, which you cross over a farm bridge.
- 19 Turn right and follow the drain to a gate, continuing beyond it past a pipeline bridge.
- 20 After a double gate, cross the Yeo via a footbridge and turn left, now with the drain on your left.
- 21 Beyond a derelict brick building, turn left over a concrete bridge to return to the left-hand bank of the Yeo.
- 22 Turn right through a metal kissing gate and follow the river to another kissing gate into a farm drive, where you cross the river again.
- 23 Bear left and walk out to the road past Yeo Bridge Farm and its mobile homes.
- 24 Cross the main road carefully and follow the track opposite, still alongside the Yeo.
- 25 At Bow Bridge, turn right and walk along the road into Cross.
- 26 Turn right at the T-junction along the Old Coach Road and walk back through the village, passing the White Hart and New Inn en route back to the Old Manor House.

CROOK PEAK & COMPTON BISHOP

6 MILES: FAIRLY STRENUOUS

Allow 3–4 hours. A couple of steep climbs, and some sections may be muddy after rain, and rocky in places. There are several stiles.

Follow steps 1–8 of the **King's Wood** walk to the car park.

- 9 Exit the car park by the gate into the woods, with the cottage on your right, and follow the West Mendip Way path straight ahead, parallel to a wall on your right and ignoring any paths off to the left. Pass a large house behind the wall on your right.
- 10 The slope eases as you leave the woods, continuing along the wall to pass Hill Farm.
- 11 Climb quite steeply to the trig point on Wavering Down, the highest point of the walk at 211 metres.
- 12 Return to the path along the wall, before descending past an inscribed stone bench and bearing right to a saddle where a path crosses.
- 13 Sticking to the main ridge, climb slightly (Compton Hill) and descend to a second saddle, before the final climb to Crook Peak.
- 14 You can either scramble directly up the low rock face to the summit or walk below the limestone crag and then double back left to the top.
- 15 Either way, after taking in the magnificent views from the summit, set off down the broad ridge known as the Razor, with the church and village of Compton Bishop below and to your left.
- 16 Pass through a gap in a fence then turn hard left into the trees on a descending path.
- 17 When you reach the wall at the bottom of the wood, bear left and take the lower, right-hand path, hard against the wall. This leads to a gate and out to the end of a driveway by Glebe House.
- 18 Walk out to the road and turn left past the Manor House.
- 19 At the church, turn right along Church Lane, which curves to the left below the churchyard wall to a road junction.
- 20 Turn right then immediately left into a driveway with a public footpath sign.
- 21 Follow the driveway when it bends right and continue to the last house, beyond which a stile leads into fields.
- 22 Follow the hedge on your right past a series of gates and stiles.
- 23 Beyond a water trough, keep to the left of a gap, still with the hedge on your right-hand side as you approach a house.
- 24 Bear left around the garden and then go over a stile and walk along a narrow field before descending to a stile into the lane below Bourton Farm.
- 25 Pick up the continuing path opposite and proceed in similar vein, with a field boundary on your right, until you cross a field to a gate into a disused quarry.
- 26 Continue ahead, with the quarry faces away to your left; ignore a path heading off to the right, instead climbing alongside the wall on the far side of the quarry.
- 27 Follow the path round to the right, along a contour across alternating rocky, grassy and scrubby slopes.
- 28 Eventually the path descends through trees and meets a path at a crossing point.
- 29 Turn right and follow the path to a hand-gate in a corner.
- 30 Beyond the gate, descend steeply to the road in Cross village.
- 31 Turn left, passing the New Inn on your return to the Old Manor House.

USEFUL LOCAL NUMBERS



New Inn

Cross
01934 732455



Lamb

Axbridge
01934 732253



Crown

Axbridge
01934 732518



Oak House

Axbridge
01934 732444



Swan

Wedmore
01934 710337



Almshouse Tearooms

Axbridge
01934 733720

DJB Taxi 07555 475787



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