

Watercress Way 8 Walk challenge: No 7/8 Shady glades and dreamy droves

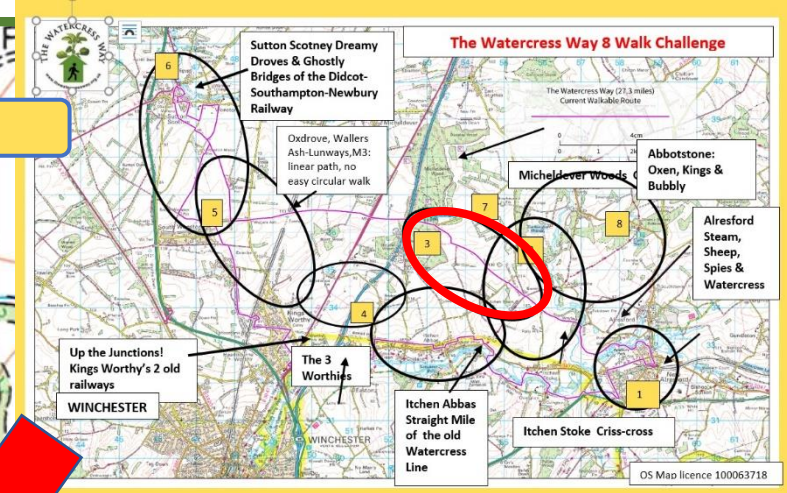
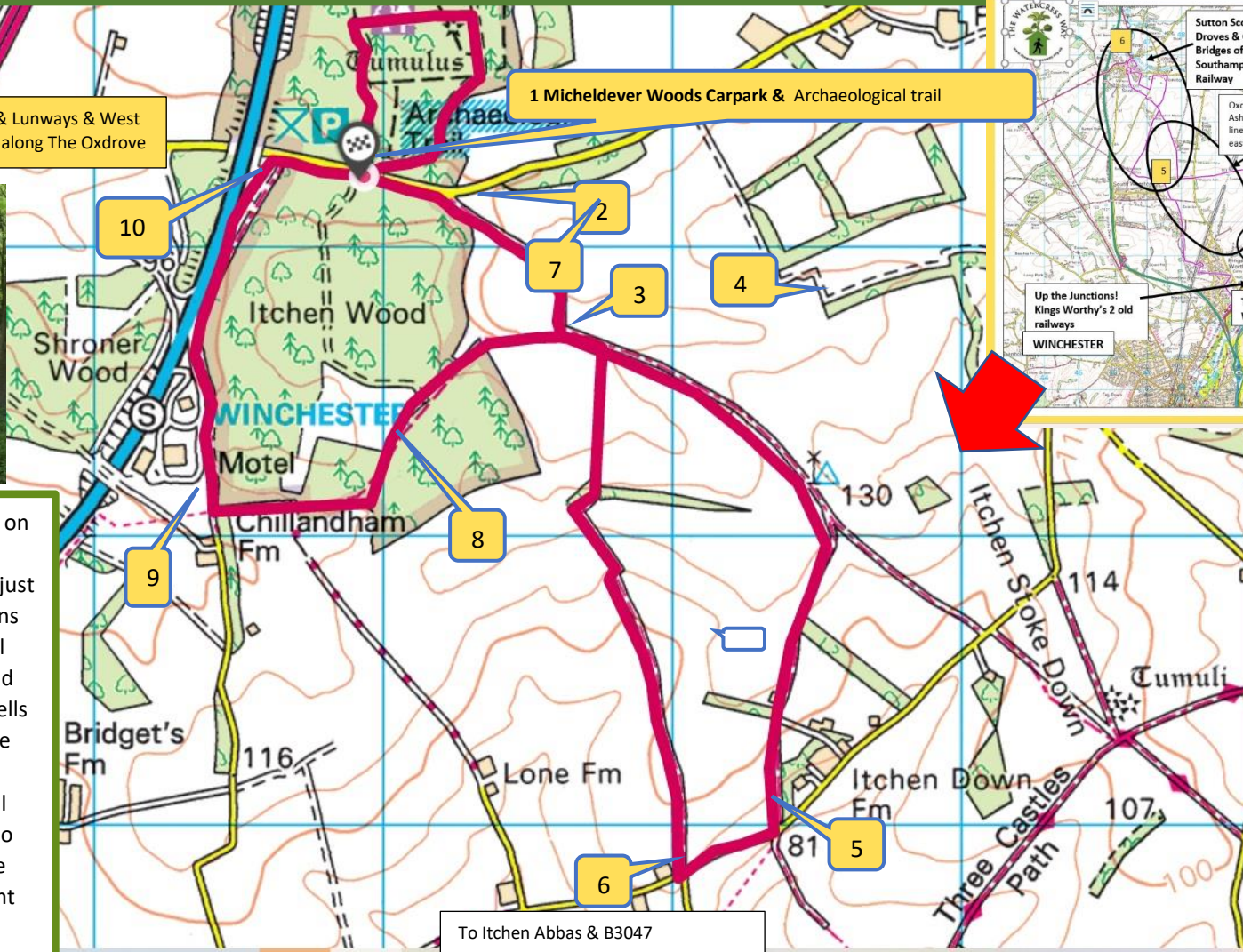


A 6.5 mile circular walk, along 1.6 miles of the northern part of the WW. It can be shortened to 4 miles or lengthened & is suitable for children, and dogs under control. It is on grassy & gravel tracks and some roads without pavements. Some tracks can become overgrown. No services. Wear appropriate clothing OS map app: [WW 11 km Micheldever Itchen Wood loop purple \(ordnancesurvey.co.uk\)](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk)

WW West to A33 & Lunways & West to South Wonston along The Oxdrove



Rolling chalk downland on the River Itchen's southern facing valley, just outside the South Downs National Park. Beautiful mixed ancient woodland famed for spring bluebells and Muntjac deer. Wide open fields & vistas. Optional Archaeological Trail with Iron Age banjo enclosures, Bronze Age burial barrows & ancient holloways & droves (livestock tracks)



ACCESS Carpark: Micheldever Woods Forest England FC off Main Rd to Northington from the A33

OS Map SU530362.

Post code SO21 1PP.

What3words: punctual. rent. pity.

Buses No 95 Winchester to East Stratton: Lunways bus stop, & walk along Northington Lane east to Micheldever Woods (no pavements)

WW trail SE to Alresford

www.thewatercressway.org.uk for information on walking, cycling & horse riding routes, heritage & wildlife, contacts & how to support our work on increasing access to the old railways & conservation. Charity No 1167675. Find us on social media, TripAdvisor, YouTube. O.S. Map Licence 100063718. Please follow the latest Government Countryside Code



Directions with watchpoints	
The Watercress Way trail	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From Micheldever Woods car park follow WW waymarkers for 1.4 miles. Turn left out of the carpark along Northington Lane. (No pavements, fast road.) <i>This is part of the historic Oxdrove livestock route .</i> 2. As the woodland ends, look for the bridleway, next to a worn down holloway, signed on the right of the road. It heads SE to Alresford. Stay on this gently undulating main track, called The Oxdrove Way, for 2 km, heading SE. Pass by the first bridleway to the right, your return route, stage 3. Can shorten the route by going from Point 3 to Stage 8 onwards, and just loop Itchen Woods. 3. Leave the WW trail at the 3rd bridleway to the right, just after an ivy encrusted windpump on Itchen Down, heading downhill, south for 0.6 miles, to Northington Rd . If you miss the turning carry on to the first height restriction barrier then go right along Northington Rd 4. Turn right along Northington Rd, past Itchen Down Farm, heading SW .Continue on Northington Rd (no pavements) until the junction with Rectory Lane, just before Spreadoak Cottages Can extend the walk here by carrying on over Itchen Stoke Down to Three Castles Path and keep turning right to return to point 5) Or you can access Alresford, another 4 miles to the Watercress Line Station
The Green Lane	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Turn right (North) up the bridleway locally called Green Lane. <i>Great views SW to Cheesefoot Head, Winchester.</i> Follow this pleasant bridleway up and down hill, with its dogleg turns, to an evergreen shelter belt, then go downhill back to the WW trail. <i>Spot the majestic solitary oaks in the huge arable field on the left.</i> 6. At the bridleway intersection turn left, on the part of the WW you walked on between stages 2-3 for a few 100ft until the first bridleway to the left heading west into Itchen Wood. To shorten the route, carry straight on back to carpark
Itchen Wood	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Follow the bridleway heading west, with fenced arable fields either side and enter Itchen Wood. Keep bearing left up hill, a deeply worn track with woodland either side. Ignore small tracks to right and left. Itchen Woods (bridleway access only) and Micheldever Woods (open access) are working forests, please keep to the only public right of way through Itchen Woods. <i>You may spot Munjac deer.</i> 8. At the top of the hill carry on over a junction of tracks, a wire fence is to your right. Can be overgrown here. The bridleway arcs right, west through tall beech trees & in Spring, bluebells and you eventually pass a broken down gate. Ignore bridleway to the south, left. Carry straight on till you reach the end of Itchen Wood at Chillandham Lane, metalled as a road to the left (goes down to the B3047 in Itchen Abbas) . 9. Take the gravel track to the right (north), paralleling the M3 and Service Station. A noisy section! Follow this downhill until you reach Northington Rd North again, with the M3 underpass just to the left. 10. Turn right, back on the WW for a few 100 feet to the car park and to access Forest England's interpreted Archaeological Trail. (No pavements)

Written by DoE volunteers and Kim Adams Trustee June 2021

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