
The woods contain many broad-leaf species including mature oaks, hazel coppices and some fine stands of conifer. Hamstead Park has some good specimens of ornamental trees, including Wellingtonia.

Birds of prey include red kite, buzzard, kestrel, sparrowhawk and the occasional harrier over the riverside water meadow. Owls are often sighted and, in the higher fields, skylark, lapwing and wintering golden plover. Migratory birds include swallow, martin, swift, cuckoo, nightingale and warbler in spring and summer, and Brambling, fieldfare and redwing in winter. You may also see kingfisher or dabchick from the riverbank.

In spring the woods and lanes display snowdrops, primroses, violets and wood anemones, followed by bluebells, riverside yellow flags and Kingcups. Butterflies and moths abound, and the amphibian population includes frogs, toads and newts. The water vole is present at both canal and river. Grass snakes are a fairly common sight. Game is plentiful with pheasant, partridge and hare in the fields. Roe deer (pictured) and muntjac are a familiar sight, along with fallow deer in the larger woods. Bats are common at dusk, and flourishing populations exist of other mammals, including badger and fox, with the occasional sighting of mink and polecat.

**PLEASE BE AWARE THAT**
- Some fields may contain livestock
- Some walk areas may be muddy
- Most walks include stiles
- Care needs to be taken when walking on village roads with no pavements
- Sensible walking footwear is advisable

**COUNTRYSIDE CODE**
- Leave gates as you find them
- Take your litter home
- Do not uproot wild plants
- Keep dogs under close control and poop-scoop if they foul paths

Walking in Hamstead Marshall

**Holtwood Walk**

**Old Mansion Walk**

Two circular walks of 3 - 4 miles each, which can be enjoyed separately or linked to make a figure-of-8 walk of nearly 7 miles over farmland, woodland, country lanes, and Hamstead Park.
HAMSTEAD MARSHALL

lies on the unclassified road which begins as Pound Street in Newbury and runs westward
to Kintbury, first passing Enborne Church and
the Craven Arms. Within the village this is
known as the Kintbury Road.

The village can also be reached by a turning
southwards from the A4 crossroads about two
miles west of Newbury.

NEWBURY BUSES ROUTE 13 (Newbury to Hungerford) passes through Hamstead
Marshall on the Kintbury Road about 6 times
daily (each way) Mondays to Saturdays,
stopping at Ash Tree Corner, the White Hart
and Chapel Corner. The timetable can be seen
on <www.reading-buses.co.uk/prev/tt_
newbury_nov2006/013MF22.html>.

PARKING

The village hall car park may be used by
walkers when it is not needed for an event at
the hall. Please ring 01488 657022 to check in
advance. There are limited possibilities for
roadside parking around Chapel Corner,
Hamstead Mill, and on Milkhouse Road running
from the railway crossing to the A4. There is
also a small off-road parking area diagonally
opposite the Craven Arms, from which it is a
short walk into the village. The private car
parks at the White Hart, Elm Farm and
Plumbs’s Farm are strictly for patrons only.
Please respect private property and entrances
when parking. Always consider sightlines and
road safety.

PICNICS

There is no picnic area as such in the village,
but there are bench seats in the village hall
recreation field, at the top end of the Elm Farm
bridle path and beside Hamstead Lock.

ST MARY’S CHURCH     RG20 0JD

Services most Sundays – see <www.hamstead
marshall.net>. At other times the church is usual-
ly locked for security. For access contact a
churchwarden on 01635 44868 or 01635 52436.

ORGANIC RESEARCH CENTRE, Elm Farm RG20 0HR
01488 658298 Not open to the public except for
special events, but there is a farm trail open to
the public seven days a week. Leaflets available
from the start of the trail (bridle path almost
opposite the farm car park) or from reception
during working hours.
<www.organicresearchcentre.com>

VILLAGE HALL & RECREATION FIELD    RG20 0HL
Hall bookings 01488 657022. Community market
10am-1pm on the second Saturday of each
month. For other events see <www.hamstead
marshall.net/whatson> Adjoining field open to
all for recreation.

VILLAGE INFORMATION POINT
at Ash Tree Corner bus shelter. Board with maps,
local contacts, event announcements, bench, bus
timetable and litter bin.

WHITE HART INN    RG20 0HW    01488 658201
Open 7 days a week, lunchtime and evening. Real
ales. Cam’s Carvery. Accommodation.
<www.thewhitelhart.biz>

DOGS TRUST, Plumb’s Farm   RG20 0HR
01488 658391 Open 12.00 until 16.00, closed
Wednesdays. Other times by appointment only.
<www.dogstrust.org.uk>

PICNICS

There is no picnic area as such in the village,
but there are bench seats in the village hall
recreation field, at the top end of the Elm Farm
bridle path and beside Hamstead Lock.
Holtwood Walk: 3 miles
(points 1 to 8)

Take the driveway opposite the White Hart up past Plumb’s Farm (the Dogs’ Trust). Pass the kennel on the left, after which there is a footpath crossroads. Take the route straight ahead, over astile and uphill (1) across a field towards woodland. Here you are at one of the highest points of the village (400ft), and you have a good overall view of the houses distributed along the Kintbury Road. The distinctive triangle of Morewood’s roof can be seen further north.

Cross the stile into Briffs Copse (2) and follow the path which eventually takes you to the corner of a field (3). This is Waterman’s Farm land. The footpath signs direct you across this field in a dog-leg (4) (5), then across another (6), eventually to meet Watery Lane at Smiths Bridge (7), which marks the border with Hampshire.

Turn left into Watery Lane and pass Foxlee and Enborne Valley farms on the right. The lane rises and then drops to the riding stables at Holtwood Farm (perhaps one of the oldest houses in the village) on the left, and its redeveloped barns to the right. Another slight rise meets Holtwood Lane.

Turn left into Holtwood Lane, and continue a few hundred yards until the footpath sign takes you off to the left, crossing the corner of one field, and then the width of another. At this point there is a stile whose approach is sometimes overgrown with brambles.

Having negotiated this you are back on Elm Farm land, crossing three fields, as you descend to the Mayhouse Gully. Winding through the damp woodland here, cross the stream (8), and the path emerges into another field, at the far fence at which the footpath forks.

Take the right-hand option leading onto a short trackway. This takes you to the Kintbury Road, and the White Hart is about 100 yards to the left.

Old Mansion Walk: 3.75 miles
(points 9 to 16)

Take the bridleway opposite Elm Farm (9) across the field (10), passing over a dip created by clay extraction for brickmaking. To the left is Woodcote Copse. The bridleway rises to meet Park Lane, which you cross, continuing on another footpath uphill to a stile (11). Follow the footpath signs which take you across the middle of the Plain, once grassland used for village cricket and golf, but now cultivated. The path through crops should be clearly marked.

As you cross the Plain note the ditch and bank on the right, remains of the pale which enclosed the medieval deer park; it is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Ahead you can see the gate-piers of the first Craven mansion, built in the 1660s and burned down in 1718. The gate-piers and what is left of the old mansion walling also have protected status.

The path reaches St Mary’s churchyard (12), at which point footpaths run left into Craven Hill, and also to the right. Take the latter, skirting the garden of North Lodge, and descend through an avenue to Hamstead Mill (13).

Turn right onto the tarmac drive and walk towards the big house in the centre of the park, successor to the burnt mansion. The Craven Fishery lies on the left, shrouded by greenery in summer but plainly visible in winter. The path passes a lake (14) and climbs a hill. To the left is the earthwork of a Norman castle (not open to the public). At the top the footpath leaves the tarmac to skirt the house grounds on grass, eventually joining another driveway leading out from the back of the house.

Continue along this to a junction marked by a white stone memorial dedicated to the US troops who camped here just before D-Day (15).