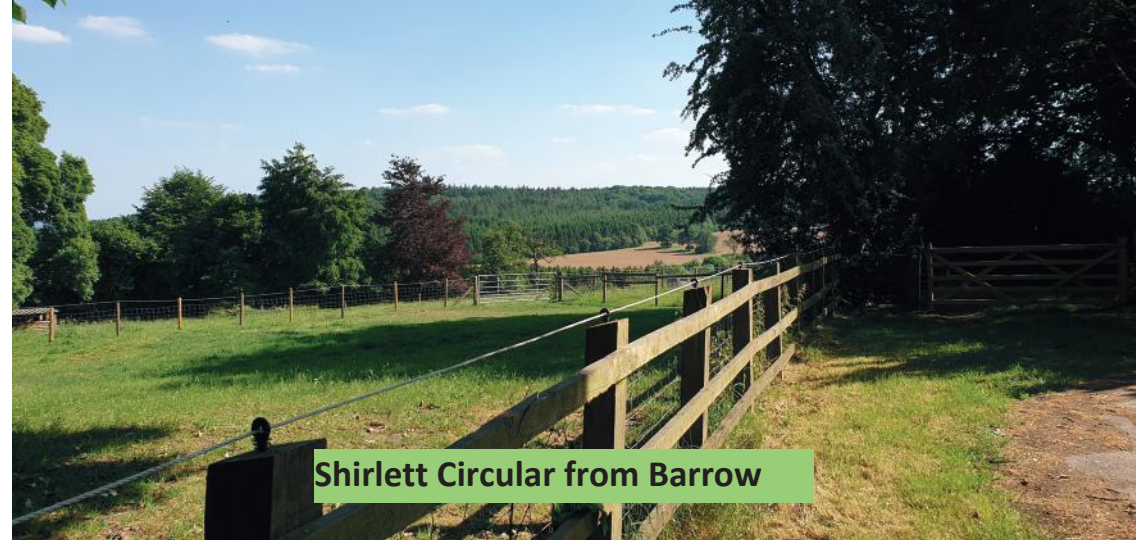


MAP: Shirlett from Barrow 2.5 Mile Circular Walk (purple route)



Broseley, Posenhall, Barrow, Shirlett & Wyke Circular 10 Mile Walk (red route plus purple route).



Shirlett Circular from Barrow

2.5 miles / 4 km: a walk along bridleways, past woods and across fields, plus a stretch of quiet road. 8 stiles. Vertical gain 328 ft / 100m

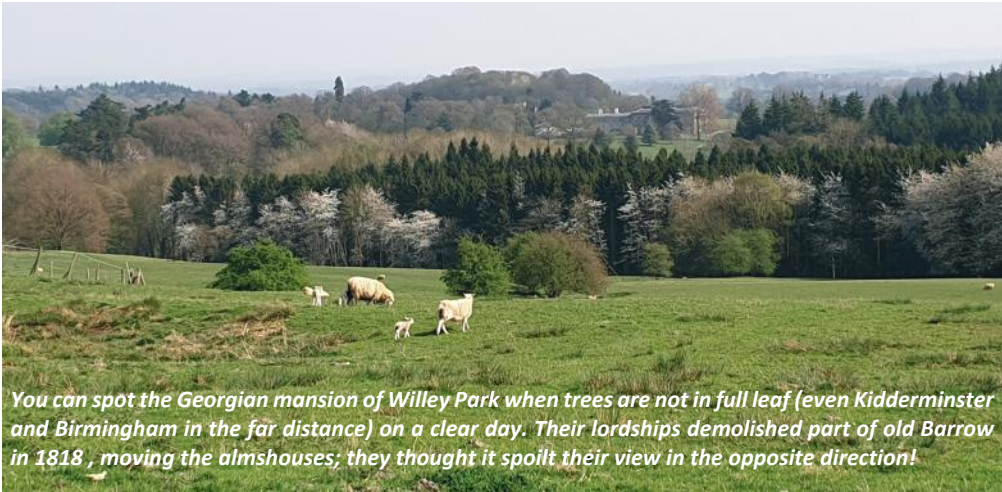
This is a bit of a 'fun walk', not without its challenges, including finding your way across ploughed fields, streams in hidden dingles, with overgrown vegetation in high summer (don't wear shorts!) and a couple of rickety bridges. There are many stiles. Much of the walk is on bridleways which can get churned up at wet times by hooves. It's one walk where boots are recommended unless in dry summer weather. However, the rewards are beautiful views across the Willey Park estate and beyond, there's lots of variety and a real sense of being away from it all, it's a treat for the soul.

This walk is an extension to the Posenhall, Barrow and Wyke circular which you can start either from Broseley or Benthall Hall, this is the route which is shown in red on the map at the end of this chapter. The whole of this longer route is fully described in the walk directions for the Posenhall to Wyke Circular and the Posenhall to Barrow Walks. If you want to continue to Wyke, or return via Posenhall, stay on the Jack Mytton Way after you come back to Barrow at the end of this walk.

① Barrow to Shirlett 1.1 miles / 1.8 km

If you are starting this walk as part of the long Posenhall, Barrow and Wyke circular from Broseley, by now you could probably do with a break and a sit down! A visit to Barrow Church is recommended, there is a bench outside the church door and a wall to sit on, so a perfect packed lunch/ snack stop. If you are starting and finishing the short Shirlett walk from here there is limited parking next to the church (there is a sign on the wall about parking at your own risk, access is needed for farm vehicles at all times here so please park with consideration and if the space is occupied you may have to choose another occasion.) Walk along the track between the church and church yard towards a 5 bar gate, which is the start of the route.

The track becomes a path downhill between cottages on one side and woods on the other. (In about 250m you'll see a stile on your left and an overgrown path beyond. If you are feeling brave and want to see a view of the stately home of Willey Park, the only one visible from any public path, take this route and follow the hedge line downhill to meet a track, climb the stiles and go straight on.) Otherwise, if blocked, carry on downhill towards where the path meets a track, turn left and walk 50m to where the other footpath meets this same track, turn right over a stile into a wooded dingle, go slight right down a steep bank to cross a shallow stream over a daunting looking narrow plank bridge. Climb the bank the other side and emerge into a field.



You can spot the Georgian mansion of Willey Park when trees are not in full leaf (even Kidderminster and Birmingham in the far distance) on a clear day. Their lordships demolished part of old Barrow in 1818, moving the almshouses; they thought it spoilt their view in the opposite direction!

Head in the same direction as the path you have just come up, just over the brow of a small hill you will see a footpath signpost and stile into another wooded dingle with steps and a narrow wood bridge over a stream, clamber up the bank over a stile into another field. Here the right of way goes diagonally slight right across the field but is often not reinstated after ploughing and cropping, if obstructed another option may be to follow a line of trees in front of you to the hedge opposite around another woodland area. You may get views of Barrow on the hill behind you. Don't enter the wood but turn right and follow the hedge until it turns sharp right near the field corner, where you should spot a gap in the hedge and a footpath sign, turn left through the gap into a meadow and follow the hedge on your left, walk uphill to a cottage on the outskirts of Shirlett.

Narrow single plank bridges with no hand rails are an interesting feature on this walk!



② Through Shirlett to the Jack Mytton Way 0.5 miles / 0.7km

Go through a 5 bar gate and turn left around the edge of the cottage garden. After a few metres you meet a lane, turn right. You are now in the hamlet of Shirlett, which is so small that the houses are numbered Shirlett 1, Shirlett 2 etc rather than use road names. There is a post box though! It was a more important place in the past. There was mining and ironworking in the Middle Ages, and up to the 19th century, and "In 1784 it was said that 82 cottages had been erected in Shirlett since 1625". A little further on was the Tuberculosis Sanatorium which closed in 1961. You have excellent views: the Windmill above Much Wenlock, The Wrekin and the Welsh hills beyond. At the cross roads there is a bench to sit on and admire the views over a snack break, and a parish notice board, though there isn't usually a lot to read. Turn right and walk down the road for 500m. Just after a bend in the road you'll see a broad verge on the right and a signpost for The Jack Mytton Way. There's a lovely display of wild primroses here in springtime. Turn right to leave the road here, then go immediately left, following the bridleway alongside the hedge.



The verge where you leave the road to follow the Jack Mytton Way near Shirlett

③ Along the Jack Mytton Way to Barrow 0.9 miles / 1.4km

At the end of the hedge, go straight across a field, it is arable so may be ploughed or have a crop in it, so the way may not be clear as the path is not marked, but head straight for the gate opposite. The next field is a meadow and the route is marked by a double row of trees. The ground between the trees becomes a wide trench which could be the remains of an old road. Go through another gate and you are now back to rejoin the path that leads to Barrow. Turn left and climb up the hill towards Barrow church and return to the start of this circular walk. If you want to carry on to Wyke you cross the B road and continue on The Jack Mytton Way, it goes through a gap in the hedge, almost directly opposite.