

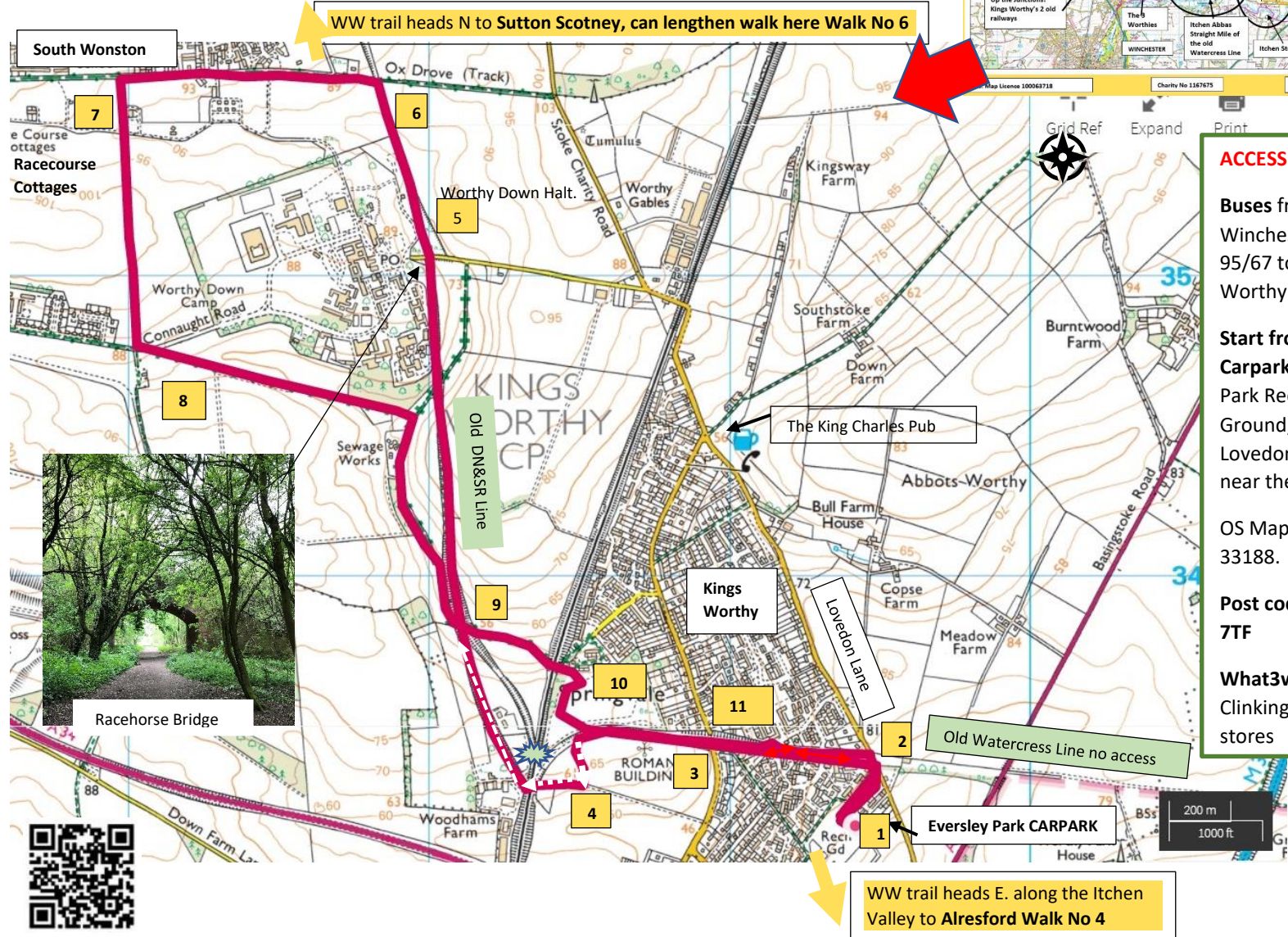
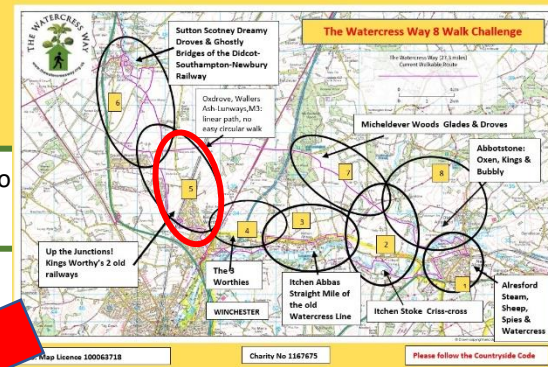


Walks from the Watercress Way No 5/8: Up the junctions!

Two shady railway tracks, a Georgian racecourse, a World War airfield with pill boxes & a SINC

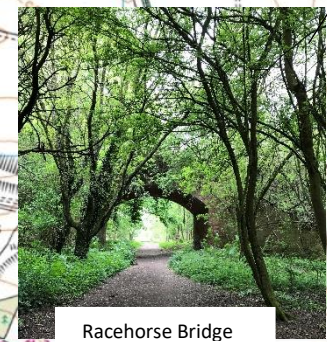
A flexible, circular walk between Kings Worthy & South Wonston 6.5 miles

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



WW trail heads N to Sutton Scotney, can lengthen walk here Walk No 6

WW trail heads E. along the Itchen Valley to Alresford Walk No 4



Approximately 3 miles of the South-North section of the WW is followed through rolling chalk downland. It can be shortened/extended & is suitable for children, and dogs under control. It is on grassy & gravel tracks & a few pavements. Some paths can become overgrown and muddy. Wear appropriate clothing.

You start at the small town of Kings Worthy, NE of Winchester, which grew up around the 2 railways of **The Watercress Line** (Mid-Hants Railway) & The Didcot-Newbury-Southampton Line (**DN&SR**) closed mid-20th C. These joined the current mainline train line separately at Winchester Junction.

This walk gives good views of the defensive system built early 1940's for Worthy Down airfield, South Wonston, & Worthy Down Halt with its rare wildlife. The walk crosses Winchesters 18th C Racecourse, and follows the Oxdrove, an ancient livestock herding route.

ACCESS

Buses from Winchester No 95/67 to Kings Worthy

Start from Carpark: Eversley Park Recreation Ground, off Lovedon Lane, near the A33.

OS Map SU 49414 33188.

Post code SO23 7TF

What3words: Clinking. dissolve. stores

	Directions	Watch points
The Watercress Line	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> From the car park at Eversley park recreation ground go behind the Worthies Social Club buildings and take the first footpath to Lovedon Lane not Gillingham Close, following WW waymarkers. At Lovedon Lane, turn sharp left, crossing over the old bridge of the Watercress Line (narrow pavement) Turn first left at the kissing gate to enter Broadview, a grassy linear park. Cross Wesley Road via two kissing gates, see the mosaic interpretation board in between. Go down Broadview hill to Wesley Rd, cross over and bear right then first left. Turn up the small ascending path signed Kim Bishop Walk This narrow path is the old track bed of The Watercress Line. It goes over Springvale Road by a high bridge and through scrubby woods to Hookpit Farm housing development 2020, known locally as Top Field or Hookpit Farm. Check way markers here: The 2021 route should bear left across to Woodhams Farm Lane to meet the southern end of the disused Didcot-Newbury-Southampton railway track (DNSL), designated a bridleway. Otherwise follow the western boundary of Top Field down to Burnett lane, then left under the height restriction barrier and main line tunnel. Follow Hookpit Farm Lane under Two bridges, turning sharp left up onto the DN&SR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at the interpretation board in Eversley Park, about White Lane drove, the Observatory Corps and Lord Eversley, champion of open spaces who lived close by in Abbots Worthy. The Social club was established 1920 as an old comrade's club Lovedon Lane Bridge & Broadview is the infilled deep cutting of the Mid-Hants line, well named because of views SW across to Winchester including the site of a Roman villa. Imagine 'Navvies' hand-cutting the chalk in the 1860's, and JCB's filling it in with M3 waste in the 1980's. Like all the disused railway sections, active management by volunteers maintains access & improves habitat diversity by layering shrubs, planting indigenous species & creating glades & log piles
Worthy Down & The DNSL track bed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The old railway track bed (gravel and cinders) stretches 1.5 miles from Woodhams Farm through a deep cutting then a series of embankments towards South Wonston. Stop a while at Worthy Down Halt. To shorten the walk, exit the WW at the interpretation board south of the platforms up a small incline to Hookpit Farm lane. Take the first left, a bridleway which brings you back to point 9. At the end of the track bed, Just after the WW interpretation board go up steep ramp to the Oxdrove and turn left/west. Go under a height restriction barrier: DO NOT take the first right along Drove Links Road at the Watercress Way sign. The walk can be lengthened here , see Sutton Scotney (Walk No.6) Otherwise continue straight ahead along the Oxdrove with South Wonston village to the right. Cross over the access road into South Wonston Pavilion and Recreation field. Turn left at the end of the recreation field (concrete public footpath sign) to walk along the side of a field. Look right to see the South Wonston Water Tower & white Racehorse Cottages. Where the path (once the actual racetrack) takes a left turn, turn right to take a smooth gravel path up the hill with Worthy Down Camp just to the left. This is a cycle path to Winchester opened in 2021. Cross Connaught Road through two gates, taking the signposted bridleway to the left. Go through scrubby woods & open fields keeping Worth Down camp to the left. At the junction with Hookpit Farm track turn right, with pony paddocks to the right and the Watercress Line track bed/Watercress Way parallel on the left, up the embankment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worthy Down Halt was built 1918 as a small single platform to serve Royal Flying Corps (RAF). It upgraded to a N and S platform when it connected with mainline Southern Railway to Winchester. It closed in 1960 & was abandoned. In 2020 a SINC was designated, a special conservation site (acid plants on railway cinders in an alkaline area of chalk downland). The two interpretation boards give snapshots of the heritage and the ecology, & famous people (Laurence Oliver and Bomber Harris) Beautiful views across old Racecourse (1590-1896) Racehorse cottages are on the site of the original grandstand. It was subsequently used as a military camp. The solitary ivy clad black roofed Dutch Barn is a relic from the WW2 airfield. Hookpit Farm track- see a tree shrouded pill box. Imagine soldiers crammed in ready for action in case of a German invasion in 1942!
The Watercress Line	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Go under the impressive red brick two bridges of the DN&SR . Hookpit Farm lane becomes a grassy track leading to a tunnel under the mainline railway. Go under the height restriction barrier to the road part of Hookpit Farm Lane. Take the first right up Burnett Lane & bear right back towards the mainline railway , a short steep hill with a playground to the left in front of Blackberry Field houses. Go through kissing gate into field and stay to the right, parallel to the mainline train track until you reach scrubby woods. The trail will either lead you through the scrubby wood which masks the Watercress Line track bed or just to the north of it. You meet Kim Bishop Way Retrace your steps back to Eversley Recreation Ground carpark via Wesley Rd, up over Broadview hill, turning right along Lovedon Lane, and next right along the footpath leading back to the car park. <p>Images & content by DoE volunteers & Kim Adams Trustee 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two Bridges carried the spur to the mainline for the DNSL upgraded for WW11 traffic. The 1970s development of Hookpit Farm Lane, Springvale was built on the old farmhouse of Hookpit. Access to Tesco & King Charles Pub .e. Access was granted by HCC to open up The Watercress Line in 2020 as part of the green space of the 'Top Fields social housing project'. Winchester Junction had a signal box and Victorian cottages to house the railway workers (demolished in the 1960s). The Watercress Line met the main line here. It was only briefly joined up to the DN &SR line in WW2.