



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

Shady railway tracks, a Georgian racecourse, an airfield and & pill boxes

A circular walk from Kings Worthy to Souths Wonston 9 km 6.5 miles (can shorten/lengthen)

This short circular walk follows part of the Watercress Way. It can be shortened/extended & is suitable for children, and dogs under control. It is on grassy & gravel tracks and just a few pavements. Some paths can become overgrown and

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.

Approximately 4.2 kms on the South-North section of the WW is followed on this walk, through rolling chalk downland.

You start at the small town of Kings Worthy which grew up around the 2 railways of **The Watercress Line** (Mid-Hants Railway) and The Didcot-Newbury-Southampton Line (**DNSL**) closed mid-20th C. These joined the current mainline train line near Winchester Junction (Point 4/ 10).

This walk gives good views of the defensive system built in the early 1940s to defend the airfield built at Worthy Down near South Wonston, and the famous Worthy Down Halt Platforms, now conserved for its rare ecology. It crosses Winchesters Old Racecourse, and follows the Oxdrove, an ancient livestock herding route.

Do become a 'Friend' of the charity online and receive regular updates. Perhaps become a **volunteer** or a **sponsor**.

Please consider a donation to use this route map.
www.thewatercressway.org.uk

Charity No 1167675




The Watercress Way

 Some visible pill boxes from WW2

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

1 Eversley Park CARPARK

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

	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 Mid-Hants 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 Blackberry Field. 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 DNSL. 	<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 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 and 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 2.5kms from Woodhams 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 8/9. 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. To lengthen the walk, 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. 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 Mid Hants 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). Upgraded to a N and S platform when it connected with mainline Southern Railway to Winchester. Closed 1960 and abandoned. In 2020 designated a SINC a special conservation site (acid plants on railway cinders in 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 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. 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. 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 	<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 a supermarket & The King Charles Pub here. 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 DNSL in WW2.