PUBS WORTH THE WALK

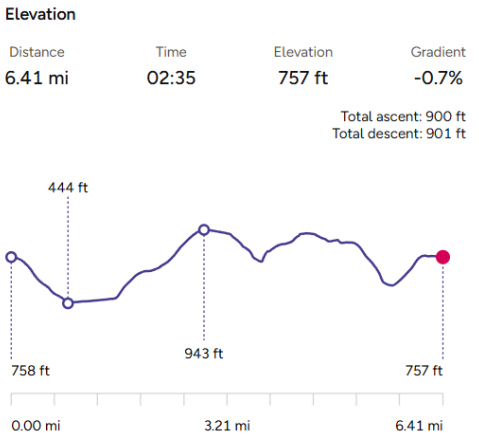
The Jack Russell Inn Walk

Fine views from the highest point in Hampshire, 6.5 miles

OVERVIEW

This is classic North Wessex Downs walking : wide chalk tracks, sweeping ridgeline views, quiet valleys and enormous skies in this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Along the way the landscape constantly shifts between exposed chalk escarpments, woodland edges, estate farmland and ancient trackways threaded through surprisingly remote countryside. One of the highlights is the approach towards Pilot Hill — the highest point in Hampshire at 286 metres.



The sense of space becomes extraordinary on a clear day - offering panoramic views stretching towards Highclere, Newbury and Mick Jagger's old recording studio at Stargrove Manor.
The walk also intersects with several long-distance routes including the Brenda Parker Way and the Wayfarer's Walk, reinforcing the feeling that this landscape has drawn walkers for generations.

Start/Finish	**Jack Russell, Netherton Hill, Faccombe, SP11 0DS. 01264 737315**
Parking	Parking opposite the pub. Overflow parking a little way down the lane.
Grid Reference	SU 390 579
What3Words	///engraving.tamed.pheasants
Distance	6.5miles/10.5km **Time** 3 hours **Ascent** 900 ft / 275 m
Paths/Terrain	Quiet lanes, chalky farm tracks & field edges.
Difficulty	The walk visits Hampshire's 'County Top', the highest part of Hampshire. A few steep climbs.
Public Transport	There's no services into Faccombe. However, the A343 corridor is served by Stagecoach route 7 (Newbury ↔ Andover). It's c.3 miles from the A343.
Toilets	At the Jack Russell Inn.
Other Pubs Nearby	There are some terrific pubs in this area, albeit fewer these days. The **Crown & Garter** at Inkpen Common is superb, and waiting for its own Pubs Worth The Walk feature! **The Red House** at Highclere is combined with Ellie's Deli next door. Definitely worth a visit.

DIRECTIONS



1. From the car park of The Jack Russell Inn, turn left in the direction of the hamlet of Netherton. Follow Netherton Lane downhill to the junction, turning right in front of Netherton House onto Netherton Road. This area has connections to the ancestors of George Washington.
2. The lane meets a junction with Upton Road running to the left. On the right is a footpath running uphill on a track. Follow this track. There has been forestry work in this area disrupting the established footpath route a little, but continue on the line you started on, making for the fringe of the copse of trees ahead to eventually join a flat path through woodland.
3. The path emerges onto a stony farm track uphill, with trees to the left and some of the vast tracts of fields of the Faccombe Estate on the other side of the fence to the right. This uphill section is carrying you to one of the higher parts of the walk.
4. The track starts to level out as the farm track emerges onto Rooknests Lane. Continue ahead on the lane. You crossed the Hampshire border into Berkshire on that last climb, and to your left is Combe Hill. At 293 metres it's higher than the county top of Hampshire still to come.

5. As the lane starts to descend, you'll see a wide-mouthed path/track to the left that's heading up to Combe Hill, and beyond. To the right is a narrower path in front of a gate. Take this one, following it as it curves between hedges and copse.
6. Go left across the lane and onto a grassy path by the side of fields. There's a steep uphill here, levelling out a little as you enter the woods above the fields, then turning right to join the Wayfarer's Walk.
7. This is where the walk really shows itself off. As you gain elevation towards the summit of Pilot Hill, back in Hampshire, the views to your left are superb, some of the best in Southern England. See if you can spot Stargrove Manor. To the right of this vista is Highclere.
8. As this route along the ridge starts to level and start downhill, look for footpath markers. One path leads down to the left off the ridge. This is where we also leave the Wayfarer's Way, heading right towards the fields - on Brenda Parker Way.
9. Head across the field to the hedge, then left hand turn to the next hedge boundary, and a right-hand turn.
10. It's a straight run back to Faccombe from here, initially downhill on a stony track and then up the other side on a smoother track on the approach to the village.
11. Continue on to Faccombe Road where you'll turn left passing the church. St Barnabas' Church is a 19th-century estate church that carries the inherited history of the earlier medieval parish at Netherton. Local tradition describes it as an 'ancestral church of George Washington', reflecting the Washington family's historic roots in this part of southern England, even though the present building dates from 1866.
12. On the left you'll pass Faccombe Manor, once the seat of the Butler-Henderson family (of steam-locomotive fame), and on to finish at The Jack Russell Inn.

NOTES: Brigadier Landon: A Man Cut From Adventure Cloth

Few rural English villages can claim a former resident whose life involved Gulf monarchies, Cold War intrigue, immense wealth, private jets, royal friendships, heavily guarded estates and comparisons with Lawrence of Arabia. Faccombe can.

Brigadier Timothy Landon remains one of the more extraordinary figures ever to settle quietly into the Hampshire countryside. Depending on which account you read, he was variously described as an intelligence officer, military adviser, royal fixer, trusted confidant, arms broker, strategic operator, moderniser, adventurer, eccentric aristocrat and deeply private landowner. Quite an impressive range for someone who ultimately became best known locally as “the Brigadier”.

Born in Canada and educated at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Landon’s life changed dramatically during Britain’s involvement in Oman during the 1960s. There he formed a close relationship with the future Sultan Qaboos bin Said, helping support the young ruler during the turbulent years surrounding the 1970 coup that transformed Oman from an isolated Gulf state into a modern oil-rich nation.

Exactly how much influence Landon wielded behind the scenes depends heavily on who is telling the story. Admirers portrayed him as a loyal strategist and trusted adviser during a critical period of Omani history. Critics painted him as a shadowy power broker operating comfortably in the murkier corners of Cold War geopolitics. Either way, he emerged extraordinarily well connected — and extraordinarily wealthy.

By the late 1970s Landon had established himself at Faccombe, assembling an estate that eventually stretched across thousands of acres of Hampshire downland near the Berkshire border.

The wider Faccombe Estate became known for shooting, farming, conservation and country sports, while also developing a reputation for immaculate presentation and intense privacy. Stories still circulate locally of sophisticated security systems, guarded entrances and blacked-out Range Rovers sweeping through estate lanes like something from a le Carré adaptation rewritten by PG Wodehouse.

Yet there was always a touch of eccentric English charm to the whole affair. Landon reportedly commuted to London in a converted black cab to avoid attention, installed one of Britain’s earliest large private wind turbines decades before environmentalism became fashionable, and cultivated the curious image of a modern medieval lord presiding over a hidden Hampshire valley.

Following his death in 2007, the estate passed into the stewardship of his son, Arthur Landon, whose friendships with Princes William and Harry occasionally brought Faccombe quietly into public view. Prince Harry’s stag celebrations were reportedly hosted at The Jack Russell in 2018 — perhaps the most modern chapter yet in one of rural England’s more improbable stories.

Whatever the full truth behind the mythology, Landon undeniably left an imprint on Faccombe. Even today the village carries that faintly surreal atmosphere found in places where immense wealth, old establishment networks, military history and deep countryside seclusion somehow overlap. And yet, wonderfully, for walkers arriving muddy-booted from the downs, it still mostly feels like a peaceful Hampshire village with a superb pub at its heart.