

# **A Pilgrim Guide to St James' Way From St James' Church Reading to God's House Tower Southampton**

## **The Confraternity of Saint James in the United Kingdom**



**CAMINO PILGRIM**  
THE CONFRATERNITY OF ST. JAMES

The Confraternity of Saint James UK is the largest and oldest English-speaking association of pilgrims.

The CSJ promotes the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela and provides support and services to pilgrims.

Amongst these services are: Practical Pilgrim Days, where around the country we provide an opportunity for potential pilgrims to learn more; a regular members' bulletin and newsletter; and a bookshop and library. We promote research and provide a bursary to young people undertaking research into the movement around St James, and we also offer help to elderly, frail or disabled people who might otherwise be unable to undertake the pilgrimage. We hold regular meetings and talks via Zoom as part of our annual programme of events.

The CSJ publishes Guides to many of the routes to Santiago and also runs two *albergues* for pilgrims at Rabanal del Camino (on the *Camino Francés*) and Miraz (on the *Camino del Norte*).

We also provide Pilgrim Records/Credenciales. Please note you do not have to be a member to obtain one. See more at **[www.caminopilgrim.org](http://www.caminopilgrim.org)**

Reading to Southampton

## **St James' Way**

### **Reading to Southampton... a Camino in England**

#### **An Overview**

The St James' Way is approximately 68.5 miles/110 kilometres long and has been designed for pilgrims who wish to walk from **Reading Abbey**, the centre of the cult of St James in England in the Middle Ages, to the port of **Southampton**, from where pilgrims may have sailed to France or Spain on their way to the shrine of St James at Santiago de Compostela in north-west Spain.

This route is mostly flat or undulating and presents no physical challenges. It goes through beautiful parts of the country and at times follows rivers and canals. On this route you will pass village churches, riverside pubs and historic sites.

The route is based on the Roman road from Silchester via Basingstoke to Winchester, and also includes the St James' churches at **Reading** (shrine to St James inside), **Bramley**, which has wall-paintings including St James, and **Upper Wield**, as well as the former priory at Monk Sherborne, whose church became the parish church at Pamber (not to be confused with the Norman church at Sherborne).

From Alresford, the Way follows the St Swithun's Way west to **Winchester**, England's capital under the Saxons. **Winchester Cathedral** was a Benedictine foundation, of which several buildings, including the Pilgrims' Hall, survive. Also Benedictine were St Mary's Abbey, also called the Nunnaminster, of which some foundations can be seen, and Hyde Abbey, of which the Gateway remains, and St Bartholomew's church is built of some of the stone. Nothing remains of the four friaries, though there are some fragments of the hospitals of St John and St Mary Magdalen. At the latter a 12th-century pilgrim burial showing signs of leprosy was found in 2012.

The route continues along the river Itchen past the **Hospital of St Cross**, which still gives out a dole of bread and beer to travellers, and past Southampton airport to **Southampton**, where a few fragments

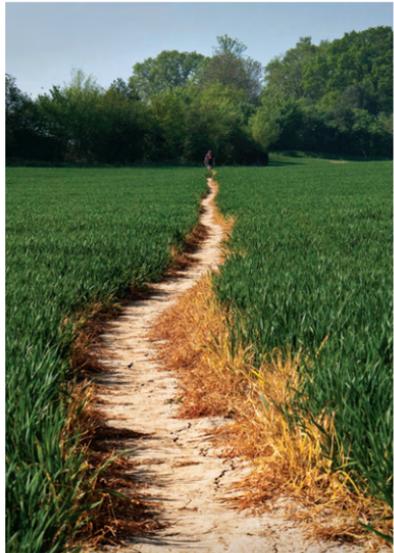
survive of the Augustinian priory of St Denis (also spelt St Denys). The medieval walls of Southampton remain, with the gateways where pilgrims embarked for destinations in France, Spain and the Mediterranean. Near the God's House Tower the Maison Dieu of St Julian's accommodated pilgrims.

Ferries no longer run from Southampton to France or Spain, but the Pilgrims' Trail connects Winchester with Portsmouth via Bishop's Waltham, where there are substantial remains of the palace of the Bishop of Winchester, and Southwick, where the parish church, dedicated to St James-without-the-Priory-Gate, contains remnants of the former Augustinian priory founded by Henry I, the founder of Reading Abbey. There is an annual pilgrimage around 25 July (St James' day) from Portchester church to Southwick, recalling the journey made by the Augustinian canons in c 1145 as they moved to a larger site.

### **Background to this guide**

This route has been devised to link **Reading Abbey**, centre of the cult of St James in England in the Middle Ages with the port of **Southampton**, from where pilgrims may have sailed to France or Spain on their way to the shrine of St James at Santiago de Compostela in north west Spain.

There is no documentary evidence that any pilgrims took this route. However, the St James' Way uses existing public footpaths as far as possible and takes in churches of St James and places of pilgrim interest. Since it was first devised further routes have been developed, most significantly the Hampshire County Council Millennium Footpath Trail, for the route from Winchester to Portsmouth, with a continuation in



*Ahead* ©Angelika Schneider

Normandy from Cherbourg to Mont-Saint-Michel, a pilgrim destination in its own right, as well as being one visited by pilgrims on their way to Santiago.

### **The Pilgrimage to Santiago**

**Rome, Jerusalem and Santiago de Compostela** were the three main pilgrimage destinations in the Middle Ages. A pilgrimage in the 11th century would have been for pious or penitential reasons; in the later Middle Ages pilgrimage became more of an industry, with many making the pilgrimage on behalf of others as well as for their own spiritual benefit. Pilgrims from Britain would have started from home and headed for a local port to take a boat either direct to Spain or across the Channel to France. They would probably have banded together with others for safety and protection to undertake the arduous journey through often war-torn lands.

Pilgrimage from England declined after the Reformation in the mid-16th century. The routes in continental Europe also declined but never really died. In the late 20th century the work of Don Elias Valiña, the parish priest at O Cebreiro in Galicia, the province in which Santiago lies, stimulated the massive renaissance of interest today. In 2019 almost 350,000 pilgrims arrived in Santiago having at least either walked or ridden the last 100km or cycled the final 200km of the route.

In recent years there has been much research on the routes to be found in Spain and France. The **Confraternity of Saint James** offers this route as part of the ever-expanding European network of pilgrim routes to Compostela.

### **The Link with the Camino Ingles in Galicia**

Pilgrims intending to start their pilgrimage in England on **St James' Way**, before continuing from **A Coruña to Santiago**, should collect pilgrim stamps in England and continue to collect them from A Coruña. The total distance is around 197 kilometres (England 110km, Galicia 87km) and therefore exceeds the minimum 100k requirement to obtain a Compostela from the Pilgrims office in Santiago. The Camino Ingles from Ferrol at 120kms approx. exceeds the 100kms minimum needed to obtain a Compostela in Santiago.

## Stages and Accommodation

This guide does not recommend particular stages. For those wishing to leave the route at various points, to return later, information is given about the location of train and bus services.

There is no dedicated pilgrim accommodation along the way, but the main towns have an extensive choice which can be found on any of the popular accommodation websites.

### Public Transport

It is possible to do the whole walk by using Reading as a base. The Southampton to Reading railway line can be used for much of the walk, supplemented by local buses and the occasional taxi. The stages below are possible with only two journeys by taxi needed.

Day 1 – Walk to Mortimer and return by bus.

Day 2 – Bus from Reading to Mortimer, walk to Worting, bus into Basingstoke, train to Reading.

Day 3 – Retrace steps to Worting, walk to Upper Wield, arrange for taxi back to Basingstoke.

Day 4 – Walk to Kingsworthy, get bus outside church into Winchester for train back to Reading

Day 5 – Retrace steps to Kingsworthy. Walk through Winchester to Eastleigh station and return to Reading by train

Day 6 – Train to Eastleigh and complete the walk, returning to Reading by train from Southampton main station.

Alternatively there is accommodation in Basingstoke, the Arlesford area and Winchester.

### Waymarking

Waymarking the route with the distinctive blue and yellow signs (provided by the Authorities in Galicia and put in place by CSJ volunteers) started in 2022 with the first section in Reading and West Berks (Mortimer). It is hoped to complete the rest of the route in Hampshire by mid 2022.

**It is advisable, therefore, to take the relevant OS map with you as back up.**



An overview map is provided in this guide.

The following maps cover the route.

OS Explorer Series (1:25,000, 2½ inches to the mile)

159 Reading, Wokingham and Pangbourne

144 Basingstoke, Alton and Whitchurch

132 Winchester, New Alresford and East Meon

OL22 New Forest

For Winchester to Portsmouth option: OL3 Meon Valley

NB Current versions of each map have a code to enable downloads of the map to a smartphone or tablet.

### **Distances**

The places along the route are in bold letters. The distance is given in miles from the previous point and the total miles walked/miles remaining to Southampton.

For those used to measuring the distance in kilometres please note that

1 mile = 1.6 km,

¾ mile = 1.2 km,

½ mile = 0.8 km and

¼ mile = 0.4 km.

### **Abbreviations used**

KSO – Keep straight on

KSO(L) and KSO(R) – Keep straight on Left or Right at a fork

FP – Footpath  
FB – Footbridge  
LH – Left Hand  
RH – Right Hand

### Suggestions, corrections and updates to this Guide

Please send suggestions, corrections and updates to the editor by email: office@csj.org.uk or by post to The Confraternity of Saint James 27 Blackfriars Road London

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It would be helpful if suggested changes or updates to the guide were written in the form of walking directions.

### Pilgrim Passport

*Please obtain a Pilgrim Record from the Confraternity of Saint James bookshop (csj.org.uk) before you leave on your pilgrimage. Passports are also available from the reception desk at Reading Museum as is a pilgrim stamp.*

**There are several churches along the way which have made pilgrim stamps available.** These are noted in the text.

The Route – Overview

This Walking Guide describes the route marked in blue on the map.



(Base map: Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2011)

Reading to Southampton

## **St James' Way – Welcome to Reading**

Visitors to Reading today will see a busy cityscape of congested roads, high rise office and residential blocks and a modern shopping centre. But look around and it's not hard to find one of the Medieval emblems of the town: the scallop shell which was the badge of the pilgrim. That is because for hundreds of years in the early Middle Ages pilgrims came from across the country to visit Reading Abbey where they would venerate one of the most revered relics in the English church: the hand of St James. Many of those pilgrims stayed in the abbey hospitium – a building that still stands today.

In the 21st century Reading is proud to be the starting point for St James' Way – the English leg of the Camino Ingles – which run the 68 miles to Southampton and then continues in Galicia in Northern Spain, linking A Coruña and Ferrol with the final destination of Santiago de Compostela.

Just as in the Middle Ages, Reading is a communications centre. Pilgrims will find it easy to get to the town and be able to find accommodation in one of our many hotels and dine in a huge choice of restaurants. They should make time to visit the remains of the once monumental abbey, which was also the mausoleum of King Henry I, see the exhibits in the nearby museum and explore the town centre before setting out on the Camino.

Look beneath the modern façade and you will see a town with a rich history intimately bound up with its abbey and the association with pilgrimage. I hope that you enjoy your stay.

David Stevens  
Mayor of Reading 2021

## Walking Notes – Reading

The starting point – **Reading (All amenities) 68.5 miles/110 kilometres**

**Reading** is a large town at the confluence of the Rivers Thames and Kennet. It is on the Great Western Main Line railway and the M4 motorway is nearby. It lies some 40 miles (64 km) west of London. Reading had national importance in the medieval period as the site of Reading Abbey. Today it remains a commercial centre, with links to information technology and insurance. Reading also hosts two universities and a large student population. It is also home to one of England's biggest music festivals, the Reading Festival. The borough of Reading has a population of over 162,000 and the town has all services. A wide range of accommodation is available.

### Reading Abbey

Reading Abbey was founded on 18 June 1121: this was the day when a small party of monks arrived from Cluny and Lewes priory to start work on the site. The Abbey was founded by King Henry I – the youngest son of William the Conqueror – and was his place of burial. It was a royal Abbey from its inception and lavishly endowed with lands and relics.



JOHN R. MULLANEY ILLUSTRATION  
WWW.THETOPFORAW.COM

© 2009 John R. Mullaney. First 2009

Reading Abbey – used with permission of John R Mullaney

Reading to Southampton

It remained under royal patronage until its dissolution by Henry VIII in 1539. At the time of the dissolution it was one of the ten wealthiest monastic foundations in England.

The last Abbott, Hugh Cook Faringdon, was a friend of Henry VIII. Two years later, however, he refused to surrender the Abbey and was executed in front of it for treason on 15 November 1539. The Abbey was strategically located on major communication routes linking London and Windsor to the south and west. Throughout its 400-year life it was visited regularly by the King and his Council, hosted parliaments, royal weddings and other historical events. This connection continued after its dissolution, when the Abbey was taken into the hands of the crown and monastic buildings were converted into a royal palace visited by Edward VI, Philip and Mary, Elizabeth I and Charles I. The Abbey also held the lordship of Reading and had a significant impact on the social and economic development of the town.

A significant portion of the monastic site has been occupied by Reading gaol since 1786 (now disused). Architecturally, the Abbey was predominantly a Romanesque building, completed in 1164 with only a Gothic Lady Chapel added subsequently in 1314.

The Abbey was one of the leading Benedictine Abbeys in Europe, and its possession from the early days of the **Hand of St James the Great**, among a collection of 230 or so relics, endowed it with great significance for visiting pilgrims. The Hand was a gift from the Empress Matilda to her father Henry I on her return to England from Germany following the death of her husband, the Holy Roman Emperor. Henry gave it to the Abbey in 1125. It became the centre of the cult of St James in England with tales of miracles and cures documented from the 12th century. A book of miracles survives describing 28 miracles, mostly cures. Henry II is known to have asked for the hand to be brought to him for prayer before particularly dangerous sea voyages.

At the dissolution the relic disappeared, supposedly hidden by the monks before their departure. In 1786 workmen building Reading Gaol found a mummified hand in the walls. Believed to be the Hand of St James, this became part of the collection of Reading museum. The collection was

dispersed in 1855 and the hand passed through various owners to Charles Scott Murray, who used it in his private chapel at nearby Danesfield House. On his death it passed to the Roman Catholic church of St Peter in Marlow, where it rests today.

The Abbey church was dissolved in 1539. The buildings were gradually degraded, particularly during the English Civil War when the site was part of the defences of the town. The ruins were closed to the public in 2009 for safety reasons. The Abbey Gateway was also closed for refurbishment. Both were re-opened in 2018 following extensive works funded by a £3.1m Heritage Lottery Grant and now form the central core of the Abbey Quarter. **This a site worth visiting with its many information boards describing the original buildings.**

The Friends of Reading Abbey was set up in the 1980s to promote awareness of the Abbey's importance and to encourage interest in and understanding of its history. Their website [www.readingabbey.org.uk](http://www.readingabbey.org.uk) provides more information.

### **St James' RC Church, Reading**

**Pilgrims are encouraged to start their pilgrimage at St James by contacting Father Christopher Heaps or his Parish assistant**



St James' Church, Reading ©Forbury John Painter

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**(office hours) at the church office (01189 574171). If available, he will show pilgrims round the church, provide the first pilgrim stamp and send you off with a pilgrim blessing.**

The Church was built between 1837 and 1840 from designs by A.W. Pugin, Catholic architect of the Palace of Westminster. Its founder was James Wheble who owned the grounds in which stood the ruins of Reading Abbey. The major portion he sold to Reading Corporation; this portion is now the Forbury Gardens. Part of the grounds he reserved for a new Catholic Church.

The church has a modern statue of St James in a new shrine setting off the RH aisle with pilgrim staff, calibasse (gourd drinking vessel), book and one scallop shell on the left shoulder. There is a modern stained-glass window of St James in the LH aisle. Above the altar there is a stained-glass medallion in the centre upper level windows with the figure of St James and a coat of arms with three scallop shells on the RH window. There is a coat of arms with three scallop shells in the lower series of modern stained glass windows behind the altar. The font is a high-quality, reused, carved, decorated, four-pillared 12th-century capital from the cloister of the Abbey.



Statue of St James with the Hand in a casket below ©Robin Dorkings

## **Reading Museum** (open Tues-Sat, 10am-4pm, free, donation requested.)

In 2018 a new Abbey Gallery opened to display finds from the conservation work and tell the Abbey's story, including a reconstruction of part of the Abbey cloister with fine Romanesque carvings. A model of the Abbey in medieval times gives an impression of its size; despite the survival of street-names such as Abbey St and Abbey Square, it is hard to envisage this from what remains on the ground today. There is also a timber from the Abbey Wharf, along with an impression of what this would have looked like in medieval times.

The Museum also has a 19th-century copy of the Bayeux Tapestry as well as an extensive gallery devoted to excavations at the Roman town of Silchester, which the St James' Way passes.

## **Reading for modern pilgrims**

Accompanying this guidebook is a leaflet describing 13 pilgrimage related sites in Reading and Caversham. We encourage pilgrims to plan time (up to a half day) to visit as many of these as possible before setting off. You will then have lots of background information to make your pilgrimage more enjoyable.



Photo ©Reading UK

Reading to Southampton

### **The Walk...**

Between Reading and Mortimer there are two opportunities for refreshments, at the Cunning Man pub on the canal and at the Fox and Hounds at Sheffield Bottom. The walk to Mortimer is 19km/12 miles and should take around 5 hours without stops. The first section is along the Kennet and Avon canal into open countryside. After that there is some road walking on mostly rural roads, some fields and woodland. After Sheffield bottom there are some minor ups and downs.

### **Leaving Reading (0/68.5)**

From the railway station leave by the South Exit marked Town Centre. On leaving the station turn **Left** past the bus stops then immediately **Right** along Blagrove Street. Pass the Town Hall and Reading Museum on your left. There is a statue of Queen Victoria facing you. Swing **Left** in front of the statue and take the narrow path to the left of the church through the churchyard past the 800-year-old St Laurence's church. On your left you will see the building housing the original pilgrim's hospital, now a day nursery for local children. Cross the main road carefully into the Victorian Forbury Gardens and bear half left, past the famous Maiwand Lion on your right and head along the path which leads to the main road. Turn right on the road for a few metres and turn into St James Church. After visiting the church continue up the alleyway and turn right at the end. Proceed to the entrance to Forbury Gardens on the right (opposite the Abbey Gateway with its small statue of St James). Turn right into the gardens, keep on the right hand path heading for the arched gateway leading into the Abbey Quarter. There are several information boards in the preserved Abbey ruins, so try to build in some time to explore the ruins as well as visiting St James' Church.

If starting from St James Church, head up the alleyway and turn right at the end and follow the directions above to the abbey Quarter.

Beyond the abbey ruins can be seen the walls of Reading Gaol (now closed) and along the Chestnut Avenue is a memorial to its most famous inmate, Oscar Wilde. There are information boards giving more details. Exit the Abbey quarter and head down to the river and Chestnut Avenue.

From Chestnut Avenue, with the river on your left, head towards a large

office block and turn **Left** with a bridge across the river in view ahead.

Continue to King's Rd, cross and use the steps to the **Left** of the Outlook pub to continue on the banks of the river, which bends to the right. Despite the private-looking nature of this area, waymarks confirm you are on a public right of way. Pass King's Reach Court. The path finishes at Duke St/London Street. Turn **Left** over the bridge (Highbridge Wharf).

Turn **Right** to cross London Street and the next road (Horn Lane) and **KSO(L)** along the left hand (southern) side of the river passing the Oracle shopping centre restaurant area on the left, noting the site of Simonds brewery across the water. Continue until you come to Bridge Street. Turn **Left**, cross the road at the crossing and go **Right** to the **blue** railings and, at the end of the **black** railings on the bridge, turn sharp **Left** down beside the apartment building then **Right** to continue along the **RH** side of the river and pass the lock and weir.

**KSO** under the road bridge and continue ahead on the footpath. Go under a second road bridge and **KSO**. 1 mile later go under a third road bridge. You can either **KSO** the path ahead or, if it is muddy, veer **Right** to go under a 4th road bridge (A33) by the junction with Foudry Brook. Reach a lock ½ mile later (approx. 1 hour) after which the path continues on the **LH** side of the canal. Go over a **FB** before the railway and before the next lock cross a **FB** on your right and **KSO with the canal and lock on your RHS (do not cross the 2nd FB)** ahead until you reach:



Along the Kennet ©Fanny Willand

Reading to Southampton

#### **4 miles Burghfield Bridge (No. 14 4/64.5)**

Go under the bridge and **KSO** ahead. Pass the Cunning Man pub on your left. **KSO**, ½ mile later cross a large wooden **FB** and continue on the **RH** bank of the canal.

Pass another lock and 1 mile after the **FB** reach another one. Cross over, continue on the **LH** bank, and go under the motorway ¼ mile later. Pass Garston Lock and **KSO**. 200 yards after passing Sheffield Bottom Lock, with seats to the left, reach the road and a swing bridge. (10.5k/6.5 miles)

**You can turn Right here to reach Theale railway station, which is ½ mile away on the Newbury/Berwyn line.**

To continue on the route turn **Left** along Hangar Road. There is a pavement on the **RH** side. ½ mile later reach the roundabout outside Theale Lakes Business Park. Turn **Left** to Fox and Hounds pub along Deans Copse Road on the left at:

#### **Sheffield Bottom (6.5/62)**

*NB After heavy rain the Hosehill Lake can be prone to flooding which covers the path around the lake. In this case, take the road around the lake from the roundabout until you see the metal 7-bar gate on the left (see paragraph below) and continue up to the Police Training College and beyond.*

Immediately after the Fox and Hounds cross the road into **Hosehill Lake Nature Reserve**. Turn **Right** where the path splits and follow the path to the right with the lake on your left. Keep the lake on left and after going about one third way round lake go through a metal 7-bar gate on the right onto the tarmac road and turn **Left** (Jacques Lane) and follow this road (be careful, no pavement) uphill for approximately one third of a mile past the entrance to the **Police Training College**. Shortly after this turn **Right** onto a tarmac road (Keepers Cottage on the left at the entrance to the road). Proceed up the road which leads to Home Farm which you can see off to your right.

When the road veers **Right** to go to Home Farm follow Public Footpath signs pointing left and **KSO(L)**. Cross the stile/go through gate and **KSO** in the field beyond, with a fence to your **RH** side. At the end of the second field go through a gate/style and turn **Left** downhill with a hedge on the LHS. **KSO** and when you reach a corner go through the metal gate and into the woods. **KSO** in a straight line and  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile later after turning **Left** to go through the churchyard, past the church of St Mary (12th century), emerge on a road at a junction in:

2 miles **Sulhamstead Abbots** (8.5/60)

### **Sulhamstead Abbots**

The name **Sulhamstead** means 'Narrow Valley Homestead' and was given to the area by the first Saxon settlers. There may have been a Danish Camp during the troubled times just before and during King Alfred's reign. The abbots were the abbots of Reading, for the Abbey owned the manor throughout the Middle Ages. Their old manor-house survives in Brazenhead Cottages. Once dedicated to St Bartholomew, the church may have been rededicated to St Mary during the time of the plague. It has a fine Norman font. A plaque in the church remembers Robert Venn, the man who improved and hybridised the potato in the century that saw the tragedy of the Irish Potato Famine. He lived at Cottage Farm.

### **A pilgrim stamp can be obtained at St Mary's Sulhamstead.**

Ring ahead to Ros Coulson on 01189 700 357 / 077 669 18248 (try landline first) or e-mail [ros.coulson18@hotmail.com](mailto:ros.coulson18@hotmail.com). Ros will do her best to make sure the church is open and make the parish hall available if pilgrims wish to use the facilities.



St Mary's, Sulhamstead

Cross Folly Lane and **KSO** down Sulhamstead Road (signposted Burghfield) past Abbots Farm on the right. Eventually you reach a white house, The Trees, on the right, about 100 m after this turn **Right** down Ash Lane (no name sign here). Follow the road down to the ford and then up to join Clayhill Road. Turn **Right** and, crossing the road, **KSO(L)** past Garland Junior School to find footpath on left opposite Coopers Place.

Turn **Left** and pass to the right-hand side of the school. Follow the path downhill to the bottom and turn **Right** at the T-junction. Follow the path left uphill with railings on your right. Keep ahead to access road at top of hill leading to the junction with School Lane (note hydrant sign and woods opposite). Cross the road bearing slightly **Left** to find the entrance to woods (note metal pole and rubbish bin). Take this path through the wood to find steps with white railings. Climb these and turn immediately **Right** along main road past the EG Pinewood Esso garage and the Nisa Local shop.

**You are now in Burghfield Common.**

**It is possible to take a bus back to Reading from a stop to the side of the Nisa Local shop.**

Cross with care to the Methodist church to find footpath on left with cycle barriers. Turn **Left** and **KSO** to next cycle barriers then turn **Right** along Bunces Lane with Palmers Lane opposite, passing Zoom House on the left.

At the end of the lane an unmade road crosses with the gate to Wokefield Common on the left. Bear **Right** to find bridleway signs and take right hand path through woodland (not the unmade road) that leads to the main road with "Burghfield Common" and speed limit signs to the right.

Cross with care to path opposite which bears **Left** and is joined by a path from the right. Head towards and to the **Left** of post to main road (green gates). Cross with care (fast traffic may appear suddenly from the right) to bridleway opposite. This bears left then right to waymarkers at car park.

**KSO** into woods ignoring crossing paths to find green posts. Look for bridleway opposite running between Pine Lodge and Starvale. **KSO** downhill then uphill to T-junction. Turn **Left** and follow the bridleway

around to the right ignoring crossing paths to find blue gate on the corner of Longmoor Lane.

**KSO** along the lane ahead to its junction with Windmill Road. Bear **Left** and cross to find a metal “kissing gate” into a field. Ignore this, taking the right-hand footpath beside the left-hand field fence, coming to a recreation area on the left. **KSO** to Victoria Road with St John the Evangelist church in view ahead in:

**3 miles Mortimer (12.5/56)** (Parish of Stratfield Mortimer) (Pub, shop, train station some distance away)

### **Stratfield Mortimer**

Mortimer was named, in Saxon times, after the Strad-Feld or “Street-Field”, the open land around the Devil’s Highway, the Roman road from London to Silchester.

The Mortimer part of the place-name stems from the Lords of the Manor, the Mortimer family, the Earls of March from Wigmore in Herefordshire.

**If you are doing this route in sections, or want to return to Reading by train, then turn left down Victoria Road past St John’s church and the Horse and Groom and KSO for 1.5 miles turning Right up Station Road at the end. This is a longer way back to Reading than the bus.**

**There is a bus service back to Reading from here opposite Badgers Croft in Victoria Road. The return via bus is faster than walking to the train station.**

### ***To continue:***

Walk up left hand side of West End Road from Victoria Road and look for Morrisons supermarket on the left. Turn **Left** before the supermarket onto a tarmac road. Look across to see the waymarked path with grey pillars/red stripes at its end. **KSO** crossing three un-made up access roads to reach a gravel surface turning area outside Summerlea and Prospect Cottage. Bear straight on to end of Summerlug and then **Right** followed by **Left** into Drury Lane. Turn **Right** to next junction with 30mph limit signs then **Left** along Turks Lane. Turn **Right. KSO(R)** at the bend at Longview, (No Through Road sign) and **KSO** ahead on the bridleway.

Pass Simms Stud Farm (you are in Hampshire now) and **KSO** ahead gently downhill all the time and cross West End Brook.

Veer slightly **Left** on the other side, NOT Right alongside the fence, and enter Nine Acre Copse. Watch out for deer here. **KSO ON FP** slightly uphill and follow the path until it emerges onto a field with electricity pylon. Follow the path across the field to the stile.

Cross the stile/gap in hedge and keep dead straight ahead under the power cables to cross the brook and join the path you can see ahead from the stile. Follow the path across the field to the top **Left** corner and pass to the side of the gate. If the gate is locked, go **Left** onto sunken path before the gate. **KSO** to the junction with a red post box. The amphitheatre is on your right after a few steps up the lane (Wall Lane). **KSO** Church Lane with an English Heritage sign for Roman Silchester.

### **Silchester Roman City**

Reading Museum and English Heritage have extensive information about the history of Silchester Roman City, Walls and Amphitheatre. Unlike most large Roman towns in Britain, Silchester was abandoned at the end of Roman rule and never subsequently built over. Today, the complete and well-preserved circuit of the town wall, and the amphitheatre, are the principal remains that survive above ground. Silchester (Callewa) originated as the centre of the Iron Age tribe of the Atrebatas towards the end of the first century BC. After the Roman conquest of Britain in AD 43, Callewa was adopted by Rome in the late 1st century, when the rectilinear street grid was laid out and public buildings



Silchester Roman Walls

constructed. It was defended from about AD 200 by an earthen rampart, replaced by a stone wall in about AD 280. As the administrative centre of the Atrebates, whose territory extended over much of southern England, the town flourished until the end of the Roman occupation of Britain in AD 409-10, but was abandoned by about the mid-7th century.

The town was rediscovered through extensive excavations from the late 19th century and a remarkable collection of finds is now displayed in Reading Museum. Since the 1970s excavations led by the University of Reading have provided new insights into Calleva's Iron Age origins, the Roman Town and later occupation.

**KSO** ahead on Church Lane to find:

### **1.5 miles Silchester Church (14/54.5)**

**There is a pilgrim stamp hanging on a string in the church porch.**

Monks from Reading Abbey came to Silchester for rest and recreation at Rye House, where their laundry was also done. One of the earliest Christian churches north of the Alps is concealed beneath the fields of the Roman town.

The church is usually open. The North doorway is c. 1230. The chancel screen is early 16th-century with an angel frieze. Note Katherine of Aragon's pomegranate badge in the tracery on the left-hand side. The wall paintings include brick tracery with flowers. On the side walls there is an image, possibly from the 13th century, of St Anne teaching the Virgin to read.

The remains of the Roman town are worth visiting depending on how much time you have planned for this section of the walk. The walk from the church through the middle of the site and back along the surviving walls to the church will take around 45 minutes.

To do this turn **Left** after exiting the church towards a barn on the right. Take the path past the barn and at end turn **Left** onto a dead straight drove road. The site of the Roman Town of Calleva Atrebatum is to either

side. There are several information boards along the track. At the end of the track (nearly ½ mile from the church), turn **Left** and head towards a gate marked **Church via South Gate**. Go through the gate and follow the path with the Roman Wall on the left. After bending left the wall is more intact and there are several more information boards along the way. Follow the wall to a gate by the road with the church in view and turn **Right** on to the tarmac road to **Three Ashes**.

If you wish to proceed straight from the church along the route, after a mile or so, you will pass a lane on your left by Pound Cottage. **KSO**, round a bend, to the T-junction and The Pound House. Turn **Right** here and, just before the road forks left into Ash Lane, turn **Left** down the FP between the houses.

**KSO** and cross sturdy **FB** over Silchester Brook, cross two fields and go over a stile into Bramley Frith Woods. Turn **Left** and follow the path round the perimeter till you reach the entrance to an electricity sub-station of the National Grid/PowerGen. Turn **Left** and follow the path through the woods keeping the fence on your right. At the exit from the woods turn **Left** onto the tarmac road then **Right** at the footpath sign along the tree lined path.

### **Silchester – Worting**

If you want to break your journey here **KSO** ahead at this point. Turn **Right** at the junction onto Minchens Lane and then **Left** into the village of Bramley and its railway station (Reading – Basingstoke Line, 1 mile).

To continue on the route: at the end of the field pass to the **LH** side of the hedge and then by the farm fork **Right** over the stile by the building with the bell tower top (formerly a school but now a private house) and enter St James' churchyard.

#### **Church of St James, Bramley**

**There is a pilgrim stamp located on the right-hand side of the church as you enter, behind the yellow curtain.** If the nearby parish hall is open there are toilets inside.

**St James, Bramley** was built in 1160 on the foundations of a Saxon church, with flints taken from the ruined walls of the Roman settlement of Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester), and is unusual in that the chancel is the same height and width as the nave. The brick tower was added in the 1630s and the brick Brocas Aisle was added by the architect Sir John Soane around 1800, to house the tomb of Bernard Brocas, who died in 1777. The medieval wall paintings include a depiction of St James and a huge St Christopher opposite the south door.

This interesting church is open to visitors Monday to Saturday 9-30 to 4-30 pm and, following the 10:30am service, noon till 5pm on Sundays. Contact Revd Mark Anderson (07480 067756) or Church Warden Rachel Barclay Smith on 01256 542251.



Church of St James, Bramley ©F. Wiland

Pass in front of the church and continue up its **LH** side (facing front door) and then veer **Left** between hedges to pass through the new section of the cemetery. At the end go through a gate and turn **Left**. Continue past allotment gardens and emerge on the road.

Turn **Right** along this road for ½ mile to the junction, Bramley Corner, turn **Right** and then immediately **Left** on to a FP into a field. Head for the top left corner of the field – beyond the pylon to your left. At that corner pass through the hedge. You will now pass 4 more fields.

Passing the first two the path is narrow with the hedge on one side and a fence on the other. In the third and fourth fields the hedge continues to your left. At the bottom of the fourth field cross a stile and **KSO a concrete lane** past College Farm and emerge on Silchester Road opposite the Methodist Chapel in: **Little London**, 6 miles.

'Little London' is a common village name in England, assumed by some to have its origins in the quantity of seasonal Londoners who would camp for the harvest season. However, in common with many 'Little Londons' approximately 50 miles (80 km) or so from London, it has also been claimed that the name was given by settlers escaping the Great Plague of London of 1665. Alternatively, it could have been corrupted from 'Little Loddon', the name of a stream that marks the southern extent of the village. Until the mid-19th century the village was a local centre for brick-making, the local clays being recognised as particularly good since the Roman period. Examples of clay roof tiles produced in this area for the nearby Roman town of Calleva Atrebatum can be seen at Reading Museum.

Turn **Right** then immediately **Left** down New Road. A quarter mile later, turn **Left** down a grassy lane between hedges. When you reach the end of the woods there is the option to cross the FB into a field and walk along the RHS of the field to the tarmac road. This shortens the walk along this busy road but is not the official path. Otherwise do NOT cross **FB** and stile over into fields ahead, rather turn **Left** and then **Right** on a shady wooded path and reach Bramley Road. Turn **Right** along it to the junction with the A340 at:

**1 mile Pamber End (21/47.5)** (Pub, regular bus to Basingstoke station)  
The Queens College Arms is opposite to the left on the other side of the road. Cross the A340. To your right as you cross is a marked FP. Follow this as it goes straight across the middle of the big field in front of you towards the woods on the other side. Cross the **FB** enter the woods veering **Right** and then **Left** round the side of a church and cross stile to turn **Right** on the drive.

Turn **Left** here to visit the Priory Church of the Holy Trinity, Our Lady and John the Baptist (usually closed). It might be possible to arrange to have the Priory opened by Mr David Cullum. Ring ahead on 01256 850315 or 07432 318317 or e-mail [d.cullum483@btinternet.com](mailto:d.cullum483@btinternet.com). David gives a very informative talk on the origins and history of the Priory. You should allow 30-45 minutes for this if David is available.

The Benedictine Priory was established around 1100 as a cell of the Abbey of St Vigor in Cerisy-la-Forêt in Normandy. Only the chancel and tower remain. The approach path is on the line of the nave, which would have been similar in length to Christchurch Priory or Romsey Abbey. The priory was strategically located halfway between Winchester, the capital of England, and Windsor, the military headquarters. It proved to be a very convenient stopping point for Kings and important groups moving between these places. It was suppressed in 1446 and passed to Eton College. It was forfeited by Eton and given to the God's House Hospital in Southampton. From there it came under Queen's College Oxford (hence the name of the pub nearby) who restored the building in the mid-19th century. The priory continues to be owned by The Queen's College in Oxford and they are required to maintain it and ensure that services are held on a regularly. There are usually 2 services each month.



Pamber Priory ©F. Wiland

Retrace your steps. At the end of the drive turn **Left** onto a minor road and at a junction by the school on the left **KSO(L)** ahead and after that cross the bridge over the stream and as the road curves left take the waymarked FP to the **Right** up a FP along the edge of a field with woods to your **RH** side.

300 yards later turn **Right** into woods veering **Left** when you get inside. At the end (field opposite) turn **Left** along the boundary fence (to the left of it) and continue through the second field to the **Right** of it and in the third field pass to the **LH** side of the fence then go over to the stile to pass between houses. Emerge on the road near Priory House in:

### **1 mile Monk Sherborne (22/46.5)**

**Sherborne** means 'bright stream' and the Monk prefix arose from the existence of a priory at Pamber, at the northern end of the parish. The manor of Monk Sherborne, held by Alnol Cild in the reign of Edward the Confessor, is mentioned in the Domesday Book, when the manor belonged to Hugh de Port. His son, Henry, established a Pamber Priory as a cell of St Vigor in Cerisy-la-Forêt in Normandy.

Cross over and go down Kiln Lane ahead, tarmac, concrete and then a grassy track between hedges. At T-Junction at the bottom turn **Left** onto a farm track, pass to the **Right** between farm buildings at Rookery Farm then **Left** and emerge on a minor road. There is a wayside cross to the left at the junction.

Turn **Right** then almost immediately fork **Left** up a shady lane, slightly uphill all the time. Over to your right is the church of All Saints, Monk Sherborne.

As the path turns right towards a road at the top, cross over and go down the path ahead and slightly left. At the dip in this path turn **Right** to follow the way-marked FP – it is clearly marked as being on the **LH** side of the hedge. The route follows the line of the hedge for 1 mile. Keep onwards with golf course on left and hedge on right. As you near the A339 main road cross over onto the narrow path on the right. This will take you to the main road. Cross over CAREFULLY and **KSO** the other side on FP to the **LH** side of the hedge. Cross two fields, reach a minor road, turn **Right** then shortly turn **Left** up a concrete lane leading to:

## **2 miles Worting Wood Farm (24/44.5)**

Pass between farm buildings, veering **Left**, stay on the concrete lane and turn **Right** opposite houses onto a path with three lock-up garages to the right. Pass to the **LH** side of Worting Woods. ½ mile later turn **Left** down a grassy lane with tall hedges to either side. **KSO** (almost literally) eventually passing to the side of St Thomas of Canterbury Church (usually closed) on Church Lane in:

**1.5 mile Worting (25.5/43)** adjacent to Basingstoke (regular bus service into Basingstoke from bus stop a few metres on left on main road).

**Basingstoke** (Population 87,000) is in Hampshire and lies across a valley at the source of the River Loddon. It is 48 miles (77 km) southwest of London, 30 miles (48 km) northeast of Southampton, 16 miles (26 km) southwest of Reading and 19 miles (31 km) northeast of the county town, Winchester. Basingstoke is an old market town which was mentioned in the Domesday Book.

The town has all services including a very frequent rail service to London Waterloo and to Reading, Winchester and Southampton. The Railway Station is 2.5 miles to the East. If you wish to walk into Basingstoke just before the tunnel follow the footpath on the left, it leads away from the road, but reaches a T-junction after about 100 yards. Turn Right there, KSO through the tunnel, and turn Left when reaching the road again to go into Basingstoke.

It is sometimes possible to get a stamp at St Thomas of Canterbury. Try the website [winkleburyandworting.org.uk/aboutus/whos-who](http://winkleburyandworting.org.uk/aboutus/whos-who). There are useful phone numbers on the site.

**Bus services 11 or 76 go to the station. Buses are approx every 30 minutes weekdays and Saturday, less frequent on Sunday. You could also call a taxi to take you to Basingstoke Station. There is a taxi rank outside the station. Try Alpha taxis on 01256 520140 if you want a taxi into and from Basingstoke, usually very helpful and with a range of vehicles.**

There is a mixture of accommodation at all price ranges. Further information on the usual websites, Booking.com, Expedia etc.

## Worting – Upper Wield

*To continue:*

Turn **Right**, cross the main road, then **Left** up the FP to the **LH** side of the church hall. Cross the stile at the top then almost immediately follow a path through a new housing development to cross the bridge over the railway lines.

**KSO** ahead on the other side between open fields, then go down a slope between hedges veering **Right** at a junction on the path and **KSO** ahead (i.e. a staggered junction) with fencing to your right. Reach and cross Pack Lane and continue ahead on the bridle path to the **LH** side of the hedge or the cycle path to its right. **The cycle path makes for easier and faster walking.**

The bridle path (maybe overgrown) follows the course of an old Roman road and is, therefore, dead straight. **KSO** for 1.5 miles ignoring turns. Eventually the path rejoins the cycle path near where the housing estate on your left ends. **KSO** up hill and when the cycle path veers left (near an information board), **KSO** veering right onto a grassy path following the line of the hedge to your right. **KSO** ahead here, slightly uphill towards the woods. **KSO** through the woods (new housing estate on left) until you emerge near Southwood Farm. **KSO** with Yara International tank on the right then turn **Right** between farm building at the bridleway sign. Immediately go **Left** past office buildings and down the farm driveway to a tarmac road. Turn **Left** and head to the main road (A30). Cross over and turn **Left** heading slightly **Right** up to the traffic lights on the busy A33.

Cross over both carriageways with care and turn **Left** on the grass verge (no path marked) for approx 120 yards. You will see a footpath sign on the right leading downhill with a golf course visible ahead and to the left. Follow this path up through the woods with the golf course on the left until it bends left below the M3 motorway. Go uphill, cross the footbridge, turn **Right** at the end and follow the path and tarmac road straight ahead. Turn **Left** at the Kempshott Park exit gates and follow the road into Dummer.

**4.5 miles Dummer (Pub) (30/38.5)**

According to the Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names, the name Dummer derives from the Old English Dunmere, signifying pond on a hill – dun meaning hill and mere meaning pond. Dummer is a village with a lot of thatched cottages and a pub, The Queen Inn, which serves food until 3pm. Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York, was brought up at Dummer Down Farm.

All Saints Dummer: The Domesday Book of 1086 records the existence of a church at Dummer. The oldest part of the present building is the 12th-century south doorway, now a round-headed window, close to the font. There is a rare 15th-century rood canopy above the Norman chancel arch. The church is usually open.

At the crossroads in the centre of the village turn **Right** up Up Street. Then immediately turn **Left** up the concrete bridleway with Manor Farm on the left and a garden with seats on the right. **KSO** ahead in a straight line all the time.

Turn **Right** onto a gravel track when the concrete bridleway ends then 300 yards later veer **Left** downhill, veering **Right** alongside Dummer Grange then **Left** again downhill. Turn **Right** along the driveway to the Grange, leading to a road, turn **Left** along it.

Pass Ash Cottage and the road to Breach Farm on your right and **KSO**. When the trees on the RHS finish, turn right at the byway sign on the RHS, up a grassy lane to the RHS of a field. Keep your eyes peeled for the waymark on the **LH** side of the road pointing **Right**. Follow it and turn **Right** up a grassy lane to the **RH** side of a field. **KSO** uphill and ½ mile later reach a farm track crossing at right angles with Lilley's Copse woods in front of you. Turn **Left** along a track with hedges to either side then turn **Right** downhill reaching a road 1 mile later in:

### **3.5 miles Preston Candover (33.5/35) (Pub and shop)**

The village of Preston Candover is probably of Saxon origin. It was originally called Prestecandavere, the Candover belonging to the priests. The name derives in part from the Candover Brook which rises from springs just to the south of the village, and from a religious community which flourished here before the Norman Conquest. The village has two pubs one of which is 350 yards to the left opposite the church. There is also a shop. A local landowner is Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover. Pass on your right the graveyard and ruined chancel of the church of St Mary the Virgin. This church, dating from 1190 but mostly demolished in 1885, is now looked after by the Churches Conservation Trust.

At the end of the road turn **Right**. At the junction turn **Left** to visit the Purefoy Arms pub and the church of St Mary the Virgin consecrated in 1885, usually open, 300 yards further on.

Otherwise turn **Right** to follow the route. 200 yards further on turn **Left** up a road marked Alresford.  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile later approaching the brow of the hill turn **Left** through the metal gate up the FP alongside the hedge on the left. At the top corner go through the hedge. There is an obvious gap at an electricity pylon but no signpost or stile.

When you go through the hedge the route goes across the field to exit at 2 o'clock at a FP sign. If the field has been cultivated, you may choose to walk round the perimeter. If you crossed the field **KSO** at FP sign – if you walked around the perimeter turn **Right** at break in hedge with FP sign. Here you are crossing the Oxdrove Way which passes between two lines of trees bordering the field.

**KSO** ahead again still in a straight line reaching a quiet minor road by a gate. Turn **Right** along it and 1 mile later reach:

### **2.5 miles Upper Wield (36/32.5)**

Continue through the village and just past the village pond on your left turn **Right** following the signpost to the Church.

If Upper Wield is your end point for the day, Alpha taxis in Basingstoke can pick you up. Call 01256 520140

The Norman Church of St James, usually open, is over to the right. The church was built c 1150, probably at the instigation of Henry de Blois, Bishop of Winchester and pilgrim as papal legate to Santiago in 1153. **There is a pilgrim stamp inside the church on the table next to the font.**



St James', Upper Wield

Retrace your steps to the road after visiting the church. At the junction with a signpost to Alresford turn **Right** and **KSO** on the road to the junction at Battle Corner with Battle Corner Farm facing you. Turn **Right**. Proceed up this road passing Ropley Motor Services then turn **Left** onto the road signposted Medstead. Approx 30 yards later at a sharp **LH** bend, **KSO** ahead down the lane ahead. This is where you join the Oxdrove Way. There are nice views along this stretch.

### **Upper Wield – Winchester**

**KSO** along the Oxdrove Way ignoring all turns for nearly 4 miles. Pass Upper Lanham Farm, cross Nettlebed Lane and when you reach Upton Park Farm on your right turn **Right** down Kiln Lane, downhill to reach the main street in:

#### **4.5 miles Old Alresford (40.5/28)**

(Pronounced Allsford)

**St Mary the Virgin, Old Alresford. There is a pilgrim stamp on the table inside the church.**

The church dates from the 18th century. However, there is much to suggest that the site has been a place of worship for over 1,000 years. The present building owes its existence to the efforts of Dr John Hoadley who was appointed rector in 1737. The churchwarden's reports from that period state that "all is well" with the church but in 1752 the report states that the church is "out of repair to be mended soon". In 1753 it was decided to rebuild the existing church. In 1768 the "roughcast tower" was repaired. In 1980 the church was united with All Saints, Bighton.

Turn **Left**. Shortly on the other side of the road you will see the Village Hall. Continue ahead on the road for ½ mile. Look for footpath above the road as an alternative. Turn onto the road signposted Abbotstone then turn **Left** immediately down a FP along the **LH** side of a stream. **KSO** with the river to your **Right**. Continue into the town passing the Town Mill on your left, up Mill Hill, continue ahead to Broad Street and then turn **Right** at the junction into West Street in the centre of:

### **1 mile New Alresford (41.5/27)** (Pubs, shops, bus links)

**Alresford** is a beautiful Georgian town which for many centuries prospered with the wool trade. Old Alresford is mentioned in the Domesday Book. The colour-washed Georgian houses you see today rose from the ashes of great fires in the 17th century. There is a lot of accommodation listed including a B&B on the route. Alresford is now the home of the Watercress Line steam railway, so called because of its association with watercress farming, in what is now known as the UK capital of watercress. The town hosts the annual Watercress Festival in May attracting thousands of visitors; it has many sights – The Fulling Mill and Eel House along the riverside walk, St John’s Parish Church, the Millennium Trail and Old Alresford Pond, created by Bishop de Lucy, Bishop of Winchester in the 12th century as a reservoir of water to facilitate navigation of the River Itchen.



Watercress beds at Alresford ©F. Wiland

**St John the Baptist Church. There is a pilgrim stamp in the church office which is open from 10am to 12 noon daily.** Best to ring ahead. Tel: 01962 733545. There are toilet facilities on the right before reaching the station, and in the station itself.

To continue after turning **Right** into West Street turn **Left** into Jacklyns Lane go under the railway bridge and **KSO**. Both Stagecoach buses and Cresta Coaches (2018) stop in West Street and Jacklyns Lane.

Between Alresford and Winchester there are two waymarked routes: the Itchen Way along the river and St Swithun's Way, which links Winchester with the North Downs Way and Pilgrim's Way at Farnham. Pilgrims from Europe who arrived at Southampton would have passed in the opposite direction on their way to the shrine of St Thomas Becket in Canterbury.

At Number 82 fork **Right** down a waymarked path between the fences. At the road junction at the end cross and turn second **Right** marked for St Swithun's Way, waymarked with a green and white logo with scallop shell, crook and gourd or calebasse. **KSO** with watercress beds on each side at times. Cross over river ford, cross roadbridge over the stream, cross minor road and **KSO** ahead up a tunnel-like tree lined bridleway uphill.

¼ mile later reach a road, the B3047, cross over and continue ahead on the other side down East Lane, a tree-lined minor road, gently downhill, with a stream to your left and river to your right. Pass a stone bridge to the right and **KSO** into the small village of:

### **3 miles Ovington (44.5/24) (Pub)**

The old Parish of **Ovington**, which stands about seven miles outside of Winchester and to the south of Itchen Stoke, derives its name Ofinetune from Saxon for 'the place above'. It was mentioned twice in the Domesday Book, firstly as being in the hands of the bishop and secondly as being held by St Mary's Abbey at Winchester. The first record of any church here was in 1284. The original church was destroyed by fire and the entrance arch is all that remains. The present church was built in 1866 and dedicated to St Peter. It was in 1922 that the parishes of Itchen Stoke and Ovington joined together and the parishes are served with St Peters.

To continue, at the junction just before The Bush Inn, which does meals, St Swithun's Way turns **Left**, then immediately **Right** onto Lovington Lane. It is however worth detouring north along the Itchen Way to see St Mary's, Itchen Stoke. To do this, turn **Right** onto FP to cross **FB** over the River Itchen.

The **Itchen Way** is a 30-mile long-distance walk from Alresford to Southampton. In the main it is reasonably well waymarked. There have been works to improve the navigation on the Itchen since the 12th century, including the 18th-century canalisation, which fell into disuse after the advent of the railways. The Itchen Way follows the towpath in sections. Look out for remains of locks, sluices and bridges.

Turn **Left** on the other side onto a causeway-like FP between two parts of the river and ½ mile later turn **Right** over **FB** and **KSO** along the lane in: **0.5 mile Itchen Stoke (45/23.5)**

Part of the way along the lane you reach the start of a permissive FP (this is a footpath where the landowner has given permission for walkers to use it) on the left providing a shortcut to the main Itchen Way to avoid walking on the busy road which does not have a pavement. It is therefore



*Swanning About* ©Angelika Schneider

suggested that you **KSO** here to the road to visit St Mary's Church, which is usually open, and then retrace your steps for 150 yards each way. The church, influenced architecturally by the French Gothic Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, is under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. The church of St. Mary's in the village of Itchen Stoke, between Winchester and Alresford, was built in 1866-



*The chancel has a labyrinth. Courtesy of Jeff Saward/ Labyrinthos Photo Library*

87 to a design by the architect Henry Conybeare, inspired by the then recently restored Sainte Chapelle in Paris. The circular floor of the chancel is decorated with around 1600 glazed tiles in the form of a labyrinth, modelled in turn on the famous example from the 13th century in Chartres Cathedral, but somewhat smaller at only 16½ feet, 5.1 metres, in diameter. It is one of the finest examples of the labyrinths created in churches and cathedrals throughout NW Europe during the latter half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. (See: <https://labyrinthos.net/C45%20Itchen%20Stoke.pdf>)

To continue: Having seen the church turn **Right** into a field, (at the start of the permissive FP) cross a second one and veer **Left** in the third. **KSO** through a fourth field and go over a **FB** over the first part of the river.

Turn **Right** on the other side. Go over **FB** over second part of the river and **KSO** ahead. 100 yards later turn **Right** over a stile into fields. **KSO**, cross the second field diagonally **Left**, veer **Right** in the third and reach the road by Yavington Farm. This is where you rejoin St Swithun's Way. Turn **Right**. St Swithun's Way and Itchen Way are now coincident until Abbots Worthy.

300 yards later turn **Left** uphill up FP, cross the stile at the top and turn **Left** uphill on the other side then **Right** into woods. **KSO** without turning until you reach the car park at Avington Park golf club. Turn **Right** by the

car park down a track down the side of the golf course. The golf club has a clubhouse selling refreshments and is open 7 days a week. Visitors are welcome. Turn **Left** onto a minor road at the bottom then immediately **Right** onto a bigger road. Pass Avington Park, a private home, on your left. Cross both bridges over the river and continue to the church in:

## 2 miles Itchen Abbas (47/21.5) (Pub)

The Norman church of St John the Baptist was rebuilt in the 1860-1880s in knapped flint and stone, incorporating the original north doorway and chancel arch. In the porch are some original floor tiles and the complicated barrel-vaulted roof structure includes some oak struts from the old church. The last man



*St John the Baptist, Itchen Abbas, Hampshire*  
©Angelika Schneider

to be hanged for horse stealing in England, John Hughes, is buried near the ancient yew in the churchyard. The church is usually open. **There is a pilgrim stamp available inside the church.**

The Plough (100 yards round the corner to the right) has food and accommodation:

The Plough, Main Road, Itchen Abbas, S021 BQ

Turn **Left** by the church, and continue ahead along the side of three fields and latterly a lane behind houses. Reach a minor road, cross over (staggered to the left) and continue ahead along the side of four more fields. **KSO** ahead on the lane to:

## 1.5 miles Martyr Worthy (48.5/20)

The Worthy villages on the way to Winchester date back to Saxon times and are mentioned in the Domesday Book. The Martyr is derived from local family Le Martre. This modern Parish of Itchen Valley comprises the ancient Parishes of Avington, Easton and Martyr Worthy from the Hundred of Fawley, and Itchen Abbas from the Hundred of Bountisborough.

Cross the road to the St Swithun's church which is usually open. The nave of the present church was built in the 12th century and the North and South doors are also Norman. **There is pilgrim stamp inside the church.**

Turn **Left** and then immediately **Right** down the **LH** side of the churchyard.

Continue on the FP to the field, turn **Left** and then turn **Right** parallel to the river. Reach a minor road, Easton Lane, and **KSO** through two more fields, passing to the **RH** side of a fence in the second field, towards the motorway ahead. In the top **LH** corner turn **Left** over a stile (the M3 is above you to the right by now) then turn **Right** and go through a subway under the motorway approximately 1 mile from the church.

On the other side **KSO** ahead, veering **Right**, and 300 yards later reach the B3047 on the outskirts of Abbots Worthy. Turn **Left**, pass in front of a large property and at its end fork **Left** into a field on a small FP leading back to the river. Reach a lane and **KSO** ahead on the FP on the other side through woods.

NB Do NOT turn Left to cross the bridge over the river – you leave the Itchen Way for a while at this point.

Reach the A33. Cross over with care and go through a small wooden gate and pass between houses on a lane, St Mary's Close, veer **Left** at the end and cross the road to the church in:

### **1.5 miles Kings Worthy (50/18.5)**

St Mary's church is usually open. Note a medieval roof and a fine Purbeck marble font.

**A pilgrim stamp is available inside the church.**

Pass to the **RH** side of the church.

Turn **Left** in front of it to the end of the churchyard and turn **Right** onto a FP. **KSO** this path which becomes a pavement between houses. Pass through a waymarked wooden gate, pass offices on each side and at the end of the pavement, where the car park also ends, go through another gate and turn **Left** onto a small FP, turning **Right** to go through two subways under the A341 – one for each carriageway.

Turn **Left** on the other side on a long straight FP parallel to the road which is above to your **Left** then at the end turn **Right** alongside the river to start with, then further away. 1 mile later turn **Left** over a concrete bridge and turn **Right** along a track to the **LH** side of a stream. When this turns right by another concrete bridge (near a long flint stone wall with a doorway leading to the recreation ground) **KSO(L)** on a small FP ahead. Reach the road with Winchester FC ground to the left. **KSO** with the river on your right and **KSO** again at the next crossroads on Nuns Walk along the **LH** bank of the river. **KSO** without turns until the King Alfred pub appears on your right. Cross over and pass the side of the pub up Hyde Church Path which leads to the church of:

## **2 miles St Bartholomew's Hyde (52/16.5)**

After visiting the church, turn **Left** in King Alfred's Place to the Abbey Gatehouse; look out too for Hyde Abbey Garden, with floral pillars marking the original east end of the Abbey church.

The Church of St Bartholomew's, Hyde was built some 900 years ago for the lay community of Hyde Abbey, of which the Gatehouse remains. It was built here for the monks forced out of the town's New Minster by continual disputes over singing and insanitary conditions. King Alfred is believed to have been buried here. In the church are some fine carved capitals from the Abbey. The abbot of Hyde had a London lodging, which became the Tabard Inn in Borough High Street, Southwark. This was where Chaucer imagined his pilgrims gathering before setting out for Canterbury. The name changed to Talbot Yard and 600 years later the office of the Confraternity of Saint James was here for a few years. The church is usually open.

After the Gatehouse, turn **Right** to continue on St Swithun's Way along the same stream as before. The route turns **Left**, and then **Right** in front of the leisure centre into Gordon Road. At the bottom, follow the markings **Left** then **Right** through the car park to North Walls. Cross the road at the lights, and turn **Right**, then immediately **Left** into Parchment St. Cross St George's St at the lights. At the end, the waymarks cease, but turn **Right** then immediately **Left**, and you will see the entrance to the cathedral grounds.

### **0.5 mile Winchester (52.5/16) (All amenities)**

**Winchester** (archaically known as Winton and Wintonceastre) is a historic cathedral city and ancient capital of Wessex and the Kingdom of England. It is the county town of Hampshire. It developed from the Roman town of Venta Belgarum. Winchester Cathedral is one of the largest in England, with the distinction of having the longest nave and overall length of all Gothic cathedrals in Europe. The town is also home to Winchester University and the famous public school, Winchester College. The city also has historic importance as it replaced Dorchester-on-Thames as the de facto capital of the ancient kingdom of Wessex in about 686. Saint Swithun was Bishop of Winchester in the mid-9th century. The Saxon street plan laid out by Alfred the Great is still evident today: a cross-shaped street system which conformed to the standard town planning system of the day – overlaying the pre-existing Roman street plan. The town was part of a series of fortifications known as 'burhs' along the south coast built by Alfred to protect the Kingdom. Only one section of the original Roman walls remains. Four main gates were positioned in the north, south, east and west plus the additional Durngate and King's Gate. The medieval city walls, built on Roman foundations, are visible in places. Winchester remained the capital of Wessex, and then England, until some time after the Norman Conquest when the capital was moved to London. The Domesday Book was compiled in the city early in the reign of William the Conqueror.

### **Winchester Cathedral**

The cathedral was built in the water meadows of the Itchen with stone from Quarr, in the Isle of Wight, transported by barge up the river Itchen from Southampton. Early pilgrims came to venerate St Birinus and Saxon kings, including Canute. All their remains are now gathered up into the mortuary chests displayed high above the chancel. St Swithun, a monk

of the Old Minster (founded 660), became Bishop in 852. He asked not to be buried in the Cathedral, but outside by the door. When the New Minster was built a century later, Swithun's relics were translated and placed in the feretory or Holy Hole behind the High Altar. Pilgrims could climb into the hole to get close to the relics. As a sign of his displeasure at being moved it rained continuously for 40 days – beginning the St Swithun tradition. This is depicted on the modern embroidered cloth on the recreated shrine. From 1189 Winchester was also a stage on the route from Southampton to Canterbury for pilgrims to St Thomas Becket's shrine. By 1200 there were so many pilgrims the retrochoir was extended by Bishop de Lucy (see also Alresford), who is buried just in front of the Lady Chapel. Henry III (1207-72) was born in Winchester Castle and baptised in the Cathedral with water from the well below the High Altar.



*Winchester Cathedral* ©Freddy Bowen

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Bishops of Winchester have been very powerful, close to the Crown and in positions of influence. One in particular, Henry de Blois, a grandson of William the Conqueror and son of King Stephen was educated at the powerful Abbey of Cluny. He was a papal legate and on his return from a journey to Rome in 1153 he visited the shrine of St James at Santiago. The marriage of Philip of Spain and Mary took place in the Winchester Cathedral on St James' day, 25 July 1554. Philip travelled from Spain after attending Mass at Santiago Cathedral, via A Coruña, and Southampton. The chair on which Mary is believed to have sat is one of the cathedral's treasures.

If you wish to visit the cathedral, please note that there is a charge. However, the cathedral staff are very friendly to pilgrims who are welcome to pay a short visit for a time of reflection free of charge. It might also be possible for a pilgrim group to have a free guided tour of the cathedral

by phoning ahead and explaining that the group is on a pilgrimage from Reading to Southampton. **The cathedral also has a stamp available at the reception desk.**

### **Other Pilgrim Sites in Winchester**

**Wolvesey Castle/Old Bishop's Palace:** the substantial remains of the 12th-century Palace built by Henry de Blois.

**St John's Hospital:** near statue of King Alfred and Guildhall: dates from 10th century, extended 13th century and accommodated pilgrims among others.

The Wessex Hotel stands on the site of the **New Minster**. Parts of Nunaminster can be found in the Abbey Gardens by the Guildhall.

The still functioning **Abbey Mill** stands in Bridge Street.

By the **West Gate:** The Castle's Great Hall of 1235 has a replica of the Round Table.

**St James' Church:** now disappeared. Continue beyond West Gate along Romsey Road, noting St James' Terrace and St James' Tavern, to reach a small gate to a churchyard up a bank. This was the churchyard of St James' church, which marked the limit of the 12th-century town. Its position outside the West Gate probably indicates that prayers for safe journeys were said here. In 1446 the church was given to the Hospital of St Cross. It is now the Roman Catholic cemetery and a mass is celebrated occasionally on St James' Day (details from St Peter's Roman Catholic Church (Telephone: 01962 852804)

Winchester railway station is served by trains running from London Waterloo, Weymouth, Portsmouth, Southampton and the North.

### **Winchester to Eastleigh**

From Winchester the route follows the river Itchen for long stretches. In autumn and winter the river is prone to flood the footpath. When flooded, it should be passable in wellington boots, but not in normal boots or shoes.

Information on flooding in Winchester can be found on [www.gaugemap.co.uk/#!Map/Summary/1472/1619](http://www.gaugemap.co.uk/#!Map/Summary/1472/1619). For the section from Allbrook see [www.gaugemap.co.uk/#!Map/Summary/1469/1616](http://www.gaugemap.co.uk/#!Map/Summary/1469/1616). Alternatively, you can check the information on the Hants County Council website <https://maps.hants.gov.uk/rightsofwaydefinitivemap> which should show which paths are known to be closed.

### **To continue on the route to Southampton:**

From the west door of the cathedral, the St James' Way initially follows the same route as the Pilgrim's Trail. This is not waymarked, but is signposted Water Meadows. Turn south and pass through the passage into the cloister. Continue **Right** into The Close, passing the mediaeval priory's storehouses.

To the left is the early 14th-century Pilgrims' Hall, a former pilgrim hostel with what is thought to be the earliest hammer-beam roof. It is now used by the Pilgrims' School (the cathedral choir school).

Leave The Close through the Priory Gate into St Swithun's Street. Turn **Left**, passing under Kingsgate's 14th-century arch. Over the Kingsgate is the chapel of St Swithun, which is medieval in origin, though heavily restored. Go **Left** into College Street and at the end of it turn **Right** into College Walk then **Left** down the FP along the river, continuing ahead with it to both sides between the playing fields. The "College" is Winchester College, whose entrance is on College St, and which can be visited on guided tours; there is also choral evensong in the Chapel each Tuesday at 5.30pm.

Cross Garnier Road and **KSO(R)** on the FP signed St Cross Hospital. **KSO** and reach:

### **1.5 miles St Cross Church and Hospital (54/14.5)**

Legend has it that the Hospital's foundation originated in a walk that Henry de Blois took in the Itchen Meadows. He was supposedly stopped by a young peasant girl who begged de Blois to help her people, who were starving because of the civil war. He was so moved by the girl's plight that when, a little further along the river, he discovered the ruins

of a religious house, he resolved to use the site to establish a new community to help the poor. How much of this is fact is unclear, but we do know that Henry de Blois was young, wealthy and powerful: a monk, knight and politician in one. Appointed Bishop of Winchester in 1129 at the age of 28, he founded the Hospital of St Cross between 1132 and 1136, creating what has become England's oldest charitable institution. The Hospital was founded to support thirteen poor men, so frail that they were unable to work, and to feed one hundred men at the gates each day. The thirteen men became the Brothers of St Cross. Then, as now, they were not monks. St Cross is not a monastery but a secular foundation. Medieval St Cross was endowed with land, mills and farms, providing food and drink for a large number of people – don't forget the water was unfit for drinking so copious amounts of ale and beer were needed!

If you wish to visit, please note there is a charge. However, pilgrims are very welcome to attend Matins led by the Brothers, free of charge. It is held at 10am daily and 8am on Sundays and usually lasts around 15 minutes. On Sundays there is church service at 9.30am. Whether or not you attend a service you may still ask for "the dole" – a portion of bread and a cup of beer, symbolic of the food given to the poor in the past. If you are in a group of more than 6 people each will have to go into the reception area to ask separately otherwise only the first 6 will be served.

**The reception area and shop has a pilgrim stamp.**



*St Cross Church @Eric Bull*

*To continue:*

After visiting St Cross, **KSO** ahead. The FP is obvious. A short way along it you can loop off to the **Left** on an unsigned path to pass St Cross Farm and Mill turning Right at the buildings to rejoin the main track. This section may be heavy underfoot in bad weather.

Reading to Southampton

Otherwise, from the Hospital **KSO** veering **Right** to cross a stile then another farther on. **KSO** to Five Bridges Road, which, as its name suggests, cross various parts of the River Itchen. Turn **Left** with a sign for a bridleway facing you. **KSO**, without turning, to the end of road and turn **Right** following a cycle path sign to Twyford. Here the route rejoins the Itchen Way. 200 yards later turn **Left** to cross main road at traffic lights and turn **Right**. Shortly veer **Left** onto a footpath with the river on the right. **KSO** under the motorway and **KSO** when the path becomes a track all the way without turning to Shawford. Come out on the road with the Bridge Inn to your right by the railway station in:

### **2 miles Shawford (56/12.5) (Pub)**

To the right is the Bridge Inn which does food. It is opposite the railway station on the main Waterloo to Southampton and Bournemouth line. The pub is famous for being where Victor Meldrew died in the final episode of TV's *One Foot in the Grave!*

Cross the road and continue on the FP on the **Right** on the LHS of the river. In this area the route becomes generally well marked with signs for the Itchen Way. These continue almost to Southampton. At the first road crossed after Shawford there is a garden centre café 300 metres to the left.

The route now basically follows the River Itchen. **KSO** the path as it moves to the **RH** and **LH** banks of the river and at times a little away from it. **KSO** all the way until you reach Highbridge Road on the outskirts of:

### **3 miles Allbrook (59/9.5)**

Cross the road and continue on the **LH** bank. Veer **Right**, pass under the railway line twice, keeping on the LH side of the river. 300 metres after the 2nd railway bridge, cross the **FB** and continue on the RH side of the river. **KSO**. Shortly after passing a disused lock reach Bishopstoke Road on the outskirts of Bishopstoke to the left and right in:

### **2 miles Eastleigh (61/7.5) (All amenities)**

As you reach the end of the track towards the main road there is a sports centre to your right with picnic benches. A little further to the right at the end of the car park there are public toilets. Eastleigh railway station is ½ mile away to the right.

## Eastleigh – Southampton

To continue cross the road and continue on the **RH** bank of the river, cross to the **LH** bank again then back again, after which the path veers away from the river for a while. Pass a sewage plant on the right and shortly afterwards veer **Right** to go under a railway line (1 mile from Bishopstoke Road). **KSO(R)** ahead on the other side. **KSO**. Southampton International Airport is over to your right.

2 miles after you last crossed the railway line reach the M27 motorway. Turn **Left** alongside it for ¼ mile then turn **Right** under it via a subway. Veer **Right** on the other side and continue beside it for ¼ mile more then turn left away from it at right angles following the waymarks. ½ mile later cross a **FB**, **KSO(L)** ahead on the other side, veering **Left** and then go under the A27 and pick up the River Itchen again by:

### 4 miles Mans Bridge (65/3.5)

Note the FP sign which says "Winchester 12 miles".

Turn **Left** over the bridge to the **LH** bank of the river and **KSO** along the water's edge in Riverside Park. When you reach Woodmill, with a bridge to your right, and a canoe shop (Woodmill Outdoor Activities Centre) and a café, cross the road and proceed up the cycle track ahead veering **Right** and follow it around the perimeter of the park. At the end of the park go up the slope veering **Left** to:

### 1.5 miles Cobden Bridge (66.5/2)

**Turn right over the bridge and left at the end onto Priory Road. Keep on Priory road to the Horseshoe Bridge** (Junction pub opposite). Turn left and before crossing the bridge turn left again downhill onto the **riverside** footpath with the railway on the RHS.



*Cobden Bridge ©John Davis*

Look for the sign **Cycle Path 23** on the right and follow this through an industrial estate. At the end turn **Right** onto **Radcliffe Road**. **KSO** past the **Vedic Society Hindu Temple** on the RHS all the way to the end. You will then see a bridge on the RHS. Cross the road ahead at the lights turn right over the bridge, keeping on the LHS (Gasometer and **Southampton Football Stadium** on the LHS). At the end of the bridge proceed ahead to the traffic lights ahead on Kingsway. Turn **Left** and **KSO** to the first set of traffic lights at **Houndwell Place** and cross over. Ahead is Hoglands Park. Go diagonally on the path through the park to the roundabout at the end. Keep right after the roundabout, crossing one more road. At a pelican crossing, cross left and head for the **BARGATE**, a fine remaining part of the old city walls, originally the main entrance into the walled medieval town. Go through the Bargate and keep straight on down the High Street to Winkle Street. Turn left to reach God's House Tower on the left.



*Southampton Marina ©John Davis*



*Bargate ©Valerie Archibald*

**A pilgrim stamp is available at the reception desk.** There are also refreshments and toilets. The tower itself is worth a visit, with some entrance costs to exhibitions inside.

### **God's House Tower**

The buildings which form modern God's House Tower are some of the earliest in Southampton. The name God's House comes from the nearby

Hospice, built around 1189 as a resting place for travellers and pilgrims. The original gate was built around 1280 to give access to the Town Quay as well as to the walls on the east at a high level, useful for any patrols or at times of attack. Running along the eastern walls was a double ditched moat, up to 40 feet wide, which was fed by sea water operated by a sluice at the Platform Quay. The ditches were important not only for defence but also because they also provided water power for one of the town's main mills which was built adjacent to the Tower.



*God's House Tower* ©Valerie Archibald

After the devastating French raid on Southampton in 1338, the townspeople faced the wrath of King Edward III, who visited the town giving orders to enclose Southampton with walls as a defence against further attack. The walls took 40 years to complete. The Tower itself was constructed during the reign of Henry V around 1415. Strategically positioned to form the south eastern corner, the Tower was built to house gunpowder, fire cannon and as a lookout point across the Solent.

These Southampton fortifications represented cutting edge technology. Bows and arrows were being replaced by guns, cannons and muskets, and at the time Southampton held one of the largest stacks of ordnance in any English town. By 1417 a gallery had been built joining God's House Gate to the Tower. The buildings were used as a key part of the south coast defence system for the next 200 years.

By the 17th century, however, the Tower began to fall into disrepair, until 1760, when plans for a prison at God's Touse Tower were drawn up. It was the town gaol until that too closed in 1855. Part of the building was used as a temporary mortuary until the Southampton Harbour Board rented the premises for use as a large warehouse.

God's House Tower became Southampton's Museum of Archaeology from 1963 until 2011. In 2012 "a space arts" acquired the lease for the building and in 2018 the £3.1 million restoration project began. God's House Tower is now a flourishing arts, crafts and heritage centre.

**The Bugle Street area is also worth a visit, with two historic churches and the Tudor House Museum.**

Bugle Street runs parallel to the High Street. It can be reached after visiting God's House Tower by turning right along Town Quay past the High Street, then turning right.

**St Michael's Church, Bugle Street.** This church, the oldest building in Southampton, is believed to have been founded in 1070. Originally built by the Normans, it has had many additions and modifications since then. Through 900 years St Michael's has been closely connected with the life of the town and has witnessed Southampton history through good times and bad. It was in the centre of the bustling life of the medieval town when Southampton flourished. The Spa period brought a different kind of prosperity to the town which was expanding beyond the medieval walled town. St Michael's must have shared some of the fashionable splendour of the period and some of the celebrities who came to take the water swelled its congregation. The coming of the railway and the docks in the 1830s and 1840s brought an end to this genteel world of leisured classes and in its place came the new Southampton with its busy port which continues to flourish and grow. In the 20th century St Michael's has stood through two world wars: it survived the bombing of WW2 when all the other Southampton churches on medieval foundations were destroyed.

**St Joseph's Catholic Church, Bugle Street.** This is the sister church to St Edmund's. The church chancel was designed by Augustus Pugin and built in 1843. It was the first Catholic church founded in Southampton after the reformation. It is a grade 2 listed building. In 1789, French Catholics fled to Southampton after the French Revolution. They worshipped in secret in a room in 13 St Michael's square in the city. In 1792, they opened a chapel in 67 High Street. In 1828, a presbytery was built. Two years later, St Joseph's Church was built in the presbytery's garden. In the early 1840s a new St Joseph's Church had to be built to accommodate

the growing congregation. In 1842 Augustus Pugin was asked to design the church. In March 1843 the foundation stone was laid. However, the church could not afford Pugin's designs. Once the chancel was built, J.G. Poole, an architect and local surveyor, was asked to complete the church. The nave was built to his designs and in 1845 the new church



*St Joseph's Church with Tudor House on the left.*

was opened. In 1888 Leonard Stokes was asked to renovate and expand the church. The north and south walls were rebuilt. A 7th window was added to the north side. The height of the church was raised and the ceiling along the nave replaced. In 1981 a restoration of the church was undertaken.

It might be possible to arrange a visit to St Joseph's and an end of pilgrimage blessing from the resident priest. Call St Edmunds Parish Office on 023 8033 3589 to enquire.

**Tudor House Museum.** A 16th-century merchant's house with fine panelling and a recreated Tudor garden.

### ***End of walk celebration...***

The Duke of Wellington pub next to St Joseph's at 49 Bugle Street is a welcoming place to enjoy a celebratory drink and a meal....**you deserve it....**

For those wishing to see more of Old Southampton, look up "Historic Southampton Walks" on the internet for a comprehensive list.

### **Winchester-Portsmouth Pilgrim's Trail**

Those needing to take a cross channel route to Normandy or Spain may prefer to walk directly from Winchester to Portsmouth via Owslebury, Bishop's Waltham and Southwick (33 miles, 2 days). The Guide is now out-

of-print but the route is shown on the OS map and streetmap. The Trail has not been maintained for some years so some signs may be missing.

St Catherine's Hill

Hospital of St Cross (pilgrim dole)

Owslebury, a small village, St Andrew's Church

Upham: Brushmakers Arms pub

Bishop's Waltham (accommodation, pubs, bus)

A small market town. See the extensive 12th-century remains of the palace built by Henry de Blois and the parish church of St Peter.

Swanmore, Bishopsmore

Kingsmead (cross A32 by The Roebuck Inn (rooms and meals)

Cross Forest of Bere/Hundred Acre Wood (bluebells in spring)

Southwick, church of St James-Without-the-Priory-Gate, with 12th-century octagonal font, triple decker pulpit and box pews.

Southwick Priory: Augustinian canons moved here from Portchester Castle in 1133; pilgrims known to come to Our Lady of Southwick. Around St James' Day there is usually a pilgrimage from Portchester Church with vespers held in the Abbey ruins – follow the footpath directly up and over the hill).

Portsdown Hill

Cosham

Riverside path into Portsmouth to ferry terminal.

### **Portsmouth**

The first settlement sites were the Roman fort at Porchester and medieval Portsea. A Norman church built within the fort in the 1120s was administered by Augustinian canons who later moved to nearby Southwick Priory. They also ran the medieval chapel dedicated to St Thomas (1181, since 1927 the Anglican Cathedral) and the Hospital of St Nicholas/Maison Dieu (now the Garrison church) in Portsea. Many pilgrims would have stayed here on their journeys. Like Southampton, the town was raided by the French in 1338. Portsmouth imported wine from Bayonne and Bordeaux in the 14th century. After the Dissolution Henry VIII made it the HQ of the Royal Navy.

An alternative route to Portsmouth is to follow the Solent Way (marked on OS maps) from the quayside all the way to Portsmouth.

### Distance Chart

Location	Distance in miles	Distance – accumulated	Transport links	Accommodation
Reading	0	0	Train, Bus	Hotels/B&B
Burghfield Bridge	4	4	Bus	
Sheffield Bottom	2.5	6.5	Bus	
Sulhamstead Abbots	2	8.5		
Burghfield Common	1	9.5	Bus	
Mortimer	3	12.5	Bus, Train (+½ ml)	B&B (+1 ml)
Silchester Church	1.5	14		
Bramley Church	4.5	18.5	Train (+1 ml)	
Little London	1.5	20		B&B
Pamber End	1	21		
Monk Sherborne	1	22		
Worting Wood Farm	2	24		
Worting	1.5	25.5	Train/ Basingstoke	Basingstoke
Dummer	4.5	30		
Preston Candover	3.5	33.5		
Upper Wield	2.5	36		
Old Alresford	4.5	40.5		

Reading to Southampton

New Alresford	1	41.5	Bus to Winchester	B&B
Ovington	3	44.5		
Itchen Stoke	0.5	45		
Itchen Abbas	2	47		Pub with rooms
Martyr Worthy	1.5	48.5		
Kings Worthy	1.5	50		
St Bartholomew Hyde	2	52		
Winchester	0.5	52.5	Train, bus	Hotels/B&B
St Cross Church and Hospital	1.5	54		
Shawford	2	56		
Allbrook	3	59		
Eastleigh	2	61	Train (+½ml)	Pub with rooms
Mans Bridge	4	65		
Cobden Bridge	1.5	66.5	Bus	
Southampton	2	68.5	Train, bus	Hotels/B&B

