

MWW website directions – stage 11, Oare to Wootton Rivers

Maps: OS Landranger 173, OS Explorer 157

Distance: 4.6 miles (7.4 km)

West to east

With your back to the White Hart pub, go R down the A345, turning L after 25 metres into Pound Lane. Go down this for 350m, well beyond where the houses end, and go through a gate on your L on a signposted footpath to cross a field. Just beyond where the path reaches the other side, cross a stile into another field and begin the ascent of the Giants Grave; the gradient, gentle at first, gets steeper and steeper, but the views at the top are well worth the effort. Continue past the trig point along the spine of the hill until you reach a gate at the end. Here there is a choice of routes:

- i) the **official route** takes you to the R of the gate and past another gate to L very soon after. Stay close to the fence on your L initially, but you are eventually forced to leave it to go round clumps of gorse bushes and stunted trees in this area of open access land. Returning to the fence at the top of the area after this, you pass through a **gate** in the corner of the field.
- ii) **alternatively**, you can take a much more user-friendly permissive path which, having gone through the gate, simply follows the right hand edge of the field beyond, soon arriving at the **gate** described above.

Continue with fence on your R into a small wooded area, emerging on the other side to a bench by another gate, where you can pause to admire the view at your leisure. Pass through the gate and follow the path round to the L, with fence L. After perhaps 300m, turn R downhill with a small copse to L and follow the track to the L; the route is well waymarked but you will have to be alert to see the signs! On arriving at woods at the bottom of the slope, turn R, with woods to your L, to arrive at a road with a small car park. On the other side of this road is the start of the well-named Mud Lane.

As an alternative to slipping and sliding along Mud Lane, it is possible to reach Wootton Rivers by taking quiet country roads, which also provide good views of Martinsell Hill. To do so, turn R on reaching the road above, and after approximately 0.6 miles (1 km), turn L to pass East Wick Farm on your L. Follow this road for approximately 0.7 miles (1.2km) to arrive at a T junction. Turn L here and after 50 metres or so arrive at the Royal Oak pub opposite.

If you wish to stick to the **official route**, make your way along Mud Lane, past Hill Barn, until you reach the edge of the third vast field to your R. Here turn R down the edge of the fourth field, with hedge on R. However before doing so, it is worth making a small detour; if you continue along Mud Lane for perhaps 20m you will see, carved onto the end of a tree stump at head height to your L, a representation of the Green Man. Once back in the fourth field, follow the edge round to the L at the bottom and after 150m turn R down a green bridleway. This leads directly to Wootton Rivers. On reaching the metalled road, turn R and you will soon arrive at the Royal Oak pub on your L.

East to west

Mud Lane (see below) is well-named and can be very unpleasant at its worst. As an alternative to slipping and sliding along it, it is possible to reach the **small car park** mentioned below by taking quiet country roads, which also provide good views of Martinsell Hill. To do so, go up the metalled road opposite the Royal Oak pub, and after 50 metres or so turn R. Follow this road for 0.7 miles (1.2 km) to arrive at a T junction after passing East Wick Farm on your R. Turn R here and after 0.6 miles (1 km) arrive at the small car park L, with Mud Lane to your R.

If you wish to stick to the **official route**, with your back to the Royal Oak pub, turn R up the metalled road. After 150m, turn L (effectively straight on) up a green bridleway. Follow this until it enters a field, where you turn L along its edge, then R at the field corner to reach the well-named Mud Lane at the top. Here it is worth making a small detour: if you turn R along Mud Lane for perhaps 20m you will see, carved onto the end of a tree stump at head height to your L, a representation of the Green

Man. Now turn round and go west along Mud Lane, counting off three vast fields and Hill Barn to your L to reach a metalled road, on the other side of which is a **small car park**.

Go through the gate beyond the car park and walk to where the woods on your R veer R. Here turn L and go uphill on the track that emerges, with a copse to R, kinking R then sharp L at the top. Continue south with fence to R and turn R through a gate after 300m. Here there is a bench where you can pause to admire the view of the Pewsey Downs at your leisure. Amble on through a small wooded area to arrive at a gate in the fence to your L. There are now two routes to choose from:

- i) the **official route** takes you through the open access land on the other side of the gate; follow the path which veers away from the fence on your R to take you round clumps of gorse bushes and stunted trees, eventually returning to the fence beyond. Follow the fence past a gate on your R to reach another **gate** only a few metres beyond. Turn L.
- ii) **alternatively** you can take a much more user-friendly permissive path along the edge of the field beyond the wooded area to reach the **gate** described above; go through this and continue in the same direction.

Proceed along the gently undulating top of the hill, with fence to your R and more stunning views of the Pewsey Downs to your L. This is the Giant's Grave. Just beyond the trig point, plunge steeply downhill and follow the path round to the L to a stile in the corner. Cross this and the field beyond to reach Pound Lane. Turn R along this to arrive at the A345 in the village of Oare after 350m. Turn R again to reach the White Hart pub, where sustenance awaits, in 25m.