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

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Distance: 7¼ km=4½ miles

easy walking

Region: Hampshire

Date written: 14-may-2018

Author: Scupar

Refreshments: picnic

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. There are only three stiles in the last section and they allow a gap for your dog.

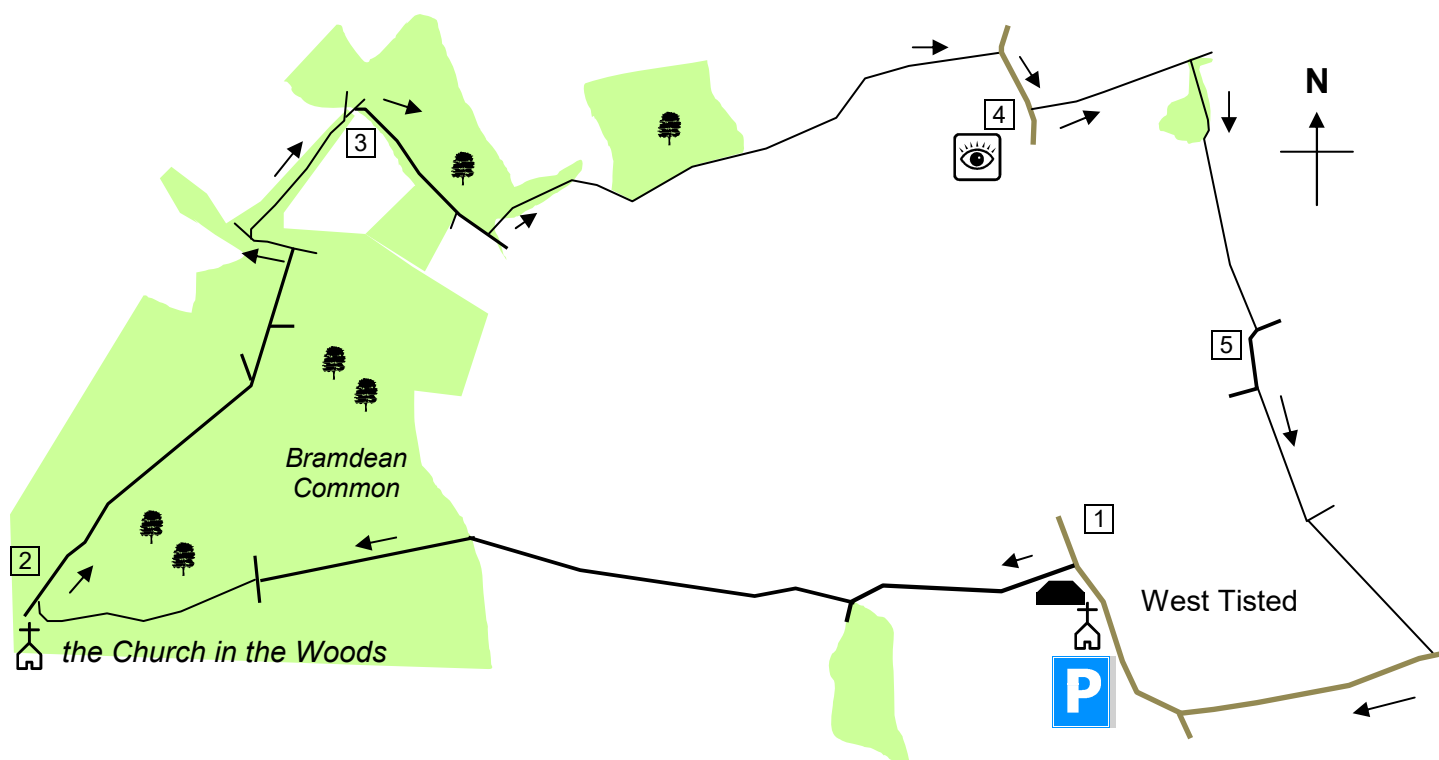
The walk begins in the village of **West Tisted**, Hampshire, postcode **SO24 0HL**. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

## The Walk

Before or after the walk, don't miss the chance to visit the delightful little village church, which is reached down a narrow path and over a bridge, as signed.

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 Parliamentary 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 Exit the makeshift parking area to the road and turn **left**, passing the path to the church (must visit!). Continue till the end of the farm buildings on the left and turn **left** on a tarmac by-way [2018: the fingerpost is broken] 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 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**.
- 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 Abbotstone 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 rather overgrown path uphill with a wire fence on your left. Near the top of the hill you pass a pond on your right. 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 down the right-hand side of the field on your left. Finally cross a stile 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. At the corner by the junction turn **right**, shortly reaching the black barn and the telephone box where the walk started.

## 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.

Parking: on reaching the village from the A32 continue till the road swings right at a junction on the left. Follow the road to the right shortly reaching a black barn and a telephone box (derelict: may disappear in the future). There is a wooden sign here pointing left, saying *twelfth century church*.

In between the barn and the telephone box turn left into a large open area and park on the gravel on the left (not the grass on the right!). The local people assured the author that this was quite OK, adding that this was “not like London and nobody minded”! In any case there is also plenty of roadside parking available.

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