

Walk 18

Nettlebed

This walk combines beautiful scenery with interesting buildings and much historical interest. The route takes you through ancient beech woodlands and through the Common Land around Nettlebed which used to be a major centre for brick, tile and pottery manufacture from medieval times thanks to its rich bed of clay and plentiful supply of firewood and springwater.

Distance: 2½ miles (allow 1½ hours)

Start: The Old Kiln, Nettlebed Village. There is parking around the village green near the kiln. Regular bus service from Henley.

Access Information: There are a few hilly sections on this walk, though over half the walk is level. There is one moderate downhill along Bushes Lane and a long steady downhill along Mill Road (surfaced). There is a moderate climb up Windmill Hill (from 7 to 8) towards the end of the walk.

Refreshments: The White Hart Hotel and the Field Kitchen cafe in Nettlebed.

Route:

Start the walk at the Old Kiln, ① an historic landmark in the village. Apart from the old clay workings on Nettlebed Common, the only evidence of a one time flourishing industry is this 18th Century bottle kiln which would have fired up to 18,000 bricks at a time.

Turn right along the High Street, looking out for the many 18th Century houses faced with the local brick. Go past the White Hart Hotel on your right until you reach St Bartholomew Church on your left. Turn right along a footpath ② past the allotments and climb gently uphill to the B481 Watlington Road. Turn immediately left ③ down a byway, 'Bushes Lane'

At the bottom fork left and follow the byway until it becomes a surfaced lane. Shortly ④

after, turn right on a path through Copse Wood following the white arrows on the trees. The path generally stays in the same direction through the wood until it emerges onto the busy B481 road. Cross over with care and turn left for about 150m until you reach a footpath on your right. ⑤ Follow this path through an avenue of beech trees, an ancient boundary bank. When you reach an unsurfaced lane turn left then shortly right ⑥ and continue along the narrow path which follows the fenceline on your left. This will bring you out by a couple of houses and another unsurfaced lane. Follow the lane round to the right then uphill for about 200m to a right-hand bend. Stay straight ahead up on a ⑦ path following the white arrows through the woods. This will bring you out onto a lane. ⑧ Turn right and follow the lane downhill to the B481. Turn left to return to the High Street and the Green.

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