**A walk of three churches**

This walk in the lovely Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty takes in three churches, including CCT’s church of St Peter and St Paul, Albury, on the Albury estate. It passes through the popular village of Shere, where there are various opportunities for refreshment. Good footwear is recommended as parts of the route can be muddy after wet weather. The walk is about 3.5 miles, 5 Km and takes around 2 ½ hours, including some time for church explorations.

Park at the Silent Pool car park (what3words: planet.engine.teeth) on the A25. This car park can get very busy so a spacious alternative is at Albury Heath (what3words:chimp.loved.swept). If you use the latter, you will need to walk along Park Road to join the walk route at South Lodge, marked “X” on the map.

You can walk this route either clockwise or anticlockwise, and directions are given for both.

**Anticlockwise Route**

Leave the Silent Pool car park by the vehicle exit, crossing a track leading to Sherbourne Farm. Follow the rough footpath along the busy A25 for 100m before crossing the road at the marked crossing point.

Take the footpath running parallel to the A248 road, behind a hedge. Soon you see the first of the three churches on your left.

*This is the Catholic Apostolic Church built in 1840 in Gothic Revival style at the behest of the MP Henry Drummond, patron of the parish. The architect was William MacIntosh Brookes. Drummond was very influenced by the teachings of the charismatic Scottish preacher Edward Irving. Irving was fascinated by the Book of Revelation and the imminent Second Coming of Christ and established the Catholic Apostolic Church, a Protestant sect. The church is not open to the public*.

After another 400 metres, just after a stables building on the right, the A248 crosses the Tillingbourne. Take New Road to the left, signed Albury Heath.

Immediately you come to a lodge building on the left. Turn left into the Albury Estate and follow the track through the park. Where the track forks, keep left and then straight ahead across the grass to the second, and oldest, church on the walk, St Peter and St Paul.

*This fascinating church dates from just before the Norman conquest, and much building fabric from this period can still be seen, though it also contains significant medieval and 19th century features. Cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust and an active Friends group, it is open daily and contains interesting information about the building and the area. Please sign the visitors’ book and consider leaving a donation to support the upkeep of the building.*

With your back to the church, from the churchyard gate walk half left under the trees for about 100 metres, towards a public footpath fingerpost, crossing two vehicle tracks at right angles and heading towards a wood.

From the fingerpost walk up the slope to the gate leading into the woods, and take the footpath into the woods following the yellow public footpath markers. The path leads uphill and then levels out through managed woodland, and is clear to follow. Ignore a crossing path which has “Private“ signs to right and left and carry straight on.

A group of very large old sweet chestnut and oak trees signals that you are close to the end of the wood, and leads to a metal gate by a house (South Lodge). A further metal gate leads onto Park Road. **If you parked at Albury Heath, this is where you join the walk – “X” on the map.** A fingerpost on the left indicates a bridleway and a footpath on the left – take the footpath which leads through a kissing gate, with a Shere Millennium Trail marker.

Follow this path downhill between pasture fields and along the remains of a further avenue of ancient trees. There are good views of the Surrey Hills to the north.

The path descends to a further lodge house on the right, with in autumn and winter glimpses of an ornamental lake through the trees to the left. Go through the kissing gate, turn sharp right (away from the stream), and then immediately left through a gap next to a stile into a field.

Bear left to follow a beech hedge along the left hand edge of the cemetery. Where this path meets a track, turn right and after about 25 metres turn left between wooden posts to follow a path between wire fences and then between houses.

At the end, turn right across a hardstanding in front of a house, then in 50 metres left onto a road, by a bungalow called Wiston. Follow this road for a hundred metres or so to a junction with another road. Turn left here, and using the intermittent footway go downhill, past the William Bray pub on the left, to find The Square on the right.

To visit the third church, walk past the shops and Hilly’s tea room in The Square to St James church. Benches outside the lychgate provide a convenient resting point. The church is open daily and is well worth a visit. Please consider leaving a donation to support the upkeep of the building.

*The church stands close to the Pilgrims’ Way from Winchester to the shrine of St Thomas at Canterbury Cathedral. Much of the current church dates from the 13th century and the spire was built between 1213 and 1300. St James was home to Christine Carpenter, the Anchoress of Shere, from 1329. There are several medieval brasses in the church floor, and the south porch inner arch is Norman.*

Retrace your steps along The Square and turn right, immediately coming to a bridge over the Tillingbourne with its resident ducks. Here there are more refreshment opportunities, including the Dabbling Duck tea room and Shere Delight ice cream. There are public toilets at the Old Fire Station by the stream.

Follow the road alongside the Tillingbourne. After a few hundred metres this gives way to an ironstone wall on the right, bordering allotments. When you reach the ford, cross by the footbridge and continue up the lane, going uphill.

At the top of the rise pause to explore the “Free Library” in a small wooden cabinet on the right of the road before taking the signed footpath on the left between two houses. The path descends to a lane, cross it and carry straight on up a rise amongst trees.

The path levels out and passes through a metal gate into a large pasture field. Follow it along the left hand side of the field, crossing a track at right angles and heading for a further metal kissing gate into the wood ahead. There are good views of the Surrey Hills to the right.

The path rises through the woods before descending a short holloway and leaving the field through a kissing gatge. On your left you have good views of the Gothic Revival tower of the first church which you passed on this walk. The path passes to the right of this and a large house and descends, via a wooden kissing gate, to meet the A248 road.

Turn right along the footpath to retrace your steps, cross the A25 road and return to the Silent Pool car park.

*The Silent Pool*

*The Silent Pool itself is reached by a footpath just behind the car park, and gives its name to Silent Pool gin. This is distilled in a building on Sherbourne Farm, where you can also find a café and shop selling Indian food, and the home of Norbury Park Farm cheese. One of their cheeses is appropriately named for this walk: Dirty Vicar! So this walk nourishes the body as well as the spirit*.

**Clockwise Route**

Leave the Silent Pool car park by the vehicle exit, crossing a track leading to Sherbourne Farm. Follow the rough footpath along the busy A25 for 100m before crossing the road at the marked crossing point.

Take the footpath running parallel to the A248 road, behind a hedge. After about 400 m you will see the first of the three churches ahead on your left, but turn left at a footpath sign by a postbox, and follow the path slightly uphill, past a house, through a wooden kissing gate, and bear right across a pasture field to enter the wood through a metal gate.

The path climbs by a short holloway and then levels out before descending through the wood and leaving via a metal kissing gate.

The path follows the right hand side of a large pasture field, with good views of the Surrey Hills to the left. Cross a track at right angles before leaving the field by a metal gate into trees.

Descend through the trees and cross a lane, then go straight on and uphill along a footpath between houses. The path emerges at a lane. Pause to explore the “Free Library” in a small wooden cabinet on the opposite side of the road, before turning right and going downhill to the ford over the Tillingbourne, crossing by the footbridge.

Turn left, following the road bordered by an ironstone wall on the left, enclosing allotments. After a hundred metres or so the wall gives way to the Tillingbourne and its resident ducks. At the bridge and junction with the main road through the village there are refreshment opportunities, including the Dabbling Duck tea room and Shere Delight ice cream. There are public toilets at the Old Fire Station on the left, by the stream.

Turn right, and to visit the second church turn immediately left into The Square. Walk past the shops and Hilly’s tea room in The Square to St James church. Benches outside the lychgate provide a convenient resting point. The church is open daily and is well worth a visit. Please consider leaving a donation to support the upkeep of the building.

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Retrace your steps along The Square and turn left uphill, past the William Bray pub on the right, using the intermittent footway. Turn right along Pilgrims Way, which is a private road. Follow this road for a hundred metres or so to a bungalow called Wiston on the left. Turn right here for about 50 metres, then cross a hardstanding in front of a house, then immediately go left to follow a path between houses and then wire fences, leaving between wooden posts. Turn right along a track for 25 metres or so, then turn left to follow a path beside a beech hedge bordering a cemetery.

At the end bear right across a field and almost immediately leave via a gap next to a stile. Turn right, and then go left through a kissing gate by a lodge. There are glimpses of an ornamental lake through the trees to the right in autumn and winter. as you take a footpath gently uphill between pasture fields and along the remains of an avenue of ancient trees.

You emerge via a kissing gate onto Park Road. There is a bridleway to your left. .**If you parked at Albury Heath, this is where you join the walk – “X” on the map.** Turn right through a metal gate by a house, South Lodge, go through a further gate and into a group of very large old sweet chestnut and oak trees. A green Albury Estate sign indicates that the path ahead is to the Old Church.

Take the footpath into the woods following the yellow public footpath markers. The path leads through managed woodland, and is clear to follow. Ignore a crossing path which has “Private “ signs to right and left and carry straight on.

Eventually the path descends steeply and leaves the wood through a gate by a footpath fingerpost.

Walk downhill, to a footpath fingerpost, and then walk half right below trees for about 100 metres, crossing two parallel vehicle tracks at right angles, to the gate into the churchyard of St Peter and St Paul. This is the oldest church on the walk.

*This fascinating church dates from just before the Norman conquest, and much building fabric from this period can still be seen, though it also contains significant medieval and 19th century features. No longer in parish use, it is cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust and an active Friends group, is open daily and contains interesting information about the building and the area. Please sign the visitors’ book and consider leaving a donation.*

Leaving the churchyard by the gate, with your back to the church walk ahead across the grass and take the track through the park. You come to a lodge at the entrance to the Albury Estate. Turn right along New Road, and then right again almost immediately, along the A248, crossing the Tillingbourne and following the footpath along the right hand side of the road.

You have good views of the third church on your right.

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From here retrace your steps to cross the A25 road and return to the Silent Pool car park.

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