



Walking in  
**West Berkshire**

**3**



# *Mortimer*

**3**

mile circular route  
for walking



# Introduction

This leaflet describes two walks, each approximately three miles (4.8km) long. Each route should take about two hours to walk. The route is marked with the Countryside Agency's standard arrow waymarks, bearing the words 'Recreational Route'.

The walks have been described from the Fairground at Mortimer.

The large square of open land known as Mortimer Fairground was dedicated for public use when the area was 'enclosed' (turned from communal fields into individually owned holdings) in 1804. The gorse that covered the common then, has today given way to an area of grassland, part of which is now being restored to heathland. The annual cattle fairs of the late 19th Century have now been replaced by the occasional visits of circus troupes and fairs.

## Southern Route

The Southern walk runs mainly along the brooks to the south of the village of Mortimer, then back over the higher ground to the east.

From the Fairground, walk east along Victoria Road passing the school and the Horse and Groom public house. Take the footpath on the right that runs along the left hand edge of a broad driveway, then bears left between the gardens, before opening out to follow the backs of some more houses. The path then crosses a field to end at Drury Lane. Turn left down this lane.

The variety of wild flowers visible growing in the hedge banks can be a testament to the old age of such routes.

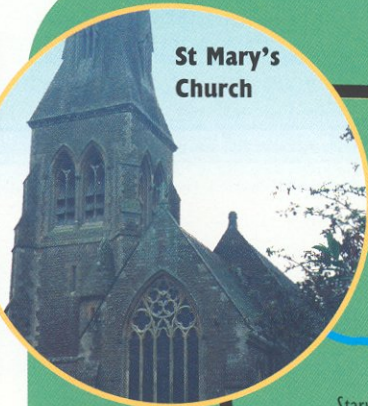
At the T-junction, turn right into Pitfield Lane. Walk down this lane to Tanhouse Bridge. Just before the bridge turn left on to a footpath. This footpath runs down the side of West End Brook. At the junction of this brook with Foudry Brook, turn left.

Watch out for water birds such as grey wagtails, kingfishers and grey herons as you walk along the brooks. The quieter you are, the more likely you are to see the wildlife.

Follow Foudry Brook across three fields, then cross the brook at a footbridge. The path runs along the opposite bank and finishes at a stile by a gate. Cross the stile and the bridge and walk up the drive to St. Mary's Church.



**St Mary's Church**



**Wokefield Park**



**Wokefield Park**

**Wokefield Common**

Pullens Pond

Lockram Lane

Lockram Brook

Starvale Wood

Bridge's Farm

**Windmill Common**

Windmill Road

Victoria Road

**MORTIMER**

**Fairground**

Horse & Groom PH

Mann's Farm

Nightingale Lane

Wheat's Farm

Mortimer Lane

Fox & Horn PH

**STRATFIELD MORTIMER**

**St Mary's Church**

**Mortimer Station**

Tun Bridge

Footbridge

Fouldry Brook

Drury Lane

Pitfield Lane

West End Brook

Tanhouse Bridge

**Southern route** 

**Northern route** 

**Roads** 

**Railway** 

**Parking** 

**Bus stop** 

**Village area** 

**Woodland** 

**Pond** 

**Stream** 



1 MILE

1 KILOMETRE



The present St. Mary's was erected under the patronage of the Lord of the Manor, John Benyon, in 1866. However, its Victorian aspect reveals only a small part of the church's historical value. Believed to be the fifth church on the site, the original St. Mary's probably dates from Norman times. Behind the organ stands a stained glass window composed in part of glass from the original Norman building.

Follow the drive to the road and turn right, passing the Fox and Horn public house. Turn left at the next road junction. The right hand turning leads to Mortimer Station and it is here that train users join the walk.

Mortimer station is one of the few remaining examples of Brunel's original designs.

After passing the last house, take the path on the left that leads up to Mortimer Lane. Cross the lane and take the path opposite, leading to Wheat's Farm. Pass between the farm buildings and up to a track. Cross the track and go through the gate to turn immediately left at the footpath sign. Follow the path round the edge of this field, crossing the stiles where the field has been sub-divided into paddocks. The path leaves the field's western border at a stile to run for a short distance along another field before crossing a further stile. The path then runs between a hedge and a fence to end at the wood.

Here the Southern route meets the Northern route.

Follow the waymarks through the wood to emerge at the Fairground. Cross the Fairground to the end of the walk.

## Northern Route

This walk runs mainly through the commons to the north of the village of Mortimer.

Walk away from the church across the Fairground and turn left into Windmill Road. Turn right on to the footpath at the end of Windmill Court. Keep straight along the path as it crosses Windmill Common.

The Common is so called because in the 18th Century the Reverend James Morgan arranged for a windmill and a cottage to be built there. With the 1804 Enclosure Act the land passed back to the Lord of the Manor, who planted the Common with Scots Pine. In 1832 the owner of the mill wrote, "It lays under the necessity to remove



because the fir plantation has overgrown and keep the wind off the mill". By 1937 the mill had gone and all that remains are some of the offending pines.

On leaving the Common, the walk follows a byway across a small valley with a stream.

This is an old track as is indicated by its slightly sunken nature and by the banks with hedges on either side. In time, tracks on soft soil and slopes gradually get lower due to erosion. Before reaching the road by Bridges Farm, a ditch and bank with old beech trees can be seen to the left of the track. Ditches and banks with old trees are often old boundary markers – look out for further examples as you continue your walk.

Turn right on to the road at the farm, and shortly afterwards turn left on to the next footpath. Follow this path until it joins a bridleway and here turn right. This bridleway goes through Starvale Wood and passes by a house before entering Wokefield Common.

Crossing Wokefield Common you will see the occasional area of heather and gorse. This indicates that the common was once heathland and probably grazed by sheep. When grazing became uneconomic, trees were able to seed into the common and Scots Pine was planted. The heathland gradually became woodland. Wokefield Common is managed by West Berkshire Council and is open for use by the public for recreational pursuits. There are many paths and tracks on the common, and the council has placed map boards at various points. This leaflet describes one route across the common that mainly uses public rights of way.

Continue in the same direction across the common. At the large pond, where there are picnic facilities, the walk bears right to end at a road junction. Cross the road and take the bridleway opposite. Follow the bridleway, passing a small pond on the left, and at the next large track turn right. The track bears to the left then to the right by a house and passes around Pullen's Fish Pond before emerging at a road.

Ponds such as this were probably used to stock fish for use in the great houses of the past.

Turn right, then go left towards Wokefield at the road junction. Walk down Lockram Lane and after passing Lockram Farmhouse turn right on to a footpath that runs down across a field to Lockram Brook. Cross the brook: the path follows the field boundary up the hill. Go through the squeeze gap to pass through a small parcel of uncultivated land and continue along the edge of the field up the hill. Cross the stile at the top of the hill and turn right along the field edge. Turn left at the next field boundary and walk down the field edge to the stile.

While you are walking down this path, Wokefield Park can be seen on the left. This was originally built for the Palmer Family, then it became a school, now it is a conference centre.

Cross the stile, the path follows the field edge, turning right along the edge of a copse. At the end of the copse, turn left along the footpath to reach Nightingale Lane. Turn right along the lane for a short distance before turning left through a kissing gate at the next footpath sign. Follow the path to a second kissing gate and on across a field to the wood.

Here the Southern route joins this walk.

Walk through the wood to emerge at the edge of the Fairground. Here there is a choice: either cross the Fairground to the end of the walk, or walk down the road to the War Memorial.

The War Memorial was designed by Herbert Maryon, a sculptor at the University College in Reading. It is made of Portland stone, displays four bronze plaques and stands 20 feet high. It commemorates the 56 men of Mortimer that lost their lives in the 1914 - 18 Great War. The War Memorial was unveiled on 9th October 1921. A fifth plaque was unveiled on 14th November 1999 to commemorate ten men from Mortimer who lost their lives in World War II (1939 - 45).



Wokefield Common



# The Country Code

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
- Guard against all risk of fire
- Leave all gates as found
- Keep your dogs under close control
- Keep to public rights of way across farm land
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges & walls
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone
- Take your litter home
- Help to keep all water clean
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees
- Take special care on country roads
- Make no unnecessary noise

## Transport

Reading Buses service 143 runs between Tadley and Reading via Mortimer, tel: (0870) 6082608. Thames Trains run trains between Reading and Basingstoke that service Mortimer Station. Tel: (08457) 484950.

## Car Parking

Mortimer Village



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