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# Favourite Nature Rambles Around Chichester

## by David & Lynda Thornley

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### Wittering to Itchenor



This walk is the first one we did when we were starting to explore Chichester, well before we moved there and remains a firm favourite. The stretch between Wittering and Itchenor is, in my opinion, the most attractive in the Harbour with outstanding views and pleasantly varying surroundings.

To make it a circular walk it's necessary to take an inland path from Ichenor and fortunately the Salterns Way exists to do just that. It's not the most interesting of walks but it's good in parts, gets you there, and the way back along the coast makes it so well worth while.



After leaving your vehicle at the car park it's a pleasant enough walk down the road to where the Salterns Way starts, just before the church; that is provided there's no traffic which is rarely the case.

The path is wide and well made so that wheelchairs can follow it with relative ease; it's also a cycleway which can be a bit irritating at times. After passing through a field there's a footpath which makes a shortcut for those on foot and temporary relief from cyclists. In this part, there are plenty of deer skulking in the cover; they can come up quite close to the path here, a great temptation for Bonnie to chase, I'm glad her recall is better now she's a bit older!





There's then another section of road to cover leading past the few shops that still exist to the village. In summer parking here is at a premium as it's a favourite with cheapskates who want to go to the beach without paying. In good weather it's always busy so to avoid the crowds it's best to take the path to the pretty little church then over a stile and field into Coastguards Lane which leads to the sea.



The open area here by the salt marsh and sea is popular and with good reason, it's a particularly nice place to be. The many small boats, either on the shore or moored in the small channels add character and the vista of East Head makes a splendid backdrop. Fortunately most people prefer to go there rather than this side, lets hope it stays that way. For much of the next stretch the view of the coast is obscured by bushes but it's easy to get on the foreshore if you want to.





Soon the path turns right on a small promontory that marks the edge of Ellen Nore, home to nesting Little Terns amongst other birds. In winter it's a good spot to watch wildfowl and there's a hide there to keep you out of the wind and rain. Ellen Nore has to be my favourite spot in the harbour; it's a lovely natural bay with plenty of interest that's only got a few houses which are not intrusive. One has a wet boathouse with rails running down to the water to launch and retrieve boats, reminiscent of an era before marinas took over. The seawall is interesting in that it's strengthened with disused swing moorings, the concrete in much better condition than the riser shackles! It's a favourite spot for wild-fowling although not at high tide as in the photograph.





There's a short detour inland at Rookwood around a couple of houses before the path leads northwards alongside an extensive area of salt marsh. It's safe on the path but treacherous out there on the mud which is particularly soft to people but most attractive to birds. This stretch of coastline has an ancient feel to it, it's lined with Oak trees, most deformed by the prevailing winds and providing a good home for songbirds. The woodland is pleasantly varied as is the path which is boarded along the boggy bits and weaves in and out of the trees in the more densely wooded areas.





If you're familiar with the harbour the views to the north are particularly interesting with Emsworth channel, Nutbourne Marsh, Thorney Island, and then Cobnor all clearly visible. The day these pictures were taken was a Saturday which is a top racing day for Ichenor Sailing Club amongst others so the channel will be a mass of small boats at times, all fighting it out and making the most of the wind.



All too quickly the path leads round to the boatyard and Ichenor itself. It's just a lovely boaty

43

place to go and fortunately there's several excellent places to enjoy some refreshments too such as the Quarterdeck at the boatyard or the Ship Inn which has some excellent beers as well as food. Maybe its the fond memories of mooring up on the piles, long before we moved to Chichester, and going ashore in the inflatable to eat at the Ship or the Yacht Club that make it so special. I hope you find it so special too.