



Old Oxted

Distance: 5¾ km=3¾ miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

Date written: 13-mar-2015

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Refreshments: Old Oxted, Broadham Green, Tandridge

Map: Explorer 146 (Dorking) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: feedback@fancyfreewalks.org

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Village, pubs, mill, meadows, church

In Brief

This walk is a dream-come-true for lovers of the good old English pub (although fresh air lovers will enjoy it just for the joys of nature). The start-and end-point, Old Oxted Village, rejoices in an unbelievable tally of **four pubs**. Even if you discount the *Wheatsheaf* which is a little further down the High Street and not passed on this walk, there still remain the *Old Bell*, the *George Inn* and the *Crown*. Of these, a little more at the end. The *Haycutter* at Broadham Green has been beautifully refurbished with a marvellous garden and you may need to book (01883-776955).

This walk is designed for the **drier and warmer** half of the year. Some stalwarts will do it in winter (as the author did) but the horse pastures and the bridleway are simply too muddy. Because of the short distance, it would make a good early-evening midsummer stroll.



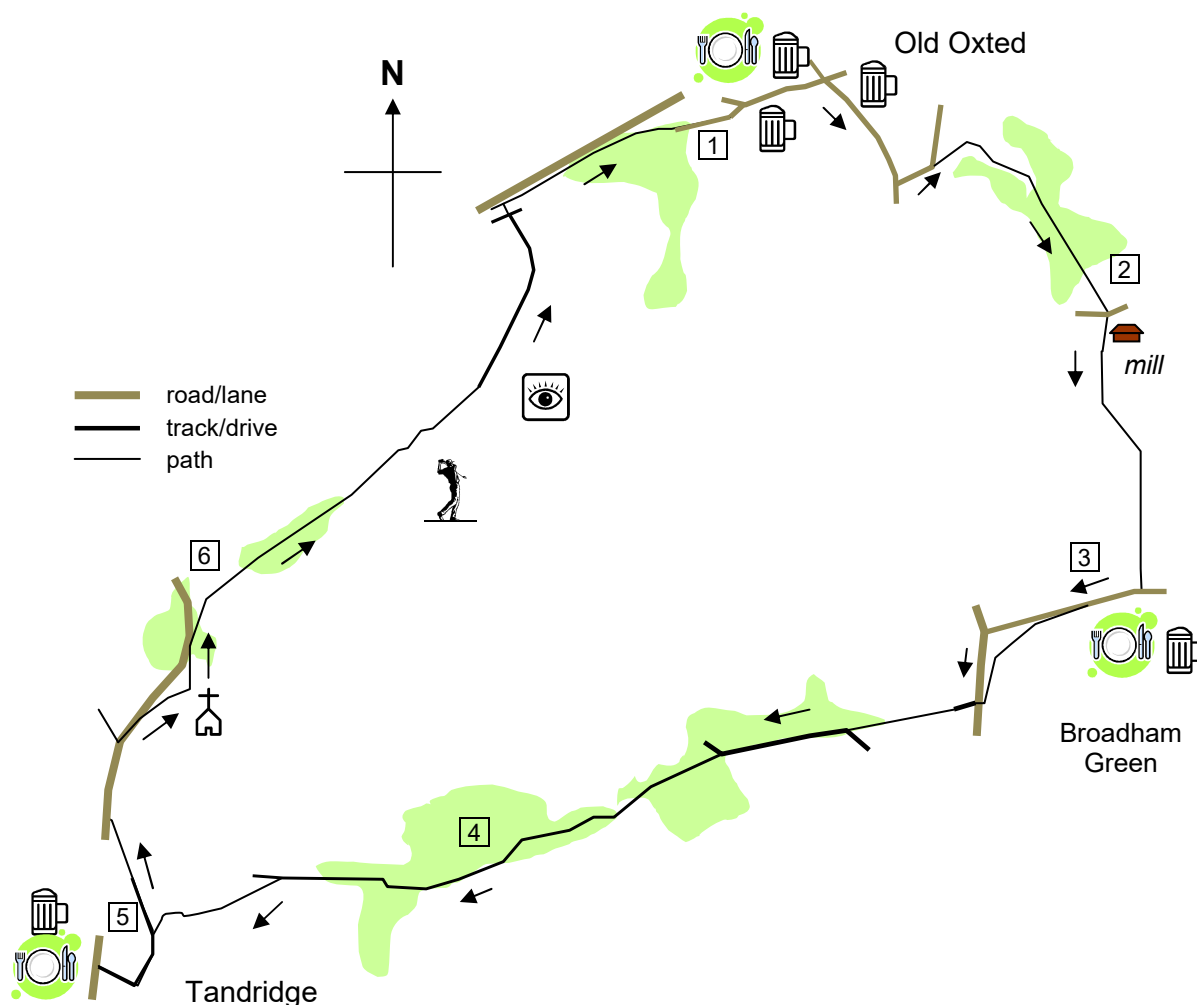
There are no nettles or brambles to speak of on this walk so any attire is fine. Solid trainers or walking shoes should be sufficient but, if you are used to wearing boots, use them. Your dog will be welcome on this walk, with a lead of course.

The walk begins in the village of **Old Oxted**, postcode RH8 9LP, where there is loads of space for parking, especially at the “blind” (western) end of the Godstone Road. If you prefer to place most of the pubs at the centre of the walk, park in Tandridge, **postcode RH8 9NJ**, where there is some roadside parking. You can also access this walk **by rail** from Oxted Station, only half a mile distant. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



The Walk

The name "Oxted" means "place of oaks" (not "ox"). It has always been a large parish and is listed far back in medieval documents. The family of Harold held it until he was slain in 1066, when it passed to Count Eustace of Boulogne. As for "new" Oxted, before the railway came in the late 1800s (too late and in the "wrong" place), it was only fields, apart from the church. Famous residents include businessman Mohamed Al-Fayed, previous owner of Harrods, whose son Dodi died with Princess Diana. He owns Barrow Green Court just north of the village. The property sits atop an oil field (oh dear!) and Al-Fayed applied unsuccessfully for a share in the revenues (which seemed reasonable since the oil company drilled under his property without informing him).



- 1 Walk through the village and turn **right** opposite the *Old Bell* at the cross-roads on Beadles Lane. Just before a housing estate, turn **left** on Springfield and, where the road curves left, leave it to keep straight on on a tarmac footpath. In 15m, filter **right** on a narrow path, passing a donkey pasture on your left. Your path goes through woodland and beside a stream to reach the mill pond and Oxted Mill. *This ancient water mill has been lovingly restored and is now rented out to small businesses.*
- 2 After enjoying the weir, the sluice and the many resident ducks, cross straight over the tarmac lane, with the mill on your left. Follow the shingle drive, zigzagging right-left on a drive and, at the end, go through a modern kissing-gate to cross a pasture. At the other side, go through a modern kissing-gate. [2015-2021: a pool of water here; it was easy to cross using some

wood, hanging on to a branch on your right.] Keep to the left-hand side across the next horse meadow, through another kissing-gate, then along the left-hand side of the next meadow, to arrive at a kissing-gate and a road. *The "Haycutter" is directly opposite. The Haycutter in Broadham Green is an unpretentious local, a delightful stopover if you do not enter with high expectations. This inn advertises pub grub and fine dining. It offers a skittle alley. Beer is Harveys and Doombar. In 2017 the pub was totally refurbished by Brunning and Price (see the Chipstead pub walk) and is proving a great attraction with its comprehensive menu, six real ales and a winsome garden.*



- 3 Turn **right** in front of the inn beside the road, using the generous green verge or bank on the far side. Where the verge widens into a green, turn **left** across the green, crossing a driveway, gradually approaching the main road on your right. When you see a tarmac lane on the other side, cross the main road and turn right at a fingerpost across the green. Keep straight ahead on a dry path between two cottages and hedges. Where you meet a tarmac drive by the pineapple-topped gates of *Oxted Place*, keep straight on. Where the drive bends right, keep straight ahead on a dirt track.

- 4 *Skippy's dodge: if you find this section muddy, you can shortly jump up the bank on your left. Where the wire fence ends, zigzag left-right onto a parallel path which is quite dry, with a bonus of bluebells in late spring; it crosses the heath, over a crossing footpath, and re-joins the main track. You can still avoid mud by keeping left round a tree.* Your bridleway goes



under a small bridge and soon, on your right, there are some farm buildings, starting with a long grey-green barn. Just before the barn, leave the bridleway by turning **left** through an old kissing-gate and take a diagonal path across a large meadow, continuing along the right-hand edge. The path takes you through a modern kissing-gate, down a narrow path. *(If muddy, it's easy to straddle.)* You reach a tarmac drive in Tandridge. Your route is sharp **right** on the drive. However, first you may wish to have a break in the *Barley Mow*. This inn is in just a short distance **left** on the drive, round a corner. You need to retrace your steps afterwards. *The "Barley Mow" is a large country pub, catering partly for the Lingfield racing crowd. Beer is K&B. Food, cooked in the newly-restored kitchen (after a fire) is comforting with a taste of the orient, served till 3 pm.*



- 5 Having turned sharp right on the tarmac drive (or keeping straight on if returning from the pub) follow an ancient narrow path over flagstones past a new house on your right. This path takes you out to the main road. Turn **right** on it using the footway, passing a junction and a little green on your left. After two drives on your right (for *Tandridge Court* and Lodge) take a **right** fork between posts heading for the lichgate of St Peter's Church, and thence into the churchyard to witness the remarkable sight of its huge yew tree. Turn **left** before the corner of the church and follow the path down and back to the road. Turn **right** on the road for only 5m and, at a fingerpost, fork **right** on a footpath.

- 6 Cross straight over a driveway, through a makeshift swing-gate opposite. Your path goes up the steep slope of a sheep pasture. At the top, the path goes through a small kissing-gate and straight on along an avenue of trees crossing Tandridge Golf Club. The last section is across grass, heading for the left-hand side of the white house ahead. Now keep to the tarmac path. Where the hedge of rhododendrons ends, you suddenly have great views on your right across Limpsfield Chart *(see the pub walk there in this series)*. The drive swings left, crossing several fairways (watch out for golf balls!).



Finally you reach a crossing with a wide tarmac drive: keep straight ahead on a tarmac path and turn **right** on a path above the A25 road. This path gradually descends and veers away from the main road to reach a cul-de-sac of the Godstone Road in Old Oxted where the walk began.

*Little need be said regarding end-of-walk refreshments: “spoilt for choice” is the obvious cliché. The Old Bell is a Chef-and-Brewer pub with the usual prescriptive fare, and they do **not** accept muddy boots. (But they are said to be very welcoming with good food and the only pub with a good car park.) The George Inn has a really good menu and four real ales, a good prospect for superior nourishment. Out of the three, however, the Crown Inn may be the best prospect for ramblers since it has a charming beer garden, themed nights and a pleasant rustic atmosphere and seems to be the most walker-friendly. (Walkers report nice lunch and friendly service.)*

Getting there

By car: from the M25, take the A22 (Godstone) exit. Turn **south** as for Oxted and turn **left** at the next roundabout as for Oxted. Old Oxted is signed right in 1½ miles. Turn right towards the “blind” end of Godstone Road where there is oodles of parking.

Tandridge is to the right at a small roundabout.

By bus/train: Oxted station is half a mile from the village, along Station Road West and Church Lane. Bus 410 goes from the station to Old Oxted. Check the timetables.

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