



Walk 6

Victorian Development Wormley, Sandhills and Enton



Map: OS Explorer 133 – Haslemere & Petersfield

Start: Gurdon's Lane, which is off A283 on the north side of King Edward's School

Grid Ref: SU948386

Distance: 3³/₄ miles

Terrain: Easy. Take care with small children and dogs when crossing the A283.

In October there is a good selection of fungi to be observed on this walk.



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Directions

Park near the far end of Gurdon's Lane. This lane can be congested if there are school matches or pupils being collected. Coaches may need to turn. Please park with consideration for other users.

King Edward's School was founded in 1553 as Bridewell Royal Hospital, to take destitute children off the streets of London and teach them a trade. It has since become a co-educational day and boarding school, moving to Witley in 1867 and retaining strong links with its charitable heritage and the City of London.

From the far end of Gurdon's Lane take the wide sandy path straight ahead. Ignore the crossing path by the school cricket ground and continue on the path through woods to reach a metalled drive by a house, Carrick Sands. Continue straight on to Brook Road, opposite the house Pinewood Hill.

This is the heart of the area developed towards the end of the 19th century by the Victorian artistic community, seeking quiet country houses away from London.

Turn right along road and fork left downhill by Sandhills Common.

The illustrator and playwright, W. Graham Robertson, gave this common to the National Trust in 1935.

At the bottom of the hill, turn sharp left onto a footpath, the Greensand Way, by the house Redlands.

Brook Cricket Club used the grounds of this house for many years until Lord Pirrie gave the land in Brook where the Pirrie Hall and cricket green are now.

There is evidence of an old boundary hedge and ditch on the right hand side of the footpath, as shown by the chestnut coppicing. Next to Pinewood Lodge on the left is a large brick and timber building, now in disrepair. This was once the squash courts for Pinewood, home originally of the marine artist, John Hook R.A. The squash courts are long disused, but bats have taken it over, so it is a protected roost. The woodland on the right containing indigenous oak and other species is secondary Ancient Woodland and is also protected.

When you reach a metalled path continue ahead continue ahead soon crossing a footbridge over the railway.

Pass the station car park on the right and follow the footpath ahead to the road. Cross the road and turn right to reach a footpath, known locally as 'The Squeeze', on the left by a bus stop.

Look out for brick pillars and iron gates on the left hand side about half way along this footpath. This is the old carriage entrance into 'The Hill', Myles Birkett Foster's house. The house fronted Petworth Road, but this was a quicker route to the station – the Squeeze was wider then. 'The Hill' was demolished in the 1950's.

The path emerges on to Petworth Road. Turn left and shortly cross the road to Wormley Lane.

The house on the corner of this junction, 'Wood End' built in 1897, is an early Lutyens house. Note the massive multiple chimney stack on the offset plinth on this corner site. A similar house can be found in the village of Shere, just off the A25. Some dry stonewalls and flowerbeds from the original Gertrude Jekyll garden remain.

Continue along the lane for about 150 yards and watch carefully for a footpath going sharp left. (See below for alternative route from this point.) This path takes you almost back to the Petworth Road, joining a metalled drive shortly before it reaches the main road. Turn right onto this BW and continue up Stonepit Hill to a gate. (There is a small sign on the gate which says 'Caution : Dogs running free'.) The BW passes through the garden in front of the house: please ensure that all gates are closed behind you.

From the top of the hill there is a good view to the left across to Enton Hall, built in 1880 and now converted into luxury apartments.

After leaving the property, take the narrow path facing you that descends as a sandy track. Ignore barred paths left and right. At the bottom of the hill, at a junction of paths in front of the timbered 'Moor Cottage', take the first footpath to the left, which is sharp left.

(Alternative route for those concerned about the possibility of encountering dogs at Stonepit Hill: Continue until the road bends sharp right and here take the BW/ Greensand Way on the left. This leads to the junction of paths at 'Moor Cottage'. Turn left and after only 10 metres take the right fork.)

Go through the wood to reach Busses Cottage on the left. Follow the vehicle track round to the left and continue out to the road beside Sweetwater Pond. Turn left along the road and just past the pond turn left again through a metal kissing gate on to another footpath.

This large ornamental pond is shown on 18th century maps.

The path becomes fenced on both sides and, where the fences diverge, fork right through the wood to reach, and cross, a stile by a garden with a paling fence. At the vehicle track parallel to the railway, turn left to Petworth Road. Turn right and go along the road, past the main building of King Edward's School.

The architect was Sidney Smirke who with his brother designed many London Clubs including the Carlton, and parts of the British Museum.

The next turning on the left returns to the start in Gurdon's Lane.

