

ROTHERFIELD GREYS A manor with royal connections

This delightful walk starts from the tiny village of Rotherfield Greys, with a population of around 350, and follows country bridleways and footpaths past the 16th-century manor of Greys Court. There are lots of butterflies along the way in the summer. See if you can work

out how the dog stiles operate for any canine companions who accompany walkers. There are plenty of opportunities to see red kites circling above the fields, particularly in the valley, before you return to the village.

THE WALK

1. Facing the Maltsters Arms turn left along the road towards the church. Go immediately right past Williams Cottage and keep ahead down an enclosed path between Churchfields and the churchyard. Go through a gate and straight over a narrow field through a kissing gate. Walk diagonally right through the next field to pass through another gate and then bear right to reach a bridleway. Turn right to follow this enclosed track passing a golf course on the left. Continue over a metalled track to reach a road.
2. Turn right following the verge. Ignore a turning off to the left signed for Shepherd's Green. At the beginning of the village green, turn left up a drive. Pass Greys Cottage on the right and take an enclosed footpath that leads into woodland. On entering the wood fork right and then shortly go right again at the yellow markers on the tree. Cross over a stile and follow the path as it bears to the right. Upon reaching a further stile on the right go left and descend to a stile. Drop down into the valley and ascend slightly to reach a lane.
3. Cross over the lane and take a footpath opposite. Cross over a stile into Greys Court estate. Follow the metalled track ahead passing the old manor on the left. Once past the entrance booth go left through the edge of the car park through a gate into the picnic area. Keep ahead on the footpath through a gate. Follow the left boundary fence to ascend a slope. Opposite a large tree go left through a gate and follow the fence on the right. Cross a footbridge and pass through another gate. Go left through a small gate then follow the right boundary to reach a track. Turn right.
4. Upon reaching a lane turn right then left along the road. Take the second turning on the right signed for Rotherfield Greys. Follow the concrete track and where it bends to the left continue ahead along a green track. Bear left after an old quarry and descend into a valley. At the bottom turn right and then left over a stile. Bear slightly right and ascend the side of the valley following the boundary fence to a gate onto a road. Turn right, back to the start of the walk.



BACKGROUND NOTES

Rotherfield Greys is two miles from the town of Henley-on-Thames and was mentioned in the Domesday Book as being under the ownership of the Norman knight Anchetil de Greye. The name Rotherfield means cattle lands. The church of St Nicholas is Norman and has a 16th-century chapel containing tombs of the Knollys family who inhabited nearby Greys Court and were important members of Queen Elizabeth I's court. An important trade route called the Pack and Prime ran from Henley-on-Thames towards Peppard Common. It was popular with bandits so any travellers on the route needed pistols to ensure their safety.

Greys Court was acquired in 1969 by the National Trust and has recently undergone extensive conservation work. The manor dates from the 16th century and has been occupied continuously for the last 600 years. Sir Francis Knollys, who was treasurer to Queen Elizabeth I and the jailer of Mary, Queen of Scots, once lived here. Of particular interest are the 18th-century plasterwork, the maze, walled gardens and a rare Tudor donkey wheel. There is a tea room in the manor complex.

3³/₄
LENGTH OF WALK (MILES)
2
DURATION (HOURS)

Allow longer for visiting Greys Court Manor House if you wish or for having a picnic along the way.

GETTING THERE Rotherfield Greys is a small village two miles west of Henley-on-Thames. From the bridge over the Thames in Henley keep ahead through the town where the A4130 bears right. Go uphill and keep following the road as it bends round to the left through Greys Green until you reach Rotherfield Greys.

TERRAIN Good footpaths but tricky for buggies. Some road walking but there is a grass verge available for safety. There are a couple of ascents and descents.

START/PARKING In front of St Nicholas church/The Maltsters Arms (GR SU726823).

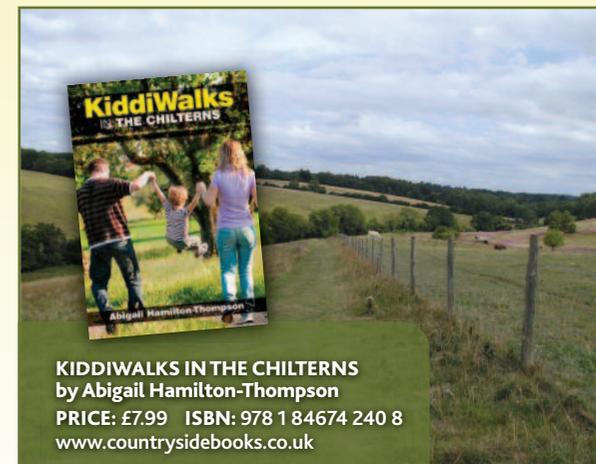
MAP OS Explorer 171 Chiltern Hills West.

REFRESHMENTS The Maltsters Arms in Rotherfield Greys has a wide menu and welcomes children and dogs. There is a tea room at Greys Court (check opening times) and the walk also passes through a pleasant picnic area.

FUN THINGS TO SEE AND DO In summer, see how many different varieties of butterflies you can spot. Observe how they feed from the flowers. Will one stop long enough for you to take a photograph? Take some binoculars to look at the red kites flying above you (be careful not to look at the sun). Can you see the birds flying low, ready to swoop down and grab their prey?



DID YOU KNOW? The tea room at Greys Court is said to be haunted by the ghost of a pot boy, who would have been one of Cromwell's soldiers during the English Civil War.



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