

The third and final part in our series of walks focuses on the Orchardleigh Estate

Simply beautiful



THIS SPRING a guidebook written by a Frome couple and featuring local walks will be published.

John and Veronica Price have established Wayshead Publishing at their home in Cheddar Close and have already published a book of walks around

Partmouth.

and the South Downs.

This latest book will feature 30 walks over a 30-mile radius, for cycle rider and children's treasure hunts in and around the Bath and Bristol area.

This week the Somerset Standard volunteered to try one of the walks in the Frome area.

The walk picked was around the beautiful Orchardleigh estate and spanned 4.4 miles of fairly easy walking.

The guinea pigs were photographer Will Nicol, a seasoned walker, and reporter Caroline Wood (not quite so seasoned).

The walk passed the test with flying



SCENIC: St Mary's Church in Orchardleigh is one of the highlights of the walk.

ME73023

colours. John and Veronica Price supplied clear directions taking their walkers through some beautiful and varied countryside.

The added snippets of information given by the couple made the walk a fascinating historical journey as well as a joy to anyone who enjoys walking.

The walk around the historic Orchardleigh Park may be familiar to some but it is still a relatively secret jewel in the Somerset countryside.

Scuffing through a carpet of beech leaves under a blue, winter sky surrounded by interesting wildlife is a real pleasure.

This walk starts from the Farmers Arms at Spring Gardens and takes you

across fields scattered with sheep as redwings overhead pluck at the berries in the nearby farmhouse garden.

At this time of year any walk is muddy so wellington boots or stout walking shoes are essential.

Orchardleigh is a magical place and this walk gives you intriguing glimpses of the estate house which is how one envisages Daphne de Maurier's Manderley.

During our walk, which John and Veronica Price accurately describe as "moderate", we spotted a lone heron, pheasants, swans, ducks and a buzzard circling overhead.

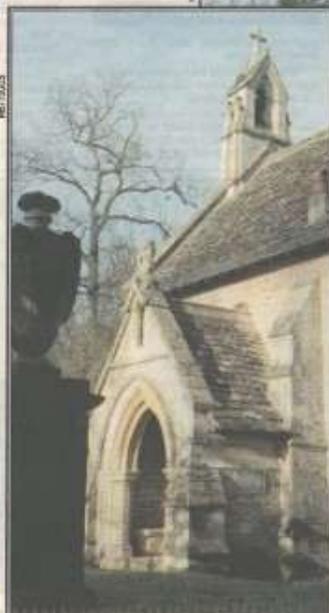
The walk is varied, taking you across farmland, through woods, across bridges and around the parkland lakes.

The architecture is interesting too, passing several of the estate lodges.

The walk includes the church on the island, St Mary's Church, which must be one of the most peaceful places in the world where the men and women who lived in Orchardleigh are now laid to rest, their graves overlooking the tranquil lake.

Towards the end of the walk the parkland still bears the scars from the bulldozers which ripped up the landscape to lay a golf course which was eventually abandoned.

Then the countryside is restored to a glorious green as the walk sweeps down towards a bridge across the Meis River and the end of a lovely walk.



ME73023

ME73023