



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 follows part of the Watercress Way. It can be shortened/extended & is suitable for children and dogs under control. It is on grassy and gravel tracks and pavements. Some footpaths can become overgrown with nettles. Wear appropriate clothing.

Buses from Winchester No 95/67

**Carpark:** Eversley Park Recreation Ground, Lovedon Lane, SO23 7TF [SU 49414 33188](tel:0196249414).

**What3words** Clinking. dissolve. stores

Perhaps visit our **sponsor** pub-The King Charles

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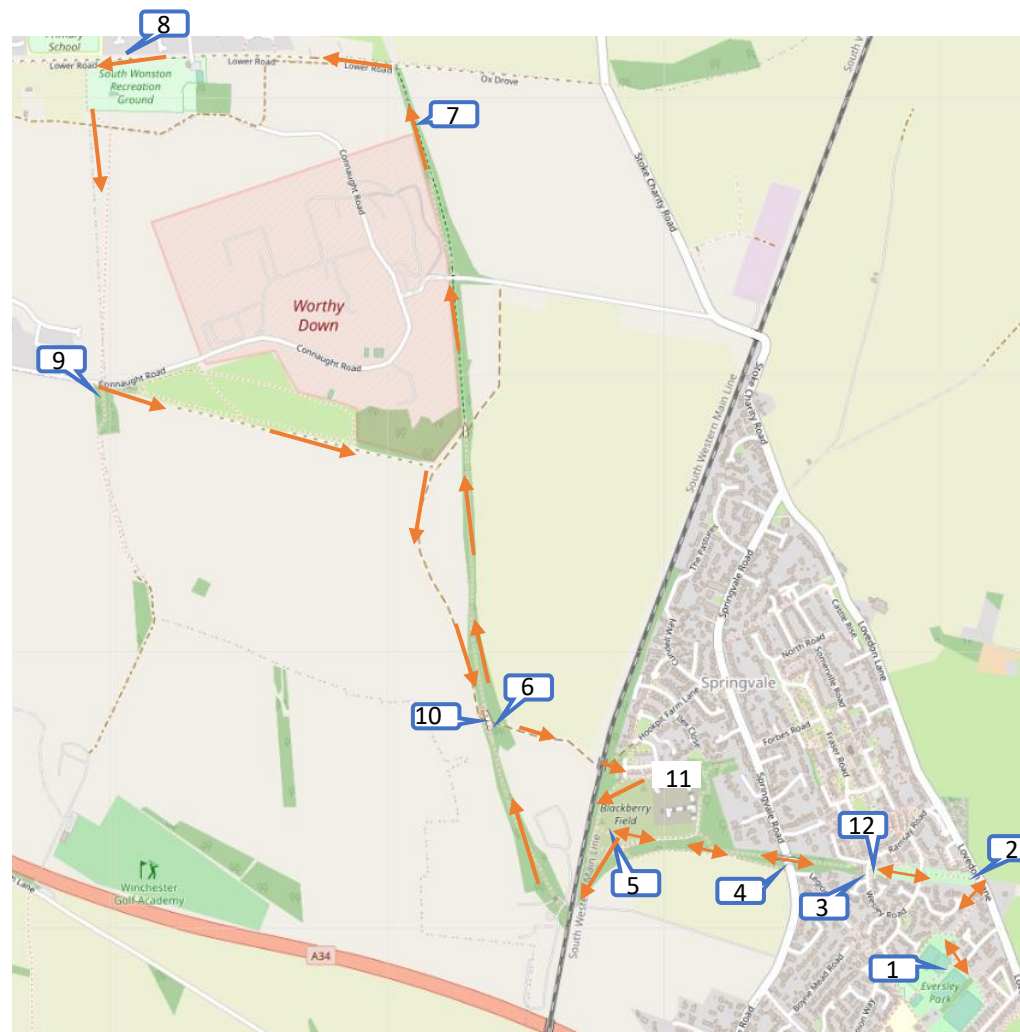
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[www.thewatercressway.org.uk](http://www.thewatercressway.org.uk)

Charity No **1167675**

## Walks from the Watercress Way: The Kings Worthy Loop: A circular walk: 6.3 miles

Up the junction, shady track beds, runways and pill boxes of 20<sup>th</sup> C Worthy Down Airfield



**Some Background heritage:** Broadview is on top of a very deep infilled cutting of the Mid-Hants line, it is well named because of views SW across to Winchester. As you stand with the mosaic board behind you, imagine workers(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 The Worthy's Conservation Volunteers and Watercress Way **volunteers**) is needed to maintain a clear access and improve habitat diversity by layering of shrubs and glades. This part of the trail is full of **artefacts** from WW11: look for pill box defences for the Worthy Down Airfield. The two **interpretation boards** at Worthy Down halt and further north near the Oxdrove intersection give a glimpse into the history of the area including testing and famous people including Laurence Oliver and Bomber Harris when it was a military camp.

1. *Have a look at the interpretation board in Eversley Park on the historic drove road called White Lane, the Royal Observatory Corps and Lord Eversley, champion of open spaces who lived close by in Abbots Worthy. From the car park at Eversley park recreation ground, head to the footpath toward the park and turn right across the field until you are behind the Worthies Social Club buildings. ( established 1920 as an old comrades club) Pick up the footpath to Lovedon Lane, ignore the footpath to Gillingham Close. At Lovedon Lane, turn sharp left, crossing over the old bridge of the Mid-Hants Line (NARROW PAVEMENT)*
2. Turn left at the kissing gate and enter Broadview, a grassy linear park. Cross Wesley Road via two kissing gates but visit the mosaic interpretation board just to the right. *Look West to see the site of a roman villa, just to the left of the railway line*
3. Walk down Broadview grassy hill to meet Wesley Rd again cross over and bear right then first left: a staggered crossing. Turn up a small ascent also signed Kim Bishop Walk
4. You are now on the old track bed of the Mid-Hants Line again: the fairly straight narrow path, continue across the road bridge of Springvale Road through scrubby woods to Hookpit Farm housing development 2020, *known as Top Field*
5. **Check way markers for route: pre 2020 go across Top Field down to Burnett lane and then left under the height restriction barrier and main line tunnel along Hookpit Farm Lane to Two bridges then sharp left up ramp onto the Didcot-Newbury-Southampton old railway (DNSL). The 2020/21 route bears left across to Woodhams Farm Lane to meet the end of the DNSL open for public access in Kings Worthy next to the Nursery/equestrian centre.**
6. Follow old railway track bed (gravel and cinders) for 2.5kms through a deep cutting (Woodhams Farm End) and a series of embankments towards South Wonston. Stop a while at Two Bridges, where the old DNSL split after its upgrading for WW11 traffic. Stop a while at **Worthy Down Halt** interpretation board before continuing north along track bed. *Built 1918 as a small single platform to serve Royal Flying Corps (now the RAF). Upgraded to a N and S platform when connected with mainline Southern Railway to Winchester. Closed 1960, abandoned but is now a SINC a special conservation site (acid plants on railway cinders in chalk downland)*
7. Just after the **WW interpretation board** (*information on the Racecourse, Worthy Down Camp +Oxdrove*) 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. Carry on straight ahead on the Oxdrove (avoid left turn) with the village of South Wonston to the right. The gravel path becomes a footpath. Cross straight over access road into South Wonston Pavilion and Recreation field
8. 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 + Racehorse cottages (*made from wood of old grandstand of racecourse used from 1664- 1887*). Towards the end of the field, the path (*once the actual racetrack*) takes a left turn. Turn right to take a smooth gravel permissive route with Worthy Down Camp to the left. *Beautiful views across old Racecourse and Spitfire runways. The solitary ivy clad black roofed Dutch Barn is a relic from the WW2 airfield*
9. Cross Connaught Road through two gates and take the signposted byway to the left. Go through woodland and open fields keeping Worthy Down camp to the left. Head right along Hookpit Farm track, a bridleway with pony paddocks to the right. (*the low concrete buildings and paddocks were part of the WW1/2 Army camp's sewage works*). This runs almost parallel to The Watercress Way, which is on the left up at the top of the railway embankment.
10. Go under the impressive red brick two bridges of the DNSL as Hookpit Farm lane becomes a grassy track leading to the tunnel under the mainline railway. Go under the height restriction barrier to the road part of Hookpit Farm Lane. (*The 1970s development in front of you was built on the old farmhouse of Hookpit*). You can divert along Springvale Rd to **The King Charles pub**. (*This was originally The Springvale Hotel, possibly for WW2 officers.*)
11. Take first right up Burnett Lane, a short steep hill between houses. Go through kissing gate into field and stay to the right, parallel to the mainline train track until reach scrubby woods which masks the Watercress Line track bed (*This is Winchester Junction, where the Watercress Line met the main line, just to the west (right) Access was granted to extend the public access to the route of the track in 2020 as part of the 'Top Fields project' ( a social housing development )*)
12. Follow the Watercress Way, also called the Kim Bishop Walk down to Wesley Rd. Staggered crossing to Broadview grassy hill. Turn right along Lovedon Lane pavement, and next right along footpath leading back to Eversley Park Recreation Ground and car park.