THE MILLENNIUM WALK ROUND WOLDINGHAM

8½ miles. Allow 5 hours walking time.
This walk can be taken in two stages - see page 6.

Woldingham Village Green (Point A)

Leave the village green (Point A on the map), with its charming cottages, horse trough and site of the one time 'Hop Pole' pub, by walking along Park View Road. You pass 'Overdale', the former home of the late Eric and Joyce Giuseppi who contributed so much to the village and particularly the village hall. Thirty yards after turning right there is an enclosed pathforking left between 'Hardown House' and the 'Red Cottage'.

This path leads downhill and then through a field to Church Road. Go to the right there is a short row of cottages built originally for families of staff at Marden House, now Woldingham School. The children of these families used to walk across Marden Valley and over the steeple opposite to attend school in Caterham.

At Church Road take a sharp right-left and cross the Oxted railway line that was opened in 1884. Spare a thought for the many Irish navvies who dug this cutting and long tunnel with picks and shovels and wheelbarrows. Where did they eat, sleep and wash? Were there any wives or railway followers? No wonder the 'Hop Pole' both flourished and suffered on Saturday nights.

Once across the bridge turn right and follow the path round to Marden Park Farm. Only a few years ago this was a busy mixed farm with those romantic clanking noises escaping from the milking parlour for the Channel Island herd. Turn left, but before climbing up the track take a few steps through the farm where on the right is an attractive arch which led to the farmyard. (This style of arch is repeated at Little Court Farm in Jackass Lane near St Peter’s Church in Tandridge village.)

On the left, opposite the arch, are the buildings, now preening themselves after their recent facelift, where the Woldingham Pantomime used to store their scenery. Many must remember those bitter Sunday mornings in January ferrying that ungainly equipment from the village hall after the New Year shows!

Retrace those few steps and continue uphill on a track, which is one of the oldest in Tandridge. An early record is on the title map of the 1830s, but it is believed to be medieval and may even be much older than that.

Madeira Walk

We hope you enjoy this walk round our Village. For those of you who prefer a shorter walk it can be done in two stages as set out below.

The Southern Half
(Shown in blue on back cover Map)

5 miles. Allow 2½ hours walking time.

Follow the full walk as far as Point B, then:

At the Ridge turn left for 50 yards, then fork left on a surfaced path to the car park. Emerge at the entrance to the viewpoint and cross the Ridge to a path by the left of a wood and then by the left of a valley for some 800 yards. Cross Southfields Road, climb a steep path to Upper Court Road and so back to the village green.

The Northern Half
(Shown in red on back cover Map)

6 miles. Allow 3 hours walking time.

Leave the village green along Upper Court Road. Just past 'Sylvan Mount', as the road bends right, take the path on the left downhill. Cross the road at the bottom. Some 100 yards up the track disregard the right fork and take the signposted footpath ahead. After 900 yards and several stiles the path reaches the Ridge. Cross into the viewpoint car park and take a surfaced footpath parallel to the road to reach the junction of the Ridge and Chalkpit Lane.

You now pick up the full walk at point B.
After some 200 yards the NDW forks right along the foot of the escarpment but our path continues steeply uphill, across a stile and then half right to emerge on Chalkpit Lane. Turn right along the lane, near where the donkeys graze, and continue forward to the Ridge and the unusual gazebo (now restored) which must once have provided a fine view over the Weald.

We are now at Point B on the map. If you prefer a shorter walk skip to the end of this guide for the southern half and directions back to the village centre.

The full walk crosses the Ridge by Flint House and follows the Vanguard Way for 1½ miles, disregarding any right turn until it descends the hill to reach Slines Oak Road. The going is easy and there are good views across the valley to Botley Hill on the right. When you reach the road, turn in through a gap at the side of a gate to a path which follows the inside edge of the field. Reemerge via a wooden framed opening on Slines Oak Road just before Warren Barn Farmhouse.
A word here about rights of way. They include 'public footpaths', on which one can walk, take a dog providing it is on a lead and, strangely, take a push chair. A 'bridleway' may be used as a footpath but may also be used by horse riders and pedal cyclists. In addition some landowners grant 'permissive rights of way'. These have no legal status and the owner can withdraw permission at any time. The path inside the field mentioned above is a 'permissive' path granted by Rodney Fuller freeing us from having to walk along that narrow, fast stretch of Slines Oak Road.

Cross Slines Oak Road opposite Warren Barn Farm and turn left onto the potholed surface of Upland Road. At the top, turn right into Butlers Dene Road and eventually cross Slines New Road into High Lane at the top of Halliloo Valley.

The track soon climbs steeply, with good views of the golf course to the left.

After about 400 yards turn left near the top of the hill along the bridleway known as Plantation Lane. Just before the track bends left to the golf clubhouse climb a stile on the left and take the path across Dukes Dene golf course. This path is straight, more or less, and is indicated by finger posts. Score cards request golfers to defer to walkers but, if you should suffer a cracked skull, the club's personal injury policy is worth a million or two. (These two concessions were granted, eventually, following overtures by the Ramblers Association.)

Looking back across the valley to Woldingham. Note the ancient walnut tree in foreground.

The track eventually skirts the back of Woldingham School. This building has been well documented elsewhere so comment here is confined to the catastrophic fire in 1879, which possibly raged more freely due to the lack of water, as Marden Valley is a "dry valley". The house was soon rebuilt.

Dukes Dene Golf Course

Cross Slines New Road once more and climb uphill with a fence on your right to a stile leading to Beulah Walk in Woldingham Garden Village. This settlement was once a convalescent depot for WW1 casualties. Some of the huts are still there, converted to domestic dwellings. WW2 is remembered as well. The quaint village hall, which has a stage and a licensed bar, plus the surrounding land and a car park were donated by the Lancaster family in memory of two of their three sons who were killed.

Where Beulah Hill turns left, keep straight on along the enclosed leafy path and then through the trees to 'Madeira Walk', a well kept ledge path with superb views across the valley.

After 400 yards continue to maintain direction up Long Hill and leave St. Paul's Church and the Crescent on the left to regain the village green. In one corner is a grassed mound, the remnant of a WW2 air-raid shelter. The mound may still be there in A.D.3000 to intrigue future students of military history.

Woldingham School, set deep among the woods of Marden Valley

Ignore a left turn and follow the track to the right, passing the nostalgic nuns' cemetery on the left. During the last war the Canadian forces occupied the house. When they left, it became a girls' boarding school run by Sisters of the Sacred Heart - thus the nuns' cemetery.

At a track junction climb a stile opposite leading to an uphill path with trees on the left. In the far corner of the field there is another stile, but pause before crossing to look back on a fine view of Marden House and the spectacular valley.