



East Tisted and Newton Valence

Distance: 9 km=5½ miles

easy-to-moderate walking

Region: Hampshire

Date written: 14-may-2018

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Refreshments: picnic

Map: Explorer 132 (Winchester) and 133 (Petersfield)
but the map in this guide should be sufficient

Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: feedback@fancyfreewalks.org

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Village, easy field paths, woodland, parkland, views

In Brief

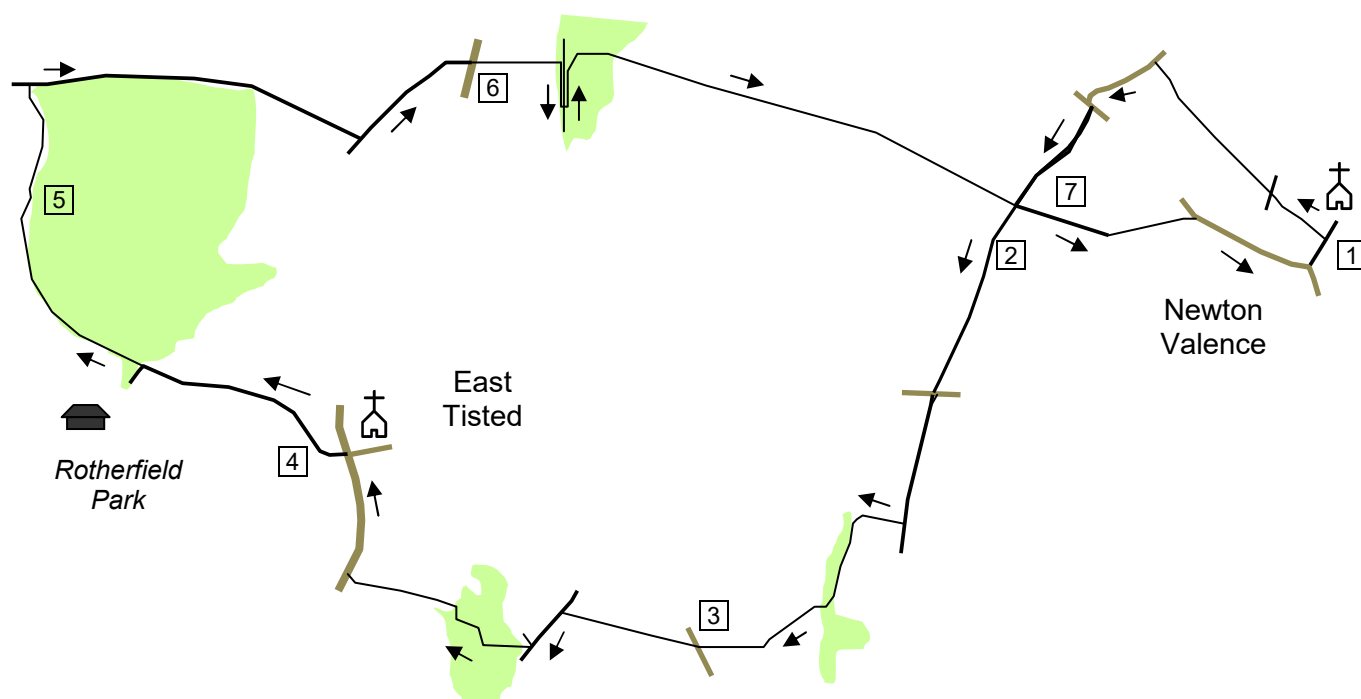
This is a pacey walk across the broad sweep of fields in East Hampshire with great views and a visit to two villages.



There are few thick nettles but there is some dense undergrowth and high grass in parts which would be uncomfortable for bare legs. Boots are recommended because the ground in the pastures traversed in one short stretch can be clumpy. This walk would be fine for your dog, with a lead of course because of the chance of passing livestock.

The walk begins in the village of **Newton Valence**, Hampshire, postcode **GU34 3RB**. There is a wide patch for parking at the start of the drive leading to the church, near a war memorial and a pond. Another possible starting point is **East Tisted**, postcode **GU34 3QP**, on the A32 where there are spaces on the side road just past the church. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



- 1 Starting at the war memorial in Newton Valence, walk along the drive signed *to the church*. In 70m, your route is **left** at a 3-way fingerpost. However, it would be unthinkable not to see the church first.

Most of church of St Mary dates from the 1200s but some of the church fabric comes from 1100s. As usual, a great deal of Victorian restoration is evident. Note the Virgin and Child outside on the west wall, rare for an Anglican church. The Manor House next to the church is from around the year 1700 with a Georgian part in red brick and a Victorian wing in yellow brick.

Having turned left on the narrow grass path (or right if coming back from the church), cross a meadow of cow parsley and cross a drive, using two old kissing-gates. Go straight down the left-hand side of this large sloping green meadow. An unclear path runs not far from the trees on your left. When you finally reach the bottom, go past two new small wooden gates (they were found to be tethered to the fence so you may have to climb over them), heading to the right of a white house. Immediately go through a gate, across the grass close to the hedge of the white house, out to a tarmac lane where there is a fingerpost. Turn **left** on the lane and follow it uphill to a major road. Cross over the road, a fraction left, to a drive marked *No Through Road* and follow it for 300m to a bend in the drive next to a large house and a wedding venue known as the *Long Barn*.

- 2 Cross straight over past a fingerpost on a track. This is an ancient trackway, still known as Shotters Lane, now neglected as you can see, and very rough and severely overgrown in places. In 500m it comes down to a road. Cross straight over the road on a farm track, using a stile on the left of the track. After 350m, go over a stile on your **right**. Continue all the way up the right-hand side of the pasture until just before you reach a large metal gate. Turn **left** here along the edge of the field (the footpath marker shows the way). Halfway along there is a blue plastic tube shielding a wire which you have to duck under to enter the next portion of the field. Immediately before the far corner there is a similar blue tube. Now go **right** over a stile

and along a rather overgrown path leading up, over a stile, to a large field. Steer a straight course across the centre of the field. [Jul 2021: the field was illegally cropped over; local advice for an alternative route is inadequate and you should walk through the crops regardless.] Almost at once a stile comes into view in the wire fence ahead. After the stile, lift another hook [Oct 2019: the hook was gone; you may need to duck carefully under the fence]. Bear a fraction right, following a wire fence on your right, all the way to a stile and a tarmac lane.

- 3 Cross the lane to a fingerpost opposite and follow the right-hand side of the next field, going under power lines. In the corner, go through a wooden barrier and turn **left** on a wide track. *This is the course of the dismantled Meon Valley Railway which conveyed passengers between Alton and Fareham until 1955.* In 100m or so, just before woodland, ignore a farm track on your right but turn **right** immediately after it on a grassy path which runs beside the wood. The path runs through woodland and comes out into a meadow. Go down the left-hand side heading for the main road and a gate. Just **before** the main road go over a stile and immediately turn **right** to follow the footpath to reach the church of East Tisted which is very well worth seeing. Most of the rest of this pretty village is up the side lane.

The original church dates back at least to the 1300s but what you see now is mainly a stone-and-slate rebuild of 1846, in Decorated style. The 3-stage tower still has some of the 14th-century work. The building contains tombs from the old church. The south aisle's east recess contains the panelled table tomb of Elizabeth and John Norton from about 1530. The north aisle has the tomb of Sir John Norton (1686), with a recumbent figure in armour resting on a table tomb. The middle of the south aisle has the Ten Commandments in gold Gothic letters.

- 4 At the junction, cross **left** through the pillared gates of Rotherfield Park (that's straight over if you parked in the side road). Go through a kissing-gate beside an animal grid, ignore two footpaths on your left and follow the tarmac path up towards the house. Soon you have a great view of this great country house.

Rotherfield Park was constructed in 1815-21 to designs by architect Joseph T. Parkinson. Parts of the house are a 19th-century whimsy – a kind of folly, as you see in the twin-roundel towers topped with wide crenellations, corbels and machicolations. You may have seen the house in some gothic horror film or in an episode of Agatha Christie's Poirot. The current owner is Sir James Scott and he has put the Gardener's Tower up for rent in case you would like a capricious country retreat.

After the drive enters trees, **leave** the drive as it curves away left over a bridge and keep straight ahead, as per the yellow arrow, on a very narrow path. After a stile, your path runs along the right-hand side of this grassy meadow. At the top, go over a stile and along the right-hand side of a crop field using the generous grass verge.

- 5 At the far end of the crop field, you pass a metal gate. Keep **left** here and turn along the **right**-hand edge of the next field. (There are certainly alternative unofficial paths through the private woods which local people sometimes use, but the author was happy to stay out in the sunshine.) The edge of the field elbows left and leads to the next corner. Turn **right** on a wide footpath. After 800m, at a T-junction with a tarmac drive, turn **left**. The drive becomes a stony track and comes out near farm buildings to the main road.

- 6 Cross directly over the main road to an unusual large metal gate and take a path straight up the centre of a crop field. *At the top it is worth looking back at the view across the valley; the cream-coloured mansion is Pelham Place.* Go up steps into woods and immediately turn **right**. Your path does a loop to cross the old dismantled railway by shortly going **left** across the railway path, up the other side and **left** again. Shortly, your route takes you **right** by a small bench seat on a very narrow path, regaining your original direction. You come out into a crop field. Go straight across the centre on a wide path. After a band of trees, continue straight ahead across the centre of the next field, going under power lines. In the next field, take an excellent path straight across the centre, heading just to the right of a large house. Go out beside a large wooden gate to a lane on a bend. *(If you did not begin the walk in Newton Valence, this is the centre of a figure-of-eight and you could go right on a track, but that would be a huge shame.)*
- 7 At the bend in the lane, go straight over, with the house and the *Long Barn* on your left. Continue straight ahead along the edge of a meadow and out into a field. Here, your path goes diagonally left, heading for the leftmost of a group of houses. In the corner, go down steps to the road in the village of Newton Valence and turn **right** on it. Continue to a pond with weeping willows and war memorial next to the parking space where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: Newton Valence is easily reached from the A31 road, near Alton. If coming from the London or M25 direction, follow the A31 from Guildford over the Hogs Back to Farnham. Continue on the A31 towards Winchester. At the second roundabout of the Alton Bypass keep **left** on the A32, signposted *Fareham*. About 1 mile after the village of Farringdon, you will see a signpost pointing left to Newton Valence. East Tisted is the next village ahead on the A31.

By bus: there are irregular bus services to both villages. Check the web.

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