

Useful Information

Directions

All the walks were tested in 2007. However, please note that some footpaths may be diverted and buildings such as pubs may have changed their name since the walks were written. If you have any comments please send them to the Harbour Office to be considered for the next edition.

Distances and Timings

All distances and timings are approximate.

Maps

The maps provided are a guide and are not to scale. Please use OS Explorer Map 120 (Chichester).

Map References

The reference given is for the start point of the walk.

Public Transport

Buses: Stagecoach run most of the local buses. Timetable details are at www.stagecoachbus.com/south or telephone **0871 200 22 33** (10p per minute).

For the Selsey – Itchenor service see www.compass-travel.co.uk

Trains: Timetable information is at www.nationalrail.co.uk or telephone **08457 48 49 50**.

Stiles and Gates

Please note stiles are gradually being replaced with gates where appropriate. This may affect some of the walk directions and photos.

Tides

Please note some paths are flooded at high tide. If you have misjudged the times, you usually only have to wait a short while before the path is clear enough to use. Tide times can be found at www.conservancy.co.uk or from the Harbour Office, please note these are only a prediction and factors such as low pressure can make the tide higher than expected.

Tourist Information

Chichester: www.visitchichester.org or telephone **01243 775888**.

Hayling Island: www.visithavant.co.uk or telephone **023 9246 7111**.

Weather

Please check the weather before starting your walk and take the appropriate clothing. Weather forecasts can be found at www.conservancy.co.uk or from the local tourist offices.

Acknowledgements

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- **Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs**

Even when going out locally, it's best to get the latest information about where and when you go; for example, your rights to go onto some areas of open land may be restricted while work is carried out, for safety reasons or during breeding seasons. Follow advice and local signs, and be prepared for the unexpected.

- **Leave gates and property as you find them**

Please respect the working life of the countryside, as our actions can affect people's livelihoods, our heritage, and the safety and welfare of animals and ourselves.

- **Protect plants and animals and take your litter home**

We have a responsibility to protect our countryside, so make sure you don't harm animals, birds, plants or trees.

- **Keep dogs under control**

The countryside is a great place to exercise dogs, but it's every owner's duty to make sure their dog is not a danger or nuisance to farm animals, wildlife or other people.

- **Consider other people**

Showing consideration and respect for other people makes the countryside a pleasant environment for everyone – at home, at work and at leisure.



8

13.5km/8.5 miles

4 hours

Map Ref. SU 752 057 - Ordnance Survey Explorer 120

Walk 8

Thorney Island Circular

This is the ideal walk for those who love sea views. Doing the walk clockwise from Emsworth gets the inland sections over at the beginning. Once onto the shoreline, the route is very easy to follow so you can concentrate on enjoying the route rather than reading instructions. A visit to the Church is also a must as is looking out for many of the birds that thrive in this tranquil area.

Start Point

The Lord Raglan pub, Queen Street, Emsworth.

By Road

Emsworth. There are a number of pay and display car parks in Emsworth. Allow at least 5 hours for the walk. Alternatively, there is a small parking area on the corner of Thorney Road and Thornham Lane. If parking here follow the directions from the fourth paragraph.

By Bus

Emsworth. Coastliner Service 700 stops at Hermitage Bridge which is very close to the start point.

Refreshments

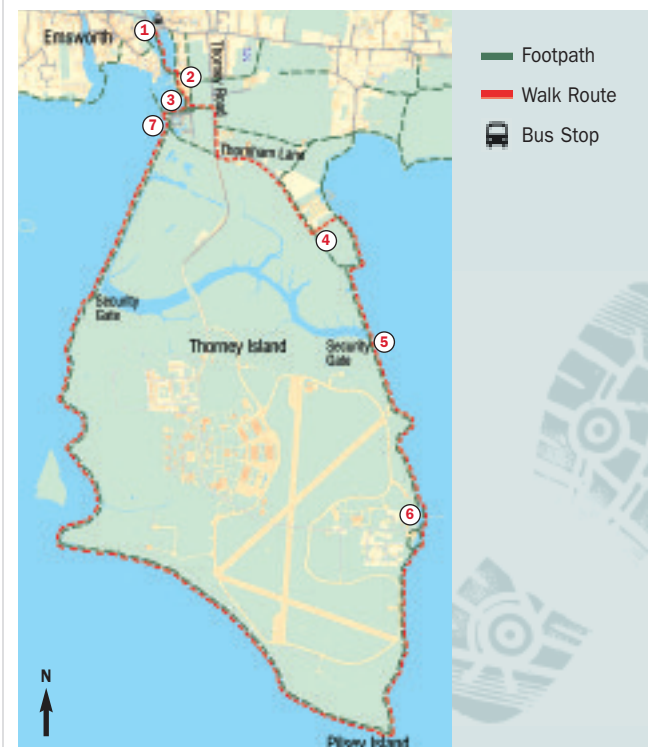
Numerous restaurants, pubs and cafes at Emsworth, Boaters Café at Thornham Marina. There are no refreshments on Thorney Island so do carry drinks and snacks.

Toilets

In the South Street car park.

Tides

The path floods between points 1 and 2 and near the church at point 6 when the tide is 5m or higher.



1



Walk Directions

Take the footpath alongside the Lord Raglan pub and through Chequers Quay. Go under the arch and through a gate onto the path alongside Slipper Mill Pond. 1

At the end of the pond, go through the gate and then turn right in front of the converted mill building. Continue ahead through the boatyard 2. Watch out for moving machinery.

After the first few 'stilt' houses, turn left and then right at the next footpath sign along Osprey Quay. Look out for the footpath on the left across a field 3. There are usually horses in this field.

At the road, turn right and then shortly left into Thornham Lane. Just past Thornham Marina (look out for the big whale!) there are some large rocks across the road 4.

Immediately past the rocks take the footpath to the left. At the shoreline turn right shortly crossing a wooden bridge. Keep going on the shoreline path until you come to the large security gates. Just before the gate, drop down the bank on the right to see Thorney Deepes. This was once part of the Chichester Ship Canal.

At the gates 5 press the buzzer. You will be asked your name, address, contact telephone number and purpose of visit. Do not be put off, this is a formality as the land past the gate is owned by the Ministry of Defence.

Once on Thorney Island do not stray off the clearly marked path. Call the Guard Post on 01243 388269 or the Guard Room on 01243 388275 if you get into difficulty.

After about a mile you will pass a dinghy park. Just beyond, the path climbs up the bank towards the 13th century church of St Nicholas 6. Take time to visit the church which is usually open. There are some benches in the churchyard for a break.

If the tide is low continue along the beach in front of the Thorney Island Sailing Club (TISC). If the path is flooded here, turn right before the club building, then left into the car park,



2



4

3



5

keeping to the left and onto the path at the other end of the club. The path turns left and then returns to the shoreline.

At the tip of the island you will see the sandy beach and dunes of Pilsley Island. This area is leased by the RSPB and is important for nesting and roosting birds. There is no public access from the footpath.

After a while you will come to a bird hide which is a good spot for a break on a windy or wet day.

As you walk up the west side of the island, look out for seals on the mudflats if the tide is low.

At the security gates you will be asked your name and then let through. Here you can either continue along the shoreline path or drop down the bank on the right to walk alongside the Deepes. Either way the paths rejoin.

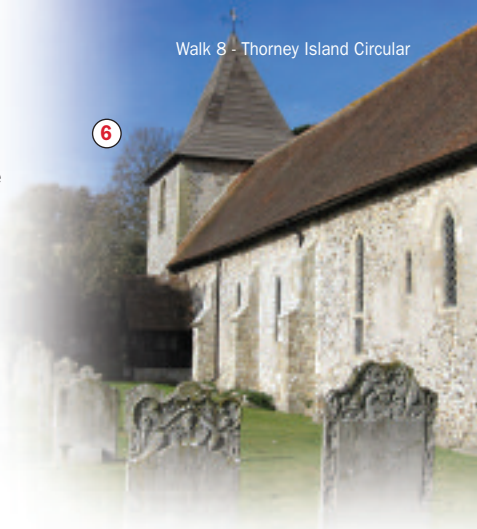
Take the path in front of the 'stilt' houses 7 and then turn right at the marina. If you have parked at the road junction keep going to Thorney Road and then turn right.

Otherwise turn left at the next set of houses. Retrace your steps back through the marina and around the Slipper Mill Pond to return to the start point.



7

6



Extra Items of Interest

St Nicholas Church

This 13th century church was described by AA Evans in the Chichester Diocesan Gazette as the 'loneliest, remotest, last seen, least known and altogether utmost church in Sussex'. This description still rings true today. The pretty church is still used by local parishioners but is inaccessible to the general public other than via the footpath or by yachtsmen landing at the nearby jetty. Despite its age there are a number of modern touches including an engraved window and a slate pulpit. In the well kept churchyard, RAF graves lie alongside the graves of Germans who lost their lives here during the Second World War.

Wildlife

The western side of Thorney Island offers wildlife on both sides of the sea wall. The interior nearest the marina used to be tidal but was enclosed in 1870. The former saltmarsh channels support waterbirds such as ducks, coot and grebes. The reedbeds are noisy in the summer with chattering Reed and Sedge Warblers. The farmland, which has never been ploughed, is traditionally managed by grazing and haycutting to maintain the botanical interest. Barn and Short-eared owls are often spotted in the winter. Unusual plants such as Golden Samphire grow on the sea wall.



Photo by Peter Cameron