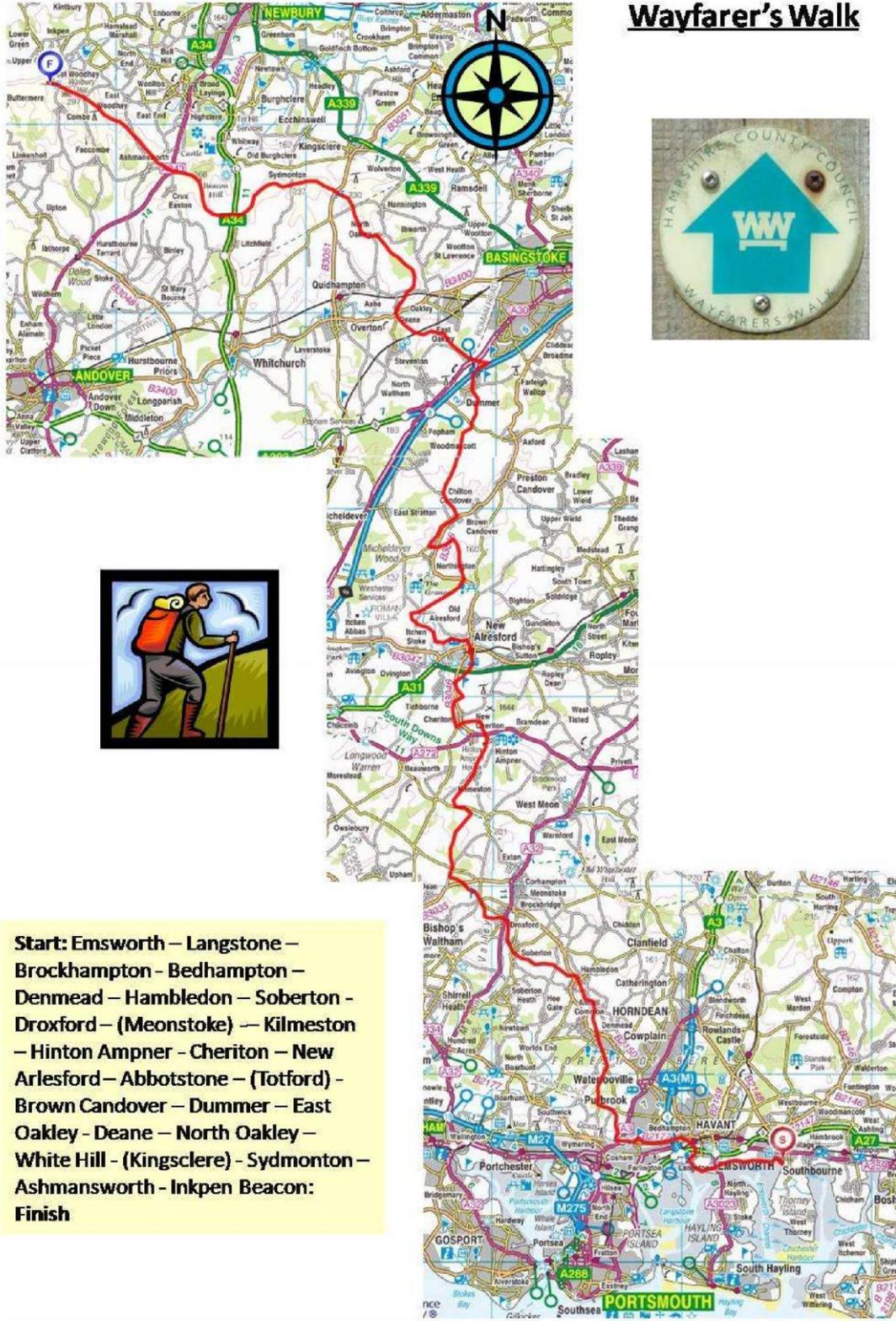


The Wayfarer's Walk: A 70-mile Walk Through Hampshire

Ben Bennetts
April 24, 2010



Wayfarer's Walk



Start: Emsworth – Langstone – Brockhampton - Bedhampton – Denmead – Hambledon – Soberton - Droxford – (Meonstoke) – Kilmeston – Hinton Ampner - Cheriton – New Arlesford – Abbotstone – (Totford) – Brown Candover – Dummer – East Oakley - Deane – North Oakley – White Hill - (Kingsclere) - Sydmonton – Ashmansworth - Inkpen Beacon: Finish

The Wayfarer's Walk

Introduction to the Wayfarer's Walk



The *Wayfarer's Walk* starts in Emsworth on the south coast of Hampshire and proceeds north/north-west the full length of Hampshire to finish at Combe Gibbet on Inkpen Beacon, also known as Inkpen Hill, just over the Berkshire border. The walk was initiated in 1981 by Bill Bide, Principal Officer for Rights of Way in Hampshire. The trail is 70 miles long and takes in towns, villages, wooded and open chalk-and-flint pathways, some road walking, walks by the side of rivers, and gentle slopes up and down the Hampshire pastures. The *Wayfarer's Walk* can be walked in 4 full days if attempting a multi-day long-distance walk or in 8 half-day segments of between 6 and 13 miles per segment. The description in this brochure is from Emsworth to Inkpen Beacon with the sun mostly behind you and the prevailing westerly wind, if present, on your left shoulder. The trail shares, in parts, the Solent Way and the South Downs Way, crosses the Itchen Way and terminates at the intersection with the Test Way on top of Inkpen Beacon.

In parts, the *Wayfarer's Walk* is based on old tracks that were used by farmers to drive their sheep to animal fairs held in New Arlesford (on the trail) and Farnham (off the trail) and is well waymarked by the distinctive green (but sometimes blue) *Wayfarer's Walk* waymark. The trail is characterized by chalk-and-flint pathways, grassy downs and fields mostly used for growing cereal or vegetables, or for grazing cows and sheep. Walkers will pass through beech groves, some oak, downs scrub and may catch sight of a variety of wild animals: rabbits and hares, pheasants (in season and including the almost-black melanistic mutant variety close to Inkpen Beacon), deer, squirrels, and, although not wild, alpacas. There is also a variety of birds including buzzards, sparrow hawks, oyster catchers (by the coast) and skylarks.

Outline of the Route

Start: Emsworth – Langstone – Brockhampton - Bedhampton – Denmead – Hambledon – Soberton - Droxford – (Meonstoke, for overnight accommodation) – Kilmeston – Hinton Ampner - Cheriton – New Arlesford – Abbotstone – (Totford, for overnight accommodation) - Brown Candover – Dummer – East Oakley - Deane – North Oakley – White Hill - (Kingsclere, for overnight accommodation) - Sydmonton – Ashmansworth - Inkpen Beacon: Finish

Planning your Walk: Mileage Chart



Getting to the Start Point in Emsworth

Getting to Emsworth. Emsworth is well-served by train (Southampton to Brighton south coast line). The start of the walk is about ½ mile south of the railway station. To reach Emsworth by car, turn off the A27 at Warblington, between Havant and Emsworth and follow the A259 into St. Peter's Square in the centre of the town. There is a car park off South Street which is the road leading south from St. Peter's Square and down to the start of the walk.

The Wayfarer's Walk

Day 1, morning, Emsworth to Denmead, 12.20 miles

Start in Emsworth at the Emsworth Slipper Sailing Club at the end of South Street at the entrance to the Promenade. There is no official start finger post or wall plaque but look for the waymark on a wooden post by the side of the club building.

Slipper launches date back to the early 1900s. The 20' to 30' launch is characterized by its elegance and sleek lines and traditionally planked with high-quality and high-glossed wood and, these days, may have a fibre-glass or mahogany wood hull. The launch is designed for use on a river, lake or coastal waters. You may spot a slipper launch close to the Emsworth Slipper Sailing Club building.

Walk west around the edge of the marina along the Promenade to team up with the Solent Way and passing by the ruins of the 16th Century Warblington Castle [1].

Warblington Castle was built between 1515 and 1525 and, just over one hundred years later, was mostly destroyed during the English Civil War of 1644. All that remains now is a tall octagonal turret of red brick and stone. The turret was probably part of the entrance to the castle. The remains of the castle are private and entry by the public is not allowed.

Cross the A3023 at Langstone and walk along the edge of a nature reserve to reach and cross over the busy A27 at Brockhampton. From Brockhampton, turn left at the first roundabout after crossing the A27 into Marples Way to enter the Kingscroft Business Park. Walk down Marples Way to turn left into Ridgeway. On Ridgeway and just opposite the entrance to the Fat Face building, look for the WW waymark pointing diagonally across a field. At the far corner of the field, use the bridge to cross over a stream and follow the footpath south-west about 600 yards to reach the railway bridge on Mill Lane. Walk up to and over the railway bridge and up Mill Lane to reach Portsdown Hill Road (B2177) at Bedhampton. Walk approximately 2¼ miles on this busy road, passing Fort Purbrook [2], now a lively activity centre, on your right to reach the intersection with the A3. Cross over the A3 but do not turn down by the George Inn. Proceed another 100 yards on Portsdown Hill Road to find the Dellcrest Path on your right. Turn north onto Dellcrest Path and proceed up the path behind a number of houses and into open fields. When you meet Purbrook Heath Road, turn left and follow the road until you come to a WW waymark on your right leading off through the woods (Portland Coppice). Continue north about 2¼ miles through woods, fields, across a golf course (take care!) and not-too-busy open roads to reach the village of Denmead where you will find refreshments for lunch at the northern end.



1. Start of the Wayfarer's Walk: ESSC building in Emsworth



2. The Promenade in Emsworth



3. Conigar Point at Emsworth



4. WW joins the Solent Way at Emsworth



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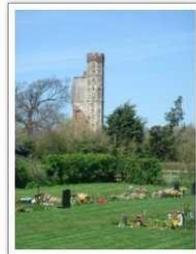
5. Along the trail at Conigar Point



6. First sight of Warblington Castle



7. Hungry seagulls at Warblington



8. Warblington Castle from the trail

The Wayfarer's Walk



9. Warblington Castle up close



10. WW waymark at Kingscroft Industrial Estate, opposite the Fat Face building



11. Daffodils along the Portsdown Hill Road



12. View from Portsdown Hill Road looking east



13. View from Portsdown Hill Road looking south



14. View from Portsdown Hill Road looking west



15. Fort Purbrook



16. Fort Purbrook 2



17. View from Fort Purbrook



18. Entrance to Dellcrest Path from Portsdown Hill Road



19. Entrance to woods off Purbrook Heath Road

Day 1, afternoon, Denmead to Droxford/Meonstoke, 6.40 miles

Exit north from Denmead along Park Road on the corner by Denmead Health Centre and head north through open fields towards Hambledon. Turn left onto Hambledon High Street and exit north via Vicarage Lane. After 200 yards, or so, turn left and cross a field to reach the B2150. Cross this road and then climb up through the wooded area and into open fields and more woodland to pass by East Hoe Manor and reach Soberton. Note: there is a trail link at Soberton across to the Pilgrim's Trail and Allan King's Way [3].

Allan King's Way is a 42-mile long-distance path starting at Portchester Castle and finishing at King Alfred's Statue in Winchester. Allan was a walk leader with the Meon Valley Rambler's Association in the 1970s and '80s. I started my interest in walking under Allan's leadership and Allan will always be remembered as a man with a big rucksack and an even bigger enthusiasm for walking in the Hampshire countryside.

Continue north along School Hill through Soberton turning left into Cutts Arch just past the White Lion pub. (Cutts Arch is not named but is marked by a WW finger post showing 17 miles to Emsworth and 53 miles to Inkpen Beacon.) Where Cutts Arch meets the now-disused Meon Valley Railway [4] track, cross over the bridge and turn right to follow a path that runs alongside the old railway track for a while and then across fields to reach the church at Droxford. Alternatively, if you want to walk along the old railway track, turn right before crossing the bridge to follow a short slip path down onto the old track. Follow the old track north about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to the next bridge just after passing what used to be Droxford railway station. Exit left by the side of the bridge to reach Droxford. This is the end of Day 1.

Note: neither of the two pubs in Droxford currently offer overnight accommodation and there does not appear to be any B&Bs in Droxford. If you are multi-day walking along the *Wayfarer's Walk*, you will have to continue a further $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles up the old railway track to the next village of Meonstoke where The Buckshead pub does offer an evening meal and overnight accommodation. Be sure to book early. This pub is also a staging post for walkers on the nearby South Downs Way.

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20. Path up through the woods at Hambledon to East Hoe Manor



21. Daffodils at Hambledon



22. Wild tulips at Hambledon



23. WW finger post at Soberton



24. Entrance to the WW path after crossing over the old railway track bridge at Soberton



25. Entrance to old railway track just before the bridge at Soberton



26. View of the old railway track from the bridge in Cutts Arch



27. Old railway track at Soberton



28. The Bucks Head pub at Meonstoke

Day 2, morning, Droxford to Cheriton, 10.29 miles

Exit west from Droxford, walking up Park Lane and past Droxford Junior School to head up through large fields to the small copse on Fir Down. The path turns north at the woods and progresses on a well-defined path across more open country with sweeping views east of Droxford and Meonstoke, the next village higher up on the A32, and, eventually, Corhampton golf course. Walk alongside the western edge of the golf course to reach and cross over the B3035. Continue a short way north (around 150 yards) to reach Bottom Copse, and then turn west (don't miss the left turn; there is no waymark and the path through the copse looks inviting!). Skirt the southern edge of Bottom Copse and cross a road to reach the impressively-laid-out St. Clair's Farm on Sailor's Lane. Walk alongside the farm house on a permissive path and continue north through the middle of Betty Mundy's Bottom to a gate leading into a wood. After crossing through the gate, observe but do not follow Betty Mundy's Walk [5] on your right. Further on, you will then pass the impressive Betty Mundy's Cottages on your left.

BETTY MUNDY. *Betty Mundy's Bottom is a wooded valley on the Preshaw estate about half a mile north of St. Clair's Farm. The earliest story is that a Roman legion camped on Corhampton Down early in the occupation and found the bottom very suited to their private off-duty activities, so they called it Beati Mundaie, the most "blessed place in the world". That is rather scholarly. The earliest written reference to a "Betty Mundy" is on the Exton Tithe map of 1839 – Betty Mundy Copse. One story is that the path lay on a route taken by discharged sailors and that Betty Mundy lured them in and murdered them for their wages. Another story is that Betty Mundy was in league with the local press gang and she would get her arm well round the waist of a stalwart farm labourer and take him for a walk in Sailor's Wood and then the press gang would jump out from behind a bush and grab him, while Betty pocketed her commission and lay low till she could do it again. The truth is now lost but, if she ever existed, she was quite a character!*

Adapted from <http://www.southernlife.org.uk/meonstok.htm>

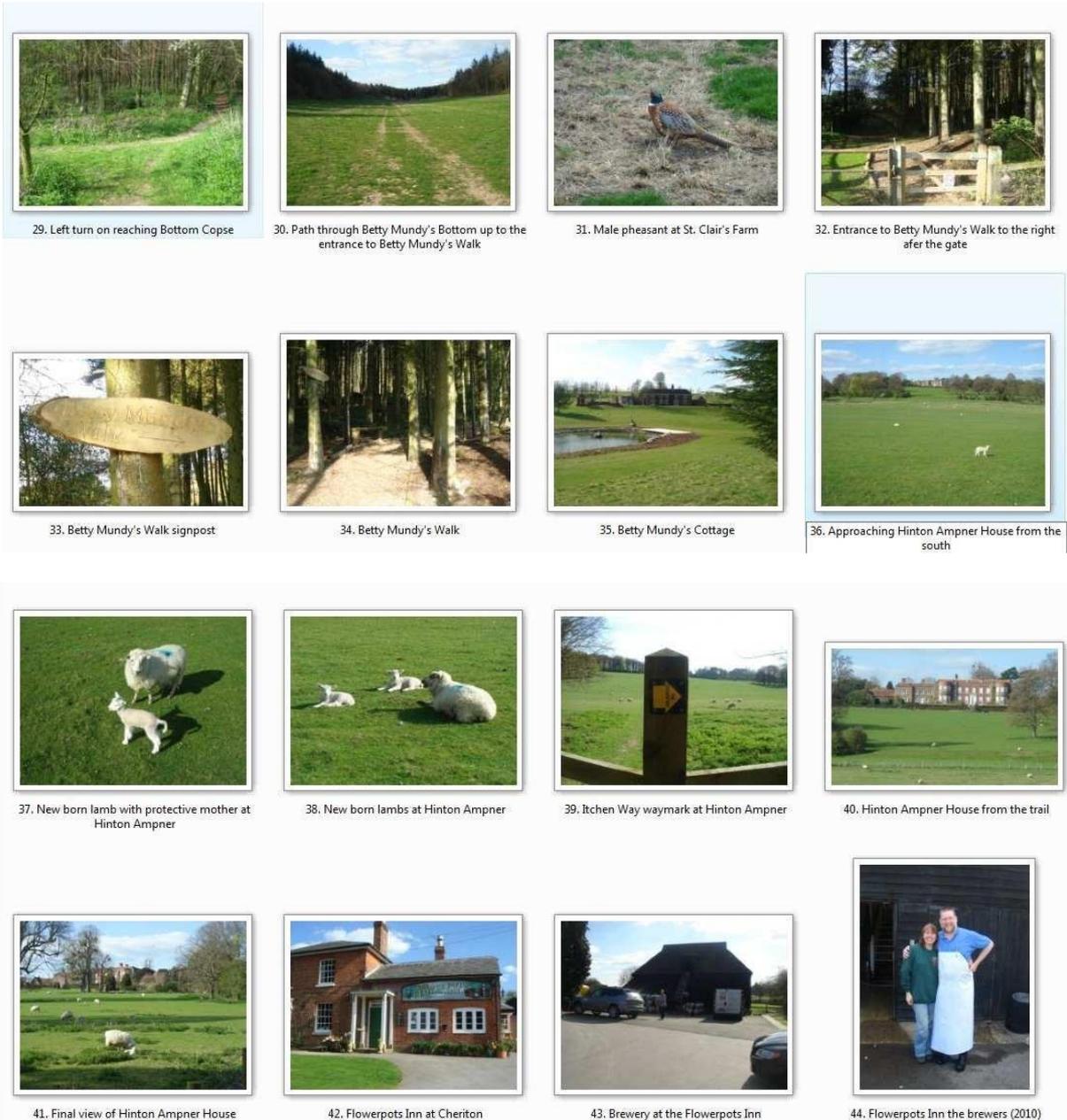
Continue further north adjacent to the Preshaw Estate to team up with the South Downs Way National Trail at Lomer Farm. Leave the South Downs Way at Wind Farm, cross over the road and proceed down the hill on grassland and through farmland to reach the small village of Kilmeston and, further on, Hinton Ampner. On your approach to Hinton Ampner, you will be rewarded with a sweeping view of Hinton Ampner House [6], a National Trust property, and you will cross the Itchen Way running east-west just south of Hinton Ampner House.

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The vision of one man, Hinton Ampner House is best known for its magnificent garden with stunning views to the south. The elegant country house was remodelled by Ralph Dutton, the 8th and last Lord Sherborne, in 1960 after a devastating fire, and contains his collection of Georgian and Regency furniture, Italian pictures and objets d'art. The gardens were also laid out by Ralph Dutton and are widely acknowledged as a masterpiece of 20th-century design, mixing formal and informal planting, providing all year round interest.

Snagged from <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-hintonampnergarden>

Continue north through Hinton Ampner and then west to reach the pretty hamlet of Cheriton, passing through the site of the Battle of Cheriton [7] in 1644 during the English Civil War between the Parliamentarians and King Charles I. (King Charles lost this battle, by the way.) The Flowerpots Inn and Brewery [8] in Cheriton is a good place to break for lunch.



Day 2, afternoon, Cheriton to Brown Candover/Totford, 11.20 miles

From Cheriton, team up with the Itchen Way for a short distance, going north, until the trails diverge at the B3046. Continue right on the *Wayfarer's Walk*, across a golf course and down Tichborne Down to reach the south-east corner of New Arlesford after crossing the A31 using a footbridge. Continue 1 mile north on Sun Lane up the eastern side of New Arlesford alongside a busy and sometimes quite narrow road and crossing over the steam train Watercress Line [9].

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The Mid-Hants Railway Watercress Line, to give it its full title, is a preserved heritage steam railway running 10 miles between Alton and New Arlesford. As the name suggests, the railway was originally used to transport watercress from local beds to the national rail link at Alton and thence to the markets in London and elsewhere. The development of motorised transport caused the need for the railway to decline and it fell into disrepair. The 10-mile section was privately purchased from British Rail in 1975 and reconstruction and repair started in 1977, finally fully reopening in 1985. The railway is now used for pleasure trips, including the Real Ale trip and commemorative trips such as Mother's Day, Santa's Specials and WW 2 Nostalgia trips.

When you reach the B3047 at the northern end of New Arlesford, turn left and continue until you reach the Broad Street shopping area. Turn right into Broad Street and proceed to the end of the shops, deviating left on Mill Street to enter the Arlebury Park "wetlands" at Ladywell Lane. Follow the River Arle westward along the Arlesford Millennium Trail [10], passing an old mill house (Fullings Mill, 13th Century); the grave of Hambone Jr [11], the "scruffy little brown and white terrier" mascot of the 47th Infantry Regiment, 9th Division US Army billeted in New Arlesford during WW2; and the Arlesford Eel House.

Fulling is a process by which cloth is washed, cleaned, beaten and thickened. In the time Fullings Mill was operating, the raw cloth would have been placed along with Fuller's earth, a form of clay, in large baskets. The baskets would then be lowered into the water flowing through the mill. The baskets were then pressed, initially by human feet, and later by large water-operated hammers. When sufficiently cleaned and shrunk, the cloth would be stretched out with tenterhooks on a large frame and the nap raised by dragging heads of teasel across the cloth. The miller applied the finishing touch trimming the nap with fuller's shears.

The Arlesford Eel House was built across the River Arle in the 1820s and is a rare surviving example of a purpose-built trapping house. The three channels under the building each contained iron grill traps which would be set when mature eels start their journey down to the sea to breed. The channels can be seen by looking back after you've passed by the building. The Arlesford Eel House was extensively restored in 2006.

(Adapted from an information boards along the Arlesford Millennium Trail.)

After several small lakes either side, you finally emerge onto a road called Dove Lane. Follow Dove Lane for about ¼ mile and where the lane turns sharp left (south), look for the WW waymark heading north-west. Follow this trail across open country for 2 miles to reach Abbotstone. From Abbotstone, follow a broad north-east sweep across more open country to reach the woods at Abbotstone Down and Oliver's Battery Settlement [12], the site of an ancient Iron Age village and now just wood-covered earthworks. The path from Oliver's Battery going north is called Spybush Lane. Continue north on Spybush Lane to reach Brown Candover. This is the end of Day 2.

Note: there is neither pub nor B&B in Brown Candover. The closest accommodation is The Woolpack Country Inn at Totford, south-west of Brown Candover and about 1 mile from the *Wayfarer's Walk*. Turn sharp left on Spybush Lane when you reach a farm building about ½ mile before Brown Candover. The track is well defined and The Woolpack is at the other end of the track, where it meets the B3046.



45. Cheriton Green



46. Cottages at Cheriton Green



47. A place to sit Cheriton Green



48. Ducks at Cheriton Green



49. War Memorial at Cheriton



50. The aptly named Magnolia Cottage on Cheriton Green



51. Approaching Cheriton Mill, close to the B3046



52. View down Broad Street New Arlesford

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53. Entrance to Mill Street from Broad Street New Arlesford



54. Entrance to Ladywell Lane from Mill Street New Arlesford



55. Approaching Fullings Mill New Arlesford



56. Fullings Mill New Arlesford



57. Reproduction 1253 sign on Fullings Mill



58. Looking back at Fullings Mill



59. At this point turn right and follow the River Arle to the right



60. Ducks on the River Arle



61. Grave of Hambone Jr New Arlesford



62. Approaching the Arlesford Eel house



63. Arlesford Eel House



64. Arlesford Eel House Sign of the Times



65. Looking back at the Arlesford Eel House



66. Old Bridge just past the Arlesford Eel House



67. Lake beside the River Arle



68. River Arle



69. Swans on the River Arle



70. All that is left of Oliver's Battery



71. Tribute to Bill Bide at Oliver's Battery



72. Trail at Oliver's Battery



73. Woolpack Inn at Totford

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Day 3, morning, Brown Candover to Deane, 10.30 miles

From Brown Candover, walk east along the B3046 and just after you pass the gated entrance to Candover House on your right, turn left at the *Wayfarer's Walk* finger post showing 41½ mile back to Emsworth and 28½ mile to Inkpen Beacon. Proceed up past the church and into a pleasant wooded track that will take you up to Breach Farm, passing through the yard of the aptly-named Lone Barn House and then across Becket's Down with rolling fields as far as the eye can see. At Breach Farm, join a tarmaced road that meets the Axford – North Waltham road. Turn left onto this road and a few hundred yards later, look for the *Wayfarer's Walk* right turn at Dummer Grange Farm (not waymarked). Follow the trail, passing around the back of Dummer Grange on the permissive path, to reach the thatched village of Dummer. Once you reach the village, turn right onto Frog Lane (Up Street is on your left) and then left into Down Street. Remember: do not go up Up Street; go down Down Street! Continue walking through the village until you reach the roundabout above the M3 motorway. You can try to cross the M3 to the A30 on the other side using the overhead roundabout but if you are worried by the amount of traffic entering and leaving the motorway, there is an alternative and much safer route. Just before the M3 southbound exit slipway, you will see a road marked "No Access" at the entrance to Kempshott Park. Follow this road north-east alongside the M3 for just over ½ mile and up to the NFU building on your right. Just past the NFU building, turn left and cross the M3 on a pedestrian bridge. Once over the M3, follow the trail first south-west and then north-west on the edge of woodland and with a golf course on your right to reach the A30 on the northern side of the M3 roundabout.

Cross over the busy A30 (take care, there is no bridge or underpass) and walk 200 yards or so south-westerly on the northern verge of the A30 until you reach a right turn. Take this road and after a further 200 yards, the trail crosses over a stile at Southwood Farm and then proceeds in a north-westerly direction, following first the line of South Wood and then open country to Bull's Bushes Farm on the outskirts of East Oakley. Walk up the easterly side of Bull's Bushes Copse and turn left on the tarmaced road to continue in a broadly westerly direction, passing under a railway line, to reach Deane. There is a pub here, Deane Gate Inn, right on the trail and suitable for lunch.



74. Entrance to Candover House at Brown Candover



75. WW just over halfway at Brown Candover. 28.5 miles to go!



76. Trail leading up past St Peter's church at Brown Candover



77. Up Street at Dummer



78. Down Street at Dummer



79. Attractive pub at Dummer



80. Thatched cottage at Dummer 1



81. Thatched cottage at Dummer 2

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82. Thatched cottage at Dummer 3



83. Thatched cottage at Dummer 4



84. Wild primroses at Dummer



85. Approaching the entrance to Kempshott Park access road just before reaching the roundabout over the M3



86. Kempshott Park entrance



87. Approaching the NFU building by the M3



88. NFU building



89. Trail to the pedestrian bridge over the M3



90. Pedestrian bridge over M3



91. Road opposite Heritage Landscape Centre off A30 leading to Southwood Farm



92. WW entrance at Southwood Farm

Day 3, afternoon, Deane to White Hill/Kingsclere, 6.13 miles

From the pub in Deane, strike north and then east on tarmaced roads to find the trail by the side of the Thatcherys cottage. Go round the back of the cottage and pass by some outbuildings to find a gap in the hedge. Go through this gap and cross two fields and then go under a railway bridge to Deane Down Farm. Note: the OS map and Google Earth both show the trail leading diagonally across the two fields. In reality, the trail now follows the north-then-east edges of the two fields to reach the railway bridge. Go under the railway and turn right onto the tarmaced road at Deane Down Farm and look for the WW waymark on your left after about 300 yards. Strike a line across the field between the sole tree and the line of trees to find a waymarked trail. Continue northerly on a well-made track, passing up the east side of Great Deane Wood and then through Frith Wood to reach Freemantle Farm and then the small settlement of North Oakley. At North Oakley, turn left onto the tarmaced road and walk westerly until you see the north-west waymark just under ½ mile from the settlement. Follow the well-waymarked trail for just over two miles to reach the B3051 road at White Hill. This is the end of Day 3.

Note: there is no overnight accommodation here; just a car park! The nearest accommodation is in Kingsclere, a distance of just over 2 miles away to the north-east and reached by the B3051. If you decide to seek accommodation in Kingsclere, do not walk along the side of the B3051. This is a busy road with virtually no safety verges until you get close to the town. Instead, from the *Wayfarer's Walk* and a few hundred yards before you reach the B3051, take the north-easterly footpath signposted as a public footpath. This path leads up to the radio mast on Cottington's Hill and then goes down to, along and eventually through some woods to a track that goes due north and straight to Kingsclere. Be advised that when you get to the bottom of the track and meet Hollowshot Lane, you will need to walk up another (small) hill before reaching Kingsclere. Until you've walked up this second hill, Kingsclere is not visible.



93. The Thatcherys cottage at Deane



94. Waymark by the side of the Thatcherys cottage at Deane



95. Go through the gap in the hedge at Deane



96. Entrance to trail across fields at Deane



97. Waymark at Deane Down Farm



98. Deane Down Farm aim between the trees



99. Trail leading NW at North Oakley



100. Hmm, which way Post at White Hill



101. Footpath leading off to Radio Mast and Kingsclere



102. Radio Mast on Cottington's Hill

Day 4, morning, White Hill to Ashmansworth, 8.05 miles

Starting from the intersection of the *Wayfarer's Walk* and the B3051 road at White Hill, walk westerly up a wide track, first across Cannon Heath Down and then Watership Down, the setting for Richard Adams's well-known 1972 book of the same name. Whistle "Bright Eyes" and don't forget to look out for Hazel, Fiver, Blackberry and all the other rabbits, and watch out for the trickery of El-ahrairah! From the ridge above Watership Down, there is a good view of Sydmonton Court, currently the home of Andrew Lloyd Webber and his Picasso and pre-Raphaelite art collection.

From Watership Down, the trail meanders first south across Great Litchfield Down and then west across mostly open fields and passing the earthwork remnants of Ladle Hill Fort [13] before reaching the very busy A34 main road. Do not attempt to cross this road at this point. There is a safe 700-yard diversion south alongside the east side of the A34 to an underpass, followed by a corresponding 700-yard path north to rejoin the *Wayfarer's Walk* on the west side of the A34.

***Ladle Hill**, an unfinished hill fort, is now just a series of grassy lumps and bumps and is situated on the site of an earlier Bronze Age settlement. The layout is best seen from above. Try searching Google Earth using "Ladle Hill House, Old Burghclere" and then scrolling slightly east of south to spot the circular rim of the fort. The *Wayfarer's Walk* passes by the southern part of the fort.*

The trail now wanders north and west through wooded paths and open trails to reach Ashmansworth at the A343. Just before Ashmansworth, you may catch glimpses of the tower of Highclere Castle [14] about 1 mile away on your right. The 5th Earl of Carnarvon, a former owner of Highclere Castle, was one of the two explorers who discovered Tutankhamen's tomb in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt in 1922. There is an extensive and open-to-the-public exhibition of Egyptian artifacts at the castle.

Ashmansworth is a good place to stop for lunch but note that the local pub, formerly called The Plough and still marked PH on some OS maps, is no longer trading as a public house. The house is now a private dwelling. The closest pub is the Yew Tree at Hollington Cross, a distance of at least 1 mile north of the trail. Although this pub is currently (2010) owned by Marco Pierre White, the renowned chef, you might decide that today's lunch is best carried on your back and eaten on the trail.

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103. Sign at White Hill pointing back to Emsworth, 57.5 miles



104. WW waymark at entrance to Cannon Heath Down, 12.5 miles left



105. Cannon Heath Down



106. Cannon Heath Down showing trail leading to Watership Down



107. View from Cannon Heath Down



108. View across Watership Down - no rabbits out today!



109. Sydmonton Court from the trail at Watership Down



110. Looking back at Watership Down



111. Approaching Ladle Hill Fort, a slight bump on the horizon



112. Entrance to Ladle Hill Fort



113. Ladle Hill lumps and bumps



114. Moat at Ladle Hill



115. Lunch in the moat at Ladle Hill



116. Attractive Highclere Castle lodge at Grotto Copse on the trail



117. Highclere Castle from the trail at Ashmansworth



118. Former Plough Pub in Ashmansworth, now a private house



119. Thatched Cottage at Ashmansworth



120. Thatched Cottage at Ashmansworth 2

Day 4, afternoon, Ashmansworth to Inkpen Beacon, 5.20 miles

From Ashmansworth, follow a well-marked north-westerly wooded trail, passing along the top of a ridge with good views to the north. Where the road forks left, about 2 miles from Ashmansworth and overlooking East Woodhay, you will pass a Huf house [15] on your left. A Huf house, named after the German architect Peter Huf, is a style of house construction whereby the house is built largely with glass and timber over a concrete frame. Further on, you will walk just under Walbury Hill [16], the site of an ancient fort. Nothing now remains of the fort although Saxon coins, bits of pottery and

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other treasures have been found on the site. There is one last mile to walk to reach the end of the *Wayfarer's Way* at Combe Gibbet [17] on Inkpen Beacon where the trail intersects with the Test Way. Once you've arrived at Combe Gibbet, pause and reflect on the purpose of the gibbet.

Combe Gibbet. *Combe Gibbet was erected in 1676 for the purpose of hanging George Broomham and Dorothy Newman and has only ever been used for them. The gibbet was placed in such a prominent location as a warning, to deter others from committing crimes. George and Dorothy were having an affair and were hanged for murdering George's wife Martha, and their son Robert after they (Martha and Robert) discovered them (George and Dorothy) together on the downs. Unfortunately for the lovers, the murder was witnessed by Mad Thomas, who managed to convey what he had seen to the authorities. A replica gibbet now marks the site. The original was destroyed many years ago and subsequent replicas have been replaced several times.*

Snagged from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Combe_Gibbet

The area around the gibbet is now a popular area for hang gliders and paragliders. On the edge of the car park just before you reach Combe Gibbet, look for the Merville Battery Memorial. This is a stone memorial to the 9th Battalion Parachute Regiment who in May 1944 rehearsed their plans in the surrounding fields and woods for a successful assault on the German Coastal Artillery Battery at Merville in France, in support of the Normandy landings on D-Day, June 6th, 1944.

Combe Gibbet on Inkpen Beacon is the end of Day 4 and the end of the *Wayfarer's Walk*. Finally, you can attend to your blisters!



121. Finger post at Ashmansworth. 5 miles to go



122. Huf House at East Woodhay



123. Melanistic Mutant Pheasant on East Woodhay Down



124. Merville Battery Memorial stone at the car park, Combe Gibbet



125. Finish of the Wayfarer's Way and start of the Test Way Inkpen Beacon



126. Combe Gibbet on Inkpen Beacon



127. One last view over the Berkshire countryside from Combe Gibbet

Returning from the End Point at Inkpen Beacon

Returning from Inkpen Beacon. The nearest railway station is at Kintbury, 3.68 miles as the crow (or hang glider) flies from the end of the trail. There is an off-road car park just before you climb the final path to Combe Gibbet and you may be able to arrange for a taxi to collect you and take you to the railway station. Note that this could be quite expensive as taxis will probably have to come from Hungerford or Newbury, both of which are further away than Kintbury but may offer better rail links. Alternatively, you could try hitching a ride with a passing hang glider or paraglider!

To dig deeper: links to relevant websites

- [1] Warblington Castle, <http://www.ecastles.co.uk/warblington.html>
- [2] Fort Purbrook, http://www.subbrit.org.uk/sb-sites/sites/f/fort_widley/index.shtml
- [3] Allan King's Way, http://www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?path_id=239
- [4] Meon Valley Railway, <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/ron.strutt/rrcor3.html>
- [5] Betty Mundy, <http://www.southernlife.org.uk/meonstok.htm>
- [6] Hinton Hampner House, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinton_Ampner
- [7] Battle of Cheriton, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Chерiton

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- [8] Flowerpots Inn and Brewery at Cheriton, <http://www.flowerpots.f2s.com/>
- [9] Watercress Line, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watercress_Line
- [10] Arlesford Millennium Trail, <http://www.alresford.org/millen.php>
- [11] Hambone Jr, http://www.whaley-computer-consulting.com/MilitaryTributes/9th_photos_england_02.asp
- [12] Oliver's Battery Settlement, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olivers_Battery
- [13] Ladle Hill Fort, <http://www.megalithic.co.uk/article.php?sid=2239>
- [14] Highclere Castle, <http://www.highclerecastle.co.uk/>
- [15] HUF homes, http://www.huf-haus.com/gb/01_01_fachwerkhaus_01.html
- [16] Walbury Hill Fort, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walbury_Hill
- [17] Combe Gibbet, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Combe_Gibbet

Websites describing the Wayfarer's Walk

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/walking/longdistance/Wayfarer's-walk.htm>
http://www.idwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?menu_type=S&path_id=508

Maps

OS Explorer 1:25,000 scale: 119, 120, 132, 144, 158
OS Landranger 1:50,000 scale: 174, 185, 196, 197

Disclaimer

While every effort has been made to ensure that the facts and figures in this description of the *Wayfarer's Walk* are accurate, the document is provided "as is" and the author, R G "Ben" Bennetts, makes no representations or warranties in relation to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained. The facts and figures were assembled partly from when the author and his wife walked the *Wayfarer's Way* in April 2010, and partly from post-walk research conducted on the Web. The exact distances quoted were computed using the facility to create a waymarked trail using Memory-Map European Edition Version 5.4.2, Build 1089 on OS 1:50k Southern England Region 1. Any errors in distances or in other factual information are not intentional. Please e-mail any comments, corrections, updates etc. to the author at ben-bennetts@hollamhouse.com. Enjoy the *Wayfarer's Walk*.

(^_^)