

## Aspects of Weybridge Walk

The walk was an initiative by Weybridge Society to celebrate the Millennium in 2000 and is designed to show the variety of the town.

The main walk (**Red route**) takes approximately 2 hours (4.5 miles), but may be lengthened (or shortened) as desired. It is essentially 'a walk', and many parts are only accessible on foot.

Part of the route goes through residential areas. Please respect the privacy of residents.

Take the opportunity to enjoy the varied flora and fauna on the route, wild flowers and native varieties of trees, many birds both woodland and river dwelling.

It is a walk which has pleasures in every season - some parts could be muddy or slippery when wet, so appropriate footwear is advised, and care should be taken.

### Start Point (**Red route**)

The Churchfields car park in central Weybridge, behind the Library and next to St. James' parish church and the Churchfield Recreation Ground.

*St. James' Church, built in 1848, was designed by J.L.Pearson, the architect of Truro Cathedral.*

**1** Leave car park by vehicle access, and enter Churchfield Recreation Ground through iron gates (**Note A**), cross Recreation Ground to top right corner near children's play area, and exit to footpath. Turn right and then straight ahead at cross paths and walk past the allotments on your right. *(These allotments were given for the use of the poor of Weybridge to grow food, and are owned by the Weybridge Charity).*

**2** Continue into Melrose Road *(passing the entrance to Weybridge Park private estate to the left)*. Go straight ahead, then into Waverley Road to the left. *(These small old cottages were originally workers' dwellings, possibly railway workers, but are now sought after and fashionable homes.)* Walk up the road and to the right *(The old Roman Catholic church is on your left (Note B).)*

**3** You now approach Heath Road (**Note C**). Turn right to pedestrian crossing. Cross Heath Road and walk across the heath along the path diagonally left, into woods. *(Just before woods on your right behind trees are the "Rose Cottages" originally erected in 1785 for use as Weybridge's poorhouse until 1835).* Follow the path ahead through the woods passing the gates to Brooklands College *(once the home of the Locke King family (1862-1936) and now a Further Education college. The Locke Kings were great benefactors in Weybridge in the early part of the 20th Century.)*

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**4** Continuing up through woods bearing slightly right you come to the Hand and Spear Hotel, *(so called because of the Locke King Family Crest, and dating from 1830's.)* Follow road round to left, skirting the car park to steps down to Weybridge station. *(A good starting point to the walk for those coming by train. The railway came to Weybridge in 1838 and marked the start of the transformation of Weybridge from a sleepy village to the busy commuter town of today.)*

**5** Follow the path up the slope to busy road junction - *(Cross with care, taking a moment to look over the railway bridge) (Note D)*. Retrace your steps and join a narrow path parallel to Hanger Hill and close to wire fence with railway on your right (and small wooden building adjacent to bridge). Follow path through woods until it turns left then, quickly right along side of a house and up steps to right into Daneswood Close.

**6** Through Daneswood Close, turn left into Pine Grove and continue until you reach a path on the right through a wall and down steps into New Road. Walk through New Road into Princes Road. Turn left and in a short distance you will see the Cricket Common. Cross road and Common in front of pavilion to far side, up slope through gap in railings and join Queens Road. Turn right and walk along, crossing on the pedestrian crossing, turn left and then sharp right into York Road. Walk the length of York Road to Oatlands Drive. **(Note E)**.

**7** Cross Oatlands Drive and about 25 yards to right is a path between the remains of gate pillars, and beside a small dwelling on the left. Follow the grassy path down into Marlborough Drive, passing St. James' school on your right *(noticing relics of the old Oatlands Palace)* and straight on into Grotto Road. *(This area of Weybridge was built on Oatlands Palace grounds, and relics of the wall remain amongst the more modern properties to your left.)* Follow Grotto Road *(which incidentally got its name from the Grotto which used to be in the grounds to Oatlands Palace)* to its junction with Thames Street.

**8** Turn right and walk towards the River Thames, passing on the left across the road, Portmore Pillars *(gate piers to the long gone 1760's mansion, home of the Earl of Portmore, and notice the commemorative plaque. St Maur's Convent on your right, now St George's Junior School, has provided a seat of learning for girls since 1898 when it was founded)*. The Old Crown public house *(possibly 350 years old with 18thC cladding)* and The Minnow, formerly the Lincoln Arms, are passed before you reach the River Thames at the point where it is joined by the River Wey. *(Here the Thames path downstream (eastwards) links Weybridge with London and beyond to Greenwich. If the ferry is used to cross to Shepperton, the Path upstream (westwards) goes as far as Henley-on Thames.)*

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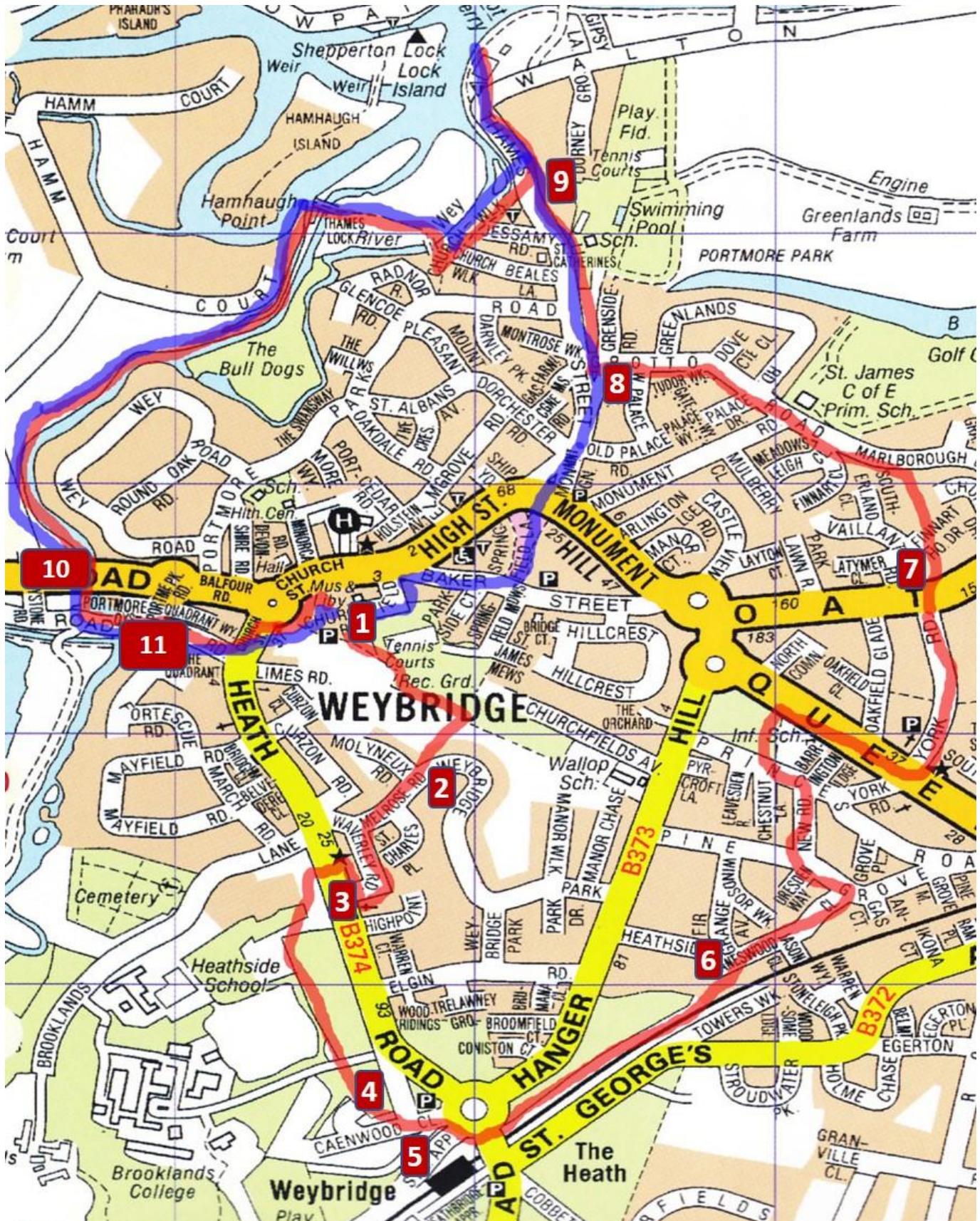
**9** Retrace your steps to the Old Crown (**wheelchair users should see note below**) and turn right down the footpath alongside the public house, Church Walk. (*This is old Weybridge with cottages dating from late 18th/19<sup>th</sup> Centuries.*) Follow the path across Jessamy Road and continue. Turn right at a green lamp-post just past small cottages (*note Public Footpath notice 300yds to River Wey*). Continue over iron footbridge to your right. Follow footpath over road round to left and on to Thames Lock where the River Wey/Wey Navigation Canal (*opened in 1653*) join the Thames. (*Harry Stevens, whose barges could be seen working on the Wey Navigation until the early 1960's, donated the canal to the National Trust in 1964. Some of the bricks from the Tudor Oatlands Palace are said to be incorporated into the lock*). Cross the lock footbridge (look right over footbridge and notice Pound Lock constructed c1820. This lock increases water level to allow boats to pass over the sill into the Thames Lock) and turn left to walk along the towing path. (**Note F**).

**10** Follow the towpath for some distance and under the 'new' brick bridge (1945) over the River near the Town Lock and round in front of 'The Old Boathouse' (*now 7 town houses which are on the site of the old boathouse which in its heyday in the 1930's hired punts, skiffs and other boats to the public. Also notice the 'verticle roller' which was used to guide ropes of horse drawn barges round the bend from the canal lock*). Continue up the foot bridge over the River Bourne onto the Addlestone Road. (*Looking to the right at this point you will see the Wey Navigation Canal, built in 1653, with foot path to Guildford and connection with Basingstoke Canal*). Turn left over the 'old' iron Wey Bridge (**Note G**), and notice the views up and down the River.

**11** Walk ahead into Bridge Road passing the Queen's Head public house (*late 17th Century facade*) to the Quadrant, a conservation area of Weybridge. Turn left into Church Street and in a few yards cross the road, to St. James Church taking the small Church Lane to the right and entering the churchyard by the first gate. Follow the path through the churchyard, round to the left, passing the famous Judas tree (*flowers in Spring*) then onto the Duchess of York's grave on the right (*surrounded by railings surmounted by coronets* (**Note H**)). *No visit to Weybridge would be complete without a visit to the handsome St. James church*). Leave the churchyard walking back into Church Street, turn right and continue to the Library and take the path right just before the building back to the car park, passing the historic Dial Stone on your left.

**Note for wheelchair users:** The walk is suitable for wheelchairs if at point **9** instead of turning right at the Old Crown pubic house, continue straight ahead, retracing your steps along Thames Street and back to Monument Green. Walk straight ahead into the High Street, eventually returning to the Library building and from there to the car park.

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### A shorter walk.... (Blue route approx. 2.75 miles)

Leave car park by the main entrance, passing the Recreation Ground gates and Churchfield Centre on your right (see **Note A**).

At main road, Church Street joining High Street, turn right. Take the right fork into Baker Street. Walk up the street to a path on the left-hand side between two small retail premises. Take this path - Springfield Lane - past the Weybridge Bowling Club (*founded in 1903*), to Monument Green at the foot of Monument Hill.

*Notice the Duchess of York's column (Notes E & H) and the Ship Hotel, an attractive historic building. Cross to the column and proceed ahead into Thames Street, picking up the main walk at its junction with Grotto Road (Point 8,) continue straight ahead.*

Before leaving take the opportunity to visit St. James' Church (1848).

### Notes

**Note A** The magnificent wrought iron gates which adorn the entrance to the Churchfields Recreation Ground were the gift of the Park's donor, Mr. John Lyle of sugar-refining fame. The park opened in 1908. In 1910 the Technical Institute opened. (*Now known as Churchfield House – nursery and pre-school*)

The Institute was constructed by S.J.Love of Sunningdale on land owned by the local authority. It eventually cost the District and County Councils who jointly funded it, £4,840. In 1999 the Weybridge Society secured listed building status for the Institute which protects its future.

**Note B** The old St. Charles Borromeo Roman Catholic Church (*dedicated in 1834*) housed in its vaults the remains of the French King Louis Phillipe and his Queen, and those of some of their court. They lived in Claremont, Esher, and worshipped in this church. Their bodies were returned to France in 1876.

**Note C** At this point walkers may cross the Heath diagonally to the right and enter Brooklands Lane, where the Cemetery dating from 1876 may be viewed.

**Note D** Across the railway bridge is Brooklands Road which passes the well-known St. George's Hill Estate. Now the home of wealthy people, but in 1649 The Diggers set up a commune on the Hill under the leadership of Gerrard Winstanley, to proclaim an early type of communism, claiming that land should be owned by all, not the few. In later years the Hill was, under certain constraints, open to the public who visited the wooded grounds and the

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Swiss Cottage (c1848) for refreshment. From about 1912 Tarrant started building on the Hill, one of the first houses being by the Brooklands Road entrance to St. George's Hill.

About 3/4 mile down Brooklands Road is the old entrance to Brooklands Museum, *The Spirit of Brooklands*, home of Motor Racing, Flying and Cycling. It is well worth a visit (*now accessed via the Mercedes Benz World site*), and allow several hours to do it justice.

Hugh Locke King built the Brooklands Motor Track, the first in England, in 1906/7; racing continued here until 1939, when the Second World War started. The site became an aircraft factory during the war and continued as Vickers, then British Aerospace until the late 1980's.

**Note E** To the right along Oatlands Drive is the Oatlands Park Hotel, one-time country home of the Duke and Duchess of York; in 1915, the building was used as New Zealand Auxiliary Hospital, and eventually becoming, and re-opening as a hotel in 1920. Oatlands village was begun in the early 1850's on Oatlands Park grounds.

**Note F** Notice the stables where the barge horses rested after towing barges from Coxes Lock Mill in New Haw. (*The stables are now a National Trust static exhibition.*) Across the river was the site of Whittet's Mill, which specialised in the extraction of vegetable oils such as linseed, using steam and water power, having originally been erected as a paper mill (c1691). Although not technically in Weybridge, the towpath gives a magnificent view of the River Wey and the houses along the bank – many dating from late 1800's and early 1900's.

**Note G** The Bridge was built in 1865 and was until the 'new' bridge was opened in 1945, the only crossing point. Imagine the consternation of the townsfolk when in 1929 a bus skidded and crashed on it, blocking the road for two hours!

The conservation of the Bridge was one of the Weybridge Society's Millennium Projects (*in addition to this walk*). The Bridge was designed by C.H. Howell, County Surveyor of Surrey, and the cast sections were made at the foundry of Hennet, Spink and Else. Weybridge was named after a bridge across the River Wey, first reference to a bridge here being in 675 AD in a document relating to Chertsey Abbey.

**Note H** The Duchess of York (1767-1820) was a great benefactress of Weybridge and a monument (*the Duchess of York's Column*) was erected by the grateful people of the town. She lived in Weybridge for about 30 years. (*See also Note E.*)

**References** - "A Window on Weybridge", DM & JL Barker.