

## Islington u3a Longer Walks Group

|                                |   |                 |          |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------|----------|
| <b>Walk Title</b>              | Oxted   | <b>Walk No.</b> | 577      |
| <b>Area</b>                    | Surrey  | <b>Type</b>     | Circular |
| <b>Date</b>                    | Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2026   |                 |          |
| <b>Distance</b>                | 12 miles (9.5 km)   |                 |          |
| <b>Timing</b>                  | 4 hours 45 minutes walking time + travel + lunch stop. Allow 8 hours in total.<br>Therefore expect to be back in Islington by 5:30 / 6:00pm.  |                 |          |
| <b>Meeting up &amp; travel</b> | <p>There is an hourly service from London Bridge to Oxted, taking 28 minutes. There is also a slightly slower, half-hourly service from Victoria to Oxted, taking 40 minutes.</p> <p>Meet at <b>London Bridge</b> station, at the foot of the stairs to platform 10, by 9:50am to catch the <b>10:07</b> Uckfield train to <b>Oxted</b>, arriving 10:35. (Alternatively, the 9:50am East Grinstead train from Victoria arrives in Oxted at 10:31.) Boundary station Upper Warlingham, £3.70 off-peak same day return with FP and SRC.</p> <p>Trains back leave at xx20 (to London Bridge), xx23 and xx53 (to Victoria).</p>   |                 |          |
| <b>Route</b>                   | <p>Much of this walk is on the wooded Greensand Ridge running parallel to and just south of the North Downs. At various points in the walk there are views across the valley to these downs, contrasting with far-reaching views out to the High Weald from the southern escarpment.</p> <p>The outward route is across the National Trust's <b>Limpsfield Common</b>, the <b>High Chart</b> (some of which is part of the <b>Titsey Estate</b>) and <b>Squerryes Park</b>. This brings you to <b>Westerham</b>, described by Daniel Defoe as a "neat, handsome, well-built market town".</p> <p>The afternoon route starts with an attractive section up the open <b>Darent valley</b> and climbs onto the wooded <b>Crockhamhill Common</b>. The walk crosses over the outward route at Limpsfield Chart, continues through more parts of Limpsfield Common and returns to Oxted via the village of <b>Limpsfield</b>, which has retained many of its historic buildings.</p> |                 |          |
| <b>Lunch</b>                   | <p>There are three coaching inns in <b>Westerham</b>, about 5 miles (9 km) into the walk: the Grasshopper on the Green <a href="http://www.grasshopperonthegreen.pub/menus">www.grasshopperonthegreen.pub/menus</a> (01959 562926), the Kings Arms Hotel (01959-562990), and the George &amp; Dragon (01959-928414), now a Bel &amp; The Dragon inn. There are also several cafés and tearooms in the town. The nearby churchyard provides a suitable picnic area. I propose to book at table at the Grasshopper unless anyone has inside knowledge and recommends otherwise.</p>   |                 |          |
| <b>Dropping out</b>            | <p>There is no station in <b>Westerham</b>, but it is served by several bus routes. The most frequent service is London bus 246, which goes <b>N</b> to Hayes and Bromley. There are three Metrobus services going <b>W</b> to Oxted, the 236 and 594/595 (the 236 goes at 2:20 in term time and 2:40 in school holidays). Go-Coach 1 goes <b>E</b> to Sevenoaks.</p>   |                 |          |

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| <b>Suitability</b>                  | <p>Suitable for any reasonably fit regular walker. There are no particular difficulties. Stinging nettles or brambles might have encroached on paths in places!</p> <p>Comfortable walking shoes/sandals. Check weather forecast for temperature and likelihood of rain and bring or wear, an extra layer accordingly.</p> <p>Members should advise the Walk Leader of their 'ICE' (in case of emergency) if they have any health concerns.</p>  |
| <b>Facilities</b>                   | <p>There are toilets at London Bridge station, on the trains and at the pub in the middle, but not at Oxted station.</p>   |
| <b>Walk source</b>                  | <p>Saturday Walkers Club <a href="http://www.walkingclub.org.uk/walk/oxted-circular">www.walkingclub.org.uk/walk/oxted-circular</a></p>  |
| <b>Map references</b>               | <p>Explorer 147 &amp; (for a small section at the start and finish) 146</p>  |
| <b>Leader &amp; contact details</b> | <p><u>Walk Leader:</u> Sara Hayes<br/> <u>Beforehand</u> e-mail: sarahayes100@gmail.com<br/> <u>On the day</u> mobile: 07791 894442</p>  |
| <b>Interesting facts</b>            | <p>The <b>Greensand Way</b> runs for 175 km from Haslemere in Surrey to Hamstreet in Kent, following the course of a sandstone ridge just to the south of the North Downs.</p> <p><b>St Michael's</b> school closed in 2002 and is now a block of luxury apartments.</p> <p><b>Pains Hill Chapel</b> is a small Independent Evangelical Church dating from the early 19<sup>th</sup>C.</p> <p>A wooden plaque on <b>Pastens Cottage</b> records that it was once the home of <b>Sergey Stepniak</b> (1851-95), a Russian anarchist who left the country after assassinating the head of the secret police in 1878. He knew Edith Nesbit and is thought to be the model for the Russian exile in her book <i>The Railway Children</i>.</p> <p>We cross over the course of the <b>Roman Road</b> from London to Lewes.</p> <p><b>Yalden Spring</b> is said to be the uppermost source of the <b>River Darent</b>. This flows through Otford and Dartford into the River Thames.</p> <p><b>Squerryes Court</b> is an attractive 17<sup>th</sup>C manor house, owned by the Warde family since 1731. It was used as Hartfield in a BBC production of <i>Emma</i>.</p> <p>All three of <b>Westerham's pubs</b> were coaching inns. The George &amp; Dragon took the private carriages and the Grasshopper Inn the public coaches.</p> <p><b>St Mary, Westerham</b> dates from the 14<sup>th</sup>C, but was extensively restored in the mid 19<sup>th</sup>C. Its bell tower contains a medieval spiral staircase, highly unusual in that it turns to the left.</p> <p>Memorials in <b>St Mary's Church</b> and two statues on the Green honour two famous residents, <b>General James Wolfe</b> and <b>Sir Winston Churchill</b>. Wolfe was born in the town and his childhood home, named <b>Quebec House</b> after his famous victory in 1759, is owned by the National Trust.</p> <p>The <b>Memorial</b> on Mariners Hill commemorates the gift of this land to the National Trust in 1904.</p> |

**Tower Wood** is part of the Squerryes estate and according to a Sevenoaks Council document "...has long been used by the public with the consent of the owner".

**Tenchleys Manor** is a 16<sup>th</sup>C house with 19<sup>th</sup>C extensions and alterations.

The source of the **River Eden** is in the Titsey Estate, less than 2 km away on the slopes of the North Downs. It flows through Edenbridge and Hever and joins the River Medway near Penshurst.