



Walliswood and the Western Woods

Distance: 9 km=6 miles

moderate walking

Region: Surrey, West Sussex

Date written: 16-jun-2025

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Refreshments: Walliswood

Map: Explorer 134 (Horsham) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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Village, long woodland trails, meadows, field edges, church in the woods

In Brief

This walk explores the footpaths to the west of this well-known rambler's patch, calling in at the end for a quick visit to the church-in-the-woods. As you would expect, the start and end point is the endlessly seductive country pub: the *Scarlett Arms* in Walliswood.

Even though there are no gradients, the difficulty is assessed as *moderate*. This is because of some tricky navigation in the woods, the narrow overgrown paths beside the fencing on the edge of fields, two dodgy stiles, and a short but very tricky section after Hoopwick Farm where the path is hidden in the thick overgrowth. For such reasons, this walk may be unsuitable for the over-80s and new-hipsters. The walk is best enjoyed in dry conditions because of the claggy soil in the woods.



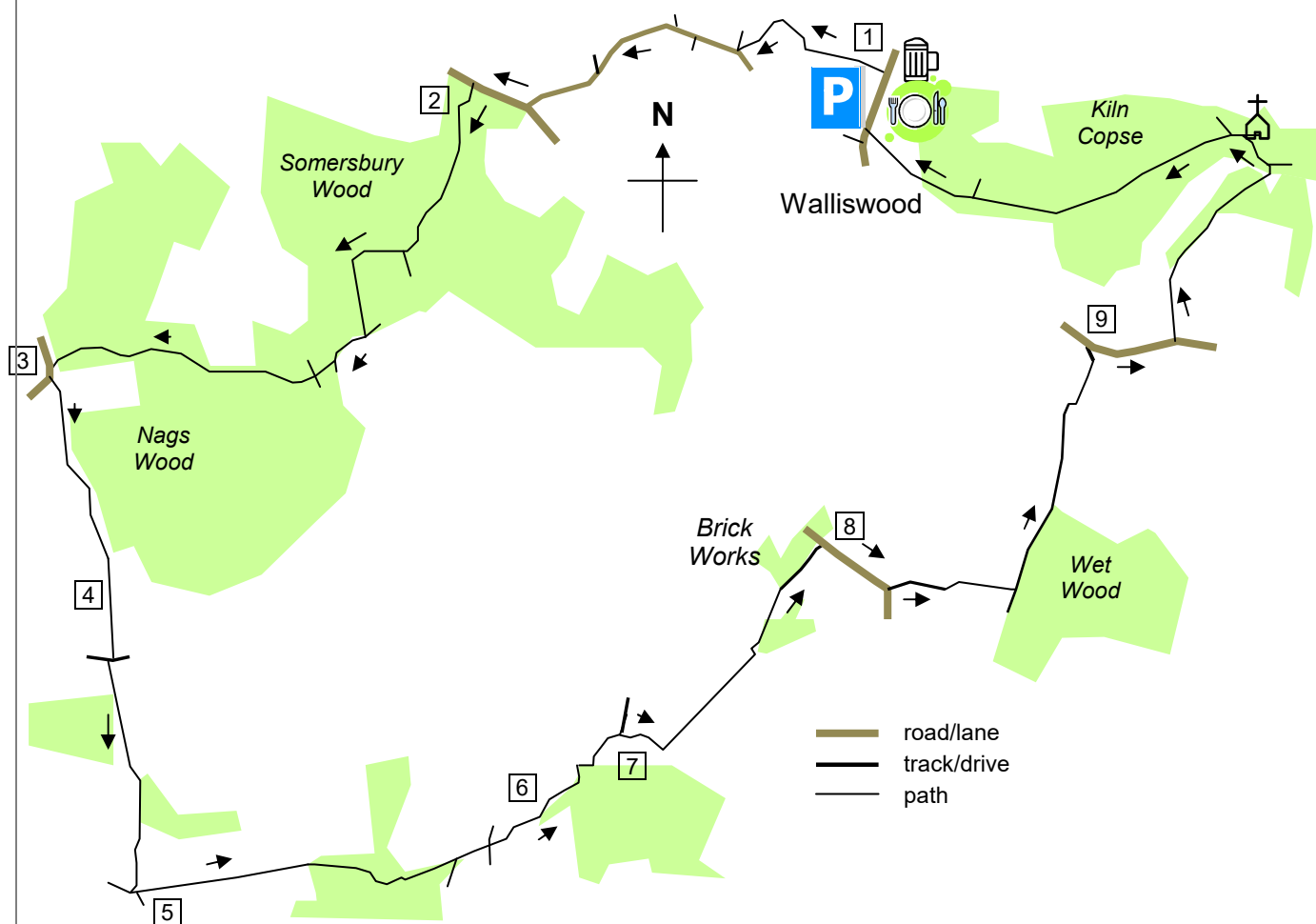
There are some occasional nettles on the paths, so shorts are not advisable. In dry weather, trainers or walking shoes would be adequate, but boots are always preferred. A hiking pole is useful to help swish away the undergrowth. This walk should be fine for your dog, because the few stiles have a gap or a dog gate: he may even act as a guide.



The walk begins at the large car parking space opposite the *Scarlett Arms* in **Walliswood**, Surrey, www.w3w.co/oxidation.glossed.curries, postcode **RH5 5RD**. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



The Walk



- 1 With the *Scarlett Arms* on your right, walk along the road passing the old village well. Just after the well, turn **left** on a tarmac driveway. After you pass buildings on the right, the path goes through a small wooden gate and runs beside a fence. In only 40m you reach a junction with a swing gate ahead and a large oak and small tractor shed. **Ignore** the swing gate and instead turn **right** along an excellent path between two sets of fences. You pass to the right of a manège, with the buildings of Walliswood Farm beyond. The path bends left, emerging outside the gate of the farm. Ignore drives sharp right for *Sawpits* and *Braeside* and turn **right** on a lane, Froggetts Lane. Follow the lane, ignoring all other turnoffs, for 500m or so until it ends at a major road, Horsham Road. Turn **right** along the road.
- 2 In 130m, look **left** for a rather hidden fingerpost. (Pass a weeping willow on the right; your path is immediately after a wider unmarked path on the left.) Follow this narrow bridleway through mixed dense woodland. The path widens due to vehicle tracks and later narrows again. After 400m total, you meet a crosspaths by a marker post with blue arrows. On your right you can glimpse a quarry, on your left is a narrow path. Ignore both and go straight over. In a further 120m, at a marker post, the bridleway turns squarely **left** (*don't miss this turn!*). As you finally come out of the dense woods, turn right on a wide path next to a large cleared area on your left (which is earmarked for a controversial extension to the brickworks). The path crosses a muddy track and runs down into woods. Keep to the main path, taking care not to stray from the winding irregular course, which runs

in a westerly direction (in case you have a compass or the sun to guide you). After 250m in the woods, a large green field comes into view on your right. The path takes you to the right of some woodland debris. Soon you are walking beside a green meadow on your left. Finally you come out, past a white post, to a road, Somersbury Lane.

- 3 Turn **left** on the road for only 15m and go **left** on a wide unsigned footpath. Slip past a large metal gate and keep **right** in front of a large wooden gate onto a wide path into woods, crossing over a trackway. The path runs past some small grassy meadows on your right. It narrows somewhat and becomes more twisty as it goes through a holly wood. The path crosses a track with a large metal gate on your right, crossing a flat bridge and a 2-plank bridge, through a metal kissing-gate and out into a large meadow.
- 4 Keep straight ahead, following a fence on your left. On your left is the historic *Hillhouse Farm*. At the far end, go through a kissing-gate to a driveway. Your route is straight ahead* through another kissing-gate and ahead across the next grassy meadow. (* But, because of the tall summer grass, it is easier to turn **right** on the drive for 10m and **left** through a field gate where you can walk on mown grass.) At the other side, go through a large metal gate or a nettly kissing-gate, cross a cinder drive and walk along a grassy bankside, as directed by a fingerpost. A 2-plank bridge and a kissing-gate lead into a spacious grass meadow, a highlight of this walk. Keep round to the **left** and pick up a concrete track that skirts the woods on your left. At the end, go over an easy stile beside a large metal gate and turn **left** on another concrete track.
- 5 The track runs gently uphill beside a fenced pasture on your left. At the top, go over two stiles - one *rickety, careful!*, the other solid but a bit high). Go straight across the next meadow, a fraction left, to some gates you can see ahead. Here, go through a metal kissing-gate on the **right** and turn **left** on a wide grass path. You are now walking along the left-hand fringe of Pottingfold Copse. A large metal gate, a stream crossing, and a small metal gate (unloop/re-tie the string) into a field. Keep **right** round the edge, close to woodland on your right. About half way along, **ignore** a bridge and signpost on your right and keep straight ahead. Your path crosses a driveway leading to the estate on your left, *Hoopwick Farm*.
- 6 A fraction to your left, you will now find a marker post pointing you on a narrow footpath into the woods. The path suddenly goes down a bank (*care!*) and **right-left** over a 3-plank bridge. You now have a very narrow path that runs beside a tall wire fence on your left - it's perfectly walkable provided of course you go single file! This narrow section lasts for 200m, when thankfully it turns **right** away from the fence and over a 3-plank bridge. In 40m you come to a clearing: fork **left** here. Ahead of you now is a 50m-long very overgrown section with tall reedy vegetation and no clear path - you simply need to keep direction, swishing the undergrowth aside as you go. You come out with some relief to a junction by the edge of a field with a bench seat on which to take a breather.
- 7 Turn **right** at the junction, past a redundant stile, over a 3-plank bridge, with the field on your left. Your path goes over a bridge and turns left on a wide grass strip, with a wire fence on your right and a narrow woodland belt on your left. It ends at a left-right zigzag on a grass path with the woods on your right and a view of the brickworks on your left. It zigzags again and, after some tall grass, merges with a track, and finally comes out, through

the right-hand of a group of wooden gates, to a road (Horsham Road again).

- 8 Turn **right** on the road, passing the entrance to Smokejack Farm. At the top of a gentle rise, just before some houses, turn **left** onto a concrete bridleway, passing a large metal gate. [Leith Hill Tower can be seen to your left](#). Before another large metal gate, go **left** through a small metal rider's gate. Your path runs along the right-hand side of a rough meadow and delivers you to a T-junction on the edge of a wood, with a 3-way fingerpost on the right. Turn **left**. There is a crop field on your left and, after a strip of woodland, a rough meadow. Just before the first outbuilding of a farm (Rose Hill Farm), go **right** and **left** on a woodland path which avoids all the farm buildings. Shortly, fork **right** on a narrower path (better for non-riders). A section of the driveway leads out to a road (Oakwood Hill). [\(In emergency, turning left on this road and right at a T-junction will take you back to Walliswood in 800m, but you would miss the best surprise of this walk.\)](#)
- 9 Turn **right** on the road for 200m. Just before a 30mph sign and a "welcome" sign for Okewood Hill, turn **left** at a fingerpost and go through a small wooden gate, following a footpath that runs just to the **right** of a fence. You pass close to Chapel House farm on your right, then into woods. Keep round to the **left** of a redbrick house, then through a cemetery to reach the Church-in-the-Woods, much visited on these walks.

Okewood church, built about 1220, was once on a major highway near Stane Street but in recent times new roads took the traffic away, making it one of the most isolated churches in the South East. It became a full parish church in 1853. A much more detailed account will be found in the walk "Okewood Hill Pub Walk".



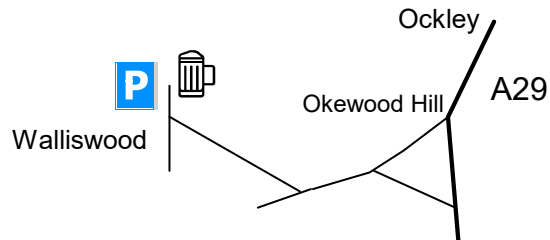
Walk up to the west door and, after a possible visit, take a path made from separate flagstones leading away from the church. Go through a small wooden gate, down steps and across a long bridge. You are on a woodland path in a spectacular stream valley with bridges visible on your right. Keep **left** on the main path through Kiln Copse. Ignore a bridge on your right but go over a bridge straight ahead. You now have nearly 1km of scenic walking back to the village. After 450m the path flexes right-left and you can see a green field on your left. Ignore all paths leading off. Finally there are houses and yards on each side and you emerge between hedges onto the road in Walliswood, with the pub and car park on your right, where the walk began.



The "Scarlett Arms" has been the local inn since the 1600s and offers every detail you would expect from a traditional English pub, including roaring fires, flagstone floors, oak beams, plus a spacious garden on one side where you can enjoy the food and Badger ales. The pub kitchen has regular oriental evenings and the pub conducts special events throughout the year such as a conker challenge. Tracey, the landlady, comes from a long Lincolnshire tradition in innkeeping.

Getting there

By car: the easiest way to Walliswood is through Okewood Hill (or *Oakwoodhill*) which is signposted off the A29 (Bognor Road), just over 1 mile south of Ockley, about 8 miles south of Dorking. At Oakwood Hill, take the **right** fork, as for *Walliswood, Forest Green*. After 1 mile, bear **right** at a junction. The pub is a short distance on your right. Park in the area opposite the pub.



By bus: bus 545 from Guildford and other smaller rail stations. Check the timetables (or ring the pub).

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