



# Walk 14

## Witley Village Walk



-  ROADS
-  FOOTPATHS
-  ROUTE OF WALK
-  WOODED AREAS
-  POND AND LAKE

**Map:** OS Explorer maps 145 Guildford & Farnham, 133 Haslemere & Petersfield

**Start:** Car park beyond church on right in Church Lane, Witley - by letter box. Busy during church services and during school drop-off and pick-up times.

**Grid Ref:** SU945396

**Distance:** 2 miles

**Refreshments:** The White Hart, The Star (just off route)  
Care needed walking along roads without pavement and when crossing the A283.

## Directions

Leave the car park by footpath at top right (it is to the left of the footpath sign). The path goes above houses to the right and then downhill through mixed woodland and veers left. Continue until you reach brick steps going down to the right with a metal handrail. Go down the steps and follow the fenced path passing the pond and house at Lower Roke on the left.

*Reference to Roke dates to 1332, with land to the south of Wheeler Street known as Rokeland. Roke Lane was a track leading to Roke Farm on the edge of Witley Common even as late as 1768. The name derives from 'atte Oke', a reference to the river Ock. The pond was at Roke Farm in the 18th century. The steps are probably part of 19th century landscaping work at Great Roke (now Barrow Hills school).*

At the junction with the drive turn right along surfaced track passing the grounds of Barrow Hills school until it meets Roke Lane. Turn right.

*Roke House was renamed Barrow Hills when it was sold just after the Second World War to a Catholic Order, The Josephites, who started a preparatory school for boys there. The Josephites left there in the early 90's. The school is now run by parent trustees. Within its extensive grounds are the remains of a Gertrude Jekyll garden.*

Continue down the road to a staggered crossroad junction. Take care on this section as there is no pavement and traffic can be fast. At the junction continue as straight as possible along Roke Lane as it becomes one way. On the right hand side a footpath comes in beside Tudor Cottage.

*A short distance up this path it passes Chandler Junior School. This was named after the Chandler family who were important local landowners in the 18th century and successively over 79 years held the living at the church. Tudor Cottage is one of a late 16th century pair, both of which have been extended in the 19th & 20th centuries.*

Do not turn up the footpath but continue along Roke Lane to the junction with the A283.

*If you wish to visit The Star turn left here and walk to the next road junction where The Star is on the corner.*

Cross the A283 with care and continue down Mill Lane to Enton Mill.

*You are now in the Witley Conservation Area. Enton Mill dates back at least to the 15th century, but may be one of the three mills mentioned within the Godalming Hundred in the Domesday Book. The oldest remaining part of the site is the miller's cottage to the east built in 1621. The mills along the River Ock were originally used for grinding corn but, with the rise in the woollen industry around Godalming, were used around the 16th century for*

*fulling cloth, reverting to grain milling when the cloth industry declined. Milling ceased in 1899, and when it was converted into a house in 1912, the mill stream was diverted and dammed to form the fishing lake that is now Enton Fisheries.*

Just before the path turns in front of the houses, go right through a kissing gate into the field on the right-hand side of the lake. Follow the path which goes uphill diagonally across the field. In late spring and early summer this field is a lovely wild-flower meadow. Go through another kissing gate, turning right onto a track which goes back out to the A283 noting the view north towards the North Downs. Cross the A283 with care by Lashams and go left along the narrow pavement.

*This is the centre of the Conservation Area. The cluster of houses here are all of historic interest, many dating to the 17th century.*

*Sun Cottages date to about 1600 and were an ale house, the Sun Inn, within living memory.*

*Red Rose cottage derives its name from its original tenure. Thomas Stynt, a weaver of Witley, granted an 800 year lease on this and the neighbouring cottage in 1580 to Thomas Paine of Enton for a yearly rent of one red rose. The lease was passed on until 1904 when the cottage was sold to E.A.Chandler and no trace of the red rose freeholder remained.*

*Summerhill Cottage was partly a former shop, Donkey Door, plying many different trades during living memory of the 20th century. It is a 16th century building with a 17th century cross wing.*

*Hillbrow Cottage and No. 2 Hillbrow was a 17th century house, divided and remodelled in the 19th century.*

*On the east side of the road, behind the high wall, lies The Manor, originally called the Vine House, which was built in the 18th century and was the vicarage for the Chandlers. Until the boundaries were redrawn in 1905, the boundary between Witley and Godalming parishes ran through the grounds of Vine House as Enton was part of Godalming.*

Continue to Church Lane, opposite The White Hart.

*The White Hart is reputed to be one of the oldest licensed establishments in England although the present building dates largely from the 16th century. At the junction of an ancient west-east pilgrim route, it is said to have been a Saxon ale house. The White Hart is the emblem of Richard II who was titular Lord of the Manor of Witley and who came down to enjoy the hunting in Witley Deer Park, although the inn was well established before his reign. A charter to hold a weekly Friday market against the White Hart was granted by Edward I in 1283. The accommodation wing (now no longer used) was built in 1908 in response to requests for accommodation from friends and visitors to the burgeoning artistic community at Wormley, Brook and Sandhills. The inn sign was painted by the engraver*

*Myles Birkett Foster and the original is in the Victoria & Albert Museum.*

*The road beyond the White Hart was opened in 1750 with the extension of the turnpike road system. Prior to that, the track continued a little way, past April and Cobblers Cottages (both dating to 1600) and then veered left towards Hambledon across what is now Witley recreation ground and along the route of footpath 133. The cottage at the bottom of the recreation ground dates to the late 16th century.*

Turn right to go up Church Lane.

*The house on the left hand corner opposite the pub is the old Witley Vicarage for which Gertrude Jekyll designed the garden in 1895. The first Jekyll garden was at 'Hangerfield', about half a mile further up Church lane.*

*On your right are Step Cottage and Church Step Cottage. The present buildings are from the early 16th century but are probably based on an earlier hall house. Step Cottage has the longest history of continuous habitation within the village. William Pyning is recorded as living there in 1381, when he suffered from the imposition of the poll tax, but his family goes back further. During the 16th century, these two cottages formed the parsonage.*

*Opposite the church is the infant school, built in 1836 and one of very few Surrey schools still using the original classrooms (as well as other more modern additions). Before it was opened classes were held in Step Cottage.*

*All Saints Church is of Saxon origin, although most of the present building dates from the 12th century or later. Inside it is noted for its wall paintings, contemporary with its construction. There are also fragments of a rare mediaeval stained glass window depicting fragments of Royal Coats of Arms. A fuller leaflet describing other historical features can be found inside the church.*

*Above the school playground is a wooden hut, now used as the Scout Hut but originally given to the women of Witley by the Canadian Armed Forces at the end of the First World War, as a token of appreciation for their help with the overall war effort. The collection of cottages opposite dates to the 16th century.*

After passing all these interesting buildings, you will find yourself back at your starting point, with the car park on your right.

