

# WINDLESHAM WALKS Walk No.9

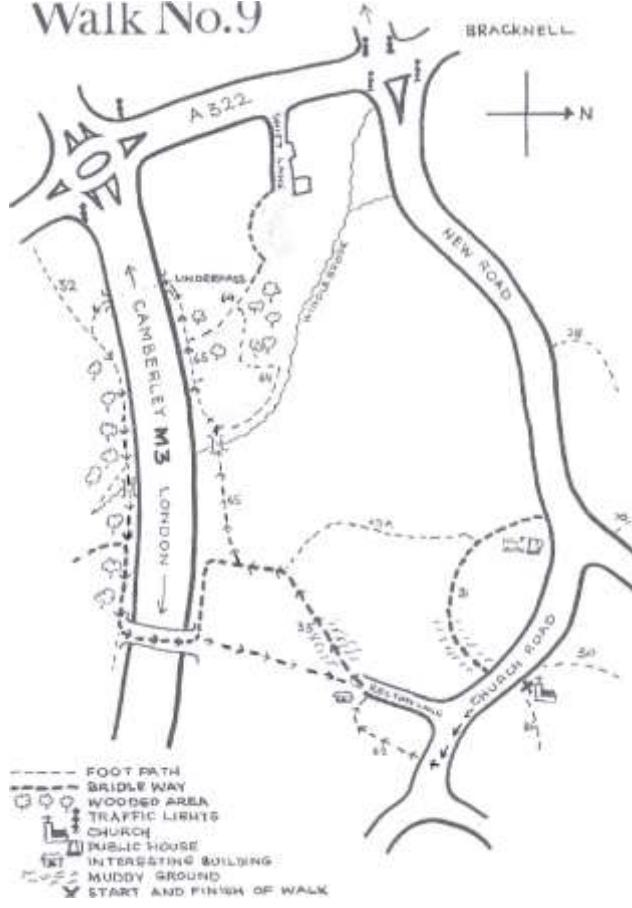
Start/Parking: Windlesham Church

Distance: 3.5km, 2.25 miles approx..

Type of walk: Mostly level, muddy in parts.

The Walk takes you under and over the motorway, and provides a contrast between the abundant wildlife encountered on the paths and bridleways compared to the sterile environment of the motorway often only yards away.

Walk No.9



Starting from Windlesham Church, turn left and walk along Church Road, passed the entrance to Rectory Lane, and continue downhill for 100 yards to a footpath sign (FP68) in the hedge. Cross over and go through the kissing gate .Walk alongside the fence on your left heading for a large barn at the brow of the hill. At the next footpath sign turn right and go through the kissing gate, turning right into a farm track which leads into Rectory Lane.

Turn left along the lane towards a field gate. The last house on the left, now called Kenworthy Cottage was formally Astagehill Farm, dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century reputed to be Windlesham's earliest building. Opposite, the imposing Windlesham Manor stands in lawned grounds.

On reaching the field gate turn right on to the bridleway (BW33), a pleasant grassy path with fields on the left and a hedge containing a diversity of plants on the right. This route, Oldhouse Lane was once the main route between Lightwater and Windlesham. The path passes beneath a sheltering of trees and emerges into open fields.





Passing a stile on the right leading on to FP65A (used in Walk 7), continue along the bridleway heading towards the motorway. At the next fingerpost turn right on to FP65, a cinder

track running parallel with the motorway between fields which often contain cattle or horses.

The track crosses over Windle brook by means of a concrete bridge. On the far side of the gate, head off bearing left towards the motorway.

Here, although the noise of the M3 can be somewhat overpowering, there is compensation in the wilder nature of the walk.

The open fields now give way to overgrown nursery plantations, with trees and shrubs tumbling over each other and the blossoms of comfrey, among other plants, attracting a great variety of butterflies. A treasure trove of wild flowers and grasses can be found and identified in a comparatively short stretch. The going is pleasant and dry underfoot, and the

blackberries here must be some of the best in Surrey.

The footpath suddenly veers away from the motorway, appears to change its mind, and dives under the road by means of a concrete underpass.

Emerging from the underpass, climb a short tarmac slope and continue straight ahead across an open glade, heading for a hedge



marking the end of a house garden. Another fingerpost then points the way, left on to a well trodden path (FP32) which soon runs parallel with the motorway. Look out for roe deer when passing FP64 going off to the right, inhabiting the Windlesham Arboretum (which can be explored in Walk 6) then cross the Windle Brook once more on a concrete bridge. On your right you can see a lake dug to accommodate surface water from the motorway, with some spectacular bulrushes. The path then becomes BW33 which emerges from the right (see walk 6) and climbs gently to eventually arrive at a crossroads of tracks with a bridge over the M3.

Cross the bridge, leading on to open fields with the bridleway turning left. Our way goes straight ahead through the kissing gate (FP68), the path following a farm track with a fence on your right. To your left is a wide vista of open farmland with the Black Hill water tower and the BT mast prominent landmarks.

At the end of the track go through the kissing gate into Rectory Lane and follow the lane back to its junction with Church Road. Turn left passed Birch Hall, with its elegant façade, to return to Windlesham Church.



*Published by the Windlesham Society with the support of Windlesham Parish Council. For further information contact Reg Ward Windlesham Society 01276 473789*