where to eat

There are many pubs and restaurants along the route of The Winchester Watercress Tour. Most of the pubs listed here are recommended in The Good Pub Guide 2008 or the AA Pub *Guide* 2008. Look out for others as you travel.

pubs

The Globe on the Lake ☎ 01962 732 294

Beauworth The Milbury's **3** 01962 771 248

The Three Horseshoes 201962 732 859

Bishop's Waltham Hampshire Bowman ☎ 01489 892 940**

Bramdean The Fox Inn **1**01962 771 363**

The Flower Pots Inn 201962 771 318

The White Horse **2** 01489 877 490

East Meon Ye Old George Inn 201730 823 481

The Cricketers Inn 201962 779 353 The Chestnut Horse 201962 779 257*

The Izaak Walton 201730 823 252

The Shoe Inn 201489 877 526**

Itchen Abbas The Trout Inn 201962 779 537

The Bucks Head 201489 877 313

The Bush Inn **1**01962 732 764*

Owslebury

The Ship Inn 201962 777 358

Soberton

The White Lion 201489 877 346

Southwick Red Lion 2 023 9237 7223

Titchborne

The Tichborne Arms 201962 733 760

The Brushmakers Arms 201489 860 231



restaurants

Shapla Indian Cuisine 7019062 732 134 Broad Street Brasserie 201962 733 246 Pizza Express 2 01962 738 758

Bishop's Waltham

Banks Bar & Bistro **1**489 896 352 The Wine Bar & Bistro 201489 894 476 Waltham Tandoori 🕿 01489 894 684*

Barnard's Restaurant 2 023 9225 7788

Shedfield Wickham Vineyard Restaurant 201329 832 985

Greens Restaurant and Bar 201329 833 197*

Old House Hotel 2 01329 833 049* Wickham Wine Bar 2 01329 832 732 Clarks Bistro 2 01329 835 566

cafés and tea rooms



Alresford

Tiffin Tea Rooms **7** 01962 734 394 Courtyard Tea Room 201962 733 303** Caracoli (tea room and deli) 201962 738 730*

Bishop's Waltham

The Palm Tree Coffee Shop 201489 893 877 The Anvil Coffee Shop 201489 892 969 Stainer's Tea Rooms 2 01489 895 331 Barrington's Delicatessen (& tea room) ☎ 01489 896 600**

Twyford

Bean Below (in Twyford Post Office) 201962 711 353

Bay Tree Tea Rooms 2 01329 832 601

*hampshire hospitality awards look for the quality marque

There is a quality assessment scheme for resturants, tea rooms, pubs, cafés and other eateries in Hampshire. Eateries in this section with a blue asterisk have received Hampshire Hospitality Awards; some for the use of locally grown produce on their menus, some for the overall quality of the dining experience (from service to ambience) and some for both, so be sure to look for the quality marque.

Winchester City Council cannot be held responsible for the quality of the establishments mentioned, although the rating awarded after their last food hygiene inspection can be found on www.safe2eat.com, a website launched in April 2007

where to stay



If you would like to extend your visit, book into a local hotel, B&B or self-catering property or caravan park. A wide selection of places to stay which all have an official quality rating from the AA or VisitBritain can be found on



www.visitwinchester.co.uk or by calling the Winchester Tourist Information Centre on 01962 840 500. You can also request a visitor guide containing a comprehensive accommodation section.

the watercress villages

The Worthies 📽

The Old Post Office in Kings Worthy (now a

Church, claims to be the oldest in England.

A receiving house, as they were then known,

is now in Winchester City Museum.

opened in Kings Worthy in 1845 and the letterbox

Follow some of the river walks around

the Worthies and you will soon come across

The Good Life Farm Shop & Plant Centre,

watercress, ice cream, cheeses and seasonal

The **Rod Box** tackle shop in Kings Worthy

those planning to fish in the area.

Itchen Abbas & Avington

Itchen Abbas sits on the north bank of the River

Close by is **Avington Park 2** 01962 779 260

where both Nell Gwyn and the poet Shelley are

afternoons from May to September and Mondays

said to have stayed. The house is open to the

public on Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday

The Church of St Mary the Virgin is virtually

The Trout Inn at Itchen Abbas

serves local trout for most of the year.

The B3047 will take you into the handsome

Alresford is the hub of the watercress industry in

Hampshire due to the clear chalk streams which

visit some of the beds and even take part in the

popular annual Watercress Festival held on a May

Sunday, in celebration of the local leaf and other

here are pretty riverside walks and specialist shops

and galleries to tempt you and a surprising number

of eateries including traditional and gastro pubs,

Mid Hants Steam Railway 2 01962 733 810,

www.watercressline.co.uk, more usually known

special railway wagons in Alresford Goods Yard for

While you are in Alresford, pick up a copy of the

Alresford Millennium Trail & Arle Valley Trail from the

railway visitor centre for a full investigation of the

leaflets The New Alresford Pocket Guide and the

smart bistros and welcoming tea rooms. Many

visitors come to Alresford for a trip on the

as the Watercress Line. In years gone by,

express conveyance to markets in London.

local sights and attractions.

watercress from nearby beds was loaded onto

remain at a relatively constant temperature. You can

Georgian town of Alresford.

interesting barrel organ

Alresford 🚏

unaltered since its construction in 1771. It has

mahogany box pews, a two-tiered pulpit and an

fish for which the River Itchen is famous. It

2 01962 779 537 takes its name from the

Itchen and it is here that Charles Kingsley is

reputed to have written The Water Babies.

sells a range of local produce including

restaurant La Bonne Vie.

the watercress beds which flourish in this part

Springvale Road, Kings Worthy 201962 889 000

vegetables and serves local produce in its licensed

201962 883 600 is definitely worth a visit for

private house), next to the charming St Mary's



The Globe on the Lake Inn, Alresford 201962 732 294. This 16th century inn specialises in freshly cooked local produce, which can be enjoyed whilst taking in the view over Alresford Pond

West Lea Farm Shop, Itchen Stoke, Alresford **☎ 01962 732 476** sells a range of local produce including fresh trout, sheep's cheese, homemade cakes and soup, fresh cheese and watercress scones and watercress from its own cress beds.

Itchen Valley Brewery, New Farm Rd, New Alresford **T** 01962 735 111 produces a range of unique traditional real ales from finest quality ingredients, creating a distinctive taste. Brewery tours are available.

The Mid Hants Railway 2 01962 733 810 runs regular Real Ale trains, and others with special dining facilities.

The Three Horseshoes, Bighton, ☎ 01962 732 859. Just 5 minutes from the Mid Hants Railway at Ropley, this 17th century coaching inn serves a range of local produce sometimes including home-made watercress soup.



Tichborne 🕵

Tichborne too has a history of watercress growing. The River Itchen runs through the heart of the village and there are still beds at Ladycroft. Tichborne, owned by the Tichborne family for nearly 1000 years, also has a fascinating history: the Tichborne Dole, flour given to villagers annually, is an 800-year-old tradition, while The Tichborne Inheritance was a sensational Victorian inheritance trial in which an Australian butcher claimed to be heir to the estate. There are some lovely walks and footpaths and the Itchen Way passes through the village.

Cheriton & Hinton Ampner



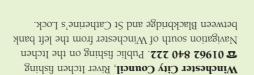
South of Alresford lies the delightful village of Cheriton. This was the scene of a ferocious battle in 1644. A clash of 18,000 Cavaliers and Roundheads ended in disaster for the King's men in Lamborough Lane, causing it to "run with blood". A copy of The Cheriton Battlefield Walk will help you follow in the soldiers' footsteps as you cross the actual site.



The Church of St Michael was built in the 1100s, and the appointment of Rector of Cheriton was then regarded as a stepping stone to high office in the Church.

Close to Cheriton is **Hinton Ampner** where you can visit the National Trust House and Garden **201962** 771 305.

Quench your thirst at Cheriton's **Flower** Pots Inn 2 01962 771 318, a delightful pub with its own micro-brewery on site and a lovely garden for warm summer evenings.



🕿 01329 841 215. Still water coarse fishing. River Farm, Fontley Road, Titchfield, Fareham Still water rainbow and brown trout fishing. Meon Springs, near East Meon 🕿 01730 823 134.

Open all year. Tuition available. Flies and rod 719 312. Still water and river fishing. Avington Trout Fishery, Itchen Abbas over 12 years old must have a rod licence to fish. visit www.environment-agency.gov.uk. Anyone please contact the agency 🕿 08708 506 506 or Fishing in the South. For a copy of the booklet

taken from the Environment Agency's free guide

The following fisheries in and around our area are

places to fish

www.hampshirefarmersmarkets.co.uk

10 149 885 07+10 B Cresson Creative. Details and dates can be and watercress crepes made by local caterers delights as smoked frout and watercress mousse sell their home-grown produce. Look out for such smallholders rely increasingly on these markets to Sunday of each month. Many local farmers and place in Winchester on the second and last towns and villages. The largest in the country takes Farmers' markets are held regularly in Hampshire's

tarmers' markets

teaturing special themed menus alongside local pubs and restaurant includes a series of food-related events This popular celebration of culinary delights annual event for food-lovers, held in June/July. also organises Hampshire Food Festival, the www.hampshirefare.co.uk. Hampshire Fare Hampshire Fare on 🕿 01962 845 435 or Local produce can also be sourced through hub of the UK's watercress industry.

held each year in May in the town of Alresford, the is also celebrated at the annual Watercress Festival Alliance at www.watercress.co.uk. The local leaf versatile plant can be obtained from the Watercress back in fashion. A selection of recipes for this a rich source of antioxidant vitamins, it is definitely bought in farm shops around the area. Known to be Watercress also features on local menus and can be



abundant wild fish population. today is from Wickham to Meonstoke, with its fishing in England. The prime trout fishing section believed the River Meon provided the best trout angling, is buried in Winchester Cathedral. Walton (published 1653) and regarded as the father of Izaak Walton, the author of The Compleat Angler

brown and rainbow trout. bliw sti not suomet si bne 'gnirist-ylt to olbero' south west of Winchester) is considered the The Itchen (along with the River Test, to the watercress growing and for trout to thrive in. water that makes them ideal both for these are famous for the clean, fast-running of our area are the Meon and the Itchen. Both of The two main rivers running through the heart tood from the chalk streams

customerservice@winchester.gov.uk

01962 840 222 or by email: Centre either by telephone: please contact the Customer Service audio tape, large print, sign language – example translation, interpreters, Braille, would like to receive information - for involved in our new services or how you affect how you are able to use or be If you have any particular needs which

OI 2 01962 840 500.

have information and leaflets on the long distance **☎** 01962 870 500 of www.hants.gov.uk - also Hampshire County Council Information Centre -Winchester Tourist Information Centre and www.visitwinchester.co.uk.

Watereress Tour by logging on to

produce and other aspects of The Winchester you can find out more about the villages, the local Space is limited in a publication like this one, so

also contact them at tourism@winchester.gov.uk off at their office on Broadway in Winchester. You can are always happy to help. Visit them before you set Staff at Winchester Tourist Information Centre turther intormation

denotes a special watercress connection. The watercress leaf next to a village name locally produced food and drink. The **tureen** will help you discover the best of

the way. Look out, too, for our special symbols: learn the fascinating history of the villages along route, and then keep one eye on the text to Use the map inside this leaflet to plan your

the first stop on the tour. will soon arrive at the Worthies, B3047 Worthy Road and you Winchester. Head out on the Journey is the historic city of

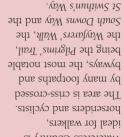
The ideal start point for your three days and enjoy the hospitality of local inns,

Winchester Tourist Information Centre 7 0871 200 2233 for details or contact Call the National Traveline enquiry number Portsmouth to most of the villages along the way. Bus services run from Winchester, Fareham and

You could choose a leisurely drive over two or

Churches and Itchen Valley Churches. feature in two new church guides; Meon Valley Self-guided trails for walkers and cyclists also

walking, cycling and riding. former Meon Valley Railway, now a trail for Crossing these main footpaths is the route of the



by many footpaths and The area is criss-crossed horseriders and cyclists. ideal for walkers, Watercress Country is

getting about

Winchester, Portsmouth and Southampton. tucked away between the busy centres of to be surprised at the rural peace and beauty area or you live in Hampshire, you are sure Whether you are a first-time visitor to the east and south of the city of Winchester. on a journey through the countryside to the The Winchester Wateveress Tour takes you



introduction



the meon valley railway

Central to Watercress Country is the Meon Valley Trail, which runs through some beautiful countryside along the route of the former Meon Valley Railway.

a brief history of the railway

Built to main line standards, this much loved railway never fulfilled the promise of its grand construction plans. Opened in 1903, the 22 mile line ran from Fareham to Alton as part of the London-Portsmouth route. It took five years to complete. It was hoped that Queen Victoria would use the line en route to Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, although she

died before the line opened on 1 June 1903. The early days of the railway were busy, with goods traffic providing much of the revenue. Market gardening was big business in Hampshire and whole trainloads of strawberries would be loaded at gford – which is why the railway came to be called The Strawberry Line. The railway also carried livestock to and from Alton and Fareham markets and during the First World War, troops bound for France.

However, wartime and the growing popularity of motor vehicles had a significant impact on the railway. Passenger trains became shorter in the 1920s and the railway began its slow but steady decline. In June 1944, however, the line achieved its place in

history. Churchill's war cabinet stayed in a special train in the long siding at Droxford Station for several days whilst final preparations for the D-day landings were being made at Southwick House. Despite local objections and a public enquiry,

Saturday 5 February 1955. The last train out of Alton was adorned with a commemorative wreath and headboard. Thirteen years later, the freight service also came to an end. Since then, the line has been taken up, along with most of the associated buildings. Further reading: The Meon Valley Railway by R. A. Stone (Runpast Publishing, ISBN 1-870754-36-0)

passenger services were completely withdrawn on

the meon valley trail

Today the route from Wickham to West Meon survives as a recreational trail for use by walkers, cyclists and riders.

During spring and summer, the trail is alive with butterflies such as the marbled white and gatekeeper and plants like the ox-eye daisy and primrose. Flocks of redwing and fieldfare can be seen in the autumn feeding on berries and, if you are lucky, you may spot a little egret in the water meadows

The trail links with the South Downs Way, Wayfarers' Walk and local footpaths, enabling you to create a circular route to suit your time and pace.

access points

suitable for wheelchair access.

You can join the trail at the following places: Cyclists and horse riders: Station Road, West

Meon; Peake New Road and South Downs Way, south of Warnford; Station Road, Droxford; Wickham. Walkers: All the above and also West Street Soberton, and via local footpath in Frys Lane, Meonstoke. Upperford Copse, Mislingford, is also

Parking is available at West Meon, Upperford Copse and Wickham, and there are **picnic** and **toilet facilities** at Upperford Copse.



The Winchester Watercress Tour An exploration of the Hampshire countryside

around the Itchen and Meon Valleys

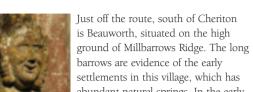






Beauworth





settlements in this village, which has abundant natural springs. In the early 1800s many cottages even had indoor wells.

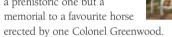
In 1833 local children found an old metal box by the village pond. The lead coffer contained around 6000 coins in mint condition from the reigns of William the Conqueror and William II. Sadly for the boys, the find was declared treasure trove and

The Milbury's 10 01962 771 248 a corruption of Millbarrows – is the local pub famous for its man-powered treadwheel, which drew water from a well reputed to

the coins are now in the British Museum.

Bramdean

Along the A272 you come to the village of Bramdean. The stone circle you see beside the main road at The Dean is not a prehistoric one but a memorial to a favourite horse



To the north of the village, in the woods on

Bramdean Common, is a corrugated iron Romany Church, known as the Church in the Wood. It was put up in 1883 for the gypsies who then camped on the common, and it still holds services in the summer. The land is owned by Magdalen College, Oxford, which receives an annual rent of five pence.



West Meon

From Bramdean the A272 reaches a junction with the A32 at the West Meon Hut public house. Turning south will quickly bring you into the village of West Meon. This sleepy village with its fast flowing river is the starting point of the Meon Valley Trail. It is also the final resting place of Thomas Lord, founder of Lord's Cricket Ground in London, who retired here in 1830. Marylebone Cricket Club (owner of Lord's) still maintains the grave. West Meon's churchyard also holds another secret. The ashes of Guy Burgess, the double agent who fled to Russia in 1951 with Donald Maclean, were interred in the family plot in October 1963. Guy's brother brought the ashes home after a cremation in in the dark to avoid media interest.

Now continue down the A32 to Wickham or take a diversion to the following villages.



Just off our route is East Meon. Here the ancient Celts took refuge when the Meonwara, a tribe of jutes, invaded the Meon Valley as far as West Meon. It is said that, even today, two very different cultures exist in the two villages.

The fine 11th century Church of All Saints houses a magnificent font, identical to the one in Winchester Cathedral. Carved from a single block of black marble from Tournai in Belgium, the fonts were a gift from Henri de Blois, Bishop of Winchester.





The village inn **2 01730 823 252** is named after Izaak Walton, author of *The* Compleat Angler, who is believed to have fished in the area.

Warnford & Droxford 😵

As you head down the A32 to Droxford, look out for the many watercress beds around Warnford. You might also like to take to the South Downs Way as it passes through Exton on its way up to Old Winchester Hill, a nature reserve on



an Iron Age hill fort. You can enjoy fabulous views across Hampshire and even to the Isle of Wight on clear days. Droxford itself offers many walking possibilities, crossed by the Wayfarers' Walk, several local footpaths and the Meon Valley Trail.

It was in Droxford Rectory that Isaak Walton wrote The Compleat Angler whilst living there with his daughter and son-in-law, the vicar. The village also played a special role during the Second World War (see 'The Meon Valley Railway').

Soberton

From Droxford, the A32 takes you to Wickham. Alternatively, a small detour to the east brings you to the three tiny villages of Soberton (a crossing point of the Wayfarers' Walk and the Meon Valley Trail), Hambledon and Southwick. This area of Hampshire used to be part of the much larger Forest of Bere – a hunting ground of the Saxon kings – when it stretched from Romsey to the



The White Lion 🕿 01489 877 346, popular with walkers, offers light bite lunches and daily changing dinner menus using local

Hambledon

Continuing along the B2150, you reach Hambledon, a quaint village with Georgian houses and cottages and a 12th century church. It was Hambledon Cricket Club that standardised the rules of the modern game and the village is today considered to be the spiritual home of cricket. The cricket ground is two miles north east at Broadha'penny Down.

Southwick

Unusually for these times, the pretty village of Southwick is still owned by the local estate, which is why the windows and door frames are all painted the same colour.

Visit the Southwick Brewhouse, 2 023 9220 1133, a scheduled ancient monument, where you can stock up on Suthwyk Ales, still brewed today on Victorian equipment.

The B2177 takes you to Wickham, rejoining the route of the Watercress Tour.

Wickham



Central to Wickham is the highly attractive square which is surrounded by specialist shops and places to eat. It was conceived by Roger de Scures, a Frenchman who bought the land from Henry III in 1269 and was designed to accommodate markets

In the same year the town was granted a royal charter to hold an annual fair in May. This tradition continues today and includes an authentic gypsy horse fair. A walk down Bridge Street will take you past Chesapeake Mill, so named because its timbers came from the US frigate Chesapeake, used in the 1812 war with America. Now offering a unique retail experience, the mill is home to furnishings, gifts, jewellery and antiques and a fine café. ☎ 01329 834 078 or www.chesapeakemill.co.uk

Hampshire Delicatessen Delicatessen located in the Co-op in The Square **☎ 01329 834 555** stocks a range of locally produced foods such as cheeses, jams, chutneys,



Wickham Vineyard, Botley Road, Shedfield, ☎ 01329 834 042 sells a selection of wines produced from its own grapes, including the award-winning Special Release Fumé which is served at the House of Commons. The vineyard also has its own restaurant and terrace with views of the vines. Tours of the vineyard are available, and it hosts a selection of events through the summer months.

Fort Nelson, Fareham

A slight detour south from Wickham makes for an enjoyable visit to the Royal Armouries Fort Nelson ☎ 01329 233 734, www.royalarmouries.org, on the outskirts of Fareham, with wonderful views over Portsmouth Harbour. Admission is free, and there are regular re-enactments during the day as well as the midday gun-firing. Fort Nelson's summer events include a spectacular tattoo.

The licensed **Powderkeg Café** at Fort Nelson is set in the historic, brick-vaulted barrack rooms and is open all day, every day. Choose from a range of light snacks to three course meals which can be washed down with locally-produced Suthwyk Ales.



Waltham Chase

On the B2177 between Wickham and Bishop's Waltham is Waltham Chase. On the way, stop off at **The Moors Nature Reserve** where the source of the River Hamble rises through sand, appearing

The Chase was originally the area reserved by the Bishops of Winchester for hunting. The deer kept on the Chase were a nuisance to neighbouring farmers and led to the formation in the 18th century of the Waltham Blacks. Young men blacked their faces as a disguise and stole the deer. They also went on to rob stagecoaches which put travellers in fear of them. In 1742 Bishop Hoadley was asked to restock the deer in the Chase and refused on the grounds that enough harm had been caused already.

Bishop's Waltham



The Bishop referred to in the town's name is Henri de Blois, the Bishop of Winchester who began to construct Bishop's Waltham Palace **T** 01489 892 460 as a castle in 1136. William of Wykeham - founder of Winchester College subsequently finished it as a palace, and the ruins can be visited during the summer months.

The Pilgrims' Trail passes through Bishop's Waltham on its way from Winchester to Portsmouth, entering the town along another disused railway line - the Bishop's Waltham Railway. This branch line ran between Botley and Bishop's Waltham from 1863 to 1932.

Obtain a copy of Discover Bishop's Waltham from the Parish Council office in Little Shore Lane to help you explore its scenic streets and interesting shops. The town holds an annual arts festival in June with a traditional carnival and fête.



Colden Common & Twyford

Coming back towards Winchester from Bishop's Waltham you will travel through Colden Common on the B3354. Marwell Zoological Park ☎ 01962 777 407, www.marwell.org.uk, which

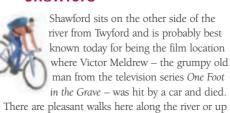
is located here, is a leading conservation zoo and makes for a delightful day out in itself. Next on the route is Twyford, where the Edwardian waterworks are open to the public on selected Sundays **201962 714 716**. The triple expansion steam

engine is normally in steam on the first Sunday of each month, and a couple of times a year there are special steam open weekends. In 1754 one William Davies, making his way home

in fog, got lost and was only saved from falling in a

chalk pit by the ringing of the Twyford church bells. The grateful man bequeathed £1 per year to the ringers provided the bells were rung twice on 7th October each year. The tradition is still upheld today and is followed by the Ringers Dinner at which Davies' will is read out.

Shawford



onto Shawford Down. The Down is public open space and a convenient point for walking along the Itchen Navigation and to Compton or Twyford.

And so you return to Winchester on the B3335 - the start and end of your Watercress Tour. We hope you have enjoyed your journey.

