

Trail : HAMPTR0061
 Activity : Walk
 Type : History
 Terrain : Towpaths and Cycle Tracks
 Author : John Owen Smith
 Distance : 9.5 miles / 15.3 kms
 Ascent : 564 feet / 172 metres
 Location : SU750381 / GU34 3AR



River Wey at Neatham Mill
 © John Owen Smith



St Leonard's Church
 © John Owen Smith



King John's Hill
 © Nigel Chadwick

Trail Summary

East Worldham and the Hangers

The trail starts and ends at East Worldham church, visiting Wyck, Neatham, West Worldham, Hartley Mauditt, Candovers, King John's Hill. It can be walked in two sections of very similar distance.

Trail Details

Romans: The Roman road from Chichester to Silchester passed close to East Worldham, cutting diagonally up the escarpment of the hill. Little remains now to show where it ran - presumably it lost its significance with the demise of Silchester, probably in the fifth century AD. Remains of Roman occupation have been discovered in East Worldham, at Wyck and close to Neatham.

Rogues: The 'Pass of Alton' on the well-used route between the capital cities of Winchester and London was notorious as a haunt of thieves who would rob travellers, some of whom then used safer routes along the higher ground, such as that through East Worldham, instead. The outlaw Adam de Gurdon is said to have lost a duel with Prince Edward (later Edward I) near here in 1266 - but his life was spared and he died 'a rich and honoured man', buried in Selborne.

A rogue of a different kind was the lord of the manor of Hartley Mauditt who, in 1798, decided to live in London. We are told that his wife preferred to remain here, so he

demolished the manor house in order to prevent this. Due to the resulting loss of employment, the village was abandoned and the church now stands alone by the pond.

Royals: The land between East Worldham and Kingsley was for centuries used as a royal hunting forest, part of Woolmer Forest. The hill just to the south-east of East Worldham (see Point 19 on the walk), known today as King John's Hill, is supposed to be the site of a 13th century hunting lodge – and Henry VIII is known to have hunted in the area and stayed at Lode in Kingsley.

Note: If you wish to do just the south section of the walk, from the parking place walk back to the B3004 and turn right to follow directions from Point 9.

1. Enter the churchyard by a track on the south side of the church, and follow the footpath to the east of the church quitting the churchyard by a stile at the left end of a brick wall.
2. Cross a paddock and two further stiles to a crossways of footpaths at the edge of a large field. Carry straight on across the field. There are good views to right and left - note particularly the prominent 'golf ball' satellite-tracking radomes of Oakhanger to the right.
3. Cross a sunken track and continue straight ahead across the next open field. Note a distant view of Binsted Church ahead.

The sunken track is the path of a former Roman road linking Chichester with Silchester. To the right it begins a sharp descent to the valley below, and appears to deviate from its ruler-straight path as it does so.

4. Arriving at a surfaced drive (to Wyck Place), turn left to pass through its impressive gates then right along the public road through the hamlet of Wyck. (Alternatively follow the public right-of-way straight ahead and divert back to the road by other means)

The remains of a Roman villa were discovered at Wyck Place in 1818. Twelve years later, in 1830, the destruction of a threshing machine here during the 'Swing Riots' (see Walk 2 in the book) resulted in the transportation of Thomas Heighes to Australia.

5. Having passed through the hamlet, follow the road to a right hand bend. Just round the corner, cross a stile to the left and take a footpath passing under electricity pylons and keeping a copse to the left. Continue downhill across open fields, crossing a drainage ditch and heading for another line of pylons. As it approaches farm buildings, the path leaves open fields and enters an enclosed section pleasantly overhung by trees. This leads to a minor public road.
6. Turn left along the road, through the hamlet of Neatham. Note the entrance shortly to Neatham Manor Farm on the left - we will take this route to return to

East Worldham, but first we recommend you carry on downhill to visit Neatham Mill on the northern River Wey.

"The Roman settlement at Neatham [Vindomis] lies about the crossing of the Silchester to Chichester (north-south) road with the main London to Winchester (east-west) road, just north of the fording over the River Wey. Occupation of this civilian settlement lasted from Flavian times until the late-fourth or early-fifth centuries." [*Roman-Britain.org*]

7. Return to the Neatham Manor Farm entrance and take the public footpath which passes through the farmyard and onwards along a gravelled farm track which rises to pass the left hand side of Monk Wood. Where the track bears sharp left, keep straight ahead up the hill. East Worldham church can be seen across the fields to the left. At the top of the hill, after passing under a line of pylons, the footpath meets the Hangers Way. There is a good view down to Alton from here.
8. Turn left along Hangers Way following it past Clay's Farm, across a surfaced lane, a railway sleeper bridge, past a redeveloped oast house and across a field towards East Worldham. At another lane (Wyck Lane), turn right. If you wish to return to the church, take a path shortly to the left past houses - the church is visible at the end. Otherwise continue along the lane to meet the B3004 road in about 1/4 mile.

The *Three Horseshoes* pub at the crossroads nearby makes a good stopping point for refreshment.

9. From the end of Wyck Lane, cross the main road with care and climb the flight of steps to a stile up the bank opposite. Follow the field hedge across to another stile to the right of a bungalow, and then along a narrow path by the garden.
10. Emerging at a concrete farm track, turn right past some farm sheds, then bear left after a fuel tank set on pillars, following a finger post pointing diagonally across a field. The track is more or less clear according to the crop. Head for the copse ahead and pass to its left. Go through a hole in a hedge and then cross several other fields, with footbridges over ditches and double stiles in places, keeping generally in a straight line and heading eventually up a rise towards buildings to meet a road at a bend.
11. Continue along the surfaced road through the hamlet (part of West Worldham) arriving in about a mile at Hartley Mauditt church.

St Leonard's Church, Hartley Mauditt stands isolated beside the village pond. It was essentially a manor church, built 1100–1125 by one of William the Conqueror's knights, William de Mauditt, in a clearing in the forest. [*Some Ancient Churches in North East Hampshire*]

12. Continue another half a mile along the road. Where it turns sharp left, take a footpath straight ahead which crosses a rough plank bridge before rising sharply to a field.
13. Follow the waymarked path straight ahead across the fields for about 3/4 of a mile. It may disappear under the plough towards the end - if so, head for the house in the distance, and once there follow the edge of the field to its left to find the gate out to a junction of tracks.
14. Take the surfaced track straight ahead which in 1/4 mile passes through a gate to Wick Hill Farm. Follow the footpath fingerpost through a field gate to the left just after the farm, and cross the field towards a line of trees. There is a stile here leading to a path which descends diagonally down the hanger slope (take care when slippery) to meet the Hangers Way track at the bottom.
15. Turn left - from here you follow the way-marked Hangers Way back to East Worldham.
16. After passing the Candovers, the Way crosses a road, turning right then left through a gate into managed woodland. Follow the track downhill looking for a turn to the right just before the bottom - the waymark is small and can be hidden at times. Continue downhill to a woodland road - turn left, then right to follow a path which leads around the edge of a pond and through woods to meet a grass track. Turn right and follow this down to a gate and diagonally across the meadow to another gate. A muddy path through more woodland leads across a plank bridge to meet a bridleway.
17. Turn right along the bridleway and enter the conservation area of Binswood.

Binswood is a rare example of old woodland looking today much as it would have done when kings hunted here centuries ago in what was then part of Woolmer Forest. The site is now owned and managed by the Woodland Trust.
18. Leaving Binswood, the Hangers Way crosses grazing fields then begins to rise through woodland towards King John's Hill.

Note the old hop poles stacked around the base of trees in the fields - a reminder of when hop-growing was a thriving business here.
19. At the top of the rise, the Way turns left around the summit of King John's Hill and descends briefly to the edge of a lake, then uphill to join a farm track which meets the B3004 road. King John's Hill is so-named after a Royal hunting lodge (some say a palace) which once stood on it. King John is recorded as being here twice in the first decade of the 13th century. Henry VIII is known to have stayed at a house just along the road in Kingsley while hunting.
20. Cross the road with care and turn left, uphill. Take the first lane to the right, returning you to St Mary's church.

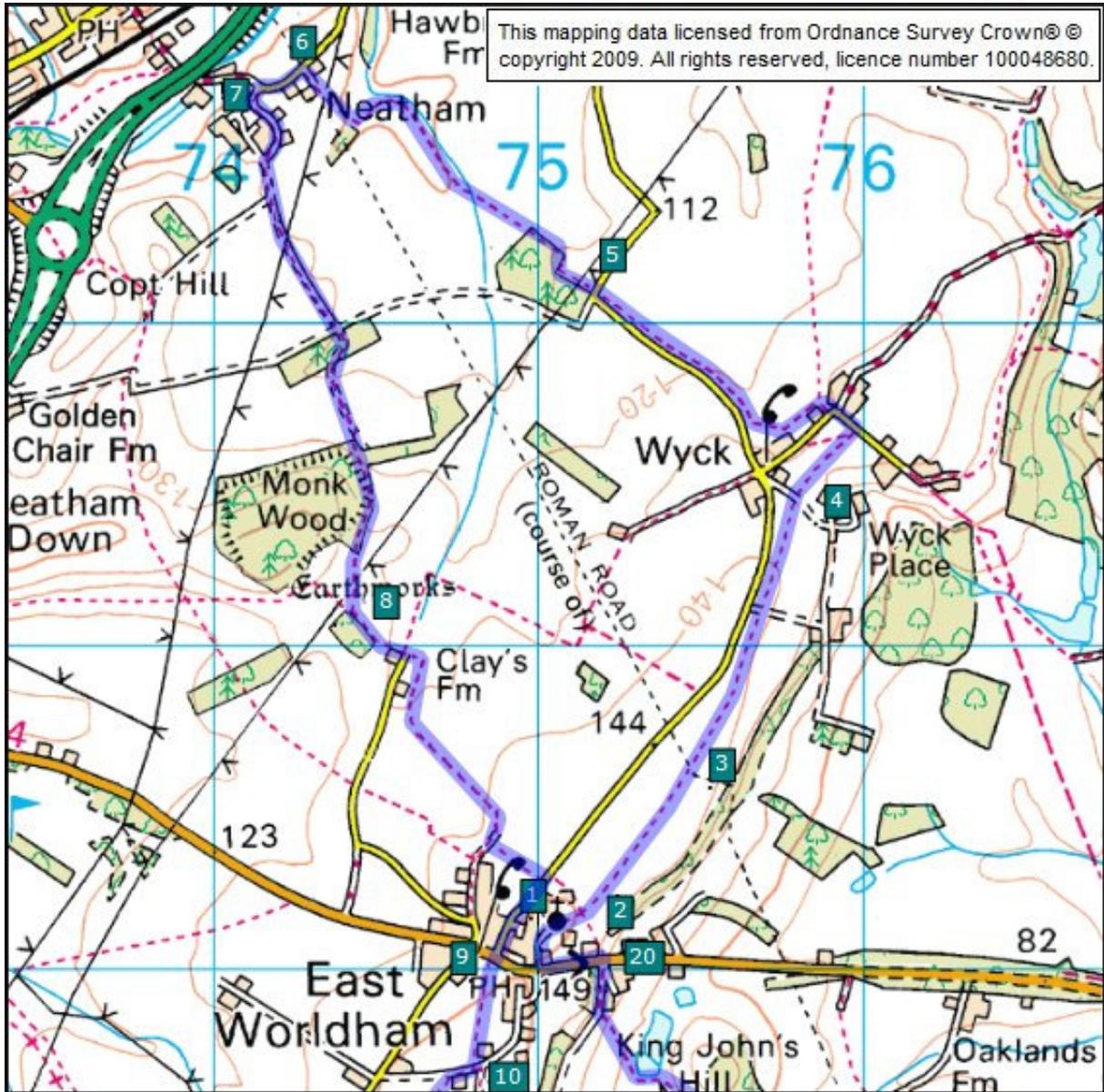


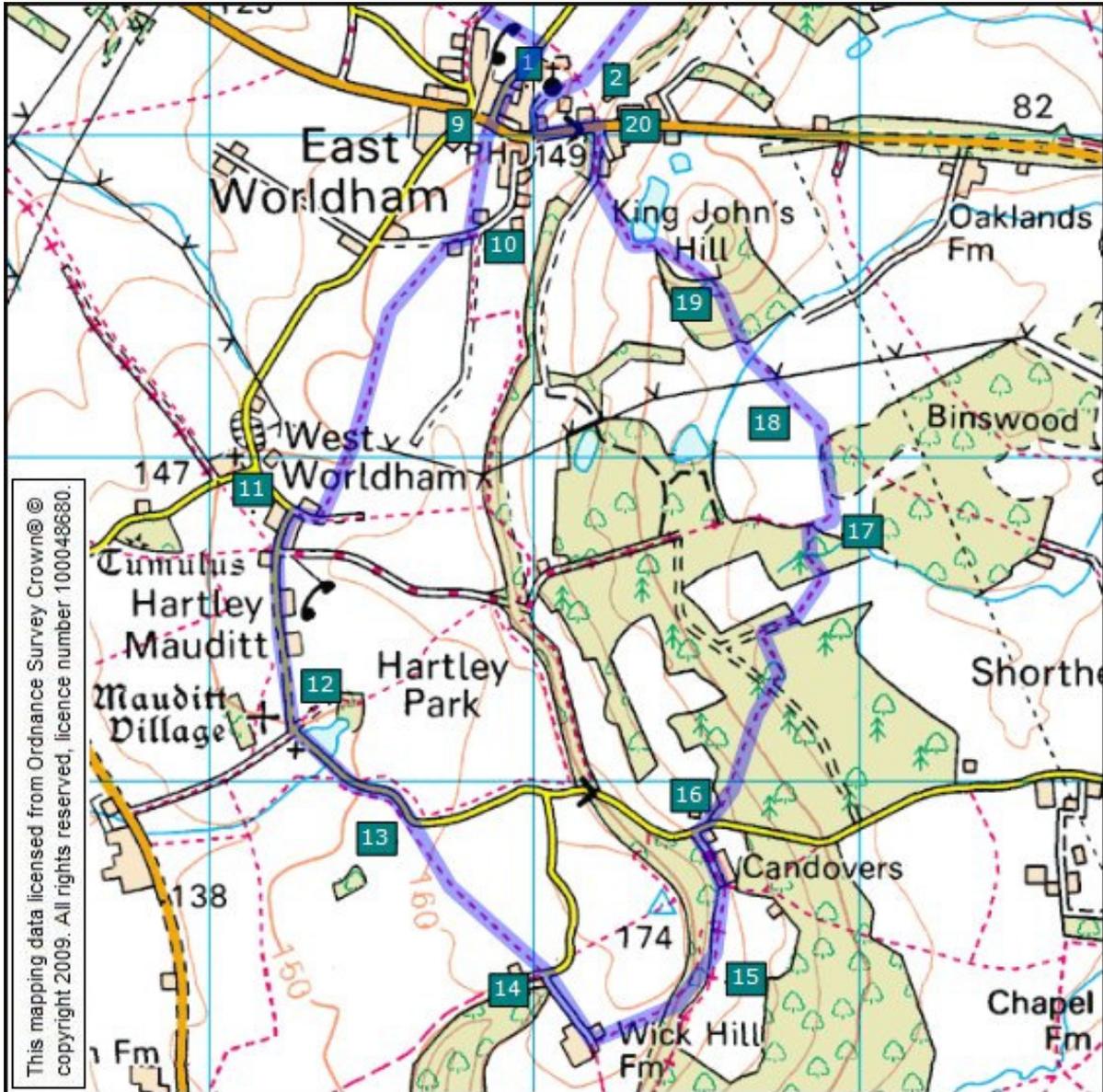
Romans, Rogues and Royals

St Mary's Church, East Worldham

St Mary's church is of early 13th century origin, but almost certainly replaced an earlier Saxon church on the same site. In the south wall of the nave is a 14th century effigy believed to be of Phillipa, wife of Geoffrey Chaucer, whose son was Lord of the Manor from 1418 to 1434 and also the Ranger of Woolmer and Alice Holt Forests. *[Taken from 'Some Ancient Churches in North East Hampshire']*

Trail Map





Trail Location



Location Details

The trail starts at East Worldham Church. There is parking alongside the church. East Worldham village is on the B3004 2.5 miles from Alton. There is a railway station in Alton that has services to Guildford via Aldershot, Woking and London Waterloo.