



Netley to Botley walking guide

This nine-mile walk from Netley to Botley offers something for everyone—sea views, salt marshes and a river teeming with birdlife, woodland plus a ferry ride.

This walk takes you through Royal Victoria Country Park, once home to a 19th-century military hospital, down to the shore at Southampton Water, before striking inland to Hamble and the ferry ride to Warsash. After following a path along the

River Hamble and the salt marshes, home to numerous birds, pass through woodland to Manor Farm, from where it's a short walk to Botley.

Leave Netley station by Platform 1 exit and follow the blue Royal Victoria Country Park sign, left. At the end of a row of houses, take the narrow tarmac lane to a road, where you turn right. With an information board on the left and a lodge house on the right, enter the Royal Victoria Country Park and continue until you pass a large red-brick building on the right. Then fork left to the imposing Netley Chapel (1).

From the front doors, walk to the remains of the pier head at Southampton Water. You'll be able to see refinery stacks across the water. Go left to the sailing club and down to the shoreline, following this for more than a mile.

Climb the steps and pass under the pipeline ahead (2). On returning to the beach, turn left at the first marker post, signed Strawberry Trail in red, passing a bench in the woods, left. At a crossing, go left, then across a grassy area following the green Hamble Common Circular Trail sign to cross a plank bridge and pass through an attractive stand of beech and oaks.

To avoid the worst of the mud, at the next green sign, keep straight on, slightly right, and emerge by a three-way finger post to your left (the third finger may be missing). Go right towards Hamble village. Reach a minor road, cross and go left to a car park. Turn right through a gate and into the woods, ignoring ways off (3). At the water's edge, follow the track left, then the red marker sign, right, to reach a car park. Cross to the road, turning right to the waterfront. Turn left and take the unmistakable pink ferry over to Warsash.

On the far bank, turn left along the river (4), which is teeming with yachts and birdlife. When you reach the Universal Marina boat yard, turn right by the blue shed, then left in the yard to Café Lulworth, the perfect spot for lunch (5). Rejoin the riverside path beyond the café's toilets and continue to a minor tarmac road and straight on to the busy main road where you go left, passing the roadside Spinnaker pub, opposite (6). You'll hear the noisy M27 nearby, so walk quickly, cross the river bridge, under the railway bridge, with Bursledon station to your left.

Cross the road to Blundell Lane (7) and, with no footpath, walk facing the traffic to enter the Brixedone Farm/Foulkes & Sons Boatyard and under the M27 flyover ahead, then turn right, using a stile to a second stile. In 80 metres, by a riverside bench, fork left across the field.

At the crest, follow the footpath sign, which is ahead to your left. Following the worn path, cross two stiles, then the drainage channel, and go right (8). At the next fork, go left uphill, following yellow-ringed posts and then signs to Manor Farm Tea Rooms (seasonal opening), about one mile further on.

By the farm entrance, follow the sign to St Bartholomew's Church, where you turn left, then left again at the road. Pass The Old Rectory and follow the footpath sign, right, to the next marker post, then diagonally right to pass between barns and a house on the right (9).

Go through the kissing gate, right on a tarmac lane and left at the footpath sign, following a track over a stream and uphill to a minor road. Here turn right, then left at the junction and continue on to emerge on Botley High Street. To get to the station, turn right on the busy A334, passing The Naked Baker at Botley Mills to your left (10).