

Walk No. 1

Circular walk around the Parish of Four Marks via Swelling Hill Pond.

4½ miles. Time 2 hours

Grid Ref. 671352 OS Explorer Map 132

By car: take the A31 from Alton to the village of Four Marks. Free parking is available in the Public Car Park behind the BP Service station.

By bus: take the 64 from Alton towards Alresford and alight at Oak Green Parade in Four Marks.

By train: take the Watercress Line from Alton and alight at Medstead & Four Marks station. Turn left at the end of the platform and walk the length of Station Approach to the A31. Use the pedestrian crossing to reach Oak Green shops.

The Walk starts at the **Oak Green Shops** in the centre of the Village.

The walk is mostly on footpaths although there is a small amount of road walking at the start on safe pavements. The walk is mostly on level ground except for one incline toward the end.

Leave the shops and walk in a westerly direction along the A31 passing the BP Service station on your left. After about 330 yards take the public footpath on your left (by a bus shelter) and continue along this path and then Merlin Road to Blackberry Lane.

Turn right down the hill to reach Lymington Bottom (X roads), **turn left** and proceed along the road for about ¼ mile to a footpath opposite Belford House on your right (cross the road with care). Use the kissing gate,

Note the old metal mission house on your left. Take this path between fences to a second kissing gate, keep to the left hand field boundary to another kissing gate to enter Gradwell Lane.

Turn right along the lane for about 200 yards to a footpath on your left (to the right of Sunnybank Cottage). Follow this footpath first keeping the field edge on your right to enter Old Down Wood to the right of metal posts and a wire fence.

Continue into the wood following a well defined path, take the left fork at the first fork and right at the second fork. Ignoring the first way-marked paths crossing proceed straight on to a large clearing area with a signed path crossing. **Turn left** and follow the yellow way marks through

through the wood (at this point the path can be muddy) to a stile and metal gate to reach the lane at the top of Swelling Hill near Old Down Cottage.

Cross the lane to a stile opposite and **bear left** across the field to another stile and footpath which runs behind Swelling Hill Pond. [*This is an ideal place for a refreshment stop and is about half way round the walk.*]

Follow the footpath keeping the pond on your left to the way marked path over two stiles and up steps to a grassed area and private drive. Respecting the residents property and privacy, cross to a stile directly ahead and to the left of a timber building. Keep the fence on your left and continue to a kissing gate at Lyeway Road.

Turn left along the road and **right** at the T junction. In a few paces at the next road junction (Kitwood Road and Kitwood Lane) take the footpath directly opposite

which runs between a fence and a hedges Follow this path to a kissing gate then past a disused stile, keeping the hedge on your right to another unused kissing gate.

Turn right. Keep to the field edge. Then, **turning left**, follow this to a kissing gate and down to a further kissing gate in Hawthorn Road.

Cross the road to a kissing gate and **turn right** and **then left** to follow the field edge to a stile and footpath junction. **Turn left** along this path and through a kissing gate to reach Alton Lane by Garthowen Garden Centre. If you need refreshment here the Garden Centre/Tree Tops Cafe sells lovely food, ice cream and cool drinks as well as flowers and plants.

Cross the lane to a footpath on the opposite side and follow this well defined path to the left to Blackberry Lane. Cross over and continue along the footpath to the A31. **Turn left** to the Village centre and Oak Green shops.