



Shere Village and Little London

Distance: 5½ km=3½ miles or 6½ km=4 miles easy walking

Region: Surrey

Date written: 24-apr-2009

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Refreshments: Shere, Little London

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Map: Explorer 145 (Guildford)

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

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Village, churches, water, parkland

In Brief



This is a glorious walk, full of variety, with a fine village at the start and a good pub at the high point. It also passes close to two of the most interesting and ancient churches in Surrey.



Any sensible shoes could be worn on this walk because the paths are generally firm. Shorts can be worn as there are no nettles or brambles. Your dog is also welcome.

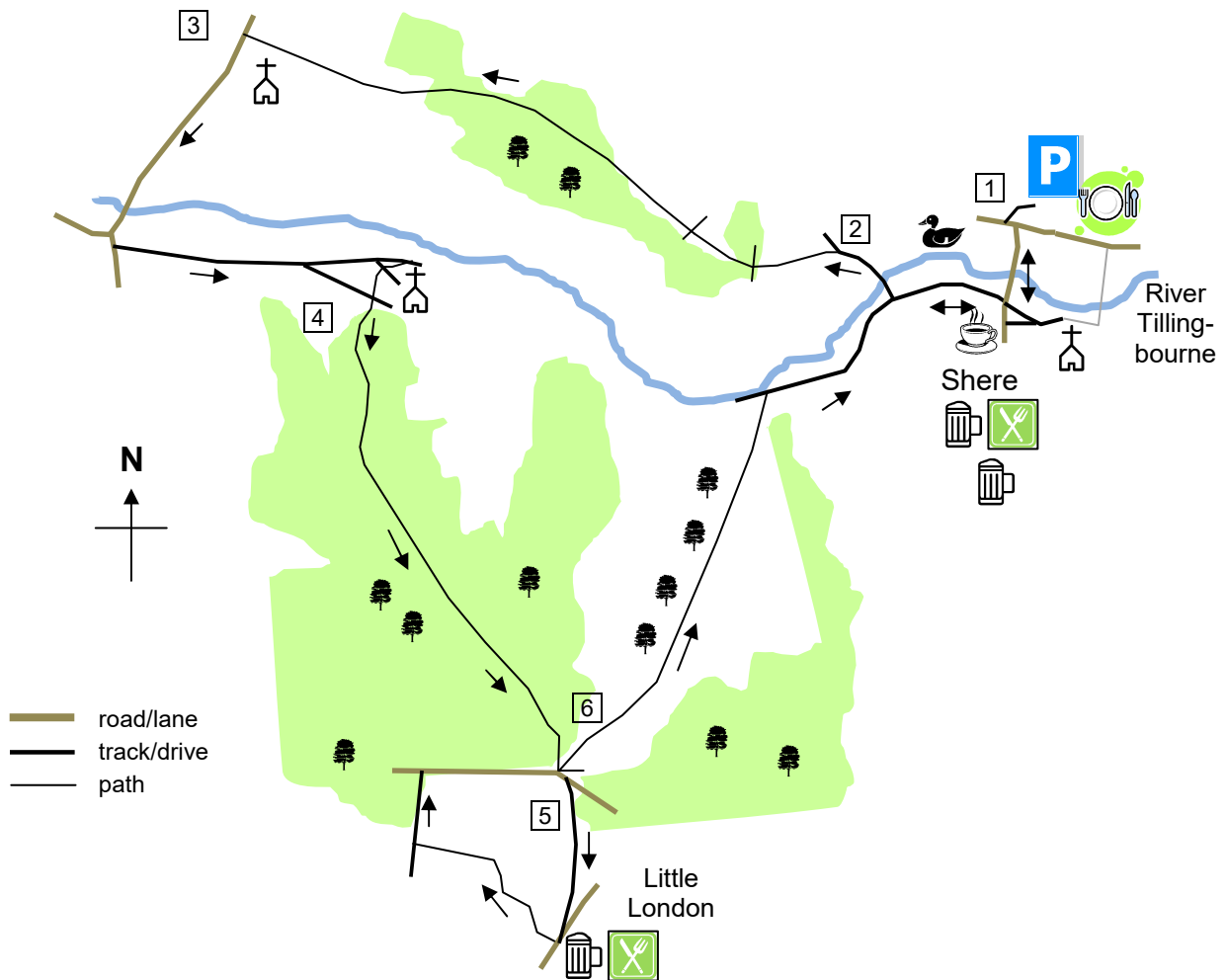


The *William IV* pub is the high point of this walk. It has recently (2017-19) undergone a reorganisation and is fully up-and-running. It now serves food every day. The new owners bake their own bread and even churn their own butter! Your dog is welcome. For enquiries, ring 01483-202685.

The walk begins in the main car park in **Shere Village, Surrey**, off the A25, **postcode GU5 9HE**. The car park often fills up, in which case you can park further down the village by the roadside. (In this case you can take a footpath direct to the church, indicated by a faint line on the map.) You could also begin at Little London, postcode **GU5 9DG**. For more details see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

- See map overleaf.** Coming out of the car park, turn **left** and immediately **right** along Middle Street, going past the shops and teahouses that make Shere so attractive to visitors. At the little green, turn **left** to visit the church which is a must-see. *Shere's ancient church of St James is a delightful essay in all that is best in an English country church: its location, its twelfth-century tower visible from the hills around and its interior with too many features to do justice to here.* After visiting the church, retrace your steps, cross over Middle Street and continue ahead along Lower Street following the Tillingbourne stream with white ducks and probably lots of children and families. Pass the *Old Forge* and other quaint properties, a scarecrow and flowerpot men. At the next junction, go over a ford on the **right** by means of the footbridge.



- 2 In 100m, at a junction of drives, take a narrow footpath diagonally **left** between houses and follow it, between a wall and a bank. It crosses a tarmac drive, goes up through a kissing gate and crosses an open meadow with the garden buildings and orchard of the Albury Estate on your left and fine views of the North Downs on your right. It then runs through a large bluebell wood, with a kissing-gate on each side, and in 350m reaches another open area. A church tower comes into view. *This church was built by Henry Drummond, owner of Albury Manor, who was one of the new “apostles” of the Catholic Apostolic Church. Because of their belief in the second coming of Christ, the unused church is still kept in immaculate condition.* Keeping the church on your left, pass through a wooden swing-gate and go down a track to a road.
- 3 Turn **left** along the road on a sheltered footpath, past the church and over a bridge over the Tillingbourne, continuing until eventually you reach a road junction. Turn **left** here following a sign to Albury Heath. But immediately turn **left** again through a wooden gate of Albury Park (*note the weight in the drainpipe*). Follow the driveway for 300m, and take the **left** fork, following the sign for the church. Shortly after, keep ahead across the grass. (Looking up to your right you will notice a marker post and a wooden gate: this is your route after visiting the church.) You quickly reach the entrance to the ancient church.

Albury Church of St Peter and St Paul was mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086. The Norman tower was built in 1240 and the “new” aisle in 1310. A certain William Oughtred, mathematician, credited with the invention of the sliderule and the “x” multiplication symbol, and tutor to Christopher Wren, was rector here for 50 years. The church stood in the centre of Albury until the gradual forced relocation of the village from 1782 by the estate owners William Clement Finch and Charles Wall. The new owner Henry Drummond (see above) commissioned Augustus Pugin, architect of the current Houses of Parliament, to design the Mortuary Chapel (ahead and to the left as you enter).

Albury Park is a historic country house with grounds laid out by John Evelyn. All the chimneys of the house are of a different design. The grounds are open to the public only during Open House week.

- 4 After visiting the church, go back the way you came, but only about 50m to meet the first dirt track under a copper beech. Turn **left** here up a gentle grassy slope in the direction of a wooden post, crossing the tarmac drive that leads to Albury Park. Go past the post, pointing your way ahead steeply towards a wooden gate leading into woods. Go through this gate on a footpath that leads up through a plantation of rhododendrons and bears left on a wide path. Keep to the path for some distance, following yellow arrows all the way, going over several crossing paths, avoiding any major or minor branch-offs. The ever-changing woodland is sometimes pine and sometimes deciduous. In 700m or so, your path passes through a metal gate by a modern house and continues to the main road at Little London. At the point where you meet the road, take a look here at the three footpath signs. The **middle** sign (at the time of writing, 2017, *still* missing its “finger”) points your way back to Shere. You need to come back to here if you want refreshment first. (There are excellent pubs in Shere too.)

The next section 5 is an extra little optional circuit, very highly recommended, giving you the opportunity for refreshment and a look at Albury Heath. If you prefer to return quickly to Shere, skip to section 6.

- 5 For the pub, take the dusty track on the other side of the road. This reaches another road after 300m and immediately on your **right** is the *William IV*.



The William IV is a lively village local which sometimes does a roast on Sundays in the winter with an open fire in winter. The pub offers Youngs and some excellent Surrey Hills brews. It is open all day Saturday and Sunday. In 2018? the pub was renovated and now serves great food and beer with very friendly staff. They are not worried about muddy boots. The restaurant tables can be reserved. One hint: don't run a tab, but pay at time of ordering for beer or bar food - otherwise you will get hit with a service charge of 10%!

To return in a circular route, go **right** through the back of the pub (note the gentlemen's “stand-up” and “sit-down”) and its car park and out over a stile (or through a large metal gate) to a small meadow veering right to join a track at the other side, via another stile. The track crosses over drives and meets the wide open space of Albury Heath. Turn **right** here on a wide track. On reaching the main road, turn **right** for 200m or so to the three signposts.

- 6 Following the **middle** signpost, through a wooden swing-gate, and walk down a wonderful grass avenue with great chestnut trees standing like guards of honour, with good views ahead to the North Downs and with horses in the fields to your right. This leads all the way down to a swing-

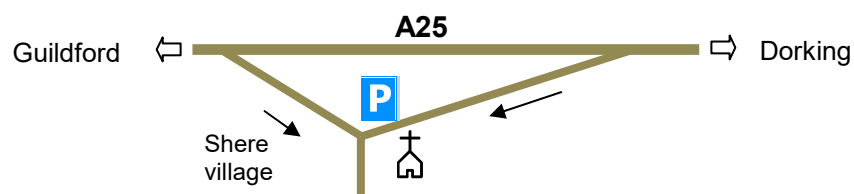


gate at the bottom. Just before a bridge over the Tillingbourne, turn **right** through a swing-gate following the stream. This takes you across a grassy area, through a swing-gate and along a woodland track with the stream always on your left, through a small wooden gate, past the ford and back to the village. Turn **left** to pass the *Shere Deli* and the *Dabbling Duck* (a new café whose menu includes homemade fishcakes and burgers, toasted sandwiches, soups etc. and a range of cakes and pastries, which welcomes walkers, two and four-legged) and the shops and **left** at the T-junction back to the car park where the walk began. “*Kinghams*”, on the **right**, with *al fresco* garden tables is an upmarket restaurant with an ambitious menu.

For another account of this walk with a good photo gallery, see the London Weather site article: <http://www.london-weather.eu/article.406.html>.

Getting there

By car: The starting point is Shere village (postcode **GU5 9HE**). Take the Dorking-Guildford road (A25), and turn off at the first signpost for Shere. Park in the main car park which is signed with a blue **P** symbol near the T-junction at the centre of the village.



By bus: Nos. 22, 25 or 32 from Guildford to Shere village.

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