

INTRODUCTION

The Octagon Parish is made up of eight villages with churches: Stansted, Racton, Stoughton, East Marden, North Marden, Up Marden, Compton and Forestside and two villages without churches: West Marden and Walderton. Blessed with wonderful walks and fine views down to the south coast, its small ancient downland churches are noted for their spiritual peace and tranquility, some dating back to Saxon times. There are two stately homes in the area: Stansted House and Uppark.

To mark the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 2012, The Octagon decided to establish a long circular walking route using existing footpaths and bridleways to link all the villages together. This is called *The Octagon Way* and is about 18 miles long. There are also eight circular *Octagon Short Walks* of 2–4 miles each.

GET THE BUS

Why not reduce parking pressure and help to conserve this beautiful National Park by using the local bus service. It passes through the area – 5 times daily except Sunday – making it possible to bus and walk. Find out more about local buses in the contacts section at the back.

Parking: Apart from Stansted Park Garden Centre there are very few official car parks in The Octagon.

Environment: Please help us to care for this beautiful place by following a few simple guidelines:

- Close **gates** behind you.
- Keep your **dogs** under close control at all times to protect livestock, wildlife and your dog!



- Please take your **litter** home with you.
- **Wildlife:** Please do not disturb or harm any wild animals.
- Photograph **wildflowers** but leave them unpicked and untrampled for others to enjoy.
- **Take care on public roads.** Some routes do involve walking along or crossing roads.
- Remember that **wild animals, farm animals and horses** can behave unpredictably – so give them plenty of space.
- Remember that **footpaths are only open for walkers**, whilst bridleways are open to walkers, cyclists and horse-riders.

OCTAGON WAY



ROUTE:

1. From Stansted Park Garden Centre car park, walk 90 yards towards main entrance and turn left ← at footpath fingerpost. Cross meadow, enter new planting of broadleaved trees. At 3-way fingerpost turn left ←, pass through kissing gate. Follow path diagonally over field, cross stile and continue ahead.

2. At next kissing gate turn left ← onto lane. Continue uphill to Racton Monument (on right).

Note: Racton Monument was built between 1766 & 1775 by the owners of Stansted House. It has a history of lavish parties, smuggling and was used by the Home Guard in World War II.

Walk downhill with St Peter's Church below (on right). At end of lane pass metal gate to main road.

Note: To visit St Peter's Church Racton: turn right → and walk 250 yards along the main road.

3. Turn left ← along main road for 220 yards – beware there is no pavement and there may be fast-moving traffic. Turn left ← at footpath fingerpost. Cross stile into field – please keep dogs on leads and don't feed or disturb horses.

4. Cross field diagonally. Pass through gate and cross next field to corner by a former watermill. Cross stile. Turn left ← onto lane. Cross small bridge, and turn right → onto grass path parallel with River Ems. Lordington House, an elegant 17th Century house (not open to public) is on left. Cross two more stiles and continue straight ahead for 100 yards. Cross stile. Walk down slope to Woodlands Lane. Turn right →.

5. At main road, turn left ←. After a few yards, cross the road into Cooks Lane and walk into Walderton.

6. At first footpath fingerpost turn left ← up a narrow footpath between houses. Turn right → along Monarch's Way. Cross lane and continue uphill to Inholmes Wood.

7. At edge of wood turn right → on bridleway down to Stoughton. Bear left.

Note: To visit St Mary's 11th Century Saxon church turn sharp left ← up church path.

8. Walk to village notice board; continue along lane past pub out of village.

9. After 500 yards turn left ← at footpath fingerpost. Follow path uphill for 500 yards towards Inholmes Wood.

10. Turn right ➔ at footpath fingerpost. Continue for a mile along headland, then through woods.
11. Turn left ◀ onto bridleway and continue to edge of wood. Turn right ➔ at footpath fingerpost. After 300 yards go steeply down to the lane.
12. Cross lane at diagonal, follow footpath fingerpost into field. Turn left ◀, then diagonally across field towards distant electricity pylon. Cross stile and follow path with hedge (on right). Cross two more stiles. After second, follow hedge (on left) to East Marden.
13. Cross stile, then through farmyard to fingerpost. Turn left ◀. Follow farm track 40 yards to next fingerpost. Turn right ➔. Follow path between houses to post box on lane. Turn right ➔.

Note: To visit the 12th Century Church of St Peter's in East Marden turn left ◀ for 100 yards. The thatched village well was the sole source of water until 1924. It has an unusual square winding wheel and is 200 ft deep.

14. Follow lane 70 yards up to footpath fingerpost. Turn left ◀ and follow path through hedge. Cross stile and bear diagonally across field. Cross another stile and farm track then continue ahead on path climbing gently along left-hand edge of the large open field. Trees on left give way to open fields. Continue uphill to top of slope.
15. At hedgerow, cross stile and enter Long Lane along which it is said Roman tax collectors used to pass. Turn left ◀ and continue to 'Fourways' crossroads.
16. Turn right ➔ follow lane uphill and through North Marden. Just after post

box turn left ◀ at footpath fingerpost and sign to church.

Note: St Mary's 12th Century Church North Marden: originally a chapel of ease to East Marden

17. From church (on right) follow path downhill. At bottom right corner of field pass between wire fences (keep wood on left). At footpath fingerpost turn left ◀. After 150 yards turn right ➔.
18. Leave woods, continue uphill with hedge on left of path. Follow edge of field to gap in hedge at field end. Ignore footpath on left and continue uphill along path through narrow woods between fields, to stile.
19. Cross stile at 4-way fingerpost. Turn left ◀ along edge of pine copse. At end of field cross stile into Long Lane. Turn right ➔. After 150 yards turn left ◀ at footpath fingerpost and pass through kissing gate.
20. Follow fence line (on right) steadily up Apple Down. The small copse on top of Apple Down marks the site of an Anglo Saxon cemetery – replaced in Victorian times by a water reservoir. Cross stile at end of field. On clear days there are fine views south to Portsmouth and Isle of Wight.
21. Continue across large arable field to distant right corner of tree line near Up Marden. Do not turn left at footpath marker post. Continue ahead with hedgerow on left. At far left corner of field join bridleway.

Note: To visit St Michael's Church Up Marden turn left ◀ along bridleway then right ➔ after cart shed into churchyard.

22. Turn right →, downhill towards Compton with view of Uppark (on right).

23. At bottom of hill path bears left ← and right → at fingerpost, then uphill between fields. Pass through wooded area and continue uphill between arable fields.

24. At the 4-way fingerpost cross bridleway and follow footpath downhill. Path crosses hedge line, then descends very steeply on edge of grass meadow with views of Compton Down ahead.

25. Leave meadow; bear right → at the 4-way fingerpost, and follow bridleway into Compton.

Note: To visit St Mary's Church Compton – at end of bridleway on right climb steps and follow path to church.

26. From village square turn left ← at pub. Walk 200 yards along road to The Old Post Office (now a private home). Turn right → across road.

27. Climb block steps; follow diagonal path across field; through pine woodland; cross next field uphill; up bank by footpath fingerpost, through tall swing gate into West Hanger Wood (used for pheasant breeding). Climb steeply uphill past cross-track footpath fingerpost, then through second swing gate into field.

28. Follow diagonal path to fingerpost; take farm track opposite steeply downhill.

29. Cross stile near field gate and dew pond. Turn sharp left ← at fingerpost and follow fence line to another stile where path enters woods. Follow path over two more stiles (ignoring private gate on right) to West Marden.

30. At the main road, turn left ← for a few yards and then sharp right → across the road. Cross stile at 2-way fingerpost and enter field. Follow path shown by right-hand pointer uphill through field to wood. Cross another stile and follow

path on left through woodland bearing right → at marker post.

31. Follow marker post straight across field, with hedge close to right-hand side. Cross Oldhouse Lane and take bridleway with fingerpost and hedge now on left.

32. Continue along bridleway to Lodge Farm. Pass farm house on left. Enter field by fingerpost. Follow track across field; enter wood at 4-way fingerpost.

Note: To visit Christchurch Forestside: Turn right → at 4-way fingerpost and follow footpath outside woodland on edge of field for about 350 yards. Enter wood at joining footpath and turn right → at next fingerpost. Continue for 60 yards to field gate. Turn left ← and follow marker and footpath for 650 yards inside wood to road. Cross road to visit church. Return back along same path to the 4-way fingerpost to rejoin The Octagon Way.

33. From 4-way fingerpost continue south along bridleway (conservation woodland on right) until you emerge from forest.

34. Continue south and after ¾ mile pass through a latch gate. Further on, pass through a second gate which takes you onto access road to Stansted Estate offices.

35. Turn left ← along road and after 100 yards, turn right → along footpath with Stansted House on left. Return to Stansted car park.










Note: To see St Paul's Chapel Stansted take left track before car park. Visits can be arranged with Stansted House.

For further information on St Paul's Chapel and the churches noted in this booklet visit:

www.sussexparishchurches.org

OCTAGON WAY

KEY

-  Public house
-  Bus stops
-  Incline
-  View
-  Church
-  Walk
-  Footpath
-  Bridleway
-  Walks



Distance: 18 miles.
Time: 8 to 9 hours.
Access: An undulating walk with over 20 stiles, various gates; some steep ascents and declines.
Getting there: The Octagon Way begins and ends at Stansted House – you can get there by car, bike or even walk the 1½ miles from Rowlands Castle rail station.
Parking: When starting from Stansted House, use the Garden Centre car park, open 0900 – 1800hrs after which you can drive out but not return.
Bus stops: Racton, Walderton, West Marden, Compton and Littlegreen.

Start/Finish

Rowlands Castle rail station
 1½ miles from Stansted House

USEFUL CONTACTS

South Downs National Park Authority

www.southdowns.gov.uk

Tel: (01730) 814810

Email: info@southdowns.gov.uk

Stansted House:

www.stanstedpark.co.uk

Tel: (02392) 412265

The Pavilion Tea Room

www.paviliontearoom.co.uk

Tel: (02392) 413432

Uppark House and Gardens:

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/uppark

Tel: (01730) 825857

Emsworth & District Bus and Coach Company (No 54 Bus Service Chichester to Petersfield):

www.emsworthanddistrict.co.uk

Tel: (01243) 378337

Compton Shop & Tea Room:

www.southdowns-tearoom.co.uk

Tel: (02392) 631144

PUBS

Walderton: The Barley Mow

www.thebarleymowpub.co.uk

Tel: (02392) 631321

Stoughton: The Hare & Hounds

www.hareandhoundspub.co.uk

Tel: (02392) 631433

Compton: The Coach & Horses

www.coachandhorsescompton.com

Tel: (02392) 631228

West Marden: The Victoria Inn

www.victoriainnwestmarden.co.uk

Tel: (02392) 631330

B&Bs & SELF-CATERING COTTAGES

Lordington House B&B:

hamiltonjanda@btinternet.com

Tel: (01243) 375862

Pitlands Farm:

www.pitlandsbarns.co.uk

Tel: (02392) 631263

West Marden Farmhouse:

www.westmardenfarmhousebandb.co.uk

Tel: (02392) 631761

West Marden: Marden Down self-catering cottages. Tel: (02392) 631729

www.west-sussex-holiday-cottages.co.uk

Watergate: Grandwood House

www.grandwoodhouse.co.uk

Tel: (02392) 631436

Adsdean Farm Self-Catering Cottages:

www.adsdean.co.uk

Tel: (01243) 575464

Compton: Compton Farm Cottages

Tel: (02392) 631597

www.cottages4you.co.uk

Compton: Hundred Acre Barn

Tel: (02392) 631413

www.comptoncrosscountry.co.uk

Compton: The Old Clubhouse

Tel: (02392) 631505

Up Marden: Orchard Barn

Tel: (01243) 535266

EMERGENCY SERVICES

NB: Mobile telephone coverage is restricted in some areas of The Octagon **Police 999**

Damage: In case of damage to gates, signs or misuse of footpaths contact South Downs Rangers Tel: (01243) 811533

centraldowns@southdowns.gov.uk

Taxi Services: Dunnaways (01243)

782403; Michaela (02392) 472782

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the South Downs National Park Authority, the Ministry of Design agency, West Sussex County Council, The Octagon Community and the many local walkers who helped describe and test each walk.

MEASUREMENTS & TIMES

All measurements including time to complete individual walks are approximate and for guidance only. Short distances are in yards (1 yard = 0.91 metre) and longer distances in miles (1 mile = 1.609km).