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## Rotherwick and Mattingley

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Distance: 11 km=7 miles

easy walking

Region: Hampshire

Date written: 1-jun-2019

Author: Botafuego

Last update: 22-jun-2020

Refreshments: Rotherwick, Mattingley

Map: Explorer 144 (Basingstoke) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

*Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: [feedback@fancyfreewalks.org](mailto:feedback@fancyfreewalks.org)*

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*Country villages, quiet lanes, meadows, woodland, churches, pubs*

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### In Brief

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You will love Rotherwick. This peaceful village seems to breathe pure country air, far from main roads. It is blessed with an ancient church and *two pubs\**. The houses, gardens and fields lie together in a long line on a quiet straight road. Mattingley is yet more dazzling, having some of the best thatched or timbered houses you are likely to see. It also possesses the most famous inn\*\* in the district. (\*To enquire at the *Falcon*, ring 01256-765422, for the *Coach and Horses*, 01256-768976. \*\*For the *Leather Bottle*, it's 0118-932-6371.)

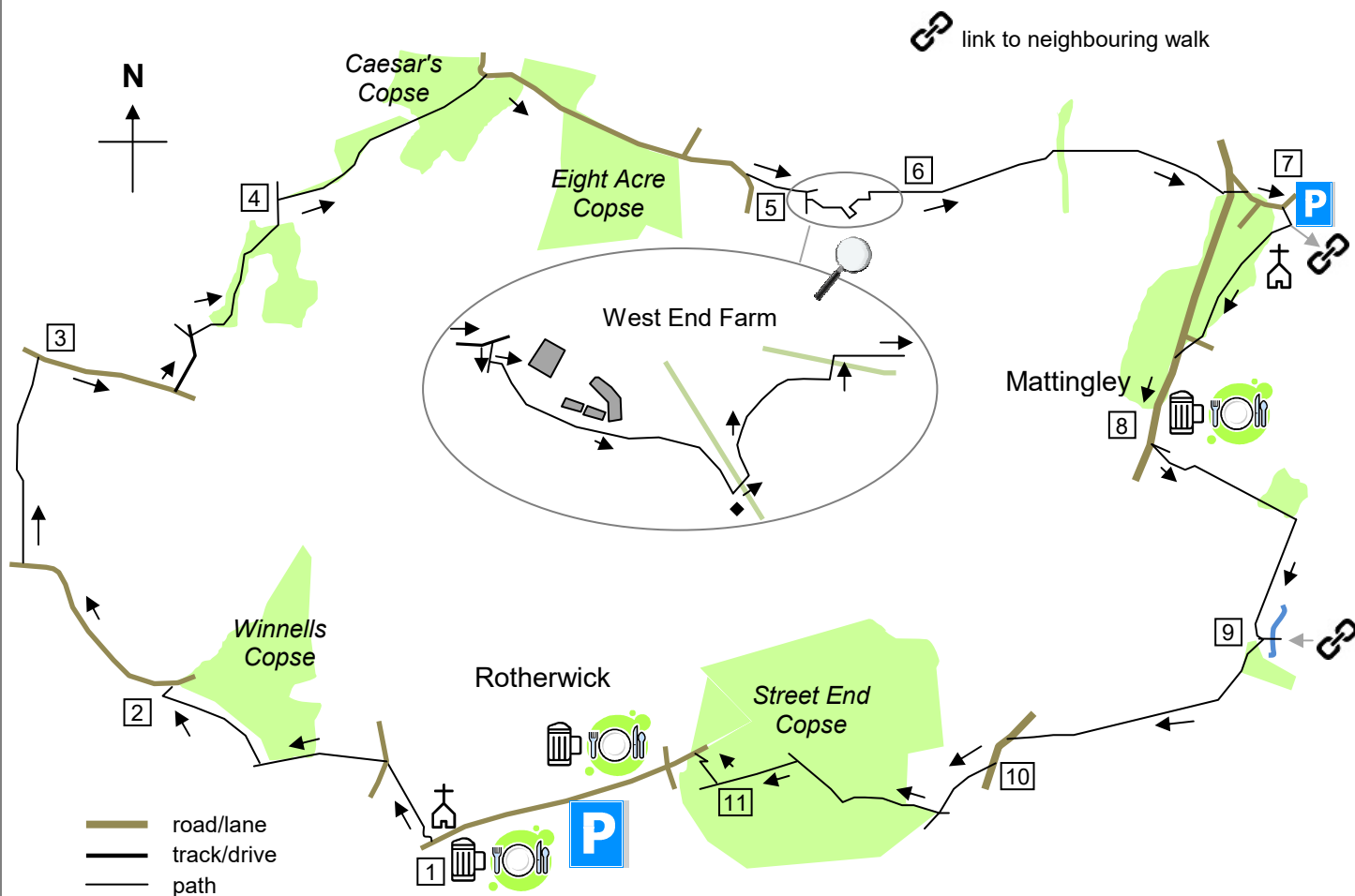
This walk can be combined with its neighbouring walk "Mattingley" to make a very satisfying 13¾ km=8½ mile walk. Unless you double back, you will *miss* the *Leather Bottle* pub but you will *gain* an excellent tea at the West Green House Garden. [Look for the coloured notes and the "chain" symbols on the map.](#)



There are some nettles and quite a bit of undergrowth on this walk, ruling out shorts. The author wore boots but felt that in June trainers or hiking shoes would have been just as fine. There is just one very short marshy bit assisted by a plank or two. This walk is almost stileless except for a flurry of three around West End Farm, where your dog might need to be carried.

The walk begins in the village of **Rotherwick**, Hampshire, postcode **RG27 9BG**. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

## The Walk



*Rotherwick's name means "place of cattle" although there are none on this walk. Its church dates from the 1200s. The interior was originally timber with a brick filling, just like Mattingley which you are due to see later. The square west tower was added in the 1600s, holding six bells. The north wall has some bullet marks, a mystery since the village was not touched by the Civil War. The church has no dedication because, despite its size, it was only a "chapel of rest" attached to the mother church which is in Odiham.*

- 1 Find your way to Rotherwick church at the far end of the village. Go through the little wooden gate into the churchyard and, after taking this chance to visit the church, make your way round the left-hand side, passing the ancient west door. Go through the churchyard, under the yew trees, and out through an old kissing gate into a crop field. Take a clear path straight ahead across the centre of the field. *Note that you are on part of the Brenda Parker Way, a 78-mile path between Aldershot and Andover.* At the end of the field, cross a tarmac lane and take a wide track opposite, running beside a wood on your right. At the corner of the wood, avoid a path ahead across the field and turn **right** on the track, staying close to the wood. In 400m, just before the field edge begins to curve round to the left, look to your right for a wooden gate in the hedge.
- 2 Slip **right** through the gate and turn **left** on tarmac Mill Lane, passing a house, *Winnells*. Immediately, at a junction, avoid a wide track to your left and fork **right**, staying on this tarmac lane. [All the lanes on this walk will be](#)

like this one – so peaceful you can hear birdsong all around. After 400m between ancient hedgerows, under tall oaks, the lane bends left. In 80m, at a fingerpost, turn **right** over a 2-plank bridge into a field. Follow the left-hand edge. At the end of the field, veer **left** past a marker post and veer **right** along the left-hand edge of the next field, thus keeping the same direction. You come past a high seat and your path zigzags right-left under power lines and through a gap into the next field. Go straight ahead, not too far from the left-hand edge, to find a gap in the far left-hand corner, which leads onto tarmac Rotherwick Lane.

- 3 Immediately before the lane, turn **right** on an unmarked path that runs along the field boundary parallel to the lane on your left. This path continues beside a second field. Just after passing under power lines, after a total of 400m, turn **left** through a wide gap, cross the lane and take a tarmac drive, marked as a footpath. In 200m, just before the gate to Mill House Farm, at a fingerpost, turn **right** through an improvised V-stile onto a narrow footpath. [The most adventurous part of your route today now begins: an easy path through varied terrain, punctuated here and there by slightly overgrown but short sections.](#) Soon you are under trees, with bluebells in late spring. Your path goes over a hump, veering right and left through a section with an unwelcome growth of Himalayan balsam. You come over an avoidable hump, through bracken, under tall ash trees. On your left soon (not on your route) is a small metal gate leading into a large meadow of black sheep. You come over a 2-plank boardwalk and across a marshy section: shortly after, **ignore** a signed path on your right which leads to a large kissing gate. You quickly reach a junction of fields with a choice of paths.
- 4 Turn **right** at a marker post. This easy path follows a woodland strip between distant fields. After a pleasant ramble, you will become aware of a farm track running beside you on the left. Your path soon merges with it. You finally come out, round a large metal gate, to quiet tarmac Bottle Lane at a bend. Turn **right** on the lane, a welcome change from the tortuous paths. In 600m, as you pass the redbrick *Thackhams Farm*, ignore a road junction on your left. In a further 200m, the lane begins to wheel right past another redbrick house, *Moneys Farm*. **Leave** the road here by keeping straight on along a track signed as a footpath. Shortly, you come through a wooden swing-gate (not needed if the main gate is open) into the precincts of the tastefully-converted West End Farm.
- 5 [The way through the "farm" is convoluted and needs a paragraph to itself \(see inset in map\).](#) Without approaching the buildings, turn immediately **right** over a stile and immediately **left** over another stile onto a shingle drive by a house. Go through a small wooden gate and walk along the left-hand side of a lawn. Keep close to two barns and some outhouses on your left. Just before a black shed in the corner, go **left** through a small wooden gate into a rough meadow. Turn **left** as directed and keep **right** in the corner. Keep going round the left-hand edge of the meadow, ignoring a large wooden gate, until you meet a wooden post. Go **left** here over a stile into a large crop field. Turn **right** along the edge.
- 6 At the end of the field, take a narrow nettly path into a small meadow. Go straight ahead, over a stone bridge, on a path which rises to run in a straight line between hedges with grassy meadows on each side. The path runs beside a cypress hedge with a ranch fence. You come between garden fences, with one especially lovely garden on your left. Cross straight over a shingle drive and through a gap in the hedge, out to the

main road outside Mattingley. Cross the road carefully, down steps, to a footpath through the woods. In only 50m, keep **left** to come out to a tarmac lane, Red Hill. Turn **right**, ignoring a road junction and passing the especially attractive thatched timbered *Mattingley Green Cottage* on your left. At a 3-way junction, keep **right**, passing a parking area on your right (alternative start) and approaching Mattingley church, which *must* be seen, even though not precisely on your route.



*For more details of Mattingley Green and the church, see the sister walk "Mattingley".*



If you are combining this walk with the "Mattingley" walk, skip to that walking guide now and start it from the beginning.

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Just before the gate into the church, turn **right** on a shingle path, passing the delectable *White Willows*. Take the **right** fork, passing the *Pumpkin Patch* pre-school and continue on a path into woods. In 250m you cross a tarmac drive and shortly arrive on a shingle driveway. Cross a tarmac lane and resume on the grass opposite which narrows to a verge beside the main road. You quickly reach the *Leather Bottle* pub where you may see the first crowds of the day.



*The "Leather Bottle", a classic old village inn, is open and serves food at practically any hour, every day. Six ales are usually on tap, including rarities such as Tillingbourne and Dunsfold. Food ranges from nibbles and bites to an impressive menu of mains and puddings. For more interesting details of this pub, see the sister walk "Mattingley".*

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After a possible sojourn at the pub, continue a short distance along the main road using a path along the verge. At the entrance to *Bartletts Barn*, take the **second** turning **left**, a pebble drive, signed as a footpath. Go through a wooden gate to the left of the main gate and follow a narrow grass path. *Note the old grainstore in the pond on your left.* Your path zigzags over a stile (or through the large wooden gate) onto a wide straight path in a lime avenue. Stay on this avenue until you finally pass through a wooden gate into a large field. Turn **right** along the edge. In 350m, at the end of the field, the path bends left and leads through a small metal gate. Your route is now **right** on a narrow path. [But it is pleasant first to step to the left onto the bridge to see the fast flowing Whitewater River \(a tributary of the Lodden\) at a picturesque spot.](#)



If you have combined this walk with the "Mattingley" walk, you will re-join this walk here.

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Having turned onto the narrow path, going over a small 2-plank bridge, you pass quite close to the river before coming out into a crop field. Turn **left** along the edge on a wide path. Just before a large metal gate, veer **right** as directed on a long straight wide path. The path is lined with newly-planted maples in a bold investment in the pleasure of future generations. At the end, leave the wide path as it bends left by going straight ahead across the grass, over a pair of plank bridges, on a narrow nettly path under trees, leading out to the main Reading Road.

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Cross the road carefully, turn **left** and, in 80m, fork **right** at a signpost on a footpath, going past a redundant stile. Your path crosses a meadow diagonally, going under power lines [[Oct 2019: recently ploughed and the path unclear: walkers went left and round two sides](#)]. When you reach the far side and a line of trees, avoid the path ahead into the next meadow and instead turn immediately **right**, just *before* the trees, up the left-hand edge, staying

in the same meadow. In the corner, keep ahead on a path through the woodland of Street End Copse. After crossing a concrete bridge, continue ahead for around 100m to cross over a gravel track. Your path then quickly elbows right. After 150m or so, you come between posts to a junction on the left. Turn diagonally **left** here on a long straight slightly narrower path through the woods, with a thin wire fence on your left. After 250m you can glimpse a small gate, about 50m ahead. **Leave** the path here by forking **right** on an unmarked, but quite distinct, path into the dense woods.

- 11 This branching path is obviously so well used that it is more like the main path. It veers right, thus completing a net right turn. Stay on the main path avoiding side turnings. You will notice a cleverly carved bench to your right just before you pass through a patch of bracken. Continue ahead, eventually crossing over a wooden bridge. Turn **left** and go through a small wooden gate to the road in Rotherwick. Turn **left** to begin a pleasant saunter along the length of The Street in this pleasant village (so that last short cut was deliberately planned). Depending on where you began the walk, your route goes over a crossroads, past the historic *Wyk House*, past (or into) *The Falcon*, a smart old pub with a stylish garden and locally-sourced food, open all day Fri-Sun. After more cottages, some with flowers for sale, a phonebox “library” and the Village Hall, on your left is the *Coach and Horses*, more of a “local’s pub” run by H&W. The School and the Church are the final buildings of the village where the walk began.



## Getting there

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By car: Rotherwick lies close to **Hook** on the M3 and could hardly be easier to get to. Get off at Exit 5 and follow signs for *Reading, Hook*. After nearly ½ mile, keep **right** at the roundabout, to go past some impressive industrial units till, after another 1½ miles you are in open country. At a bend, look for a sign for *Rotherwick* and turn **left** here. Turn **left** in the village and park discreetly somewhere along the road towards the church.

By bus/train: bus 333 from Basingstoke to Rotherwick and Mattingley, Wed-Fri. Check the timetables.

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