

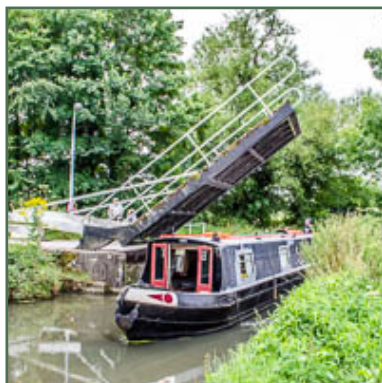
# Mill House, Butter Wood and Basingstoke Canal, Hook, Hampshire



Moderate Terrain

3 miles  
Circular  
1.5 to 2 hrs

071213



## Access Notes



1. The walk is relatively flat with just a couple of gentle slopes. The paths are a mixture of stone towpaths, quiet lanes and woodland paths, the latter of which can be very muddy so good waterproof footwear is recommended after periods of rain.
2. There are several gates, a few squeeze gaps plus two stiles to negotiate (both of which have adjacent gaps which should be easy for most dogs).
3. There is one short section of road walking so take care with children here.
4. The heath is grazed by cattle for conservation and one field may be holding a couple of smallholding cows so take care with dogs.

The Mill House has its own large mill pond set within beautiful gardens making it the perfect relaxing place for refreshments before or after your walk.

A 3 mile circular pub walk from the Mill House in North Warnborough, near Hook. The walking route provides a lovely mix of environments, allowing you to explore open heath, mixed woodland, fields and a long stretch of a pretty canal towpath. You'll also have chance to explore the impressive ruins of Odiham Castle along the way.

## Getting there

North Warnborough is just south of Junction 5 of the M3, between Odiham and Hook. The walk starts and finishes from the Mill House pub on the B3349 Hook Road (note there are two Hook Roads – you want the further east of the two) just a few hundred yards from its junction with the A287.

Approximate post code **RG29 1ET**.

## Walk Sections



### Start to Butter Wood



Leave the pub car park back to the road, cross over with care and turn left along the pavement. You will pass the pretty white frontage of the Mill House over to the left. Immediately after the pub (and its large willow tree), cross over the road to turn left down a small lane. Follow this lane with the pub on the left and Waterside Cottage on the right. Follow the lane as it bends right, passing a timber framed house with a pair of beautiful stained glass windows.

At the fork, keep left and a few paces later turn left at the T-junction. Pass through the gate alongside the cattle grid to enter Bartley Heath and Warnborough Greens. This large area of heath, grassland and woodland sits on clay and gravel and over the years has been used for grazing and small scale gravel extraction. Today the site is conserved using rare breed cattle for grazing and it creates an important

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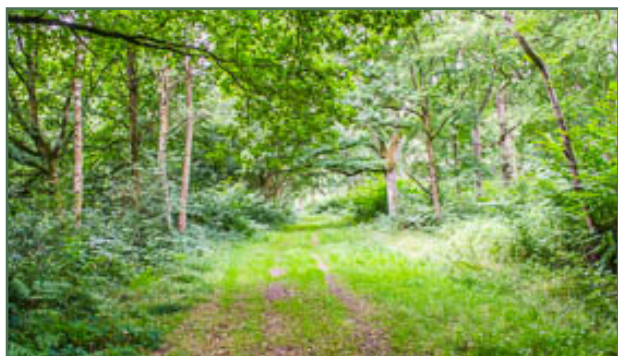


habitat for plants such as early marsh orchids and birds such as meadow pipits.

Keep ahead along the tarmac lane enjoying the range of wildflowers. At the staggered crossroads keep straight ahead. A few yards later you'll reach a T-junction with a ford to the left. Turn right here through a gate alongside another cattle grid. Pass between a few houses, go through the gate ahead into an area of scrubland and dog-leg right then left to join a narrow path between wild hedgerows.

Follow the narrow path winding through a belt of pretty mixed woodland and you'll come to a crossroads of paths (just before the road). Take the gate ahead to reach the road, cross with extreme care and take the footpath opposite. Follow the narrow path running under power lines through a wild meadow. Cross a tarmac access lane to reach a metal vehicle barrier which marks the entrance of Butter Wood.

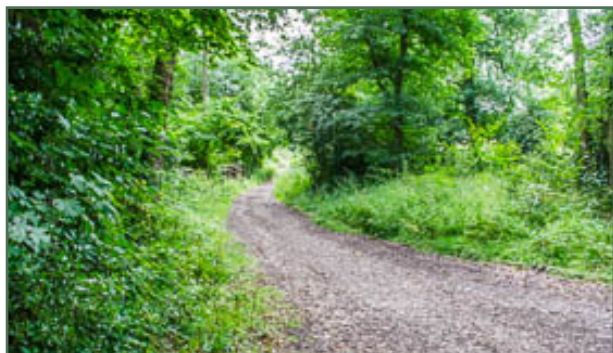
## 1 → 2 Butter Wood to Nap Pond



Walk straight ahead on the clay track heading into the woodland. Eventually you'll reach a yellow arrow marking the path swinging left, follow this and a few yards later you'll reach a fork in the path with yellow arrows marking the two paths. Keep left at this fork and you will then meet a staggered T-junction with a wide grass track. Turn right along this.

Keep ahead on the main grassy ride marked with occasional yellow arrows, ignoring any smaller tracks off to the left and right. Eventually the track leads you through a small gap alongside a wide wooden gate to reach a T-junction with Nap Pond hidden beyond the trees opposite.

## 2 → 3 Nap Pond to Greywell Tunnel



Turn left here down the main stone forest track. Pass over the motorbike restricting sleepers to leave the wood and a few paces later you'll reach a T-junction with Hook Road. Cross over with care and turn left along the road edge for just 100 yards, passing Royal Oak House on the left. Turn right into Dorchester Way and then turn immediately right again through a narrow squeeze gap hidden in the hedge to reach a field.

Cross the field at about 11 o'clock to reach a stile in the hedge opposite. Cross this into the next field (which may be holding a

couple of small cows). Keep close to the right hand fence to cross the next stile into an enclosed path between house gardens on the right and horse paddocks on the left.

Keep ahead passing an old farm outbuilding on the left and cross straight over a concrete access lane via a pair of squeeze gaps. Turn immediately left for just a few paces and at this point glance right to see the arched entrance to Greywell Tunnel within the Basingstoke Canal.

## 3 → 4 Greywell Tunnel to Odiham Castle



The Basingstoke Canal was built in the late 1700s to form a link between Basingstoke and Weybridge, from where goods could continue on to the Thames. One of its most impressive engineering achievements was the construction of the Greywell Tunnel, a 0.7 mile long tunnel which avoided the need to extend the canal around Greywell Hill. To traverse the tunnel the boatmen would lie on their backs and use their legs to propel the boat, a process that could take about 6 hours. The canal was never a commercial success, even before the advent of the railway, and the tunnel collapsed in 1932. At a constant temperature of 10 degrees Celsius with high humidity, the derelict tunnel is now home to a number of bat species including Natterers, Brandts, Whiskered and Brown Long Eared bats. There have also been sighting of rare Barbastelle bats visiting the tunnel.

Keep ahead on the stone towpath with the canal down to the right. This section of the canal is not navigable and the crystal clear water (provided by chalk springs which rise within the tunnel) contrasts strongly with the black silt bottom giving a strange eerie feel. Look out for wildlife including swans, many types of ducks, water voles and freshwater fish.

After some distance you'll reach a line of buoys which marks the point from which the canal is navigable for boats. Continue ahead on the towpath and you're likely to see several ornate canal boats along this stretch. Soon afterwards look out for the remains of Odiham Castle on the left. Take some time to explore this.

## 4 → 5 Odiham Castle to End



As Odiham was half way between Windsor and Winchester, it was a frequent stopping point for Norman kings. Between 1207 and 1214 King John (the youngest brother of Richard the Lionheart)



had Odiham Castle built as a stronghold but it was used primarily as a hunting lodge.

When you've finished exploring the castle, return to the towpath and turn left to continue your journey alongside the canal. A little distance further you'll pass out through a gate alongside a lift bridge which carries a small road over the canal. Cross straight over to continue on the towpath opposite. Beyond a couple of cottages you'll be able to enjoy views both sides of horses grazing.

Pass under a brick arch bridge and immediately afterwards turn left up the gravel slope to reach the main village road. Cross over and then turn right passing a petrol station on the right. Further along on the right you'll pass Castle Bridge Cottages, a pretty row of timber-framed terraced cottages. Continue for just a few yards more to reach the Mill House on the left for some well deserved hospitality.

#### Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

#### Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and an Ordnance Survey map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.

