

# The White Hart – Walk with the Water Babies Circular

An opportunity to see some of the more rural parts of the Blackwater Valley, as you travel along field edges and through Bramshill Forest.

## About the walk

Start point: The White Hart pub car park, Eversley Street, Eversley.

Distance: 9 km / 5.5 miles

Walk time: 2 hours 45 minutes

Terrain: The route is relatively flat with uneven ground which can get very muddy and wet in parts, particularly during winter.

Parking: The White Hart pub car park free to use for patrons – join us prior to your walk or on your return – please pre-book your table.

The route takes you past St Mary's Church to the 3 Castles Path, through Bramshill to the old ford, weir mill & Lower Common. On this walk you'll see Guanacos, friendly goats, and curious pigs.

## Route Description

### Eversley to Bramshill Forest

1. From The White Hart pub car park, turn left along Eversley Street heading away from the village centre. Take care when the pavement becomes very narrow past Warbrook House entrance. Take the signed footpath on the right, just after the pavement runs out. The path leads away from the road into a wooded area. Follow the path all the way to the end, through the barrier to Bramshill Road.

2. Cross the road and continue along the footpath to the right signed as Lyndride Drive. Follow the surfaced path past a house, stable, goats & pigs. At the junction, continue straight past the pond on the right. Where the path bends around to the right up to the house, follow the footpath straight along the fence line, down the side of the Guanaco enclosure. At the T-junction, turn left over a small bridge into a field. Continue along the field edge with a hedge on the right. In the far corner of the field proceed through a kissing gate then over a small bridge towards the church. Go through a metal gate and walk around the church, to leave through a wooden gate at the main entrance.

St. Mary's Church has been a place of Christian worship for over 900 years. There is evidence that it may have been a significant pagan site long before the advent of Christianity. The church building, which dates mainly from the 18th Century, lies off a quiet country lane. It is surrounded by fields and trees, much as it would have been years ago. A notable figure in the history of St. Mary's is the 19th Century preacher, author, naturalist and social reformer Charles Kingsley. He was Rector of Eversley for 31 years and founded the village school, which recently celebrated its 150th anniversary. However, it is possibly the children's novel *The Water Babies* for which he is most remembered. Kingsley wrote this, his most famous book, during his time in Eversley. The tale

touches upon many of his favourite themes: the working conditions of the poor, public health, pollution of rivers and streams and the theory of evolution.

### **Through Bramshill Forest**

3. Turn right and follow the lane uphill. At the house in front of you, take the signed footpath to the left. The path leads uphill into Bramshill Forest. Follow the footpath waymarkers which take you off to the left. Keep right as the path splits and you will emerge onto a large clearing where five paths meet.

The Three Castles Path is a long distance route of 96 km from Windsor to Winchester. It is based upon the 13th Century journeys taken by King John at the time of Magna Carta.

4. Turn left and take the second exit, which is a bridleway known as Welsh Drive. Follow waymarkers to take you across the site straight over two crossroads, then keep left at three forks. When the path emerges onto a third crossroads turn left to take the path running parallel with the power lines. Still on the bridleway the path runs down to a metal gate. Walk around the gate passing the works on the right and continue on the surfaced path to the road (Bramshill Road). Turn left along the road for a short distance to reach the small parking area.

### **Bramshill to New Mill**

5. From the parking area, take the signed footpath heading away from the road. The path runs alongside the school playing fields and heads straight. This wide track now runs under the power lines through Bramshill with a bridleway along the left. Continue straight ahead past the metal gate past houses. Just before the last visible pylon, there is a small crossroads, turn right, and pass through the kissing gate. Follow the track to meet the surfaced road, New Mill Lane.

The Mills, now known as New Mill, can be traced back to the days of William I and the Domesday Book which records two mills in this vicinity. Parts of the buildings are believed to have been built in 1577 when a new mill replaced the original, after a fire, hence the name 'New'. The waterwheel and corn grinding equipment are still in working order.

### **New Mill to Eversley and the White Hart**

6. Standing facing the Ford and New Mill, you will see a gate and footpath to your right. The route now follows a path. Crossing fields which are joined by metal gates. Follow the Path and continue through the gates, keep to the left of the fields. The Path now runs straight between fields and a hedge line. At a driveway cross and continue straight. After passing through a gate the Path runs between a walled garden and hedge line. Continue to the main road - Eversley Street.

7. Turn right onto Eversley Street and proceed along the pavement to return to The White Hart pub car park.