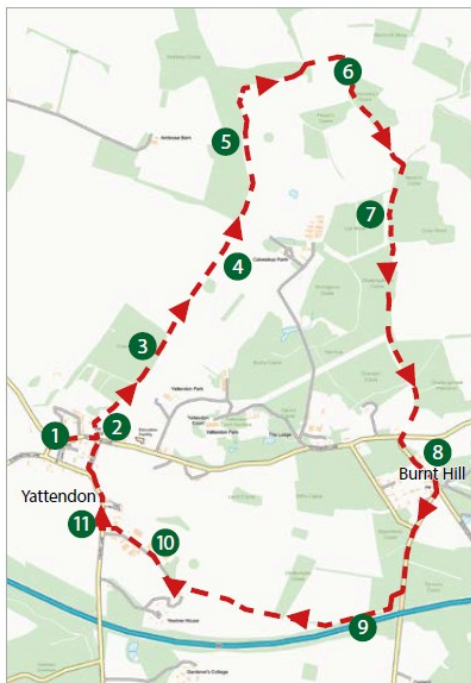


Exploring the village and countryside around Yattendon

About 7km or 4½ miles

Starting and finishing in Yattendon Square. There are several car parks in Yattendon, and a pub and a café. The brewery tap is on the walk. OS 'Explorer' map 158 'Newbury and Hungerford' may be useful.



Yattendon Village is very ancient. The name comes from the Old English 'The Hollow of Geat's People'. The original village was near the modern school. The 'castle' – a fortified manor house – was built by John Norris when he bought the manor in 1448.

1. **The Square** was laid out as a marketplace at about the same time as the Manor House was built. The Well is 131 feet (39.9 metres) deep. It was sunk in 1878 by Alfred Waterhouse who bought the Estate in 1877. He was the architect of the Natural History Museum in London.



2. **The church**, a short distance to the east of the Square, is another of John Norrey's constructions but has had several remodellings, the last in the late 19th century by Alfred Waterhouse.



After looking at the church go up the left-hand side and diagonally across the churchyard at the back.

3. **The Woodland Classroom** was proposed by Yattendon Estates and created by West Berkshire Countryside Society Volunteers in 2013. It is regularly used by Yattendon Primary School and is available to other schools.



4 **Calvesleys Farm** once housed the men and horses that worked the wide fields to the west. This saved a long walk back to the home farm in Yattendon after a hard day. Ambrose Barn served a similar purpose.

5. **Ancient Coppice** stools were formed by the regular cutting of ash trees near ground level to provide straight thin poles for many purposes. Coppicing allows the stumps to continue to grow – virtually for ever! They steadily become wider and thicker. These may be 400 years old. The red strip is a metre long.



6. **Drove Way**. The wide track at the 'T' junction is an ancient road. Many of these, often deeply sunken, exist in this area. This one led from the high grazing areas to the north around Aldworth down to the Pang Valley near Bucklebury and on to Reading and the Thames Valley.

7. **Lye Wood**. 'Lye' – a very dangerous liquid – was made in this wood by burning twigs, brambles and bracken in shallow pits. The ash was then soaked in a barrel and the water drawn off. Boiled with animal fat, it made a very coarse soap. It was also used to remove the hair from hides during tanning.

8. **Burnt Hill** probably got its name from the glow in the sky above wood fired brick kilns. The local geology of sands over clays and chalk provided the raw materials for the bricks and the local woods and coppices provided the fuel to fire them.

9. **The M4 motorway** was opened on 22 December 1971.

10. **West Berkshire Brewery's** buildings were converted from an ultra-modern dairy unit. The east end houses a shop and tap room.



11. **Frilsham Home Farm** was built in 1896. It served Frilsham House which was a little way to the south. The house was demolished when the M4 was built.



Dick Greenaway, Terry Crawford