

Whitchurch Walks 2012

1) January 15th Village Round

This is a short walk for short days; it takes about an hour, but has some lovely views, only one ploughed field and is mostly flat.

- Starting at the telephone kiosk, cross the road and turn right. Walk along the pavement until Post Office Lane appears on the left; turn into this and bear left to follow the footpath (46) past the stone-built cottage, right; note the ammonite set in the walls. Cross the stile and continue along the narrow paddock to the KG into the cricket field. Continue in the same direction to the KG in the far hedge ahead. Through this, follow the left hand fence where it turns left and walk along the field edge with fine views of Great Ground, where cattle bound for the London market were rested and grazed before their final journey. Creslow Manor can be seen to the right on the ridge. Pass through the gap in the hedge at the end of this field and bear left (about 10o'clock) across this ploughed field—footpath (43) usually re-instated—until reaching the end of a hedge, with footpath sign. Turn left into the field known as the Butts, (35) where villagers would practice their archery skills. Walk along this, parallel with the hedge until the gate, with stile left, leads onto a short track and the main (A413) road.
- Cross carefully and enter Mount Pleasant, to arrive at a T junction with Oving Road. Again, cross carefully and enter Weir Lane. This leads down to Dunn Mill; cross the stile into the farm track, (7) and, bearing right, cross the stile next to the barn into the field ahead. This is muddy in wet weather! Continue ahead, gradually converging on the left hand hedge and reaching a stile in the hedge ahead, just short of the left field corner. This is also often muddy! Once across the footbridge, turn left (3) to walk along the field edge until a gateway and stile appear left. Cross this onto the track leading to the Gas Storage Plant, right. Go ahead on the left arm of this track, (2) until, opposite the crumbling buildings of the Firs explosive stores, a stile in the left hand fence appears; cross this into the pasture. Bear half right, (1) heading towards the raised footbridge crossing Dunn Mill stream. Across this, and the double stile ahead, head slightly left up the horse grazing field and an intervening stile, to a stile in the hedge ahead.
- Walk up the steeply rising path along the recently planted hedge until, with a footpath sign ahead, turn left (58) at the hedge corner to arrive at a KG. Through this, pass along the left hand edge of 3 further fields and intervening stiles/KGs to emerge into Keinches Lane.

- Cross this track and, ignoring the gate left, cross the stile next to the gate ahead and walk (16) along the right hand margin of this steeply sloping field to a decayed (2012) stile/short track/stile. Walk a short distance round the mound ahead down the left edge of the field, and, where the mound ends, turn right and pass with the back gardens of the High Street, to your right. Cross two further stiles, noting the springs that once supplied these houses with fresh water, and cross the footbridge across the stream leading from Whittle Hole. Once up the bank, a right turn will lead you up the steeply sloping path (21) back to the telephone kiosk.

Key: KG=kissing gate.

Numbers refer to Whitchurch Parish Paths

February 18th 2012

This walk, which takes about 75 minutes, has some hills and views towards Waddesdon Manor as a reward.

- From the telephone kiosk, take the tarmaced steep footpath (21) with the short spur to Whittle Hole on the left. Take the right spur and pass through the gate, then ahead along the right hand hedge/fence to cross the stile/FB/stile onto Castle Mound.
- Bear half right to cross the FB across the Spring of Fair Alice, (57) which supplied Bolbec Castle with fresh water, and continue up the steep (and often muddy) path to emerge through a KG to Castle Lane.
- Turn left towards the junction with Weir Lane, cross and pass through the KG, taking FP29 downhill passing to the right of 2 springs to the double stile next to the gate ahead.
- Climb this steep field to the gate ahead (well chewed by the horses, 2012) and pass through into the field with the new house, right, and wind turbine ahead.
- Continue (34) to cross the double stile to the left of the WT, and walk in the same direction down the steep field, with the promised views of Waddesdon Manor seen to the left. Cross the stile/FB/stile next to the fallen, but still living oak, and turn left (30).
- Follow the left hand hedge until the field gateway is reached. Through this, turn left (30) to walk along the left hand margin of this large field until a signposted gap is reached. Turn left through this (25) to cross a usually ploughed and often muddy field, heading half left towards the top right hand corner.
- Cross the deeply rutted and muddy gateway, and walk along the left hand edge of the following field to cross the stile at the corner.
- Cut across the top corner of the next field, keeping roughly parallel with the left hedge/fence, to cross the double stile and protected wire which appears after a few yards. (25).
- Head half right across this pasture, crossing the track to Scotshill Farm, to the far right corner, where a stile/FB leads to Weir Lane.
- Turn left up Weir Lane, and at the FP sign, right, cross the FB/stile to walk half left (18) to the top right hand corner where 2 stiles lead onto Castle Mound.
- From there,(21), walk down to the stream, crossing the stile/FB stile to retrace your steps up to the telephone kiosk.

Key: Numbers refer to Whitchurch Parish Paths
KG=kissing gate
FB=footbridge