

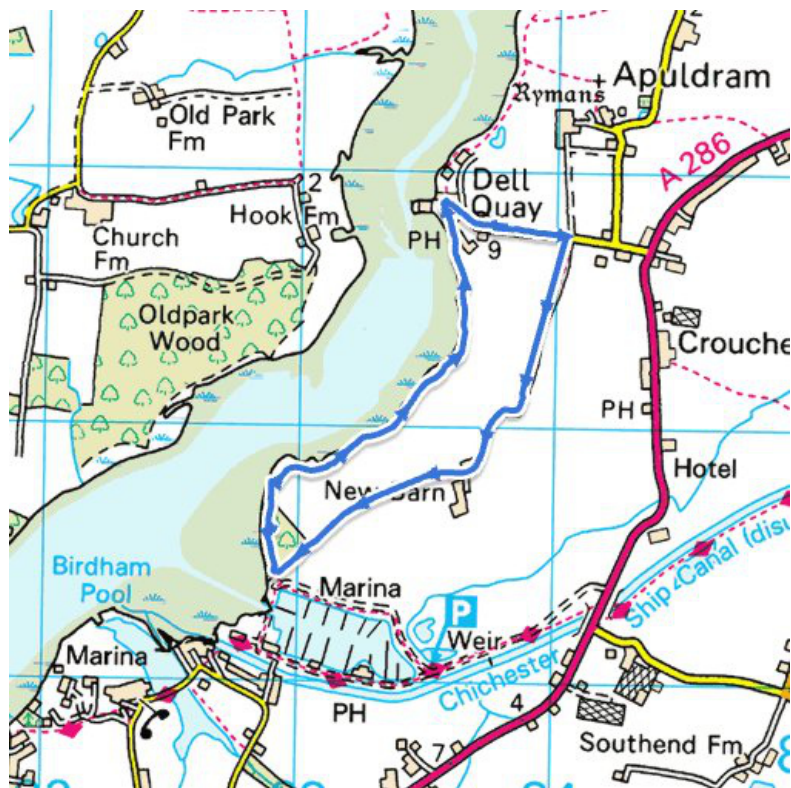
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# Favourite Nature Rambles Around Chichester

## by David & Lynda Thornley

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### Dell Quay Circular Walk



This is a fairly short walk that's close by, ideal for giving our dog Bonnie a bit of exercise and for me, enough time in the harbour to reset priorities in a timeless landscape. It's easy to fit in, especially early in the morning, as at 2.8 miles of flat walking it doesn't take long. The only downside is that in winter it can become rather muddy.

What's particularly attractive is seeing the same part of the harbour regularly throughout the year in varying weather, seeing it in all its moods and all its seasons. We try to get there at least twice a week as many others with dogs tend to do.

The starting point is in the lane at Dell Quay, fine mid week but very busy on a Sunday at lunchtime. If it's not Sunday the lane is fine to walk down, but if there are lots of cars it's better to walk along the field where there isn't a formal path but everyone goes along there anyway.



After a few hundred yards you come to the Salterns Way which is a cycle and wheelchair path from Chichester to Wittering and makes a convenient way south. The first part is a track leading to a small mixed farm with a dairy herd as well as arable fields. This passes the site of one of the many second world war grass airfields that supported the Normandy landings with squadrons of Typhoon aircraft, not that there's any sign of that now. Nearer the farm the hedges are teeming with song birds, and in the fields there's often a hare to be seen; they stay frozen for a while then make off at incredible speed.



The fields between Salterns Way and the harbour are particularly attractive to wildfowl in winter, especially at high tide when they have to move away from the water. The air can be thick with Brent geese as they come down to join those already on the ground; at other times it also popular with Curlews and oystercatchers.



A short straight stretch of well made path then leads south and looking back there's a fine view of the Cathedral in Chichester rising alone, above the trees in splendid isolation, not another building in sight. It's visible for most of the walk, seeming to be watching over us, reminding us that we're close to home.



The path then leads into Saltern Copse and a change of atmosphere. It's not that big but is varied and well maintained as a nature reserve so there's lots to see from black caps to wood peckers. This gives an introduction to another of the more pleasing characteristics of the walk, the large number of ancient oak trees which occupy much of the copse and form a line along the shore for much of the way back to Dell Quay; you can't help but wonder what they've witnessed over the years.



Leaving the copse you come to Copperas point with its green marker buoy and mud that stretches well out at low tide. This is a favourite spot for Bonnie who never tires of going for a swim to retrieve sticks or, failing that, chasing stones. It's also a favourite spot for birds too and this morning there were eight Shelduck resting after a flight around the adjacent Chichester Lake.

Opposite is Old Park Wood, looking like a mass of broccoli on the other side of the channel; it's inaccessible and as a result one of the most natural areas of the harbour, lets hope it stays that way.



Dell Quay with its yachts on their moorings is now in the distance; it's interesting to see the channel meandering along this stretch, especially at low tide; not easy to follow in a boat with a keel. The Oak trees gradually build up as you get nearer affording the odd glimpse of boats and a roost for the many rooks here.

Providing it's not high tide it's easier and more interesting to walk along the shoreline, where in winter the wildfowl like to rest. All too soon the Crown and Anchor comes closer along with the pretty quay where there is an active sailing club and boatyard; it's a particularly pleasant place to be, especially on a Summer evening with a pint in your hand!

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