

WINDLESHAM WALKS Walk No.7

Start/Parking: Staple Hill Car Park, Chobham Common

Distance: 6.5km, 4 miles approx. Type of walk: Hilly gravel tracks through woods and heathland with fine views from the highest point in the Parish. Long trousers recommended.

Grand Chobham Camp 1853

Come haste away without delay, and merrily on be tramping.

To Chobham Heath, where drums shall beat and see the soldiers camping.

Ten thousand soldiers, horse and foot, and nobles be so grand.

There was never such a sight before in any part of Old England.

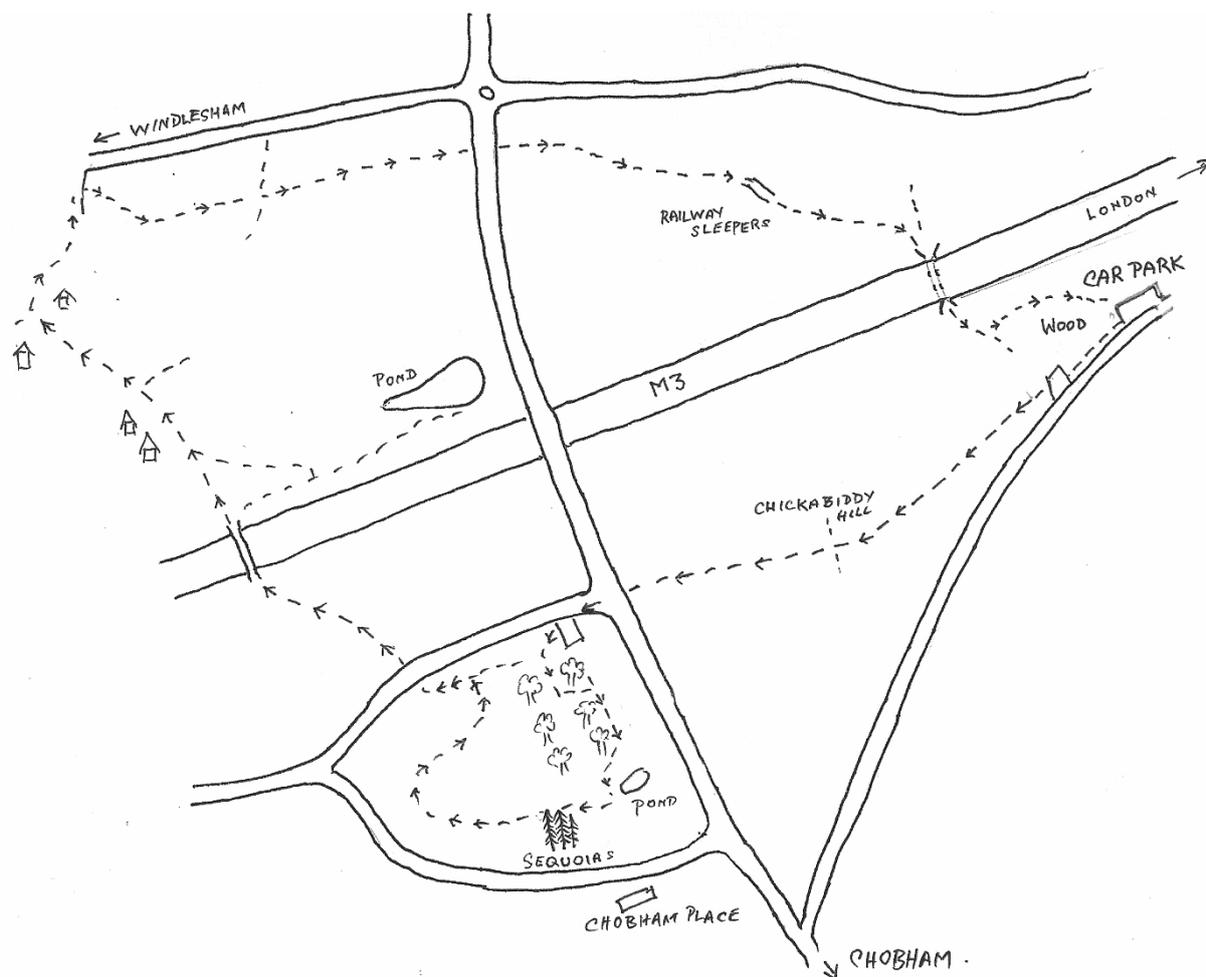
Sweet Bagshot Fan and her flash man, with little Bracknell Betsey, plus Frimley Jane through fields and lane came all the snobs from Chertsey.

There's Odiam Poll, like a little wax doll, plus husband son and daughter with such a lot of pretty girls from Sandhurst and Blackwater.

In pleasant June, such glorious tunes on Chobham Common will cheer us, and every nation throughout the world shall kneel in fear before us.

Britannia's deeds proud France may read, our victory at all times did crown her.

If 'Boney' comes to Chobham camp, we will show him our true English power.



Leave the car park by making your way alongside the adjacent woods following the Staple Hill Road on your left.

This path will lead past Chickabiddy Hill to the beginning of Valley End road on the B383. Cross carefully over the road, continuing down the left hand side to reach the entrance to Chobham Wood's small car park.



At the entrance to your right, can be seen the original gateway to the drive which extends straight through to Chobham Place house. Follow the path for approximately 30 meters, turn left at the first opportunity and observe the memorial commemorating the Grand Chobham Camp. Continue on the path turning right and where the undergrowth thins out, the remains of some large trees can be seen and close by is revealed a large pond.

The pond originally provided water to Chobham Place House. It had gradually become filled in naturally by silt, leaves and other material, so in 1997 it was dredged and some local marginal and subaquatic plants were put in to supplement natural regeneration. The pond is a source of drinking water for local wildlife such as deer, and is home to many mini-beasts such as brightly-coloured dragonflies and damselflies.

Chobham Place is, as it now appears, a fine Georgian house standing on rising ground north of Chobham village. The hall was part of a house of much older date, and the woodwork of the dining-room is late 17th-century. It is said to have been the seat of Mr. Antony Fenrother in Elizabeth's reign. It descended in that family till Sir William, seventh baronet, sold it in 1809. It was finally sold to Sir Denis Le Marchant. His son Sir Henry Denis Le Marchant was until recently the owner.

Chobham Place House was one of the properties that was considered as a residence for the Duchess of York after her divorce from Prince Andrew.

The remains of a grand avenue leading from the Car Park to Chobham Place can still be seen. It is called Queen Ann's Drive consisting of an inner avenue of Beech trees and an outer avenue of Scots Pine which flank the route. The original trees are very old, having been planted in 1702 to mark the ascension of Queen Anne to the throne, so they have been inter-planted with young trees that will

eventually replace them and maintain the avenue. Some of the trees are dead but have been left standing as a habitat for fungi and insects and to provide nesting holes and a valuable source of food for birds such as Woodpeckers and Nuthatches.

Cross from the pond to pick up the path which steers round four sequoia trees (American Redwoods) These magnificent trees, originally from North America and probably planted in the 19th century, provide roosting posts for birds such as the Tawny Owl.



Lefthand Fork just past Sequoia trees

Take the lefthand fork which continues downhill. Follow the path which eventually arrives at a T junction marked by a low-lying bank. You may have observed some forming enclosures on the woodland floor. It is not certain whether these are a result of former woodland management on the estate or the military training that was conducted here during the Crimean War

Make a left turn here and pass through these low lying banks to reveal an exit onto the Valley End Rd. Cross directly and

follow the pathway to the footbridge taking you over the Motorway and onward towards Brick Hill.

You have a choice to go onwards to Brick Hill or turn immediately right to view the serene pond which must be rarely viewed, due to the path becoming a dead end. (Take note on the way to where you can re-join the walk to Brick Hill)



Pond

Brick Hill gets its name from the brick works once located there and consists of perhaps a dozen or so dwellings, some Victorian and no doubt connected to the old brick works.

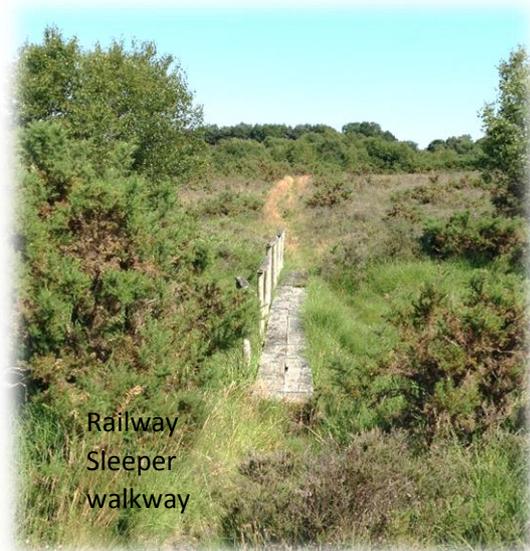


Brick Hill

Make your way through the unmade up roads arriving at the B386 (Chertsey Road). Just before the road a footpath can be found off to the right which uses railway sleepers to cross a drainage ditch.

Proceed through the overgrown footpath which opens out into an unkempt field, across which an unmade-up road crosses from left to right marked by posts. Keeping the footpath post well to your left proceed towards the tree line ahead, where you can discern a break in the foliage. This pathway can become difficult due to overgrown vegetation, but persevere and it eventually becomes easier. Take care to follow the path which is generally in a straight line arriving at the B383. Cross the road taking the footpath almost opposite.

You're now on the final part of the walk. Again you may be challenged by the undergrowth as the path is narrow. Eventually it opens out to a heather covered common which can be seen to your left.



Railway Sleeper walkway

Follow the path as it heads towards the motorway crossing a railway sleeper walkway and arriving at an underpass for horses taking you under the motorway. (Note the steps at each end for remounting)

Come out of the underpass and turn left climbing up towards the treeline where the walk began.



Tree Line