

Odiham Society Walks

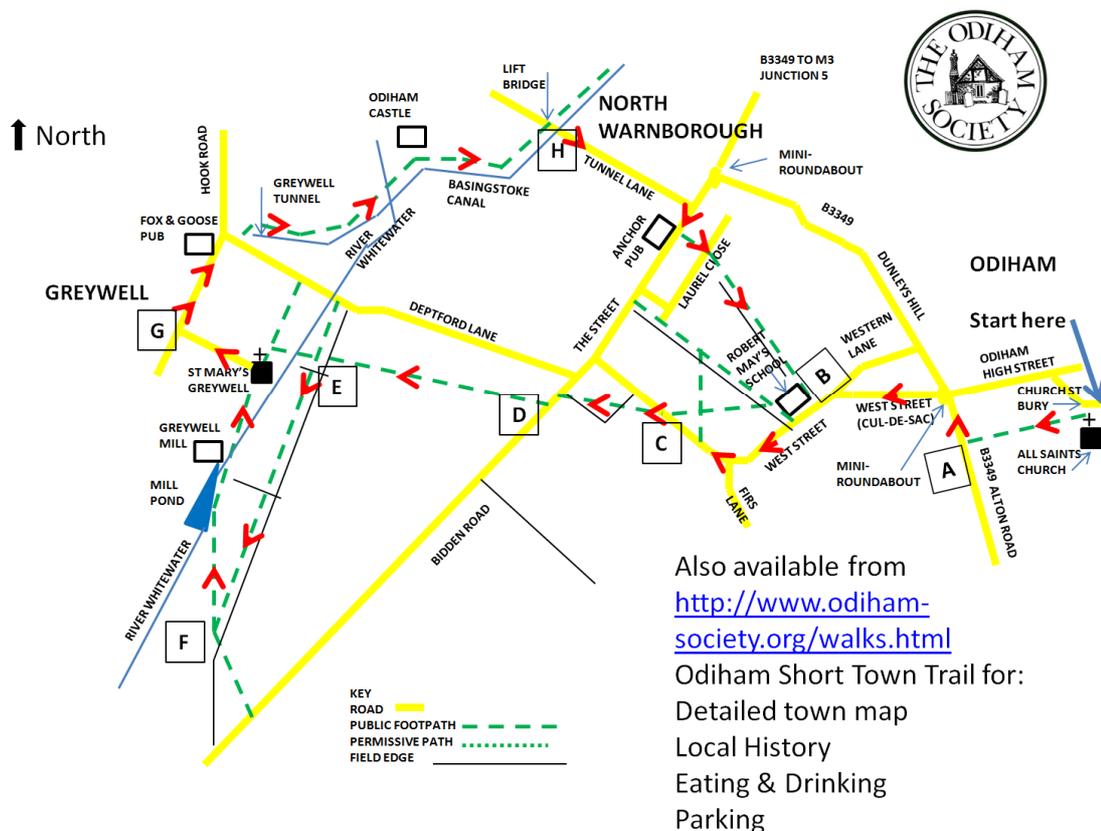
www.odiham-society.org

Walk to Greywell and Odiham Castle

Distance: 4.5 miles, around 2.5 hours

Description: Circular walk from Odiham church including attractive farmland to the West of Odiham, the fens of Greywell moor, the gentle chalk stream of the infant River Whitewater, the lovely village of Greywell, the Basingstoke canal towpath – passing the romantic ruins of 13c Odiham Castle - and finally passing through the cottages of North Warnborough to return to Odiham.

Difficulty: Moderate: gentle hills with some stiles and a couple of steepish banks. Footpaths across fields are normally well-marked, except after very recent ploughing.



Directions From Odiham's Bury, enter All Saints churchyard and turn immediately right; follow the path ahead, keeping the brick wall on your right. When you reach the Alton Road (point A on map), turn right & cross the road at the pedestrian lights. Continue downhill for 30m & then turn left into the cul-de-sac – this is West St. Where West St meets Western Lane, cross road & turn left along pavement (point B on map). Pass Robert Mays School on your right and continue over brow of hill. When you reach the end-of-speed-limit signs, go past by 100m and look out for footpath signpost on opposite side of road (there's also a stile on your right at this point). Cross the road to the footpath sign (point C on map) and climb up the bank, through the hedge, into the field. Follow the footpath which cuts off the corner of the field, pass through the hedge into the next field & follow the path to the opposite corner of this field. Go through the hedge and, just before you reach the road, turn left along the path (which runs along the top of the verge) for 50m. Follow the path down the steep bank with care and cross the road to pass through the hedge opposite – point D on map (if the bank

is too steep, retrace your steps for 50m and walk on the road instead – but care, it can be busy). After passing through the hedge at point D, you're at the top of a hill looking down into the lovely valley of the River Whitewater. Follow the footpath which cuts diagonally across the field to reach the hedgeline at the bottom of the valley – point E on map.

The valley bottom here is known as Greywell Moors, an area of fens maintained by the Hampshire & IOW Wildlife Trust. Note that this is sometimes grazed by cattle – please ensure dogs are on leads.

At point E, pass through hedge and kissing gate to enter Greywell Moors and turn immediately left through a gate and keep straight ahead, keeping hedgeline on your left. *Look out for boggy areas on your right sporting the impressive hummocks of the Greater Tussock Sedge, some over 50 years old.* You'll pass through another gate and about 200m after this gate you'll reach point F on map, marked by a bridleway sign pointing back along the path you've just been following and a footpath sign pointing right. Take the footpath to the right – which leads down to the River Whitewater.

The infant River Whitewater is just below its source here, but is widened into the large millpond which provides the head for Greywell Mill – the redbrick building at the end of the pond, with millwheel still visible from path. The reedbeds here provide habitat for specialist wildlife.

Turn left immediately after the Mill, cross the river and then turn right at the footpath sign behind the little shack. Soon you're following a boardwalk along the river bank and then the path turns away from the river and soon emerges into the churchyard of the lovely 12c church - St Mary's, Greywell. Continue past the church and turn left up the track leading uphill to the church gates and road beyond (point G on map).

On reaching the road, turn right along the pavement with fields on your right and the picturesque cottages and houses of Greywell village on your left. Soon you come to the Fox & Goose pub (at Sep 2011 open 11am – 11pm Mon-Sat , 12 – 10.30pm Sunday - www.foxandgoosegreywell.co.uk).

Immediately after the Fox & Goose turn right into Deptford Lane and then after just 20m turn left up the bank and take the footpath which leads you up and over the Basingstoke Canal which opened in 1794, connecting to London via the River Wey. As soon as you've crossed the canal, turn right along the canal towpath. After a few metres you'll be able to see the mouth of Greywell Tunnel.

Greywell Tunnel collapsed in 1932, creating a 'cave' which is now an important haven for hibernating bats – supporting the 2nd largest colony of Natterer's Bat in Europe. See storyboard here for more.

Further on, the towpath crosses over the River Whitewater – a quiet approach may be rewarded with a glimpse of brown trout down in the river. Then, shortly after, the romantic ruins of Odiham Castle appear on your left.

Odiham Castle was built between 1207-1214 by King John and was one of his favourite residences. What you see today is the rubble core of the 3 storey keep – the dressed stone which would once have clad these walls has long disappeared. If you go to the right of the keep and turn into the centre, you'll find some good storyboards with much more of the castle's history.

Continue along the canal to the first bridge – a lift bridge – point H on map - and turn right to walk over the bridge and then along Tunnel Lane until you reach a T-junction where you turn right along North Warnborough's 'The Street'. After 100m turn left just opposite the start of the Anchor pub and follow the track uphill past cottages. This track soon becomes a footpath. Cross Laurel Close and continue on the footpath opposite, which soon becomes a wide tarmac path returning you to Robert May's school (point B on map). From here you can retrace your earlier steps back to the Bury or perhaps head for the High St for a well-earned drink or bite to eat?