

The Wessex XXX (Social)

Originally planned as a social walk for the Wessex LDWA and scheduled for 14th June 2020, the walk is here presented in virtual form with words and pictures under lockdown conditions imposed by the global covid-19 pandemic. Four walkers enjoyed this route on 14/06/20 without pub stops.

History

The Wessex XXX was the first challenge walk (i.e. to be completed within a set time limit) organised by the Wessex LDWA, and ran annually from 1977 to 1983. The route described below follows that of the original event as far as is practical, with diversions to take in two refreshment stops (pubs). The event ran for the last time in 1987 (over a different route) before ceasing.

Walk Stats

Length: 30 miles (48.5km) Ascent: 2530' (770m)

Start: Winchester Leisure Centre car park SU483301 Postcode: S023 7DD



Park and meet here, then turn round and walk south past main entrance to Leisure Centre and turn left on tarmac path. Cross river and follow path round to the right joining Park Ave to pass WINCHESTER SCHOOL OF ART keeping ahead to busy road (North Walls).

Cross using pedestrian crossing then continue in original direction along Middle Brook St then cross Friarsgate (busy road!) to continue in same direction to High Street SU482294. Turn left on this historic street (initially pedestrianised and becoming The Broadway) and walk towards the STATUE OF KING ALFRED seen below. (Photo is looking back up the Broadway).



Continue past Alfred to reach CITY MILL (National Trust) on the left. Immediately before the bridge SU485292 turn right down steps (Signposted South Downs Way). Follow path along river Itchen for approx 400m to path junction in front of old mill building (now residential) and turn left to bottom of hill. Do not climb the hill but turn right to walk south along Wharf Hill. After 200m as the road bears right SU485288 turn left onto narrow lane



(Domum Rd) signposted Viaduct Way. Follow this lane to wooden gate then continue in same direction along cycle path past tennis courts and soon follow course of old railway line to bridge over main road SU484280.

Just after bridge descend through tunnel into Garnier Rd car park and take the riverside path at the SW corner of the CP. Follow this path for 600m to path junction SW of St Catherine's Hill SU480273

Take path on the left (kissing gate) and ignoring stepped path on the left follow grassy path gradually uphill to cross the M3 motorway at bridge SU489276 turning right at far side of bridge onto obvious ascending track (ignore less obvious path forking to the right which keeps closer to the motorway).

Continue on this path in a SE direction (golf course soon on your right) over several undulations for 2km to path junction SU501257

Turn right on the Pilgrims Way and follow track round to the left to reach gate and minor road. Turn left on road.



Follow the road over the crossroads and continue uphill to pass cottage on your right SU512259 and then take the left-hand track at the fork.



Follow this ascending path for 2km, bearing right towards clump of trees at Cheesefoot Head, to reach junction with the South Downs Way SU527276. There will be a mid-morning refreshment stop here, or just across the road at CHEESEFOOT HEAD car park SU529277

From the SDW path junction above, turn right (SE) on path initially downhill swinging left after 200m & ascending to broad track by water tank SU530275 Follow this path (Allan King Way) gradually downhill for 2.5Km to reach cross-track at valley bottom under power lines SU529251. Go straight across and ascend to road.



Climb South across field towards trees at Pilgrims Ash shown above. At top of hill bear left (SE) to descend on narrow sunken path to reach road near Whiteflood Farm SU533238 crossing over into enclosed lane.



Continue on this track, gently descending or flat following the valley bottom for 1.3km to reach road junction at SU537224 Turn right and follow road (still down the valley) to the next road junction SU539217



Keep left here and in 50m bear right at junction (just visible in photo) following the road which now climbs steadily for 1km to Upham. At the village green SU538208 take the road on the left...



...and follow for 250m to the Brushmakers Arms, Upham (a lunch stop can be made here or at village pond). Distance covered: approx 11.5 miles



After the pub, continue down to the road junction with telephone box and turn left past pond, now on the Monarchs Way. At the next road junction (past the grassy triangle with tree and seat) turn left uphill and in 50m (just before end of wall on left) turn right through hedge onto footpath SU541206

Follow path (Monarchs Way) downhill SE across field, cross fence then steep ascent in same direction to trees at top. Follow obvious track SE towards

farm buildings, descending then ascending. Follow path as it swings to the left before farm buildings then follow signage through Street End Farm to the road. SU555199



Turn left on road and bear left at next road junction. In 100m take track at end of lay-by on right. Track soon becomes enclosed and turns sharp right above a steep slope (good views of the South Downs from here). Follow path and tree line down to path junction SU561200 then turn left (North) to descend the scrubby slope diagonally. Go through gate at bottom of slope then cross meadow in NE direction to road and thatched barn at Dean Farm SU562204



Turn left (North) on road and follow along valley bottom for 1.2km to road junction. Cross over, still following valley bottom ascending to Lower Preshaw Farm and a fork in the road just beyond SU568220. Keep left (North) and follow road along valley bottom gradually uphill for 1km, passing Middle Preshaw to reach a junction just beyond a large house on the right SU568230

Turn right here (still on the Monarchs Way) and follow the ascending track generally east, heading left (north) at the top of the hill at track junction to reach the entrance to Preshaw House. Continue on road/track (NE) gently downhill to meet South Downs Way and Wayfarers Walk at buildings SU580241 then bear left (NW) 100m to road. Cross road to fingerpost and stile. SU579241 A short break with views can be made just beyond the stile.



The route now follows the Wayfarers Walk as far as Hinton Ampner. Cross the stile and descend, initially steeply to cross fields and several stiles, trending generally NE for 2.8km to reach the road at Kilmeston village SU589258



Take the road ahead (East) for 100m into trees to reach fingerpost and track on left. Follow this track (Wayfarers Walk) north to emerge on a minor road. Turn right for 25m then left over stile then follow path across several fields generally NE descending to track junction at the entrance to Hinton Ampner estate (National Trust) SU596271

Follow the path uphill to reach the chapel. Continue ahead (North) on road for 150m descending to footpath and gate on left. SU597276 (gate dedicated to Tony Farrell, founder member of Wessex LDWA)



Go through gate and descend through the park, generally WNW to join main drive and pass through the gateway. SU592278



Turn left on path alongside main road (A272) to reach the HINTON ARMS on the left. There will be an afternoon break here. Distance covered: approx 20 miles. Not far to go now!

After leaving pub cross the road, through kissing-gate opposite, follow trees on left then cross double barrier (wood + metal) on left to road. SU589280



Turn right on road. In 50m as road bends left, take track ahead (now following the Itchen Way). At cross-tracks beyond housing on the left keep ascending to reach track junction at top of the hill and turn left. SU590286. Follow path down into Cheriton village, turning right at road with stream on left, and after 80m as road bears left over bridge, follow path ahead still with stream on left to road. SU583285.

Turn right on road and in 25m cross stream on left via wooden bridge to road and turn right (Caution! One-way road) and in 100m reach road junction. SU582286



Cross to road opposite and in 100m as road starts to ascend, take footpath on right (North) to follow valley bottom (River Itchen now on right) through fields for 1.3km to descend to road at Cheriton Mill. SU579296



Turn left to follow road to Tichborne. 25m beyond the village sign, look for footpath in hedge to left. Follow across field NW aiming to right of farm buildings to road. (If footpath not accessible follow road to same point).



Turn left on road and in 50m as road bends right follow farm road then track ahead (SW) and follow this path, ascending gradually for 2.5km to reach the South Downs Way at Gander Down SU554279.

Turn right (we now follow the SDW all the way to Winchester) to pass under barrier after road.



At cross-tracks and farm buildings follow SDW on ascending track to left. Continue ascending, passing through avenue of beech trees to reach ROAD AT CHEESEFOOT HEAD SU528277. A final refreshment/rest stop will be made hereabouts. Distance covered: approx 26 miles.

The remaining 4 miles or so follows the South Downs Way through Chilcomb, across the M27 via a footbridge and passing the Blackboys pub to reach the outward route near the mill (now residential) at Wharf Hill, SU485289 From here we follow the outward route in the reverse direction to the Leisure Centre and car park. SU483301