



Registered Charity
No. 1167675

The Watercress Way is a waymarked 26 mile circular trail, near

Winchester, Hampshire. It follows parts of two disused Victorian railway lines, linked by historic livestock droves.

This short walk following part of the Watercress Way is on gravel tracks & pavements. Suitable for children and dogs on lead. It can be shortened/extended.

Buses from Winchester. Carpark: Arlebury Park Recreation Ground SO24 9EP

SU 5866232345

Perhaps visit our **sponsor** pubs, cafes & shops, spot our logo sticker in windows.



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www.thewatercressway.org.uk

Walks from the Watercress Way : the Alresford Gateway: A circular walk : 4-6 miles 'Echoes of the Past: trains, sheep, watercress, spies and eels! '



Some background heritage: Old Alresford is mentioned in Domesday Book 11th C. New Alresford was planned as a T-shaped town with its huge fishpond (Arlesford Pond) by Bishops Henri de Blois and Godfrey de Lucy in the 13th C. It has held a market for 800 years. It became a regional wool staple town, with 32,000 sheep once counted in Broad St in the 19th C. The last sheep fair was in 1973. Much of Georgian Arlesford remains built on Norman foundations. The whole 26 mile route of the Watercress Way is famed for watercress production which boomed here after the 19th C. railways built. The key to watercress production is a constant 51 degrees spring water. The chalk springs and clear waters of the Arle and Itchen have been used for millennia. For more history see <http://www.alresford.org/history.php> and for old photographs see www.arlesfordheritage.co.uk. **Look for Millennium Trail interpretation signs along your route**

Points of interest -

1. 1 Exit Arlebury Recreation Ground car park, then turn left towards shops
2. Go down Pound Hill, a 19thC animal pound. Cross over The Dean to West St, with some of the few remaining burghage plots (100 by 10 m) nationally (see Burgage Mews by Co-op). 18th C Coaching Inns Bell & Swan, two of 32 pubs here until early 20thC.
3. Turn right up Station Approach. At the public toilets: look for plaque on Cold War link & Portland spy ring. The Station opened 1865 for the Mid- Hants Railway. Closed and dismantled 1973. In 1985 it was partly reopened to Alton (10 miles of original 17 miles) as the Watercress Line. Visitor centre named after Edward Knight, Jane Austen's nephew, an early director of the railway. The railway led to a boom in local watercress production.
4. Backtrack to St Johns Church Its tower has a Saxon cross (rood). Opposite are the graves of Napoleonic War officer prisoners. Take path east out of back of church yard next to station, past Church Cottages. View of working heritage railway, goods yard.
5. At the railway bridge turn right onto Sun Lane, then first left down the footpath parallel to the line. These fields used for the sheep waiting for market, called FieldFair. **(SHORT CUT BACK TO EAST ST, POINT 7)**
6. Long Barn (Lavender Barn coffee shop was the site of the Sheep Fair, moved out of Broad St because of the smell and noise in the late 19thC. It had pens for 18,000 sheep. **(NARROW PAVEMENTS)**
7. East St destroyed by successive fires. Georgian buildings remain. Old pubs are now houses: Sun Inn (linked to cricketer John Arnott) and No 9 Peaceful Home (popular for Drivers) Look how many buildings had entrances for horses and carriages. Turn right down Broad St.

8. Broad St –site of original sheep fair, still has weekly markets and recently a Watercress Festival in May. Look for No 48(smithy) 50(US HQ WW2) Horse & Groom pub 400yrs old, Wykeham House: old workhouse next to tanneries. Just after Old Fire Station go behind Globe pub for views of the lake and info on WW2 plane crash. **(NO PAVEMENTS)**. Then go down Mill Hill and Ladywell – look for the chalk spring and little rivulet.
9. Follow the Millennium Trail along the R Arle. Stop at the 13th C. Fulling Mill. The river bed here is called Pinglestone Rd used for horse drawn flatbeds piled with watercress from local beds to the station. **If you want to see a watercress farm, cross in front of Fulling Mill and follow path turning left to look into Pinglestone Farm, then return.**
10. Pass Amy's duck feeding station and continue along river past US Army's Hambone's dog grave just before entrance to Arlebury Recreation grounds. **CAN SHORTEN ROUTE BY RETURNING TO CARPARK THROUGH RECREATION GROUND**
11. Continue along river to the Eel house –Sargasso Sea link. Then uphill past the futuristic Drove House with views over the Arle valley, fish ponds and imposing white 19th C Arlebury Park
12. Turn left down Drove Lane. Look north to the vineyards planted 2018 covering Fob Down hill, a Neolithic+ Roman settlement.
13. The Watercress Way continues west along the old droves to Sutton Scotney. **To extend your walk you can go west around Fob Down and return to Alresford by several different footpaths/minor roads.**
14. look right, west, from Drove lane : views of Rivers Arle and Itchen meadows used for tank training WW2 and Watercress Line embankment.
15. Cross over the main B3037 (The Avenue)to New Farm Rd. At the bridge is a clear view of the disused Watercress line running 7 miles to Kings Worthy. **(NARROW PAVEMENT)**. Continue to South Rd on the left. The Watercress Way carries on along New Farm Rd to exit Alresford towards Kings Worthy along Spring Gardens.
16. South Rd is actually a historic drove. Turn off it left along Bridge Rd back to The Avenue. So where is the bridge?! Look for houses built on the old line: 'Whistle-stop'!
17. Walk back east down The Avenue through 19th C limes, past octagonal toll house, back to carpark . Perins School is partly built on the old railway.