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## West Tisted Bramdean Common and the Church in the Wood

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Distance: 7½ km=4½ miles

easy walking

Region: Hampshire

Date written: 14-may-2018

Author: Scupar

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Refreshments: picnic, *Angel Hotel* after the walk

Map: Explorer 132 (Winchester) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

*Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: [feedback@fancyfreewalks.org](mailto:feedback@fancyfreewalks.org)*

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*Woodland, churches, easy field paths, hills, views*

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### In Brief

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This is a gorgeous walk with lovely views, shady woodland and an interesting visit to two churches, one twelfth-century the other unique and hidden in the depths of the forest.



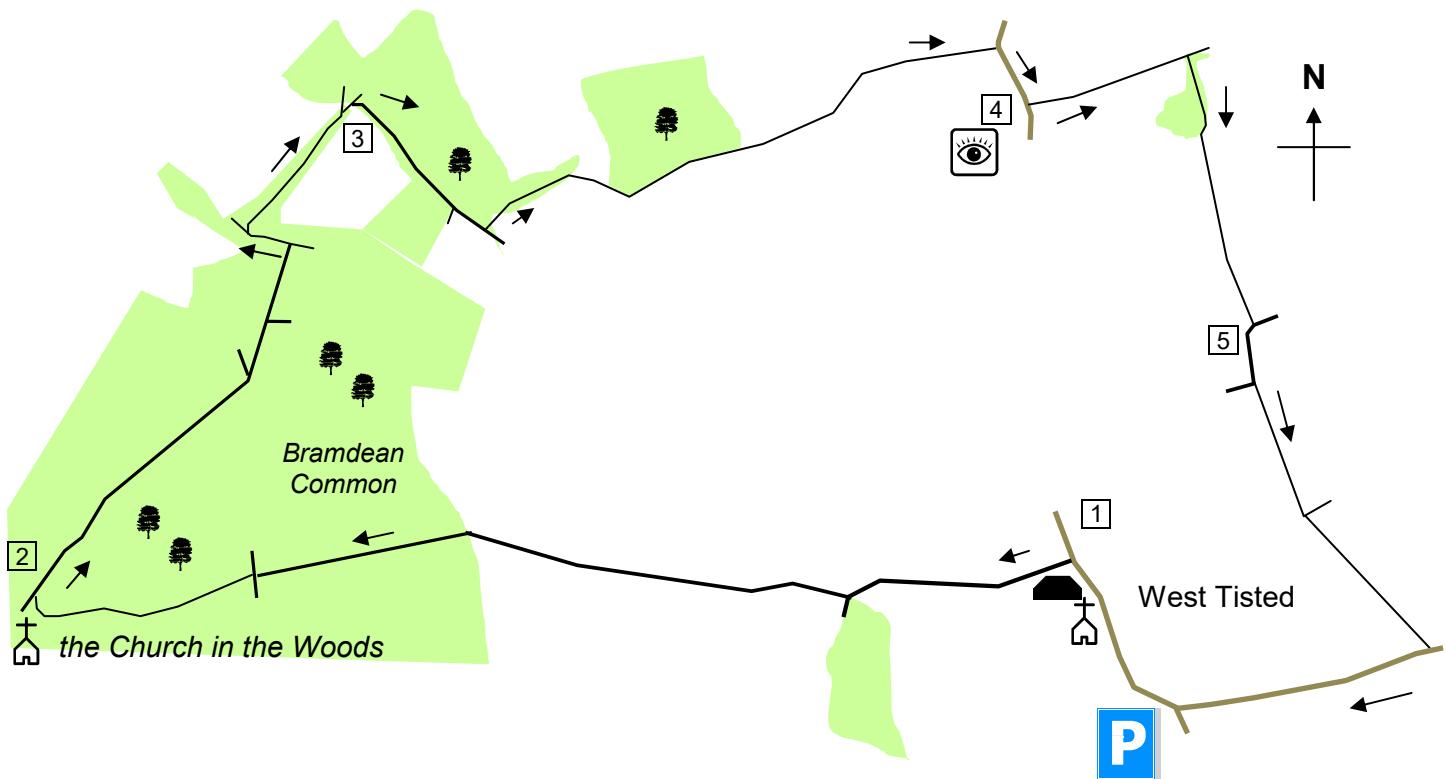
There some nettles on one narrow path making shorts inadvisable. Hiking boots are best for this walk, although in dry conditions you could wear trainers or solid shoes. The undergrowth may be very high on at least one stretch, which could be a hazard for children. There are only three stiles in the last section and they allow a gap for your dog.

The walk begins in the village of **West Tisted**, Hampshire, [www.w3w.co/poems.palm.chaos](http://www.w3w.co/poems.palm.chaos), very approximate postcode **SO24 0HL**. Park by the village hall or on the roadside verge. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

## The Walk

The manor of West Tisted goes back to Anglosaxon times when a charter of 941 from King Edmund granted the “mansea of Ticcestede” to his thegn Aethelgeard. After the arrival of the Normans, it became the property (like most of this part of Hampshire) of the Bishop of Winchester. The village is known as the birthplace of Sir Benjamin Tichborne, ancestor the notorious “Tichborne Claimant” (see the Sussex walk “Rudgwick, the Canal and a Watermill” in this series). Sir Ben had fought with the Royalists in the Civil War and, after being roundly defeated by the Roundheads (see the “Cheriton” walk), he supposedly hid in an oak tree, known as the “Tichborne Oak”, which is about 200 yds from the church. In 1644 a Parliamentarian soldier was accidentally shot in the kitchen of the Manor House. A groom was accused of the misdeed, but rumour had it that Sir Ben himself fired the shot. In recent times, the village is dominated by a huge grain storage and processing plant.

The church of St Mary Magdalene stands in the grounds of the original manor. It is early Norman, with Saxon influences, as witness the thick walls. The west-end window dates from the 1300s. The chancel (at the east side) is a Victorian rebuild, with stained glass by C.E.Kempe. The altar is 17<sup>th</sup>-century oak.



- 1** Continuing in the direction you probably arrived (the A32), walk through West Tisted village, passing houses on both sides. Shortly, you will see a wooden sign pointing left, saying 11<sup>th</sup> century church. **Before or after the walk, do not miss the chance to visit this delightful little village church, which is reached down a narrow path and over a bridge.** Continue till the end of the farm buildings on the left and turn **left** on a tarmac by-way following a yellow marker, leading down the side of the farm buildings. Still on the by-way, go downhill to reach a cottage, St Christophers, on your left. Here the track swings right. Follow it straight ahead ignoring any turn-offs till you reach a metal gate into a wood. This is Bramdean Common. Continue straight ahead through this beautiful wood, ignoring all turn-offs. On reaching a major crossing of paths in 400m by some timber stacks, take the

smaller path straight ahead and continue for 400m [jun 2019: avoiding two large fallen trees] until you see the *Church in the Wood*. As you pass the church on your left, your path veers right to meet a T-junction with a wide path. Your route is **right** on this path, but first you will want to go **left** to have a look at this little church.

*This little iron church was built in 1883 at the instigation of the author of "Country Sermons", the Rev. Alfred Caesar Bishop (he's misspelt on the plaque), so that the charcoal burners and gypsies could attend church. His widow set up an endowment on her death for the maintenance of the church.*



- [2] Having turned **right** on the excellent wide path, continue straight ahead for about 1 km ignoring any turn-offs. In 600m, at a junction of paths, ignore the muddy bridleway that forks left by a blue arrow and keep ahead. The track is now grass. In 100m, in a clearing, ignore another blue arrow that indicates a bridleway on the right. In 150m, you reach a T junction. Turn **left** and continue 80m to a junction of paths with a fingerpost by some wooden railings on your right. Turn **right** at the fingerpost and follow the path between trees and fields and under power lines. In 300m you reach another junction of paths with coloured arrows on a marker post on your right. Here, select the by-way on the **far right**, as indicated by the orange arrow.
- [3] After 300m, as you approach a field on your right, ignore a bridleway on your right but, in another 50m, **leave** the by-way by turning **left** by a fingerpost on a bridleway into a field. Follow the left edge of the field. After the first field, continue similarly beside the next field. At the end, go through a small wooden gate in a hedge and continue between a hedge and a wire fence, with sheep fields on the right, through another small (open) wooden gate, past a house and garden, to reach a tarmac lane. Turn **right** here. *If you heard a whistling sound during your travels, this comes from the Watercress Line a heritage railway in nearby Alresford (see the walk "Alresford and Abbot-stone Wood" in this series).*
- [4] Follow the road uphill until it swings right. **You now have a terrific view back across the country you have covered.** Here there is a fingerpost pointing left to a blue metal gate with a smaller blue gate beside it. Turn **left** through the gate and follow a track across the centre of the field for 300m until you see a footpath on your right. Here fork **right** up a slope towards a large metal gate and keep **right** on a clear, rather overgrown path uphill. Near the top of the hill you pass a deep hollow on your right. *One idea is that the clutter left here may be what remains of the old Meon Valley Railway Line (Alton to near Portsmouth) – maybe a tunnel.* Where the path emerges into a field, keep **left** and continue to the next corner. Turn **right** here on a wide gravel farm track.
- [5] The track immediately bends left and later turns sharp right. Leave it here to continue straight ahead along the right hand side of a field to reach a stile at the next corner. Cross the stile, ignore the yellow arrow which points firmly left and walk straight ahead keeping to the left side of the hedge dividing the fields. Finally go through a kissing-gate to join the road.

Turn **right** on the road. This will lead you into West Tisted again, by the same road you probably drove in on, where the walk began.



For end-of-walk refreshments, the *Angel Hotel* is only 4 minutes away on the A32 and serves very well-priced lunches.

## Getting there

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By car: If coming from the London or M25 direction, follow the A31 from Guildford over the Hogs Back to Farnham. Continue on the A31 towards Winchester. At the second roundabout of the Alton Bypass keep **left** on the A32, signposted *Fareham*. Continue for about 6 miles through Farringdon and East Tisted. Turn **right** at a signpost for *West Tisted* and follow the signs into the village.

The village hall is the first building on your left as you reach the village from the A32. In case the village hall is required for an event, you will be able to park on a verge just after the bend or in the side road on your left. Please keep residents in mind!

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