

Country Escapes

Ancient Routes and Landscapes

Just like Mole in 'Wind in the Willows', your journey along the river will whet your appetite for distant horizons glimpsed along the way. Following the River Thames from Goring to Wallingford, The Ridgeway and the Thames Path provide ready routes into the peaceful heart of the South Oxfordshire countryside. Take this countryside slowly to enjoy the detail of its hidden pleasures.

South Stoke to Wallingford

You can begin in the market town of Wallingford, on the River Thames. Trace the story of the town as told by [Wallingford Museum](#), wander round the ruins of the castle, built by William the Conqueror and demolished on Cromwell's orders during the Civil War, visit historic churches or sit by the river and watch the world pass by.

You might take a bus or taxi to South Stoke, and follow The Ridgeway for 3 miles along the banks of the Thames to North Stoke. From there you'll cover the remaining 2½ miles back to Wallingford, first along The Ridgeway as far as the Wallingford bypass where you cross via the road bridge to the opposite bank of the river to return to the town along the Thames Path.

Distance: 5½ miles/2¼ hours



Nuffield to Wallingford

Head to Nuffield (bus from Wallingford stops opposite Crown pub) and enjoy a walk back to Wallingford along The Ridgeway and Thames Path. From Nuffield you follow The Ridgeway along part of an ancient Grim's Ditch, large linear earthworks probably dug during the late Iron Age either as tribal boundaries or for defence. They take their name from the Nordic god Grim, to whom later generations ascribed the work. Walking mostly through a narrow strip of woodland, you will be rewarded with lovely views and stunning displays of bluebells in spring. When you reach the Wallingford bypass, cross the road bridge over the river and, turning right after it, follow the Thames Path to Wallingford alongside the river.

Distance: 5½ miles/2¼ hours



Bluebells along Grim's Ditch © Jos Joslin

Fact File

Finding your way

The Ridgeway and Thames Path are way-marked throughout with the National Trail acorn symbol.

Maps

See map at end of document; also OS Landranger 174 and 175 OS Explorer 170 and 171

Getting there

For details of buses and trains visit: [Ridgeway Travel Planner](#) and [Thames Path Travel Planner](#).

Refreshments

Wallingford: Various cafés and pubs

South Stoke: [Perch and Pike](#)

T: 01491 872415

North Stoke: [Springs Hotel](#)

T: 01491 836687

Nuffield: [Crown Inn](#) T: 01491 641335

Dorchester: Various pubs, hotels, tea rooms

Long Wittenham: [Vine & Spice](#)

T: 01865 409900

Plough T: 01865 407738

Ewelme: [Shepherds Hut](#) T: 01491 835636

[Village store and café](#)

Dorchester and Little Wittenham

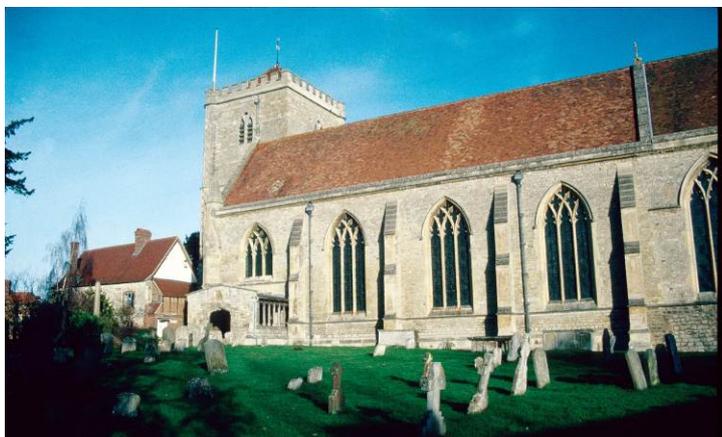
If you extend your trip to a couple of days, it's well worth following this walk to visit these picturesque villages. Please note this walk has moderate climbs up to the Wittenham Clumps.

From Wallingford, take a bus to [Dorchester](#). Pass through meadows to join the Thames Path for a short distance, cross the Thames over Little Wittenham Bridge, site of the annual Pooh Sticks competition, to the parish church of St Peter with its 14th century bell tower. The church overlooks [Wittenham Clumps](#), an Iron age fort on Castle Hill and Round Hill - an ancient, iconic landscape which inspired artist Paul Nash. Walk up from the church to the top of the Clumps where there's a panoramic view of the Thames and across Oxfordshire.

On the way down, explore Little Wittenham Nature Reserve and the newly created wildflower meadows - the jewel in the crown of the [Earth Trust](#). Then rejoin the path by the parish church and return to Dorchester. Or, if you've time, continue back across the River at Days Lock and follow the Thames Path to Clifton Meadow and Long Wittenham before circling back to Little Wittenham and retracing your steps to Dorchester.

In Dorchester view the elegant [Dorchester Abbey](#) with its wonderful Jesse window and visit the fascinating museum and tea room by the abbey, (open on summer weekend afternoons in). Take tea there or in a local hostelry before returning to Wallingford.

Distance: Dorchester to Little Wittenham returning via Little Wittenham nature reserve - 3½ miles/1½ hours



Dorchester Abbey © Jos Joslin

While visiting the area

The Maharaja's Well at Stoke Row should not be missed. With its golden elephant and domed canopy, the well was a gift from the Maharajah of Benares. Picturesque Ewelme with its [watercress beds](#) is another 'must'. Chaucer's grand-daughter, the Duchess of Suffolk, lived and entertained royally here and founded the 15th-century church where Jerome K Jerome is buried, the school and almshouses. Near Nuffield is [Nuffield Place](#), home for years of William Morris, Lord Nuffield, philanthropist and founder of William Morris Motor Cars. The house is a perfect example of a 1930s country home.

Public Toilets

Wallingford: Car park off New Rd (8.00am-7.30pm)

Dorchester: Bridge End (24hr)

Accommodation

Wallingford: [George Hotel](#)

[Huntington House](#)

[Old Schoolhouse](#)

52 Blackstone Road T: 01491 839339

South Stoke: [Oak Barn](#), [Perch and Pike](#)

North Stoke: [Springs Hotel](#)

Briar Cottage T: 01491 835833

Nuffield: [Mays Farm House](#),

14 Bradley Road T: 01491 641359

Dorchester: [George Hotel](#), [White Hart Hotel](#), [Fleur de Lys](#)

Long Wittenham: [The Grange](#),

Witta's Ham Cottage T: 01865 407686

Ewelme: [Fords Farm](#)

Other places to visit

[Earth Trust](#)

[Nuffield Place](#)

[Pendon Museum](#)

[Chinnor Railway](#),

[Cholsey Wallingford Railway](#)

[Didcot Railway Centre](#)

Tourist Information

[Visit Southern Oxfordshire](#)

Wallingford: Town Hall, Market Place,
T: 01491 826972

E: wallingfordtic@btconnect.com

Remember when out walking

- Wear appropriate clothing and strong, comfortable footwear.
- Carry water.
- Take a mobile phone if you have one, but coverage may be patchy in rural areas.
- If you are walking alone it's sensible, as a precaution, to let someone know where you are and when you expect to return.
- Please follow the [Countryside Code](#)



Crab apple in flower © Jos Joslin

Ancient Routes and Landscapes map

