

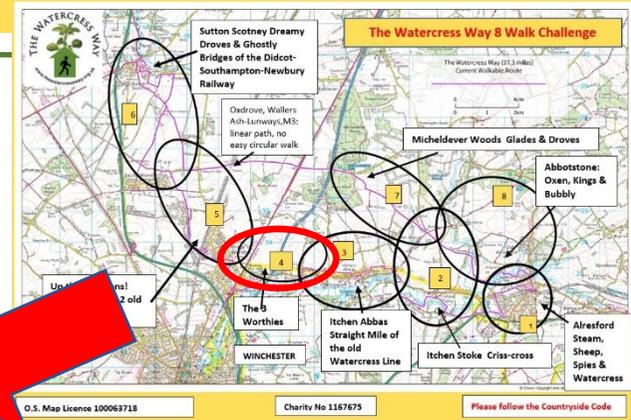
Walks from the Watercress Way No 4/8: The Worthy's

A world famous river, 3 beautiful villages & glimpses of The Watercress Line

A flexible, circular walk from Easton to Kings Worthy 5-7 miles, 7-10 kms



This walk follows about 3 miles of the Watercress Way, through rolling chalk downs & farmland in the South Downs National Park. It follows the River Itchen & parts of the disused Watercress Line. It may be extended onto the old DN&SR line.



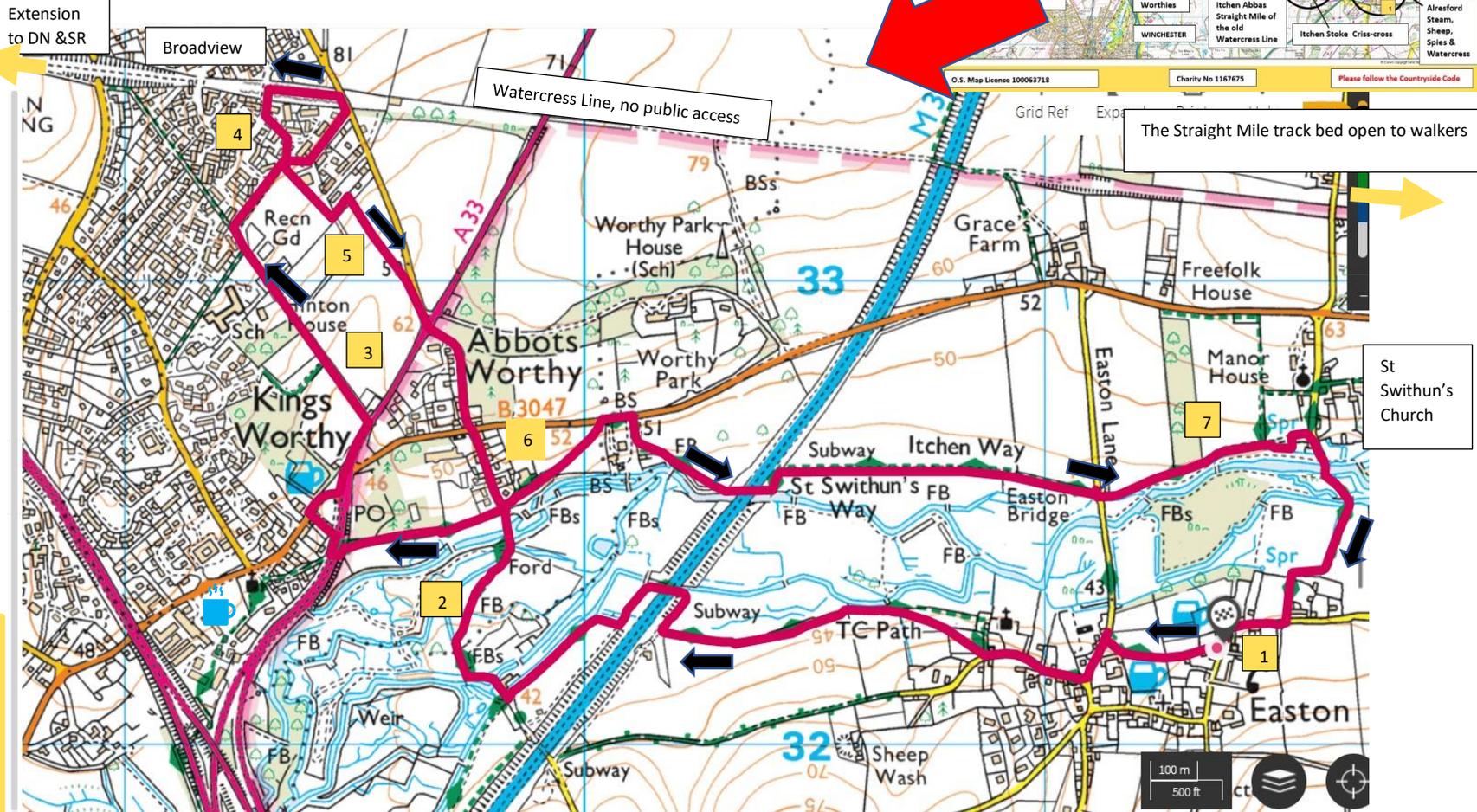
The Watercress Way (WW) is a waymarked 27-mile circular trail, near Winchester, Hampshire. It links parts of two disused Victorian railway lines by historic rights of way including livestock droves.

Access & Services

Parking: Easton near the Chestnut Horse pub, SO21 1EG **turntable armrests. roughness.**

Buses : none directly to Easton, can access route from Martyr Worthy, Abbots Worthy or Kings Worthy: Stagecoach No 67 & the Spring. **3 pubs and a cafe:** The Chestnut Horse, Cricketers, Cart and Horses & Winchester Coffee Roasters.

Suitable for children, and dogs under control (cattle in meadows). It is on grassy & gravel tracks & a few minor roads. Several kissing gates, one stile. Some paths can become muddy in winter. Wear appropriate clothing. **Follow the Countryside Code: Respect, Protect, Enjoy.**



For other self-guided and guided walks and information on the main trail see www.thewatercressway.org.uk and email info@thewatercressway.org.uk Become a 'Friend' of the charity online and receive regular updates. Perhaps become a **volunteer** or a **sponsor**.

| | Directions | Points of interest |
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| 1. Easton to Abbots Worthy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start at the Chestnut Horse. Follow a narrow footpath to the side of the pub (north) heading west towards Easton Lane through paddocks. Turn left after the last kissing gate along Easton Lane towards The Cricketers Pub (no pavements). Cross Easton Lane, with the small grass triangle on your left, up Church Lane. Just after The Old School House, built in 1840, take a footpath right, diagonally across the grassy recreation field. Several kissing gates lead down to near to the private river banks. Follow the footpath along the righthand, northern edges of a large field. Just before the M3, the footpath goes sharp right to an underpass. Follow this path as it winds westwards along one of many small branches of the Itchen. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easton's name originates from Old English: tun is an enclosure / farmstead / village/ estate. The earliest recorded mention is in 871. The oldest building is St Marys Church, but there are many 16th C. cottages. Behind the Chestnut Horse, on the left, is a complex of mainly 18th C buildings, part of the original Manor Farm, established in medieval times. The triangle is thought to be the last vestige of the village common. On the left side of Church Lane is the imposing Dymoke House, rebuilt in the late 18thC partly by stones recycled from a house demolished in the 1780's. On the right , on the top of the river terrace lies St Mary's Church, a Grade 1 Listed Building, c.1200. It is the oldest and largest church in the Itchen Valley. Spot its iconic late Norman doorway facing south. Its 12th C windows in the north wall were reglazed in the early 1900s. The 28 mile R. Itchen is one of just 200 or so chalk rivers globally. It was designated a Site of Special scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1979, to help conserve its rich mosaic of wildlife including otters, water voles, lapwings, sedges and orchids. It also has wild watercress (do not eat, danger of liver fluke!). Look out for herons and even cormorants, lured by fish farms upstream. Much of the meadows have been managed by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Trust since 2018. They use docile British White cattle to help increase biodiversity by gentle trampling. The many channels of the Itchen have been made over centuries to power local corn and cloth(fulling) mills. |
| 2. Abbots worthy to Kings Worthy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn sharp right in front of The Fulling Mill. Pass by the front of the house , effectively through its garden, over several small wooden footbridges. (Dogs on leads please) This footpath heads NW across the undulating floodplain meadows to a bridge over the Itchen, at the bottom of Mill Hill. Turn left on the footpath signed The Watercress ,Itchen and Pilgrims Way along a small ditch and high fence with glimpses of Abbots Worthy House on the right Take the left hand ramp up to cross the A33 dual carriageway (Dangerous crossing.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fullers earth clay was beaten into cloth to make a closer weave The lumps and bumps in the meadows here are of a deserted medieval village. Pause at the interpretation board at the bottom of Mill Lane, near the old ford entrance to the river. Worthy probably comes from Wordie, Anglo Saxon for part of an estate. There are 5 in Hampshire, recorded by the Domesday Survey. Kings, Headbourne, Abbots, Martyr are all linked to 12th C Winchester's St Swithun's monastery, probably a royal estate dating back to Roman times. Indeed, these villages are on the line of the Roman Road Silchester-Winchester (now the A33). Abbots Worthy House was built for the Baring family in the early 19th C. but in Tudor style. Lord Eversley lived here, a Victorian cabinet minister, more about him in Stage 3. To the left is scrubby wetland woodland called 'carr', part of the SSSI. |
| 3. Kings Worthy to the Watercr | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn right alongside the carriageway on a pavement until the footpath sign on the left to Kings Worthy Post Office. Using the pedestrian crossing over the busy B3047 cross to the right of the Cart and Horses Pub. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between the A33 and the Post Office are some Victorian alms houses and a Reading Room, was set up by local benefactor Richard Turner to help the parents of the local school become literate. The Cart & Horses was a farmhouse, converted to an inn 760. For a coffee shop open Friday -Sunday, walk a short distance west past St Mary's Church and small recreation ground to Winchester Coffee Roasters, opposite the Volvo garage, then return to The Post Office. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry on along the left hand pavement of the A33. Turn first left up tree lined Hinton House drive. • Cross Eversley Recreation Ground heading NE towards the social club. • Just behind the Social Club is a footpath which goes right, east to Lovedon Lane. • Turn sharp left up Lovedon Lane , over the old Mid-Hants Watercress Line railway bridge, narrow pavement. • | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To the left of Hinton House Drive is a field of grass and scrub & woodland, the site of Kings Worthy House, its lodge and gardens. This was the grand Victorian residence of Richard Turner, a local benefactor (You passed his Reading Rooms and Alms houses by the Post Office). It became derelict and burned down in the 1960's. • Eversley Park was named after Lord Eversley, an early advocate of public access to open spaces and footpaths. This was the site of The Whiteway, an ancient livestock drovers route linking Winchester & Basingstoke, and had an important WWII role too. • As you pass over the narrow infilled Lovedon Lane railway bridge, look right over the wall, SE, to glimpse trees lining the old railway line, now farmland .The bridge was filled in with earth from the M3 cutting at Twyford Down. |
| <p>For a shorter circular route, turn right down Lovedon Lane to cross over to Park Lane, Mill Lane and then the Watercress Way signs direct you left, east to Easton.</p> | | |
| <p>4. Broadview</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the first footpath to the left just after the railway bridge, through a kissing gate. • Walk down the grassy linear park called Broadview to Wesley Rd and the Millennium mosaic interpretation board. • Go to stage 5 unless you want an extra loop | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadview is well named. It is on top of a very deep infilled cutting of the Mid-Hants Railway. It has stunning views SW across to Winchester including the site of a Roman villa at Woodhams Farm depicted on the Millennium Mosaic . Imagine workers called 'Navvies' as young as 7 years old, hand cutting the hard chalk in the 1860s, and JCBs filling it in to dispose of M3 waste in the late 1980s. • In all the disused railway sections active management by the Worthys' Conservation Volunteers, Watercress Way trustees and friends and Hampshire County Council, is needed to maintain clear access and improve habitat diversity by layering the shrubs and creating glades. |
| <p>Extend your walk by 1.75 miles to see the disused track bed of the Didcot-Newbury-Southampton Railway (DN&SR). Walk further west into Kings Worthy and follow the Watercress Way signs, continuing down Broadview across lower Wesley Rd, to access The Kim Bishop Way and what locals call 'Top Field or Hookpit, a new social housing development of 2020.</p> | | |
| <p>5. Eversley Park</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With your back to the mosaic board, turn right, south along upper Wesley Rd, then first left into Frampton Rd. Go left up Gillingham Close and then take the first footpath to the right back into Eversley Recreation Ground. • Walk along the left hand, north side of the park, by the car park, to steps down into Eversley | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lovedon Fields is a 2018 award winning HAB eco home development. • It has a beautiful herb rich common meadowland, managed by selective mowing .It was originally an arable field. • The A33 before the 1980's took all the traffic from London to Southampton and on to the infamously congested Winchester by- pass. • Back in 50BC, you might have seen Romans passing since this is the main road from Winchester to Silchester! |

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| | <p>Gardens. Go through Lovedon Fields houses to near its entrance to access its meadow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exit the meadow onto Lovedon Lane. Turn right to the A33. | |
| 6. Abbots worthy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross A33 and walk down Park Lane. No pavements, narrow road. Cross B3047 to Mill Lane Take the first footpath to the left, opposite the outward stage to Kings Worthy. Follow Watercress Way signs east back to Martyr Worthy. Go through some paddocks, slightly uphill then a kissing gate and paddocks to the B3047. Turn right, along a grass stretch (no pavement), for a few metres before a footpath to the right takes you downhill to the river, with fields on the left | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Park Lane is named after Worthy Park and its farm (left beyond the woods.) On the right is a large Victorian redbrick house- one of several Rectories around the village (not all in use at the same time!) Mill Lane has many beautiful, listed thatched cottages. You get glimpses of Worthy Park on the left, now Princess Mead School. This imposing house was built in 1829, another listed building. It has an Anglo Saxon cemetery dating from the 5th/6th C . From this period onwards both Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy established as small agricultural communities close to the River Itchen. Mill Lane, Abbots Worthy, was first referred to in the Anglo-Saxon Charter of AD961. |
| 7. Martyr Worthy & Easton | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Just before the M3 is a gate/ stile and then an underpass . Sharp left after underpass to a kissing gate and then sharp right. The field boundary is to the right. Then another kissing gate switches the boundary fence to the left into a frequently grazed meadow. (cattle!) One more kissing gate before Easton Lane. Cross over Easton Lane, with Newbridge Cottage to the left. The footpath winds around several fields through kissing gates until Church Lane, Martyr Worthy. Leave the Watercress Way here and turn right, south, to cross the main Itchen. Follow the footpath to a small bridge(Dogs have access to water here) then metal gate into meadows. (cattle grazing). The path bears right then left through another metal gate, a gravel drive to Avington Rd. Turn right to The Chestnut Horse (no pavements) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The M3 was opened fully in 1995. You can divert to go straight back into Easton rather than via Martyr Worthy at Newbridge Cottage, by following Easton Lane to the right (no pavements). At Martyr Worthy is a short diversion left up Church Lane(no pavement, quiet road). Worthwhile to see another Norman church: St Swithun's. There is a Pilgrims Way sign of a scallop shell engraved in its churchyard wall. Shells were possibly used as a measure for free food enroute wall. The church was modified by the Victorians. If time permits, you can extend the walk by following the Watercress way signs past Martyr Worthy church, across the B3047 up Bridget's Lane to see ' the Mile stretch' of the old Watercress Line track bed opened up by 2015 into Itchen Abbas. The River Itchen at Martyr Worthy has a spectacular Monet style bridge and a small interpretation board, with its changing display according to seasons. Look for spotty brown trout and grayling(dark, with a spine), ducks and swans, voles and otters. Avington House is a small privately owned stately house, just to the east from here. It was famed as a meeting tryst between Charles II and Nell Gwynne. |

Images & content Kim Adams Trustee of The Watercress Way May 2021