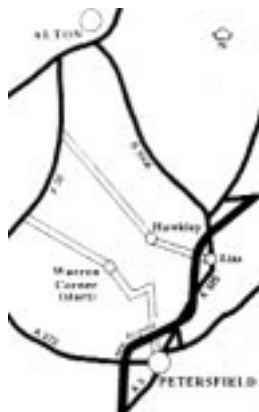


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## *How to get there*

Warren Corner is 31/2 miles north-east of Petersfield on the road to Stoner Hill and A32. There is a pull in for a few cars at the end of the green lane. Do not block the lane or the entrance to field.



### ***Public transport***

No regular bus services. The nearest railway station is Petersfield.

### ***Refreshments***

There is a public house (Hawkley Inn) in Hawkley marked on the map which provides a range of snacks and hot meals. They also produce a leaflet on local walks.

### ***Maps***

Ordnance Survey Pathfinder 1265 - Petersfield and the Meon Valley (1:25,000)

Ordnance Survey Landranger 197 - Chichester and The Downs

### ***Clothing***

Part of the walk is through exposed country so be sure to have enough warm clothing and waterproofs in event of rain. The paths can be muddy and slippery so footwear should have good treads.

### ***Dogs***

Please keep dogs under control and on lead near farm livestock.

### ***Further Information***

Farnham Museum has exhibits on William Cobbett.

Telephone:- 01252 715094.

Information on the William Cobbett Society via a SAE to Mr David Chun, Boynell House, Outlands Lane, Curdridge, Southampton S03 2HD. Telephone:- 01489 782453

A number of local bookshops stock William Cobbett's Rural Rides and Gilbert White's Natural History of Selbourne, both as Penguin paperbacks.

Credits: This leaflet was prepared by Dr June Chatfield for EHDC

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## *Literary walks in East Hampshire*



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Hawkley and the East Hampshire Hangers  
as described by  
**William Cobbett**  
**in Rural Rides (1830)**

and the Hawkley landslip in  
**Gilbert White's book The Natural  
History of Selborne (1789)**

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## *Points of literary interest*

The journey down the Hampshire Hangers to Hawkey was made on Sunday 24th November 1822 by William Cobbett and published in his Political Register and later as a book in *Rural Rides* (1830) - this is currently available as a Penguin paperback. Cobbett set out from Hambledon on horseback to go to Thursley, but because of his obsessive dislike of heathland, and especially Hindhead, he decided against the more obvious route via Petersfield and Liphook and used maps to devise his own route via Hawkey and Headley.

### *From Rural Rides:*

*“The map of Hampshire (and we had none of Surrey) showed me the way to Headley, which lies on the West of Hindhead, down upon the flat... I, therefore, resolved to go to Headley, in spite of all the remonstrances of friends who represented to me the danger of breaking my neck at Hawkey and of getting buried in the bogs of Woolmer Forest. My route was through East Meon, Froxfield, Hawkey, Greatham, and then over Woolmer Forest (a heath if you please) to Headley”.*

(a) The green lane leading to the parking place from the north west is probably the one which Cobbett took on his way from Bower Farm to the Petersfield road.

*“I inquired simply, whether people were in the habit of going down it; and, the answer being in the affirmative, oh I went through green lanes and bridle-ways till I came to the turn-pike road from Petersfield to Winchester, which I crossed, going into a narrow and almost untrodden green lane, on the side of which I found a cottage .*

The cottage was probably at Warren Corner.

(b) Cobbett continues:

*“Upon my asking the way to Hawkey, the woman at the cottage said, “Right up the lane, Sir: you’ll come to a hanger presently: you must take care, Sir: you can’t ride down: will your horses go alone?”*

At the end of the road surface, as the path descends between an avenue of yew trees, it is as steep and muddy as in Cobbett’s time.

Cobbett was very impressed with the scenery!

*“we came, all in a moment, at the very edge of the hanger! And never, in all my life, was I so surprised and so delighted! I pulled up my horse, and sat and looked; and it was like looking from the top of a castle down into the sea.”*

From doing this walk, this section seems out of sequence in Cobbett’s account for the spectacular view he describes was more likely to have been from the upper greensand hanger above Scotland Farm - see 6.

(c) The foot of the chalk escarpment is usually muddy and slippery. *“After crossing a little field and going through a farm-yard, we came into a lane, which was, at once, road and river.”* Gilbert White described the rocky hollow lanes as “Among the singularities of this place” in Letter 5 to Thomas Pennant in *The Natural History of Selborne*. The ones to Hawkey are full of ferns.:

(d) Here William Cobbett was about to descend the parallel hanger of upper greensand, past Scotland Farm to Greatham; and thence on his way through Woolmer Forest to Headley. *“at last, got us safe into the indescribable dirt and mire of, the road from Hawkey Green to Greatham. Here the bottom of all the land is this solid white stone, and the top is that mame [malm] which I have before described.”*

(e) The view from the top of the upper greensand hanger overlooks Scotland Farm and the hummocky area in the fields below is the remains of the substantial landslip at Hawkey in 1774 which Gilbert White describes in his book *The Natural History of Selborne* (Letter 45 to Daines Barrington). *“About fifty acres of land suffered from this violent convulsion; two houses were entirely destroyed; one end of a new barn was left in ruins... a hanging coppice was changed to a naked rock; and some grass grounds and an arable field so broken and rifted by the chasms as to be rendered... neither fit for the plough or safe for pasturage”*

**William Cobbett (1763-1835)** was born in Farnham. He had a varied and colourful career in the army, in publishing, politics and farming. His travels for *Rural Rides* took him through many parts of Hampshire and he once farmed near Botley.

**Gilbert White (1720-1793)** was born and lived in Selborne. He was a country curate and pioneer naturalist whose classic work on Selborne is still in print.

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# Route

***The Route About 6 miles (3 hours)***  
***For a shorter walk (2 1/2 miles) park in Hawkey and follow the route from 4 to 8. Alternatively Warren Corner to Hawkey and back 1 - 4 and 9 -11 (about 4 miles).***

- 1 Park at the end of the green lane by telephone box off the Petersfield Road north of Stoner Hill near Warren Corner (SU/724277) See (a).
- 2 Cross the Petersfield Road and walk along the lane opposite to Warren Corner. Here, take a right turning (Warren Lane only) along the edge of a wood. Where the road surface ends, take a narrow path ahead and down the hanger. See (b). Proceed down to junction with road. See (c).
- 3 Turn right (Hawkey 1/2 mile) and proceed to Hawkey village, taking great care on the road. This is one of the hollow rocky lanes full of ferns, typical of the area. See (c).

*Hawkey church with its distinctive bell tower was built after Cobbett's time, in 1865 He would have passed by the old Chapel of Ease*

- 4 Enter the village and keep left past the church on your right. Turn left at the T junction for Lower Green. Notice the wooded chalk escarpment of Hawkey Hanger on the skyline to the left and the south slope of Noar Hill ahead.
- 5 Turn right (signposted Empshott and Selborne) and then take a right fork (Hawkey Hurst and Mabbotts) down a small road with a few houses, keep right to Mabbotts and at a sharp left bend take a bridle path (signposted) right up a steep bank, through a gate and continue along edge of field until it meets a road. See (d).

- 6 Turn left and look for a gateway and stile on the left after the 17% road sign. Follow this diagonally to a stile for a view from the top of the upper greensand hanger and (further on) the hummocks of the landslip of 1774. See (e). Retrace steps to the road.
- 7 Turn right, and look for a footpath sign left and follow this to the next road and view of Hawkey church.
- 8 Take the road turning straight ahead (Upper Green) and into Hawkey past The Hawkey Inn, a convenient halfway point for lunch.
- 9 At the Upper Green and church, take a track left (signposted Hangers Way) down to a hollow lane. Look for oblique path on right signposted to Steep and Petersfield, then over a stile ahead waymarked for Hangers Way. Proceed over second stile to field with houses on left and look for signpost. Take the footpath to the right across field with valley: of stream on your left. Climb stile and follow path along woodland edge to stile and bridge over stream. The footpath continues parallel with the stream (now on your right) to Middle Oakshott farm.
- 10 At the road, turn right, then left up a track for Oakshott Hanger and a very steep footpath on the right up the hanger to bridleway on the top, take this left to Hill Farm. Continue on the road from the farm, looking for a bridleway on the right opposite a flint and brick cottage.
- 11 Follow bridleway to road at Warren Corner, then turn left for the Petersfield road and parking place.

# Map

