

Islington U3A Longer Walks Group

Walk Title	Holmwood to Gomshall	Walk No.	383
Area	Surrey	Type	Linear
Date	12 October 2022		
Distance	10.1ml/16.2 km, 1280ft/390m ascent and 1490ft/450m of descent.		
Timing	4.5 hours walking time. Allow min 8.5 hours in total.		
Meeting up & travel	<p>Meet at Victoria Station 9.25am near platform entrance. Train departs 9.41 (Southern to Horsham) Arr. 10.47 Return Gomshall hourly to Waterloo change Guildford(7m); Dep. at 16.26-17.29, 17.24 takes 1 hr; or hourly to Blackfriars at 16.28-17.36, 17.24-18.22 change at Redhill (6min). BUY RETURN Surbiton (or zone 6) to Gomshall at £5.25</p>		
Route	<p>Much of this lovely walk is through National Trust land, the broadleaf woods and heathland of Coldharbour and Abinger Common. This walk is enjoyable at all times of year, but particularly in late October and early November: leaf colour in the woods can be spectacular.</p> <p>The walk is largely easy going, steadily but not very steeply going up on sandy ways and bridleways. The views are magnificent. After periods of prolonged rain some of the bridleways in the woods can be churned up and muddy, the bridleways being well used by horse riders.</p>		
Lunch	<p>Lunch is at 2.00pm at the pub Wotton Hatch, Guildford Road, Dorking, Surrey RH5 6QQ (01306-887694) 11.5 km into the walk which is late, I am aware, but the original pub on this walk in Friday Street has now been permanently closed. Please bring a snack for a short food & drink stop halfway the morning. The station is just over 60 min after lunch.</p>		
Dropping out	<p>There is an hourly bus, no 32, from Wotton Hatch (opposite lunch pub) at xx.02 going to Redhill and another one at xx.12 going to Guildford. Please check day before if you plan to take this option.</p>		
Suitability	<p>Suitable for a fit, regular walker. It is a steady climb up through woodlands to the heathland but otherwise no particular difficulties. Description see above.</p> <p>Comfortable waterproof walking shoes/ boots. Waterproof jacket. Check weather forecast for temperature and likelihood of rain. Wear, or carry, an extra layer.</p>		
Facilities	<p>There are toilets on the train & at the pub in the middle; plenty of greenery in between and after for discreet comfort stops.</p>		
Walk source	<p>SWC walk 42 adapted for members of the Longer Walk Group of iU3A avoiding steep, and possibly slippery, climb up Leith Hill.</p>		
Map	<p>OS Explorer mostly 146 (very little on 145) or OS Landranger 187</p>		
Leader & contact	<p><u>Walk Leader: Pia Rainey</u> Mobile phone: 07775 782 860 (leave text if necessary)</p>		
Interesting facts	<p>The Church of St John the Evangelist, near Wotton (open Sunday only) on our path after lunch is of Saxon origin. It contains the tomb of John Evelyn, the essayist (author of, among other</p>		

works, Fumifugium, or the Inconvenience of the Air and Smoke of London Dissipated) who was born at Wotton House in 1620.

The monument to Samuel Wilberforce in Abinger Roughts marks the spot where this Victorian bishop fell from his horse and died in 1873. Known as 'Soapy Sam', he vigorously opposed Darwin's new theory of evolution, most notably in a famous debate with Thomas Huxley in 1860. Hearing of his death, Huxley is said to have waspishly remarked that 'Wilberforce's brains had at last come into contact with reality, and the result had been fatal'.

Abinger Hammer village is named after the Hammer Pond, which enabled the working of the iron industry furnaces here from Tudor times. The commemorative iron master's clock (seen on this walk) has Jack the Smith striking the hours. John Evelyn inveighed against the widespread felling of trees as fuel for iron works. In Sylva, first published in 1664, he suggested exploiting the developing world instead: ' 'Twere better to purchase all our iron out of America, than thus to exhaust our woods at home.'

Gomshall Mill is mentioned in the Domesday Book, but the present mill dates from the seventeenth century. The Tilling Bourne stream (which springs out of the north slope of Leigh Hill) passes directly under the mill.

