



The well

# HAMPSTEAD NORREYS

## *Footpaths, Bridleways and Byways*

### **FOLLOW THE COUNTRYSIDE CODE**

**Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs.**

**Leave gates and property as you find them.**

**Protect plants and animals and take your litter home.**

**Keep dogs under close control.  
Consider other people.**

**Know your rights and responsibilities.**

*For the full Countryside Code and information on where to go and what to do, visit*

[www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk)

*For more local information see the parish website*

[www.hampsteadnorreys.org.uk](http://www.hampsteadnorreys.org.uk)

Walking is recommended by the Government as a safe and health promoting form of exercise. However, it should be carried out with care and forethought. Always wear appropriate footwear and take care when walking in the town or countryside.

There is a regular bus service to Hampstead Norreys. Current information can be obtained from Newbury Buses 01635 567500

No responsibility is accepted by the authors of this leaflet for the state or condition from time to time of the paths comprising these walks.

### **Acknowledgements**

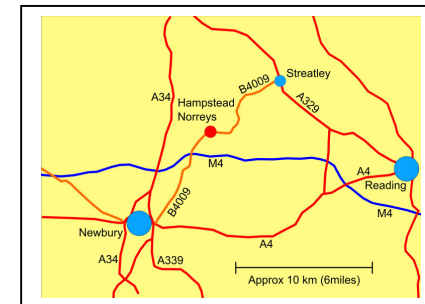
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West Berkshire  
Countryside Society



St Mary's church



Hampstead Norreys Parish lies in the North Wessex Downs  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## **HAMPSTEAD NORREYS PARISH COUNCIL**

*Further copies of this leaflet may be downloaded from*

[www.hampsteadnorreys.org.uk](http://www.hampsteadnorreys.org.uk)

[www.westberkscountryside.org.uk](http://www.westberkscountryside.org.uk) and [www.westberks.gov.uk](http://www.westberks.gov.uk)

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## HAMPSTEAD NORREYS FOOTPATHS BRIDLEWAYS AND BYWAYS

This leaflet gives descriptions of the footpaths, bridleways, byways and restricted byways in the parish of Hampstead Norreys, West Berkshire.

Hampstead Norreys village lies some seven miles (11km) northeast of Newbury, and like so much of West Berkshire is in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The parish lies in the valley of the River Pang.

The parish is without a post office, but has a Community shop, a pub and a school. There are 31 paths of various classifications and many links to other parish networks. The paths offer walks and rides through differing terrains such as ancient woods and coppices, across fields and along ancient drove roads.

**Paths with red titles** we rate 'difficult' and have multiple stiles or steep hills.

**Paths with black titles** we rate 'ordinary country paths' but may have uneven and muddy surfaces.

**Paths with blue titles** we rate 'easy'. There are no obstacles and reasonably sound surfaces. It would be wise to check before use with a disabled companion.

Local people provided the route information, but O.S. Explorer Map 158 (Newbury and Hungerford) will provide the bigger picture.

### THE HISTORY OF HAMPSTEAD NORREYS

There seem to have been people here very early. Mesolithic and Neolithic stone implements have been found and there is a scatter of Bronze Age barrows (burial mounds) around the village. Most of these have been ploughed flat but a pristine example has survived in Park Wood.

There is an Iron Age hill fort a mile to the north of the village. Roman finds have been made around the parish and the place name is Saxon meaning *farm settlement*. The 'Norreys' element celebrates the family which bought the Manor in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

The place name and the close positioning of the early church and manor house indicate that the village was the centre of a large Saxon Estate. In Domesday Book (1086) it was held by Theodoric the Goldsmith and had about 30 families, a church and some woodland. Until 1840 the parish included Hermitage parish to the south and the combined area was probably the area of the Saxon Estate.

The common fields were enclosed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### NATURAL HISTORY

The underlying geology is chalk but this is overlain in many places by acid clays and sands. Chalk is an internationally rare rock. It only occurs in southern England, the northern Continent, Canada and New Zealand. Chalk streams like the Pang are therefore internationally important for their distinctive flora and fauna. The Pang rises at two places. At East Ilsley pond and on Churn Plain north of Compton. It is a *bourne*. This means that its upper reaches naturally dry up – sometimes for long periods.

The woods consist mainly of mature deciduous trees and the remains of hazel coppices. There are several Ancient Woods with rich floras. The woods are home to fallow, roe and muntjak deer and an increasing population of badgers. Red kites and buzzards are regularly seen.

**Footpath 24** is a short length of the old road that ran up the length of the valley from Bucklebury to Compton. The Right of Way ends at Path 22.

**Footpath 25** is a short link to cut the corner between the B4009 Streatley Road and the Yattendon Road.

**Footpath 26** has the Job Lousley memorial near the west end. He was a member of a notable family and died in 1855. The wood is a hazel coppice planted on old fields. There are many badger setts. Look for World War 2 remains.

**Restricted Byway 27** is a tarmac road and ran across Hampstead Norreys Common to the windmill at Little Hungerford. The mill was a post mill and was moved to Compton in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

**Restricted Byway 28** runs between Path 29 to the parish boundary at the A34. Its western half lies along the parish boundary and is shared with East Ilsley as Path EI34. It runs between banks. Double banks were a common Saxon boundary feature so these may be a thousand years old. The area is very flower rich but may be difficult in summer.

**Restricted Byway 29** is a 'Green Lane' or drove road along which sheep and cattle were driven to East Ilsley Fair. East Ilsley was one of the most important livestock markets in Berkshire up until the 1930s. The southern end has species rich hedges. The area around the junction with Paths 16 and 28 was one of the drovers' camp sites. Note the large bank which was part of the parish boundary – the ditch is the boundary. There are bluebells on the bank so it was built through woodland and is very ancient.

**Footpath 30** crosses the field SW from Path 28 and can be hard to find. It follows

the parish boundary on a map of 1761. The same map shows Great Ridge Copse. This is an ancient hazel coppice. The massive lynchets south of the wood were caused by centuries of plough-loosened soil moving down slope. The path crosses the hedge and follows the field edge to the A34. *See Permitted Path below.*

**Numbers 31 – 34 are not used.**

**Access Paths 1 & 2** at Eling Farm were created as part of a Higher Level Stewardship Scheme.

**A Permitted Footpath** runs inside the hedge along the A34 joining paths 28, 30 and 18 to the lanes at either end.

### Other leaflets on Hampstead Norreys paths.

These can be downloaded free of charge from the parish website

[www.hampsteadnorreys.org.uk](http://www.hampsteadnorreys.org.uk)

or from

[www.westberks countryside.org.uk](http://www.westberks countryside.org.uk)

### Individual walks

- 'Around and About Hampstead Norreys'.  
About 6 miles (10km)
- 'Historic Hampstead'.  
2½ miles (4km)
- 'The Woods of Hampstead Norreys' (For walkers interested in archaeology).  
1¾ miles (2.8km)

### Path networks.

- 'Haw Farm'
- 'The Paths in the Woods'  
*The paths in Park Wood,  
Down Wood and Westbrook  
Copse*





Wood anemones and bluebells

**Footpath 11 and 11a** runs uphill and along the crest of a steep slope falling to the north. This slope contains terraces that may have been formed by medieval farmers ploughing along the slope. The area at the NE end is particularly rich in Ancient Woodland Indicator Species of plants (AWIS) confirming that the wood has been here since at least 1600. AWIS are plants with very poor powers of seed dispersal. This means that once destroyed by cultivation they do not return and so their presence indicates centuries of undisturbed soils.

**Footpath 12** skirts the toe of the slope along the southern edge of the Dean Meadow. It then runs alongside the disused railway to the B4009. The Dean Meadow was rented by the parish in 1983 and the Village Hall was opened in July 1988. The name 'Dean Meadow' comes from the Old English *denu* and means 'the meadow in the hollow' an apt name that has survived a thousand years.

**Footpaths 13, 14, 15** are short paths within the village leading to the church and formerly to the railway station. The *Didcot, Newbury and Southampton Junction Railway* was opened in 1882, doubled to take wartime traffic and closed in 1964.

**Bridleway 16** is shown as a road on a map of 1761. There is a good view of Perborough Iron Age Hill Fort to the north. Look for species rich hedges and verges. Banterwick Barns are probably 18<sup>th</sup> century but the *wick* element of their name is Old English and indicates that the site was an isolated dairy farm a thousand years ago. Look for buzzards, red kites, brown hares and deer.

**Footpath 17** runs along the line of the old driveway to the former Langley Park and south between Langley Wood and the A34 to join *Old Street*, a very ancient track. **17** can be hard to find in summer. Paths in Langley Wood are open to walkers under the Eling Estate access policy and can be used to link to Path 20.

**Footpath 18** runs through horse paddocks and across fields. It is sometimes hard to trace.

**Footpath 19** runs over open farmland and links to paths in Hermitage parish.

**Footpath 20** once followed a hedgerow but now runs across open fields joining Bothampstead to Langley Wood.

**Bridleway 21** runs from Trumpletts Farm to the Malthouse. This was formerly an open area called Bothampstead Green.

**Footpath 22.** There is a very steep hill on this path. The field on the edge of the village was originally the cricket ground. There are dramatic views from the hill top. Beech wood is rich in bluebells in Spring and housed bomb dumps during World War 2.

**Footpath 23** has two steep hills. Look for species rich hedges at the top. The fields on the east were a World War 2 airfield. A special leaflet covers this. See the parish website for a copy.

## WALK DESCRIPTIONS (Numbers 1&2 are not used)

**Bridleway 3** runs south from the B4009 at Wyld Court to join Yattendon Bridleway 8 at the parish boundary.

**Footpath 4.** This short path links the Yattendon Road at St Abbs to the B4009. The SW half runs along the parish boundary. There is a moderate hill on this path.

**Bridleway 5.** The eastern end of this path is also the parish boundary and is likely to be over 1000 years old. Note how deeply the track is sunk into the landscape and, in season, how species rich the hedges and verges are. St Abb was a 7<sup>th</sup> century Saxon abbess and is remembered in Oxford as St Ebb. With Frideswide at Frilsham this may indicate a very early link between the Pang Valley and Oxford. Down Wood is also very flower rich. Look for, in season, dense bluebells, wood spurge, Solomon's seal and many more. The path side hedge up the hill to Eling Farm is also very species rich with at least 13 different species including dogwood, spindle, wayfaring tree, field maple and wild plum.

**Footpath 6** is a cross-field path and links Eling to the Everington Lane. 'Eling' is a very early Saxon name meaning 'the people of Eli'. There was a Roman farm near the present farmhouse. (It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument). The Manor of Eling is mentioned in Domesday Book (1086). Eling Farm is an organic dairy farm so look for a rich variety of herbs and flowers in its fields.

**Footpath 7** crosses the area that was once Hampstead Norrey's Common. This was enclosed in 1771. Hermitage became a separate parish in 1840 taking most of

the Common with it. Look for heather in the woods beside the path and note 'Common Barn'.

**Bridleway 8** passes through Spring Plantation and marks the eastern edge of the former Common. It is now a species poor larch plantation.

**Footpath 9** runs through Westbrook Copse and the dense dog's mercury indicates that the copse was once a field. The path follows the edge of the flood plain. Note the steep drop into the floodplain caused by build up of plough loosened soil building up against the boundary over many centuries.

**Bridleway 10** runs up the hill between Park Wood and Down Wood and across the field to Eling. Both these woods are ancient and flower rich. Park Wood was a medieval deer park and the substantial bank with the ditch on the inside is probably part of its boundary.

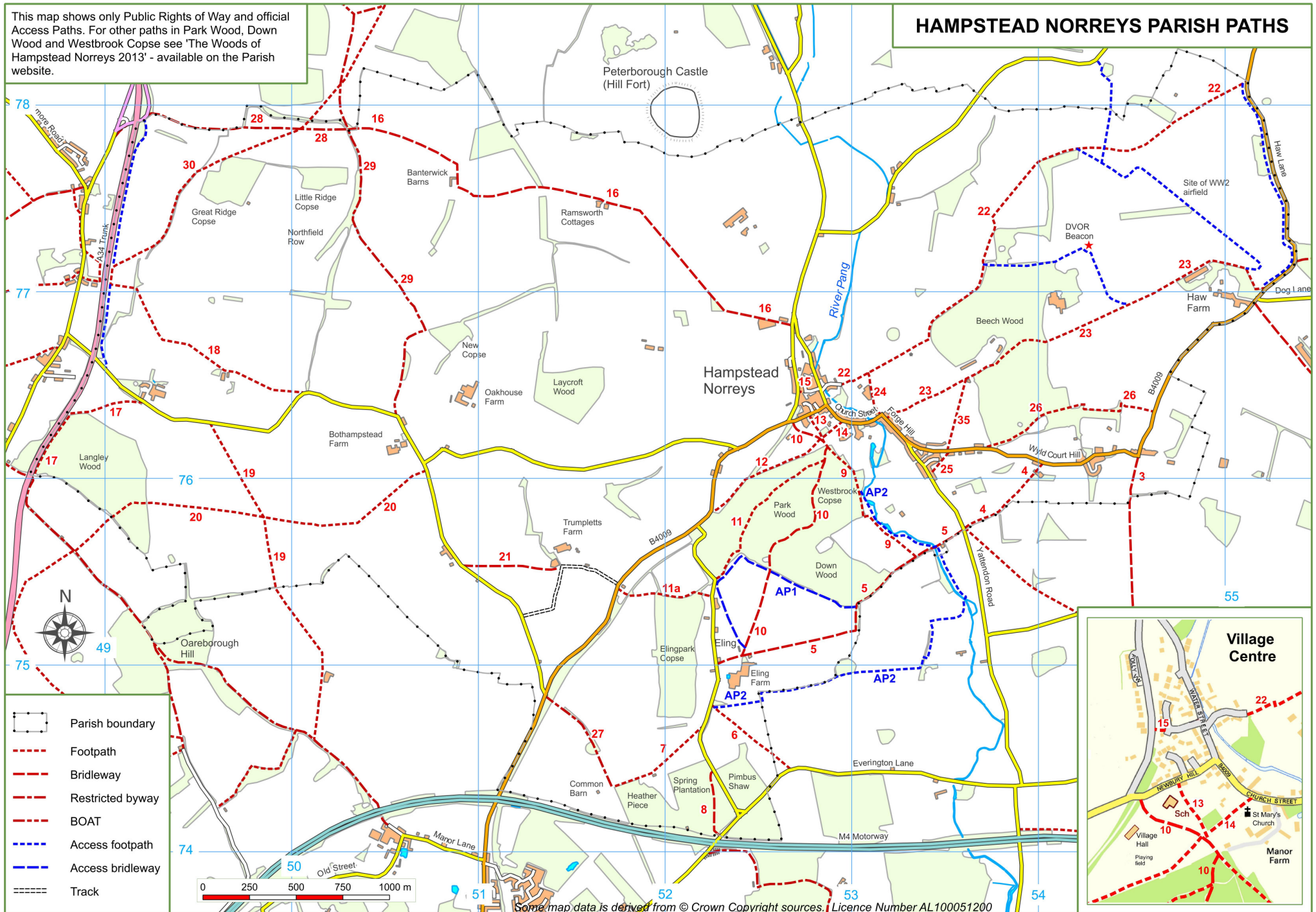
Note the large mound on the north side of the path. This is a Bronze Age burial mound (a 'barrow') dating from around 2,500BC. It has been preserved from ploughing by being in a wood. Many others near the village have been ploughed flat.



The c.4500 year old Bronze Age Barrow

This map shows only Public Rights of Way and official Access Paths. For other paths in Park Wood, Down Wood and Westbrook Copse see 'The Woods of Hampstead Norreys 2013' - available on the Parish website.

# HAMPSTEAD NORREYS PARISH PATHS



- Parish boundary
- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted byway
- BOAT
- Access footpath
- Access bridleway
- Track



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