



Worplesdon Whitmoor and Rickford Commons

Distance: 6½ km=4 miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

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Author: Botafuego

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Refreshments: the *Jolly Farmer*

Map: Explorer 145 (Guildford) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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Heath, woodland

In Brief

This walk is a secret treasure found in the sandy hills near an unsuspecting little town in west Surrey. The commons contain some of the best silver birch forests in Surrey. For refreshments, there is an excellent pub en route.



There are no nettles so any sensible clothing and footwear should be fine. This walk is best in dry conditions. You can certainly do it in winter but you will then need ankle boots because the paths tend to be churned up by horses. (After a *very* wet spell, you may even benefit from Wellingtons.) Your dog will love this walk too.

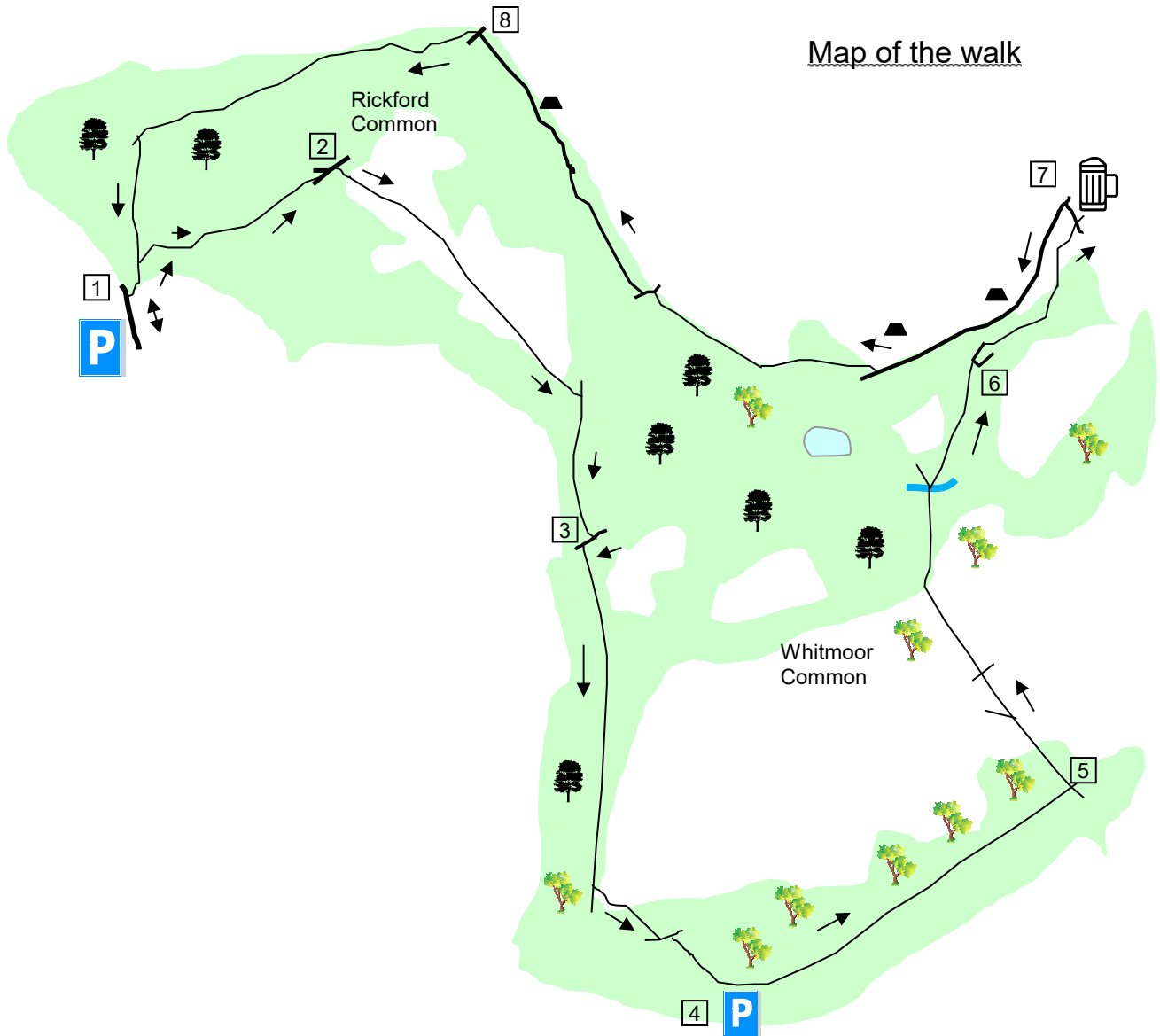


The walk begins in the parking area off the A322 road in Perry Hill near the **Worplesdon Memorial Hall and Sports Ground**, opposite the Asperion Hillside Hotel, **postcode GU3 3RF**. Park at right-angles. There are two other good places to start: one is the car park by the *Jolly Farmer* pub, **postcode GU3 3RN** (start at stage 7) which doubles as a car park for walkers/dog owners so anyone is free to park there. The other is the Whitmoor Common Salt Box Road car park, **postcode GU3 3LH** (start at stage 4), although the pub stop would then come earlier. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

Worplesdon stands on the edge of the Bagshot Beds, a formation of sand roughly 35 million years old, on what was then shallow sea. The sand keeps the terrain clear of agriculture and makes these commons so pleasant to walk, even in winter. There was a manor here. There was also a "Lord Worplesdon" but he is a fictional character from P.G. Wodehouse's Jeeves stories.

Map of the walk



- 1 From the car parking area, facing the road, turn **left** for 50m, cross the road and turn **right** on a track by a small house, a signposted footpath. Avoid the first track forking off right towards houses but, in 40m, opposite a small noticeboard and by a sign for *Perry*, fork **right** on a drive. Just before a wooden entrance gate, turn **right** on a narrow path. Veer **left** with the path where it tunnels through dense holly. In a while, your path gradually meets a road on the right, The Avenue, at a junction with Goose Rye Road. Go straight ahead on the major road.
- 2 Immediately, look out for a new galvanised gate on your right. Turn **right** here, passing a fingerpost, and take the wide grassy path ahead, in preference to the narrow path on the right, into the open moor with the crest of Jordan Hill ahead. Keep to the **right**, keeping to a path that you can see ahead passing to the right of the tree-crowned hill. Near the top, go straight ahead over a crossing path, aiming for a marker post. *It is worth turning around here to take in the view back over Pirbright Common and beyond.* Keep straight on by the post, over a track, past a bench, and continue downhill with birches on your right and into woodland. At a crossing track by a post, turn **right**. Your wide path goes through a wooden barrier by a 1-bar gate, passing a toponymic dark barn, a sign for *Jordan Hill* and an open wooden barrier, and reaches a cinder track. Turn **right** on the track.

3 In 20m, you reach a fingerpost pointing to three local sights. Turn **left**, as for “Salt Box Road”. You will follow this excellent straight path for some distance. It goes over a long bridge and continues beside the stream on your right. Further along the straight path, you reach a more open area with narrow ditches on both sides of the path. From here, you can see (and hear) the main road about 100m ahead. Fork **left** here on a narrow path, going past a metal water trough. Stay on this path as it bends right and left again until you reach a fork in front of a white birch tree. Take the **right** fork to join a wide sandy track. Immediately fork **right** and keep right past the next marker post. Your path runs next to the Salt Box Road car park on your right (an alternative start).

If you are beginning the walk at the **Salt Box Road** car park, first turn **right** on a path just beyond the railing at the back of the car park.

4 Go past a small noticeboard on a path through woodland dense with silver birches. The path goes under wires, passes a bench and goes over a diagonal crossing path. The road on your right now gives way to a green field. Soon you come to a distinct fork in the path. Take the **left** fork. You are immediately joined by a path from the left and are once again in a woodland of birches. After about 300m, you reach a right-angled bend on a track with a bungalow over on your right. Turn **left** at the junction across the open grassed area and find your new path heading north. (As a guide, this is 25m before an electricity pole, 5m from a marker post.)

5 This rather obscure path runs in and out of trees over the grassy space. After 160m, avoid a path branching off to the left and stay on the same path, now a little narrower. In another 50m, you pass a marker post either side and reach a crosspaths. Keep straight ahead through heather and very dense gorse. Soon a wider path joins from your left, with a wooden bench on the right, and immediately a boardwalk takes you across the marshy area. *There are opportunities here to observe the marsh-dwelling wildlife and soon there is a little observation area with railings.* The boardwalk veers right alongside the trees and takes you past a wooden barrier and over a bridge across a stream which has recently been restored with a wattle lining. After the bridge, immediately veer **right** in the direction of the purple and green arrows on a wide path under tall pines. Continue straight ahead through a wooden barrier, running by a garden and house on your right. Go between stumps and straight ahead on a gravel path coming from the house, *Heather Court*.

6 Only 40m from the house, just before where the two strands of the gravel drive merge into one, look for a post on the right with a yellow arrow. Turn **right** here on a narrow footpath. Follow this winding path eventually arriving at a little horse pasture with two birch trees in its centre. Continue straight over, crossing a track to arrive at the *Jolly Farmer* pub. *The “Jolly Farmer” is a Fullers pub but has a number of guest beers. It gets really crowded at weekends, which speaks well of the quality of the food and the pleasant surroundings. The large patio spreads into the garden where there is a barbeque hut. The meat is locally sourced from a butcher in Pirbright. The pub offers a winter warmer menu during the winter months for £8 (see the blackboard).*

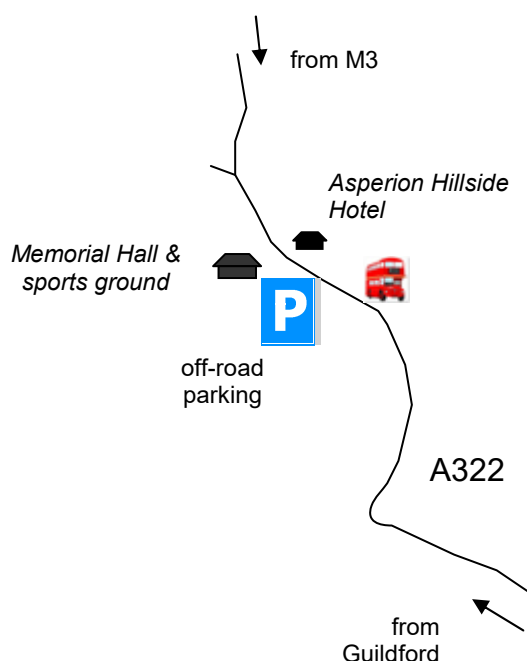
7 After possible refreshments, return the way you came but turn **right** on the track you crossed earlier and immediately **left** on a tarmac drive that runs to the **right** of the little horse pasture. At a fingerpost, keep ahead on the tarmac drive and stay on it for nearly 500m, avoiding all minor paths off and passing on your right several entrances to large properties. After *Whitmoor*

Hatch, at a 3-way fingerpost, fork **right** past a wooden barrier on a path through the woods. The path is a little unclear but it stays close to the houses and gardens on your right. Eventually you join a drive coming from a house on your right. If your navigation was pin-point accurate, you will be next to a post with a yellow and a faded blue arrow where the path continues across the drive. But in practice you will be a little closer to the house and will need to follow the drive for about 20m and turn **right** at a marker post [2017: missing its blue arrow] marked *Whitmoor and Rickford Commons*, back on the path. Continue fairly close to the properties on your right until eventually your rather overgrown path joins a drive coming from *Upper Jordan*. Stay on the drive, going past the imposing *Gooserye* and finally reaching a road. Turn **left** on the road.

- 8 In only 20m, fork **right** on a woodland path identified by a small fingerpost near a noticeboard. Your path crosses a tarmac drive. It then runs under tall pines, followed by thin birches. You pass under wires and go over a drive by a house, followed by another drive and another house. Your path nears a road on your left. 20m before it meets the road, go **left** on a very narrow path and cross the road to a 3-plank bridge by a fingerpost indicating a footpath going slightly uphill into woodland. You soon meet a redbrick house *Perry* on your left. Continue past the house, ignoring a marked footpath on your right. (If you did not start the walk at the A322 road, take a sharp left turn opposite a small noticeboard and by a sign for *Perry*; and pick up the route from stage 1; otherwise continue as stated.) Stay on this track avoiding all turnings off until you pass a small house on your left and immediately reach the main A322 road in *Perry Hill*. Turn **left** and cross the road reaching the parking area where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: the starting point is on the A322 Guildford-Bracknell road. If coming from the A3, come off at Guildford and follow signs for *Worplesdon* or *Bagshot and Pirbright*. After passing the *White Lyon* pub on the right, you will find the parking area ½ km (500 yds) further on the left. If coming from the M3, come off at junction 3 *Lightwater* and follow sign for *Woking* or *Guildford*. After the *Fox Corner* roundabout, the parking area is about 1 km (1000 yds) further on the right.



By bus/train: bus 28 from *Woking Station* to a bus stop next to the starting point.

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