

GRAYSHOTT BOUNDARY WALKS

Circular Walks Around Grayshott and its Surroundings

1: Kingswood and Stoney Bottom



Introduction

Grayshott Boundary Walks is a set of 5 routes intended to help you explore the parish of Grayshott. Numbers 1 to 4 take in the village centre and the rural outskirts, each designed to follow a portion of the parish boundary. If you do them all then you will cover almost the entire boundary. Each walk is about 3½ miles, and should take about 90 minutes at a gentle stroll. The walks interlink and can be joined to make a longer expedition. Each begins and ends at the same place, although you can join them at any point. Walk 5 is a shorter circuit of the village centre, all on pavements and level, accessible for those less mobile.

Walk 1; Kingswood and Stoney Bottom, from the Village Hall

Walk 2; The medieval hamlet, from Waggoners Wells

Walk 3; Flat Wood and The Southwater, from Applegarth Meadow

Walk 4; The Hanger and Whitmore, from the Playing Fields

The going is mixed, always on public footpaths, open access space, bridleways or pavements, but varying from smooth tarmac to steep slopes, with the



possibility of mud and slipperiness at any time of year. There are no toilet or refreshment facilities away from the village centre. This walk is the easiest, with just a few tricky bits in Stoney Bottom. A route map is given on the centre pages. Ordnance Survey Explore 133 may also be useful.

Please follow the countryside code:

- Follow the Rights of Way.
- Leave gates and property as you find them.
- Respect the peace and privacy of others.
- Leave no litter.
- Park safely and considerately.
- Keep dogs under effective control; bag & bin it.



1. Start and Finish; Grayshott Village Hall

Please note that the car park is for Hall users only. There are free car parks in the village centre, the nearest being in Glen Road.

The Village Hall was opened in 1902, after the existing social venue, The Institute – an ‘iron room’ in Stoney Bottom – became inadequate for the village’s growing population. It was soon in use for gym classes, horticulture clubs, music practice, dancing, the Choral Society, technical instruction, flower shows and varied lectures; and so it has continued.

In 1906 the Small Hall next door was added to cope with overspill. In the same year, Grayshott Fire Brigade was formed, their wooden station being in front of the Small Hall. Subsequently one fireman in uniform was to be admitted free of charge to any public entertainment at the Hall. During the First World War the Hall was used for billeting soldiers, commemorated by the plaque over the doors. During the Second, the Small Hall was used by the Home Guard as a drill room.

Nowadays it’s run as a charity-registered trust and remains at the heart of village life and society.

Head for the far side of the car park and take the gate through to Boundary Road.

Here are some teasers to work on as you walk. You’ll find some clues in this leaflet but not all the answers – they are in the landscape.

- Can you find three dragons?
- How many bears in the wood?
- Can you find three kings? Two of them should be easy, the third will require a lot of luck and a lake.

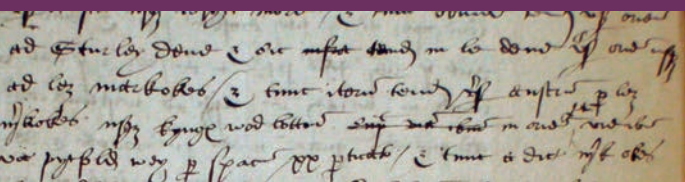
2. Boundary Road

Turn right and walk along the bridleway, Boundary Road.

The track itself was established in the late 19th century and it follows a very ancient feature – its eastern edge marks the border between the villages of Grayshott and Hindhead, the counties of Hampshire and Surrey, the medieval manors of Bishop's Sutton and Farnham, and at one time the Saxon Kingdoms of Wessex and Mercia. Its course was first recorded in a charter of the year 965, running from 'Pitfaldes gate swa to Wulfredes beame'. Pitfold is straight ahead of you, about half a mile, and Wulfredes beame directly behind, down in Whitmore behind Hurstmere. In this context a beame was most likely a post or a gallows.

A record of the Bounds of Alice Holt and Woolmer Forest from around 1200 gives us more details. The spot of Wulfredes beame had become la Wolpet – The Wolfpit – perhaps appropriate given that the bottom runs up to the Wolf Horan (Wolf Ridge) of Hindhead. The name Woolmer is thought to derive from 'wulf gemeare', the wolves' boundary.

By the 16th century the boundary was marked by a row of oak trees – 'lez mark okes' in the words of the Bishop of Winchester's scribe. No sign of them now, but at the time they must have been a substantial and distinguishing feature in a landscape of mixed wood and heath. Most likely they were pollards, a feature of the type of wood-pasture on the common land hereabouts.



From a perambulation of 1552, the scribe wrote 'aim in the dene (ie Whitmore) in the direction of east towards lez mark okes & then again aim in the

direction of south in front of lez merk okes reaching kynges wod bottom in the east part of highway there called pytfold way'. You're following his instructions.

You'll come to St Edmund's school on your left. It was formerly a house called Blen Cathra, which in 1888/89 was rented by George Bernard Shaw, the playwright, critic and political activist. He was a well-known figure around Grayshott, and although he was only here for nine months he made a lasting impression, including donating books to the first village library in the Fox and

Pelican. After St Edmund's, the track bends to the right. Originally the boundary maintained a straight line here, directly towards Stoney Bottom; for a while the modern house in its path had a bedroom that was part in Surrey, part in Hampshire.

Follow the track down the slope to meet Crossways Road. Cross over, turn left, and continue to the far side of the lane of Stoney Bottom.

3. Crossways Road

The part of Crossways Road behind you, back to the village centre, is relatively new. It was made around 1880 after the common was enclosed and sold for building. The part you are walking on now is far older. It was formerly known as Pytfold Way, and linked the head of Whitmore Bottom across the heathy ridge to Stoney Bottom, then on to Pitfold. We've already heard of Pitfold and Whitmore in the boundary records, so the road joining them will be at least that old. The stretch through the village centre was closed by the 1859 Enclosure; we'll explore its far end on Walk 4.



This Ordnance Survey map, surveyed in 1808, shows the county boundary as a dashed line, with Surrey to the right and Hampshire to the left. Modern Grayshott village is in the central area, open common at the time, with Pytfold Way running across it, highlighted in orange.

This is one of our most tantalising spots. Before the area of Kingswood Firs was transferred from Bramshott to Grayshott in 1932, the old boundary ran along Stoney Bottom and turned a right angle here. This corner of open heath was identified in 19th century perambulations by 'The Big Apple Tree', an ancient crabapple. In 1919 the tree was dead; Kingswood's landowner James Mowatt sent a sample and photo to Kew Gardens who pronounced it to be over 300 years old – it would have been a pip at the time of Queen Elizabeth I. Sadly, the sample and photo have been lost. Mowatt planted a replacement, which has also disappeared. (Until recently there was a boundary stone opposite; that has also disappeared). In the Woolmer bounds of 1200 the place was called Horeapeldore – the Grey Apple Tree in Old English. Grey meaning lichen-covered. Trees are popular landmarks in boundary charters, going back to Saxon times. There rests the very intriguing possibility that this point was marked for centuries by successive generations of apple trees.

Continue up the slight rise to Yew Tree Cottage, on your right at the corner of Mowatt Road.

This is one of Grayshott's older houses, built in 1809 by John Lawrence. The Lawrence family had various interests; they had fields at the far end of Kingswood, John was a broomsquire, and his brother William had Whitmore Vale Farm at the far end of Pytfold Way. Yew Tree seems to have originally been two very small buildings which were later roofed over as one. Built of greensand rubble picked from the land around, there's a broken millstone incorporated into an internal wall, and in the front wall a stone inscribed 'John & M Lurance 1809' (John & Mary Lawrence). It also has a cellar, of which more later.



Here the boundary continues to play tricks with us. John built his house with the garden half-and-half between Surrey and Hampshire, but now it's all in Hampshire. Next door, Pooks Hill is named after a previous occupant, Frances Pook, who was said to have been a witch who died after falling into her fireplace.

This map from the deeds of Yew Tree Cottage shows how the parish (and county) boundary ran through its garden. The pond opposite the end of Stoney Bottom road is yet another feature which has disappeared from this area.

Now cross back over the road and retrace your steps to Pollock's Path.

4. Pollock's Path

Follow Pollock's Path to its junction with Portsmouth Road, the A333.

Sir Frederick Pollock, baronet, was Chairman of the Grayshott and District Refreshment Association, the organisation which founded the Fox & Pelican pub. He had links with Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and the pub's name arose from the fact that Grayshott was in the diocese of Winchester, and the sixteenth century Bishop, Bishop Fox, was also the founder of Corpus Christi College. 'Fox' was therefore taken from the Bishop's name, and 'Pelican' from the Bishop's coat of arms, a Pelican, which is also the crest of Corpus Christi College.

Pollock was a distinguished legal scholar, primarily known for his book 'History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I', and also held numerous public positions, such as judge of the Admiralty Court of the Cinque Ports. In 1884 he built his mansion of Hindhead Copse in 27 acres of land, opposite the far end of the path. He left in 1904 due to 'loss of wildlife and building that had taken place'. Much of the woods surrounding his house were lost to the construction of the Hindhead Tunnel, so his departure was prophetic if somewhat premature. The path remembers his name, and one wonders if Sir Frederick used it to nip down for a quick pint at his personal pub.



The Fox and Pelican's original sign, painted by the Arts & Crafts illustrator Walter Crane. It's now on display in Grayshott Pottery.

5. Hindhead Tunnel (an optional small detour, otherwise jump to 6).

At the road, turn left, cross over and make your way to the bridge over the A3.

From here there's a grand view of the Hindhead Tunnel from a perspective not seen by motorists. The tunnel is the culmination of decades of study; one option

put forward was to build a viaduct across Whitmore Bottom. Work began in January 2007 and it was opened on 29th July 2011. The project cost £371 million, of which the tunnel itself was about £300 million. At 1.14 miles long that equates to about £150,000 per yard.

If you catch this view on a sunny day in late spring the embankments will be carpeted in yellow gorse, their coconut fragrance wafting up to the bridge.



Two hundred years ago the diarist and reformer William Cobbett described Hindhead as 'the most villainous spot that God ever made' and 'that miserable hill', sentiments which might resonate with 21st century motorists on finding that the slip road or tunnel has been closed yet again

The mansion in the distance is West Down. It was built for Miss Marian James in 1892-96, using the proceeds of a legacy from a long-time family friend. The architect's notes described it as a 'house, coach house, pigeon home, stable for six horses and semi-detached cottages'. The grounds kept eleven gardeners employed. She gave some of her land in Nutcombe Valley to the National Trust, now known as Miss James' Walk, which is accessed over the arched footbridge.

Backtrack to Pollock's Path.

6. The Portsmouth Road



Continue on the pavement down the Portsmouth Road, past Bears' Wood, crossing the end of Crossways Road, to Kingswood Lane.

You are now following an important historical road, which linked London to the Royal Navy's main base. For centuries it was a strategic route, and traffic along it brought trade and wealth to wayside towns such as Guildford, Godalming and Petersfield. Grayshott's main contribution to national economy and security was to provide refuge amidst the old hamlet's wild landscape for the alleged gangs

of footpads who preyed upon travellers. The stretch around the Devils Punch Bowl and past Grayshott was the most feared part of the journey, not to be tackled at night, coachmen whipping the horses, and passengers on their nerve-ends until reaching the relative safety of the Anchor at Liphook. In the words of Samuel Pepys, Chief Secretary to the Admiralty, writing in 1668 'So to coach again, and got to Liphook, late over Hindhead, having an old man, a guide, in the coach with us; but got thither with great fear of being out of our way, it being ten at night'.

By the 17th century the road network was ruinous; increasing volumes of cart and coach traffic churned them into a quagmire, often impassable for months. The solution was to privatise roads in the form of turnpikes. Private companies were granted permission by Act of Parliament to maintain portions of road in good order in return for charging people to use them. There were concessions; churchgoers on Sundays, funerals, farm traffic, pedestrians and the military typically went free. Disagreements were common; down the road at Sheet Bridge a toll collector was sword-stabbed in the arm during an altercation. Road rage is nothing new.

In 1764 the Milford to Portsmouth Turnpike Act was passed by Parliament. This was the heyday of the stagecoach; there were several services every day with brightly painted and evocatively named coaches - the Flyer, the Nelson, Perseverance, the Portsmouth Regulator, the Rocket, Independent, the Star of Brunswick ... all intended to induce a sense of prompt reliability. The fastest took nine hours from London to Portsmouth, a duration that modern rail commuters might sometimes envy.

If you're not yet lost, you should be walking along the pavement on the road's west side. This marks the modern parish boundary. You'll see that the road is dead straight with substantial ditches on either side, a reminder of its turnpike days. You have interesting company as you walk, along with Pepys and The Rocket. In 1757 Admiral Byng was brought this way to be executed by firing squad on deck at Portsmouth Harbour for supposedly failing to do his utmost in the face of the enemy. In 1759 the remains of General Wolfe, victor at Quebec, travelled the other way en-route from Portsmouth for burial at Greenwich. In 1814 came the Duke of Wellington, in a carriage drawn by eight horses, to celebrate at Portsmouth the short-lived peace with Napoleon. Dickens' characters Nicholas Nickleby and Smike trudged through looking for nautical employment. And more recently, in 1944, thousands of Allied soldiers passed by on their way to the D-Day embarkation ports and the eventual liberation of Europe. All this on our village's doorstep.

A section of a strip map by John Ogilby, from 1675: an innovative new way of portraying roads and their landmarks. It post-dates Pepys' journey this way, hence his need for a local guide across the featureless heath. You are walking the stretch by mile 43.

7. Kingswood Lane



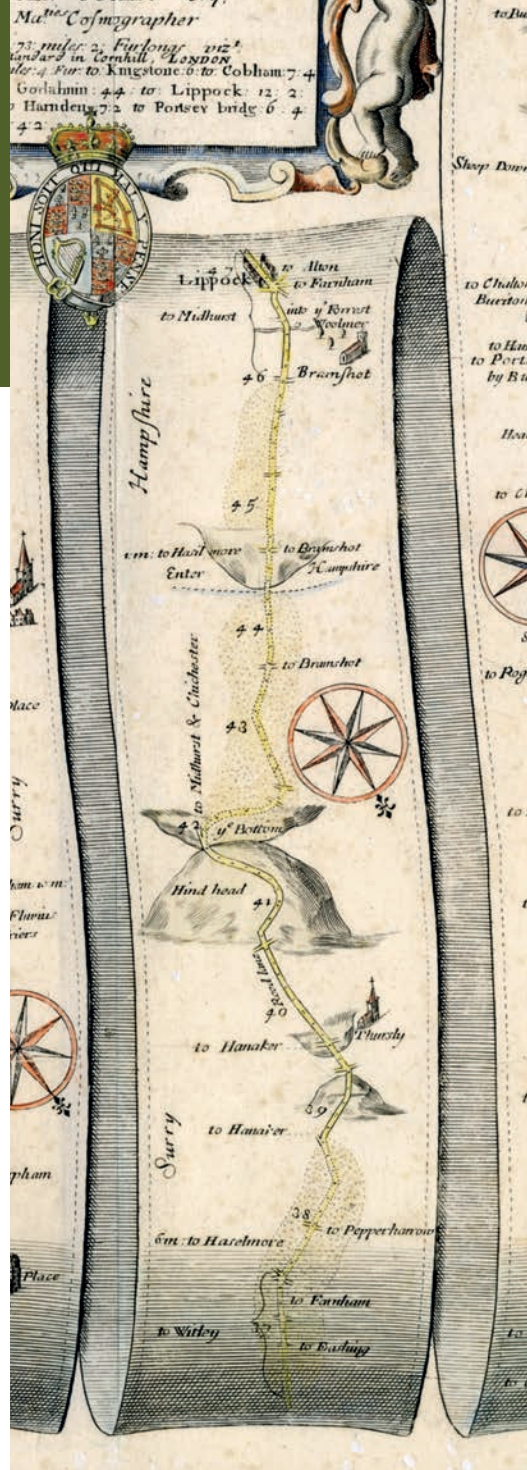
Turn right into Kingswood Lane

and continue, passing another

Yew Tree Cottage.

This takes you into broomsquire territory. The traditional besom or 'witch's broom' was ideally suited to cottage production, requiring no complex machines or expensive materials. A specialist craft industry emerged in places with heath and wood commons – the broomsquire.

Locally, the first evidence dates to the mid-1700's when the word broom-maker starts to appear in records. There were a surprising number of them, over 60 in 1841. They clustered in the Lion Common area of Haslemere, up on the high ground of Pitfold behind you, in Hammer Vale, along Kingswood Lane to Waggoners Wells, and from there along Stoney Bottom towards the village.



They must have been tough, wiry folk, weatherbeaten from a life outdoors and with the iron grip of those who wrestle with nature. The commons were alive with them, dozens out here gathering heather, birch and hazel coppice by their commoners' rights. Officially only those with copyhold or freehold houses in the manor had such rights, and many broomsquires did. Even so, manor records note complaints of 'encroachment onto the waste and building a hut thereon'. Many of these were the work of broomsquire squatters, cheekily fencing off a compound and throwing up a little heather-thatched shack to work in. Despite the area's reputation for lawlessness, the broomsquires don't seem to have been conspicuous as perpetrators. As far as we can tell, they married legally, baptised their children, traded openly and were a visible part of society; not at all outlaws.

Production was a family affair. With birch, long, feathery branches were cut when the catkins were out, stored until winter to season, then trimmed to size. Heather was cut in full bloom, towards the end of August. Ernest Boxall describes doing this as a child around 1900 on Bramshott Common (over to your left), fuelled by his grandmother's sandwiches of home-cured pickled pork between thick slices of new bread from the wood oven. At the end of the day, heather bales were tied with tarry twine and taken home by wain, with Ernest installed on top of the pile.

To assemble the broom a handful of small twigs was used as the core, around which was gathered the birch or heather. It was then bound tightly with two damp withy bands, which pulled firm as they dried. The handle, of shaved birch or hazel coppice, was pushed in and located with a crosswise peg. The finished brooms were bundled up at thirteen to the dozen for sale, at a rate of 3/6d (17½p) a dozen for best quality birch, and 2/6d (12½p) for heather.

Some were sold to locals, but broomsquires occasionally embarked upon surprisingly long road trips. Young Boxall told that his uncle would hire a cart, horses and boy assistant, pile it high and then tour around the stables, country houses and gardens as far afield as Kent and Salisbury. When stocks ran low he telegraphed grandma who despatched further goods by rail from Liphook. The trip would take three to six weeks, lodging at inns with sturdy food, first-class ale and clean beds.



Inevitably some broomsquires would have spent time close to poverty, working hard for little return and occasionally going hungry through illness or misfortune. And yet, this was a well organised industry. Broomsquires were skilled workers and their products were not easily made by machines. The craft passed down through families and there are hints of apprenticeship and syndicates. Some, such as the Beltons, accumulated enough cash to purchase their own freehold property. In his will of 1794, John Bull of Bramshott described himself as Broom Maker to His Majesty's Yard in Portsmouth, meaning the Navy. He left properties in three parishes and £300 in 'lawful money of Great Britain'. There was a good living in brooms, for some.

Industrialisation and enclosure eventually took its toll but the craft survived remarkably long; there were full-time broomsquires in the 1950s. You can still buy besoms at country fairs, hand-made with traditional materials by local woodsmen.



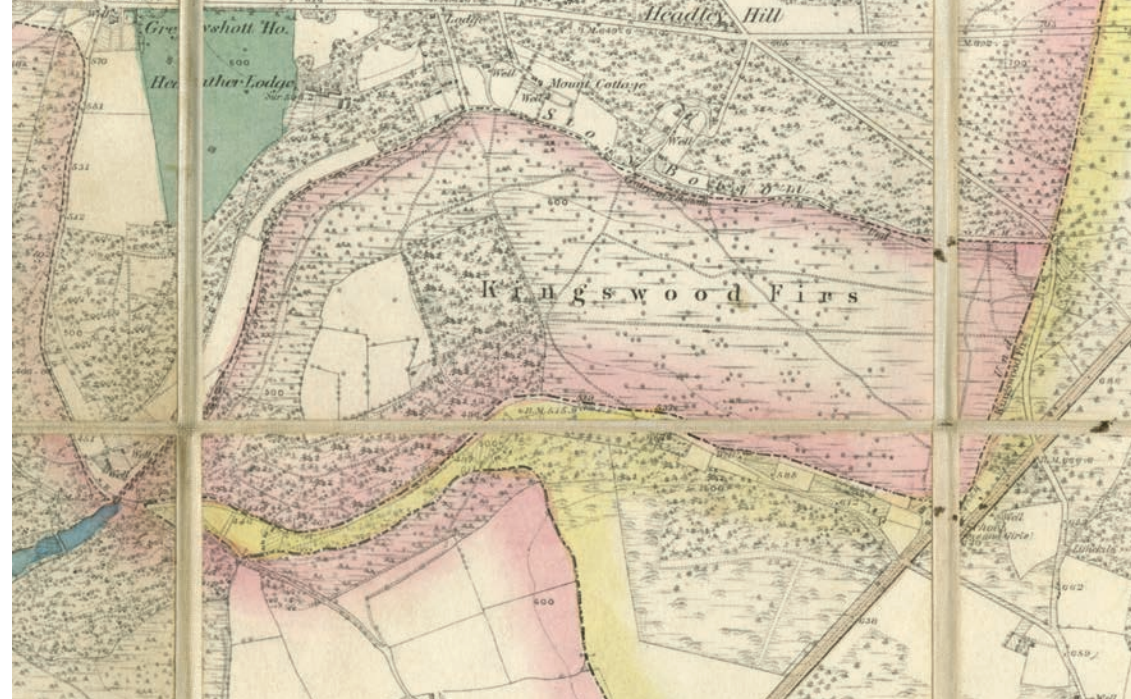
Eventually the tarmac fizzles out. In spring this part of the walk is alight with rhododendrons and azaleas.

Fork slightly left to follow the Footpath sign, continuing on a dirt track through beautiful mixed woods.

As you descend, the noise of the A3 quickly fades and the landscape becomes more tranquil and ancient feeling. You'll see old dry-stone walls, moss-dressed, with tree roots twining into them. You're in a remnant of Woolmer Forest, a Norman hunting estate. You walked part of its boundary at the outset; everything inside was Royal Forest and subject to Forest Law. During the 13th century the Forest shrank a little and the boundary retreated westwards.



This shrinkage may have happened as a consequence of the Charter of the Forest of 1217, a little-known complement to the Magna Carta of two years earlier. The boy-king Henry III conceded that 'All woods made forest by king Richard our uncle, or by king John our father, up to the time of our first coronation shall be immediately disafforested unless it be our demesne wood'. Not all royal forests disappeared of course, but



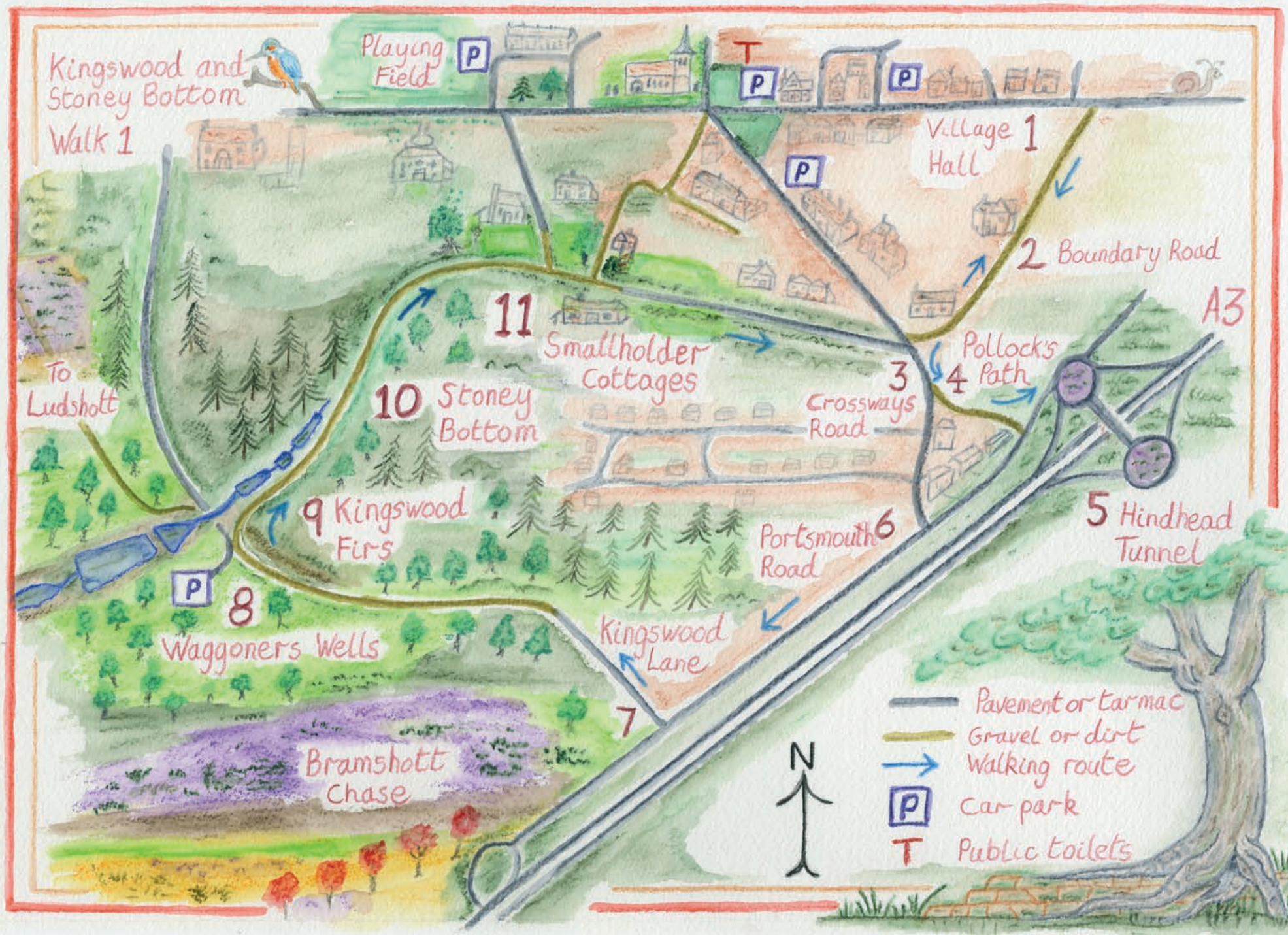
This map from 1882, once the property of James Mowatt of Kingswood Firs, shows the narrow finger of Surrey, tinted in yellow, pointing towards Waggoners. In Saxon times the boundary was a direct line south from Whitmore to the junction of the three Kingdoms of Wessex, Mercia and Sussex at Pophole. As the population increased during the 13th century, more farms became established on the high ground, and needed access to water.



it does seem that Woolmer retreated beyond Grayshott. The names of Kingswood, to your right, and Bramshott Chase, to your left, are its ghosts.

Possibly at the same time, the boundary was adjusted to leave a tapered spit of land, now part of Surrey, so that people on the dry, high ground of Pitfold manor could drive their livestock to water at Waggoners, or Wakenors as they would have known it, without trespassing on the land of Bramshott or Headley at either side. You are walking along the northern edge of that salient, your feet in the track, or driftway, worn by countless generations of farmers and their animals.

This was once the main road between Grayshott's medieval hamlet (Walk 2) and Haslemere. A survey of 1552 called it the



Kings Highway, not to indicate that the King used it but simply as an established public road. Approaching the bottom you'll sense the imminence of Waggoners Wells. In his book 'Frensham Now and Then' Harry Baker wrote of his father's experience hereabouts. Having attended a cattle fair at Haslemere and returning to Frensham with money in his pocket....

"...my way from Frensham Hall [Pitfold] to Simmondstone was by a track crossing the Portsmouth Road near High Pitfold, traversing the centre of Wagner's Wells Bottom, emerging thence near where Grayshott Hall now stands, and so leading



to Barford and Simmondstone. It was now dusk. Immediately on entering Wagner's Wells Bottom I passed a drove of ponies lying down in the fern, and I had only proceeded a few hundred yards when I heard a shrill whistle from my rear. Startled by the sound, the ponies I had just passed came galloping down on me. At once I realised that I had been marked down at the Fair. As they overtook me I managed to grasp one of them by his mane and neck, and ran beside him. Almost immediately I saw figures emerging from the high furze bushes which grew densely in the narrowest

part of the valley. But with the ponies all around me I broke through them safely, and reached Simmondstone sound in limb and pocket. I learnt afterwards that the gang who waylaid me were from Blackdown, across the Sussex border, that I had been shadowed at the Fair, and had been heard to say that I was taking the money to Simmondstone that night...."

This would have been in the mid-19th century. Hopefully things have improved a little since then, and the only predators you'll encounter might be the buzzards and an occasional red kite.

In the early 20th century the track you've just walked was the principal approach from the main road to Waggoners, which by then was in the ownership of The National Trust and a popular beauty spot. Solid-tyred, open-topped charabancs laden with daytrippers grundered down here, hopefully managing to stop before contact with the lake, their driver perhaps being in need of a fortifying nip from

the hip flask to both recover from the descent and steel himself for the return climb. It's still a very pleasant spot to pause for a breather and a little paddle in the ford.

As you reach the bottom, a track forks in from your left, becoming a tarmac road;

join it and continue a few yards towards the watersplash.

8. Waggoners Wells

Here you have three options:

- Continue with this walk.
- Extend your expedition by linking to Walk 2, which will add another 2½ miles. Cross the stream, turn left to the stone monument and follow Walk 2 from there.
- Linger to explore the woods and lakes, which were made in the 17th century by Henry Hooke of Bramshott, an ironworker. This is the edge of the Wealden ironworking region, and although there's no evidence of iron production at the lakes the Hookees did have a mill further downstream. Maybe these lakes were reservoirs for its water-powered hammers and bellows.



9. Kingswood Firs

To continue, follow the Bridleway sign pointing east, below, before the watersplash.



Before doing so, note that in the road by the entrance to the bridleway is where the narrow salient of Surrey reaches its apex. You can amuse yourself for a moment by standing at the roadside in Hampshire, leaping clear across Surrey, and landing back in Hampshire. Jump back again and follow the bridleway. You will probably have to navigate a small, muddy streamlet, which having achieved, everything you see in



front of you was once part of the Kingswood Firs estate of James Mowatt.

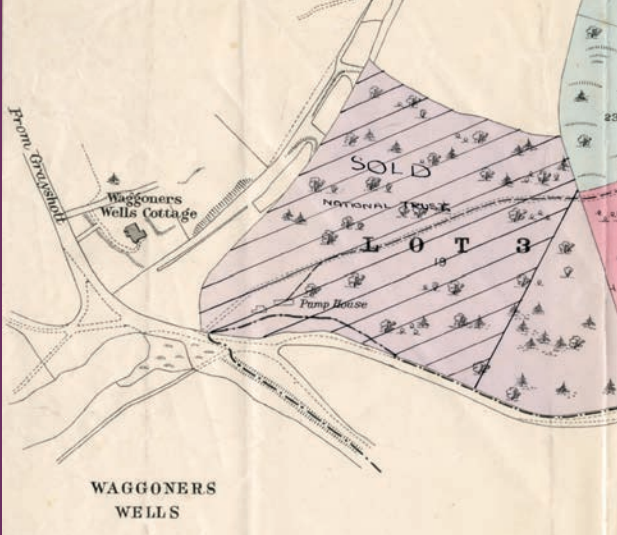
A London lawyer, Mowatt purchased the entire estate in 1884. Perhaps he'd seen the advert in the July 28th edition of The Globe for 'an Estate ... of ornamentally-timbered land, well adapted for the erection of a Family Residence'. He built a mansion on Lawrence's old fields at the top, equipped it with a billiard room, nine bed and dressing rooms, a 'lofty dining room', library, tennis lawn, walled kitchen garden, pleasure grounds, stables, coachhouse and farmery. This is now the house of Hunters Moon, named by a later owner after Sir Robert Hunter, a founder of the National Trust. Down in Waggoners he built a pump-house to supply fresh water; it's there now, empty and roofless, but with its reservoir still visible. You can explore its remains off to your right.

Mowatt was one of the growing villages' benefactors. He was, however, touched by bad luck. In 1890, having offered a lift in his carriage to a guest, Mrs Margaret Bell, the horses bolted down the drive (now the road called Kingswood Firs, through the 1960s housing estate), dashing the carriage against a tree and overturning it. Mowatt and his two sons were injured, Mrs Bell was killed. During the First World War Mowatt allowed the estate to be used for army training. His son Osmund was a soldier, a decorated officer of the South African Campaign, who died of wounds on 22nd April 1917. A cavalryman, Osmund probably rode with the Chiddingfold Hounds when they met at Kingswood, an echo of their Norman ancestors seven centuries earlier.

Upon Mowatt's death in 1932 the land was sold, the sale brochure clearly signposted its future: 'Lovely Pinewoods and Meadows ... Offering some of the Finest Building Sites in this Favourite Residential District, facing South and Ripe for Development'. The mansion and grounds remained intact as a family home. The land to their west, where you are standing, found its way to the National Trust, where we can all still enjoy its natural beauty. At the same time, in anticipation of residential development, this outlying part of Bramshott was transferred into Grayshott parish to closer align it with village facilities and administration.



An army map from WW1, showing Kingswood Firs allocated as a training area.



From the 1932 sale brochure, this plan shows Mowatt's pump-house and the rectangular reservoir above it.



Aim to the left of this knobbly tree

Before Mowatt's time Kingswood was enclosed managed woodland. In the 1860s timber was taken out of it by four-horse waggon via Stoney Bottom to Liphook station.

To proceed, don't follow the obvious sunken path up the hill, straight ahead. Look for a fir tree in front of you with a big knobble on its trunk. You need to walk to its left, over a small ridge then down into Stoney Bottom. There's a well-trodden path but it sometimes disappears under leaves.

10. Stoney Bottom

Follow the path along the top of the bank, with swampy ground to your left. Take care, there are tree roots and slippery bits all along here.

For centuries, probably since the Saxons set out their manors until the incorporation of Kingswood, the boundary of Grayshott ran along Stoney Bottom. This pretty little valley's original name was Kingswood

Bottom. In the 19th century it was called Grayshott Bottom, meaning the valley up to the growing new village from the old-established settlements of Headley and Bramshott. Stoney Bottom is a relatively recent tag.

Soon you will reach a string of three man-made ponds. The first one is elusive, silting up, its dam broken. On your right, amidst the beech trees and whortleberry (called hurts locally), you can see the hollows from which the dams were quarried.

The exact origin of these ponds hasn't so far been established, except to say that they're not connected to the much larger ponds further down. It's thought they were originally built by Edward I'Anson around 1882 to provide a water supply to his mansion of Heather Lodge. I'Anson, a London architect, bought the 73-acre Grayshott Park Estate in 1863. This was the land on the opposite slope, between Waggoners Wells Lane and Ruffit Lane. The lowest and largest pond had a ram pump installed at the foot of the dam. In old documents the dams are called penstocks, a precise term, used to describe a means of controlling water flow. It comes from the time of water mills. The water was *penned* behind the dam, and its flow was varied by raising or lowering a baulk of timber, the *stock*, in the sluice. The series of ponds would have provided both a head of water to power the



pump and a constant supply fed by the little springs. There's no sign of the pump now, it would have been redundant after mains water came to Grayshott in 1904. It seems that the ponds then silted up until they were restored in the 1980s.

One of the ponds around 1900, looking up towards Grayshott. Note how open the land was, meadows instead of pine plantation. Photo by courtesy of Richard Peskett.



Windhead, Waggoners Wells.



After the ponds, you'll start to see the crumbling remains of a dry stone wall, which runs for hundreds of yards up to the near corner of Ruffits. It's thought this wall was built by I'Anson. The actual parish boundary at the time, which would originally have been I'Anson's property boundary, in fact runs three feet in front of the face of the wall. This is a very traditional arrangement; the owner of a wall, hedge or ditch had to build it entirely within their

land, and leave a space for maintaining its outer side without having to trespass on neighbouring property. Further down the boundary runs through the middle of the ponds, which means that half of them were actually in Bramshott parish at the time. This might be the clue to a reported dispute in 1886 between I'Anson and his new neighbour James Mowatt, concerning water in Stoney Bottom. It seems likely that I'Anson had perhaps been a bit naughty and made his ponds

on land that was strictly speaking not entirely his own. The ponds are still there so presumably the two men reached an agreement.

The swampy ribbon of land down on your left is an old track, which to see it today might sound unlikely. However, on the Tithe Map of 1846, pre-dating I'Anson's ponds, it's shown as a narrow strip of Bramshott's common land, sandwiched between the manor/parish boundary and the Kingswood enclosure. Quite likely it was an arrangement similar to Kingswood Lane, a little freeway between the properties to allow the passage of commoners' livestock.

The bank descends and the path veers towards the fence.

Here you can look up through the trees and see rooftops on the horizon. These houses were built in 2000 on the site of Heather Lodge.

11. Smallholder Cottages

Continue past a bar gate to where the stone wall ends just beyond a magnificent

beech tree, its roots layered into the rocks.

Now you'll start to see some of Grayshott's old smallholder cottages. Most of these traditional cottages seem to date from the early 19th century. The amalgamation of Grayshott's medieval farms on the ridgetop during the 18th century forced smallholders to look elsewhere for a patch of land that they could work independently, so they colonised these steep little valleys. People snippily called them squatters, because their enclosures were unofficial - without planning permission, so to speak. However, many of them purchased the land from the manor and became freeholders, and their modernised dwellings are now most sought after. In the census they were often called labourers, which underestimates their skills. A more accurate job description would have been 'stockman, horticulturalist, woodsman, builder, beekeeper, brewer, broomsquire, poacher & trader', which wouldn't fit in the census form's box.

First, up on the left at the head of its paddock, is Ruffits. The house was built around 1830 by David Belton, perhaps on an older plot which had fallen into decay. The Beltons, along with William Hill, Widow Winchester, Amos Lawrence, John Voller and William Morrey were all broomsquires who operated in this area during the 19th century. Some of them were old families, in the parish for 300 years or more. The cottage was originally two ground floor rooms, two bedrooms,

two piggeries and a woodhouse. The word Ruffit, like many placenames, is descriptive of the landscape and comes from Old English (ie Saxon) ruhet, which means a rough place or one overgrown with brushwood. It seems to be a very local piece of dialect. Look at the hazel shrubs growing on the left boundary bank. They're coppiced - many hedges around here were almost pure hazel - and the rule of thumb is that coppiced hazel increases the girth of its stump by about one foot per century: these are David's original hedge, or perhaps even older.

Continue until a steep track joins from your left.



This is where you'll re-join if you took Walk 2. The spectacular oak is at least old as Ruffits.

Next, again set well up the slope to catch the sun, is Stephen's Orchard, once the home of another broomsquire, Stephen Boxall. He kept a big black horse and cart which he hired out for funerals, and also hawked hurts in Guildford. A contemporary witness has it that he once concealed two rustled sheep carcasses beneath his manure heap.

After, beyond a tree-grown bank, is the plot of Henry Robinson's Mount Cottage. He described himself as a 'farmer of six acres and landowner'. His son, another Henry, was an opportunist. He saw the potential of the new Grayshott village and by 1871 had established Mount Cottage as its first shop, a general store. He

later moved to the village centre, at Crossways House, and his widow 'Granny' Robinson was a well-known village character. The original Mount Cottage is long gone; upon Henry's departure it was bought by l'Anson and redeveloped as a

home for his daughter Catherine. The plot's boundary banks survive in places, surprisingly large, and hint that old Henry might have recycled a plot that had been cleared in antiquity and reverted back to waste.

Continue along the hard-surfaced lane, between Henry's plot on your left and a paddock on your right.

This paddock, in fact everything on your right from Waggoners until Crossways Road, was once Mowatt's estate. The Public Footpaths through it are very pleasant, if a little steep in places.

Just beyond a Bridleway to your left, you will reach Old Yew Tree Cottage, formerly Silvae, formerly Birch Cottage (people round here like their trees). Walk a short way up the concrete track, to compare the cottage's front with the photo of the Cane family. The Canes had been in the parish for centuries; in the 18th century they had farms on the ridgetop but by the early 19th had taken to smallholding in the bottoms. The cottage's owner, James Voller, asked John and Hannah Cane to live with him, to look after himself and his young donkey, in return for which he would give them the cottage and donkey when he died. Hannah bore 12 children here. James lasted another 20 years, passing at the age of 90 in 1887, after which John used the by now not so young donkey to set himself up as Grayshott's first carrier, the minicab-cum-white van of the day.

Hannah Cane, second from right, with her daughters Jane, in the doorway, and Alice, with the jug. 1904, August Bank Holiday, hence the outfits.



John Cane with his donkey cart, standing in the middle of Crossways junction. Don't try this today please.

Old man Voller said that he could remember the gallows chains rattling on the old yew tree used to suspend the three murderers of the Hindhead sailor. They were executed in 1787, and like every lad in the district young James no doubt enjoyed a game of dares to scavenge a souvenir. In fact, the fireplace lintel is said to be made from a piece of the gallows yew.

The cottage also has a concealed cellar, which reminds us of the first Yew Tree Cottage. There were smugglers in the area, with bases at Churt and the Anchor at Liphook. You can picture a convoy treading this way on a moonless night, hooves muffled, from Liphook through the sunken lanes of Bramshott, following Cooper's Stream to Waggoners, softly along the track you've walked, a quick stop at Voller's, another at Lawrence's, then nosing up over the ridge, a tense dash along the exposed Pytfold Way, dropping down into Whitmore then on to Churt, Frensham and the townsfolk of Farnham Kipling caught the spirit of it:

*Five and twenty ponies,
Trotting through the dark,
Brandy for the Parson, 'Baccy for the Clerk,
Laces for a lady, letters for a spy,
Watch the wall my darling while the Gentlemen go by!*

If you need a quick return to civilisation, head up the hill to the village centre.

Otherwise, return into Stoney Bottom and continue, passing Broomsquires on

your right.

Broomsquires Cottage, circa 1895. Look closely and you can see piles of twigs and handles. Exactly this scene was described by Flora Thompson in *Heatherley*: 'the broomsquires' little low houses ... and piles, built rick-wise, of new heather brooms with shining white, newly-peeled handles'.



You'll start to see more modern houses on your left; these were built on plots sold off to speculators after the Enclosure. The final pair, Spring Cottage and Cosy Cottage, are neat examples of the tile hanging that the local Victorian and Edwardian builders were fond of.

On your right, you'll start to see the gardens of the 1960's Kingswood Firs housing estate. A condition of its design was that the gardens should be generously sized and blend into the wooded surroundings. Behind a bar-gate some recent clearance work has revealed the banks of another 18th century smallholding, these earthen ghosts the only reminder of its cottage and garden. As you approach the road junction, the final house on the right,



Lansdowne, was the site of the old Institute's iron room, donated to the village by Miss James of West Down, which returns you in a sense to the walk's beginning.

To return in body, cross the road and head back along Boundary Road to the Hall.

Or if you prefer, turn left and follow Crossways Road to the village centre.

My Notes, Observations and Reflections

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Historic photos are from the Grayshott Heritage archive.

When writing about Grayshott one is standing upon the shoulders of others. Here are some sources of additional information.

Books

Grayshott: The Story of a Hampshire Village by Jack H Smith.
Shottermill: Its Farms, Families and Mills, 2 volumes by Greta A Turner.
Churt: A Medieval Landscape by PD Brooks.

These are published by John Owen Smith and usually available from Grayshott Pottery.

Web Sites

www.grayshottheritage.com Dozens of articles written by expert local historians.
www.johnowensmith.co.uk/headley/index.htm A wealth of transcribed documents.

