

Aynho – Upper Aynho Grounds – Croughton - Aynho

Leave the village by the path opposite Portway which passes between two high stone walls and continue across the low stile, down the field and through the kissing gate at the bottom. Walk up the sharp rise in the next field aiming for the white disk you can just see over the top of the hill. You will soon reach another kissing gate. Pass through this and continue in the same direction downhill on a concrete road with the field fence on your right. Go through the wood and cross the stream. You are now in Oxfordshire.

Cross the stile ahead and turn diagonally left across the field to a metal gate. You will have to climb over this as it is almost always locked. Once over the stream you are back in Northants. Climb the hill in front of you to another kissing gate and then shortly ahead is the road. This



is the B4100 and is very dangerous at this point so cross it with care and continue along the drive of Upper Aynho Grounds.

A number of corporate events are held at the building complex at the end of the drive so look out for traffic on the narrow lane. Follow this lane round to the left and into the farmyard. Cross this and take a sharp left turn down a track immediately after leaving the farmyard. The track leads down through a field to a wood beyond.

Enter the wood and continue downhill in the same direction. There is a gate at the bottom just beyond the stream. Pass round this and follow the path through the woods up the hill. This part of the path is marshy almost all year round so you may have to tread with care. As the hill

begins to level out you need to bear right at a junction. The gate at the end of the wood now appears ahead.

Once through the gate walk up the slope diagonally left towards the far corner of the meadow. In summer you are likely to pass through the prize herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle. This is the Warren Farm herd which has been reared for over 100 years. In the far corner is a metal gate and once through it you can turn left or right. A left turn takes you down through a paddock and a derelict small holding to the Croughton Road.

This walk turns right, however, and keeping the hedge on your right descend the slope to the gate at the bottom which emerges onto the gravelled track known as Mill Lane. Turn left and follow the track towards the ford. Cross the footbridge by the ford and walk up the lane until you come to a stone stile at the top of some steps on your right. Cross this stile and follow this footpath.

The path passes between hedges and through an old iron kissing gate and crosses a stile into an open field. There is a derelict farm building on your right and a wall on your left. Beyond the wall the path continues across an open field and the squat tower of Croughton church can be seen beyond. Half way across this field turn left and aim for the point where the wall curves round. This is difficult to see from the path.

The path but becomes clearer as you approach. The green footpath sign by the wall should help. The stile is actually against the house wall and once across it you emerge from the drive into the centre of Croughton village. Refreshment is available at The Blackbird if your timing is right.

To continue the walk cross the road and follow the footpath opposite through the housing estate and then between houses and the village hall and tennis courts. At the end of the tennis court field the path curves round to the left and enters the open field. It takes you down hill along the field edge and over a wooden bridge into the next field. At the end of this next field cross another wooden bridge and climb up through a small spinney into another large open field. Cross this diagonally and pass through a gate onto a single track road.



Turn right onto the road and follow it round to the junction with the Charlton Road. This is known as cut throat corner after a murder committed here many years ago. Bear left and follow the Charlton road back to Aynho. If you become fed up with walking on the road turn left at the signpost and right onto the footpath across the two fields to Portway. You can return to the Square either through the Black Path or along the main road.



The path through to the main road in Croughton