Fancy Free Walks

point your feet on a new path

Walliswood and Ockley

Distance: 10 km=6½ miles — easy walking

Region: Surrey — Date written: 9-oct-2022

Author: Fusszweig — Last update: 18-sep-2026

Refreshments: Walliswood, *Gatton Manor*, Ockley

Map: Explorer 134 (Horsham) and 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, nature reserve, green meadows, woodland, easy country tracks, church in the woods

In Brief

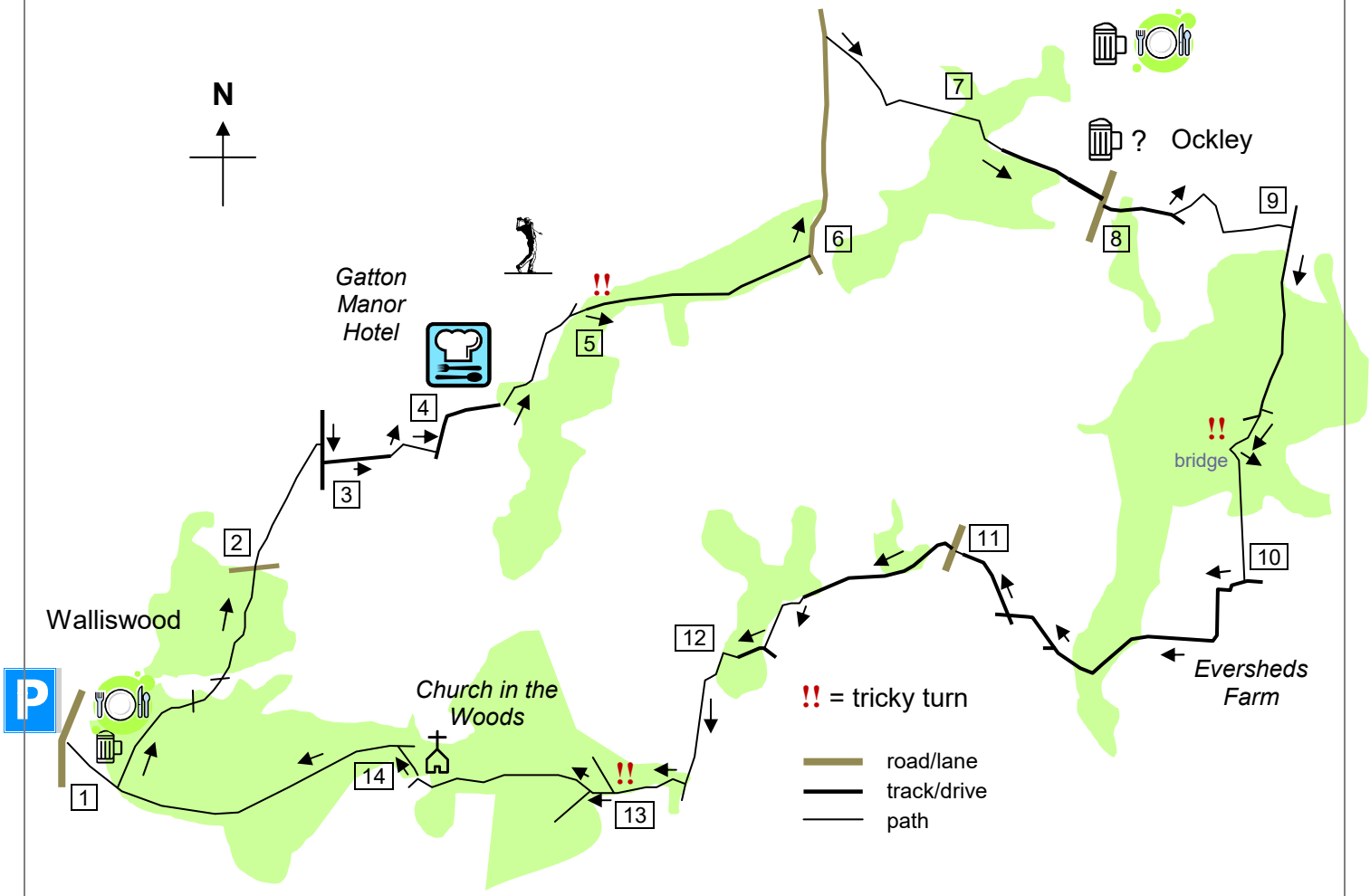
This is a captivating walk which takes you on a kind of voyage of discovery, constantly taking unexpected turns into a new surprising landscape. The route takes you through several forests: the wood after which Walliswood takes its name, the wood just east of Ockley, and Chapel Wood which contains the Church in the Woods, a hidden gem and the subject of other walks in this series.

Refreshments are to be had in Walliswood itself, at the iconic *Scarlett Arms* (ring 01306-627243 for info), at *Gatton Manor* for a slap-up meal and drinks (see below) and In Ockley, at the *Cricketers Arms* (call 01306-627205). (The *Cricketers* may be "quiet" on less popular days and does not always serve food: see their website.)

The route is along good woodland paths, farm tracks or quiet tarmac, with very little undergrowth, so shorts would be wearable. In the October of 2022, any type of walking shoes were adequate but in damper or wintry conditions boots are necessary. There is one broken stile on this walk but the others are well-made and not too high, so your small or medium dog should enjoy the walk.

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

The Walk



1 Starting in the car park opposite the *Scarlett Arms*, walk along the road with the pub on your left for only 20m. Just after the entrance to *Hill View*, go **left** through a new swing-gate on a narrow *footpath into woods. [* May 2023: if temp closed due to burst overflow pipe, walk up Horsham Road with the *Scarlett Arms* on your right, turn **right** on Standon Lane and rejoin the walk at the next section.] After 150m the path elbows a fraction left. In 25m you come to a fingerpost (partly hidden in a holly bush). Turn **left** here onto a wide path under tall beeches (skipping round some tree debris). You pass on your left a manège* and the path becomes twisty and takes you down shallow steps into a gulch. A bridge-with-rails leads to a path between wire fences, with a thatched house on your left. You cross a tarmac drive, followed by a rough driveway, with more cottages peeping out through the woods. Keep straight on now under tall oaks, veering slightly right at a marker post, passing under wires. There are more tall oaks and beeches (one fallen and you have to skirt around it). Keep straight ahead over a hump, down to a tarmac lane. *(*a smart name for a horse exercise area)*

2 Cross straight over to a footpath opposite. At the metal gate you have to keep **right** and **left** through a wooden swing-gate to continue ahead on a grass path with a meadow on your left. *The meadow and little woods here are all part of the Wallis Wood nature reserve, a hidden gem on the Weald Clay.* Go over a stile, or through the large metal gate, and continue on a similar grassy path, encountering another stile or open gate, beside two pastures with friendly sheep and horses. Your path bends right through a wooden swing-gate to meet a wide track.

3 Turn **right** on the track. Immediately *ignore* the first driveway, signed *Gatton Manor Farm* and turn **left** on the *second* straight driveway signed *Benbow Stables*. Go diagonally **left** across a dusty yard and through a large wooden gate into a sand manège *(that word again)*. Cut the corner on the right to go through a small wooden gate and over a stile *(care! broken)*. Keep ahead beside a fence on your right to reach a fingerpost. Turn **left** on a tarmac drive leading to the *Gatton Manor Hotel and Country Club*, a major golf resort.

The Manor House dates back to 1728 and was the original Dower House (a kind of swanky "granny flat") of the Abinger (and Wotton?) Estate. It is now a hotel, famous for golfing, but not exclusive to that. It should be open for drinks or lunch: ring 01306-627555 to enquire.

4 Turn **right** in front of the hotel, ignore a portico on the left and continue on a gravel path through the colourful treegarden of the hotel. Follow the path as it bends left to cross a stone bridge onto one of the golf links. Your route is straight ahead, but the wisest course is to cross the grass diagonally **right** and follow the fringe of trees on your right. At the far side, turn **right** over a wide flat concrete bridge onto a wide gravel track leading towards another golf tee. But (important!) go only 25m to **leave** the track by forking **right** onto a narrow waymarked path into the rhododendrons.

5 Your path takes you past a large wooden gate to reach a wide gravel driveway coming from a house with an ornate metal gate. Keep straight ahead on the driveway (called *New Barn Lane*). In nearly 200m, ignore a fingerpost on your left and keep straight on. You join a tarmac drive coming from a couple of houses on the right. In a short distance there is another fingerpost and its left turn a few metres beyond. **Ignore** these (the "short cut" across the golf course is too awkward). Stay on the driveway for a further 350m, passing *New Barn* and other houses on your right, to end at a tarmac lane (Mole Street).

6 Turn **left** on the lane. Soon you have a nice clear view of Leith Hill tower ahead.

You pass a footpath on the left and the entrance to *Parklands Farm* on your right. After 500m or so on this quiet lane, as you approach a double-gabled house, *Parklands*, turn sharp **right** through a modern kissing-gate into a grassy meadow. Take a faint path diagonally across the grass, heading a little to the left of a large oak (the healthy oak on the right: the other one is ailing). Go through a gap and along the left-hand edge of a large meadow, towards a farmhouse. Turn **left** in front of a shed and keep round to the right, along the right-hand side of a large meadow.

7 Near the end, go through a small improvised wooden gate on a path into woods. Your path goes over a stream and leads up into a field. Immediately fork **right** to stay close to the trees on your right, on a path which becomes a farm track. Go past a large metal gate via a new metal kissing-gate and follow a short residential road, leading out to the main A29 Roman road in Ockley.

Ockley, to your left, has two pubs. The Cricketers is only 200m distant; it is open 7 days a week from 11am to 10:30pm Sun Mon Tue Wed and to 11pm Thur Fri Sat. The Inn on the Green is 700m away. The filling station also serves coffee and snacks. A full account of this interesting village will be found in the "Vann Lake" walk in this series.

8 Cross the road, turn **right** for 20m, and turn **left** on a driveway. A large wooden gate has a small gate on its left to give you access. You pass a large duckpond. Ahead of you is *Ockley Windmill* (more correctly *Elmer's windmill* or *Almer's Mill*), probably still missing its blades and sails. *A full account of the windmill will be found in the "Vann Lake" walk in this series.* Just before the track bends right towards the windmill, go **left** at a fingerpost along the left-hand side of a meadow. Turn **right** in the corner. At the next corner, by a fingerpost, turn **left** to go through a modern kissing-gate set in the hedge. Keep straight ahead on the main path, across the grass, over a dry ditch, arriving at a crossing path and a 4-way fingerpost.

9 Ignoring the stile, turn **right** on the crossing path, along the left-hand side of the meadow. The path leads you through a modern kissing-gate next to a large metal gate, onto a fine straight woodland path. After 400m or so in the woods, your main path meets a junction of minor paths in a clearing and starts to bend right. Care! The next turn is important! Turn **right** with the main path but **immediately leave it** by forking **left** onto a narrow winding path down into the woods. In 100m or so, the path leads you **left**wards over a long bridge-with-rails across a stream. After the bridge, turn **left** and follow a rising path. You may need to skip over some mud here. The path goes under some tall trees and finally leads over a (bypassable) stile and up the right-hand side of a grass meadow towards *Eversheds Farm*.

10 You emerge onto a farm track via a large metal gate. Turn **right** and follow the main track left-right-left past a brick shed. In 120m the track bends right. It curves left and right in woods, going over a stream and leading to a fork. Avoid the left fork which leads to farm buildings and keep straight ahead up a slope. In 150m you reach a crossing of tracks by some silos. Opposite the *first silo*, turn **right** at a blue arrow, through a (usually open) large metal gate, onto a straight track, with another good view of Leith Hill Tower. At the end, a short grassy path leads out to the Roman A29 road again. *Note the old sign just before you reach the road about the dire consequences of not shutting the gate.*

11 Cross straight over the main road onto a bridleway signed *Middle Lodge*. Keep **left** to avoid a private gate and follow this wide woodland drive for 400m. Immediately before a large wooden gate belonging to a white cottage, turn **left** as directed on a narrow path beside a fence with a wooded gulch down on your right. *Along the way, as you pass a bench seat, note the touching garden of colourful "flowers" and "insects".* Go through a small metal gate and across a grassy space to meet a driveway near *Oakwood Mill Farm*. Turn **right** on the driveway, going over a bridge across the Oak Wood Stream, through a large metal gate* and up into a large field. (*If closed, duck under some wooden bars on the right.)

12 Immediately turn **left** along the edge of the field. In the corner, turn **right** and immediately **left** over a 2-plank bridge and a stile. Continue ahead on a grassy path in a lovely sloping meadow, always staying close to a hedge on your right. Within 200m you enter a more densely wooded area. In about 25m you come to a junction of woodland tracks. Turn sharp **right** here on a path which leads up out of the wood into another fine green meadow. The author met a lovely group of shy heifers in the wood who quietly led the way up into the pasture where they usually graze. In the far corner, go over a stile onto a woodland path into *Chapel Copse*. In 50m you reach a marker post with yellow arrows.

13 [2024: care! do not stray; some walkers went wrong here; yellow marker(s) missing.] Turn **left** for only 20m to meet another post with yellow arrows. Ignore the more prominent left turn here and instead go straight ahead on a rather narrow path which will lead you direct to the Church-in-the-Woods. In 40m you are joined by a footpath coming from the left and your path widens. Follow this path gradually uphill, soon passing a meadow visible on your left. A short distance further, you see a cemetery, meet a path from the left and come down to the Church of St John the Baptist (the "Church in the Woods"), Okewood. Cross straight over the drive, passing a stone crucifix and the side of the church.

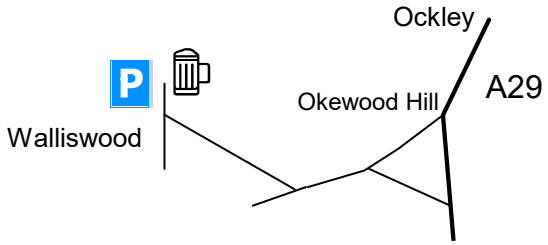
A full interesting history of this precious church will be found in the neighbouring "Okewood Hill Pub Walk".

14 Turn **right** in the corner to reach the west door and *immediately* turn **left** on a path made of "stepping stones". Go through a small wooden gate, down steps and across a long bridge-with-rails on a deep woodland path, reaching a T-junction alongside a stream. Turn **left**, passing a sign for *Kiln Copse*. Cross the wooden bridge-with-rails straight ahead, avoiding the one on your right. This good woodland path runs slightly uphill, with the stream down on your left. It becomes a wide path between wire fences. It zigzags right-left near the corner of a meadow (used as a playing field by the residents of Walliswood). Ignore a junction on your right, familiar from your outward journey. In no time at all, you are back in the village, near the *Scarlett Arms*, where the walk began.

Less than a mile east of Walliswood, just off Standen Lane, is the Hannah Peschar Sculpture Garden, an unexpected gem, consisting of lakes and woodland with a large display of outdoor sculpture by leading artists. Allow time as you can easily spend two hours here. (Compare the Churt Sculpture Garden on the Frensham Little Pond walk). Open April to October, postcode RH5 5QU, modest entrance fee.

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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