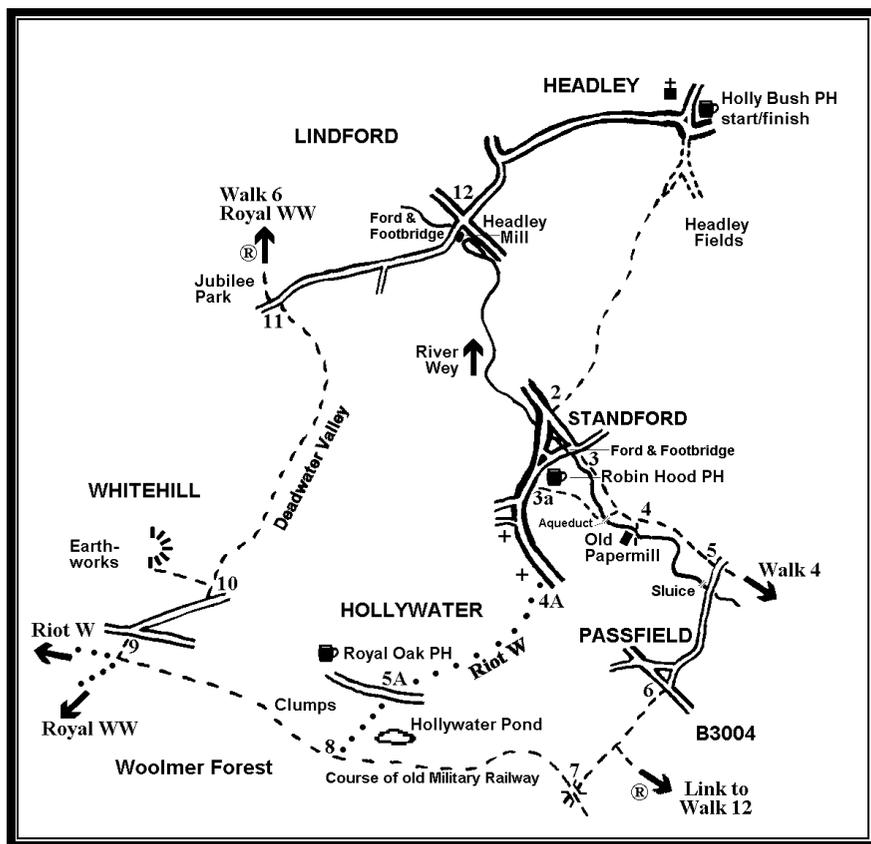


## Walk 5 – To the Military railway

Distance approximately 7¾ miles/12.5km

This walk starts and ends in Headley High Street, visiting Standford, Passfield Common, Woolmer Forest, the track of the Longmoor Military Railway, Walldown earthworks, Deadwater Valley and Headley Mill.



For notes and illustrations up to point 5, see *Walk 4*.

- 1 From the *Holly Bush*, turn left, cross the road with care and to the right of *Crabtree House* go along the lane called *Headley Fields*. After a hundred yards or so, fork right by *Mayfield House* along another unpaved lane. Keep to the footpath where this divides to the left. After passing between hedges, it crosses fields through a number of ‘kissing gates’ and eventually descends to meet a road (*Tulls Lane*) at *Standford*.
- 2 Turn left along *Tulls Lane*. Where it bends sharply left, take the footpath passing through a gate and garden straight ahead. (To the right at this point is a footbridge over the *River Wey* leading to *Standford Village Green* and the *Robin Hood* pub, and to the *Rioters’ Walk*).

## Walk 5

Part of the **Rioters' Walk** can be used as a short-cut here if desired, but be prepared for boggy terrain – see p.32 for details.



*The ford and footbridge at Standford*

- 3 Follow the track through the garden, then between fences. The field to the right which falls towards the river is a nature reserve (old watermeadow).
- 4 Ignoring a flat concrete bridge over the river to the right, carry straight on following the footpath along the river bank. This path is a pretty, shaded walk along the bank of the River Wey. It emerges up a sharp incline to meet an unmade lane serving houses which leads shortly to a surfaced road. (You may alternatively follow the river bank, turning right just before the end of the path to pass a sign indicating a nature reserve – this route passes the old sluice-bridge before emerging at the road).



*Passfield Sluice-bridge*

The sluice diverted water from the river as part of the water meadow irrigation system which ran along both sides of the river.

- 5 Turn right along the road to cross the River Wey and arrive at Passfield Common.

The triangular green in front of the houses at Passfield belongs to the National Trust and is part of a larger area owned by them on the other side of the main road. It is often left untended as part of the Trust's planned management of wildlife areas.

- 6 Cross the B3004 and take the track to the left of the large white building (which was once the *Passfield Oak* hotel). Continue along the track which becomes a path and follow it down to cross a stream (where it can be muddy) before arriving at a dismantled railway bridge where the line of the old military railway crossed on an embankment.

*Note: The link from Walk 12 joins from the left before you cross the stream.* The railway was constructed in a loop around Woolmer Forest by the Army in order to instruct soldiers on how to operate (and if necessary destroy) railway systems. It closed in 1969.

Of greater antiquity is the site of a hunting lodge (Linchborough) used by monarchs from the time of Edward I – this now lies within the military danger area. Woolmer Forest is a haven for many rare forms of wildlife – one benefit of the military occupation of the land.

- 7 A permissive path follows the line of the old railway, which is outside the boundary of the military 'danger area'. Go under the bridge hole, turn right and follow the track up an incline to join the course of the old railway track.

To the right of the track the land falls towards Hollywater Pond (out of sight behind trees), restored in recent years by the National Trust and said to be the site of a leper colony in ancient times.

- 8 *After about three-quarters of a mile, the short-cut via the Rioters' Walk rejoins us along a grass track to the right of a house.*

Continue along the 'railway track'. Shortly, on the right, look for the fallen remains of an old wooden railway viaduct which the Army would build and destroy for practice. Soon after this the track divides – take the right fork uphill. This forestry road runs in a fairly straight 'switchback' line over the shoulders of a couple of wooded hills.



*Climbing the forestry road beside Hollywater Clump*

The wooded hill 'clumps' are associated in legend with burials from the leper colony, but most evidence points to them being of natural origin.

## Walk 5

About three-quarters of a mile after the fork, look for a track to the right. This leads you to a road (Liphook Road). Depending on which of several tracks you have taken, you may emerge opposite the junction of this road with Walldown Road, or you may have to walk along the verge to find this junction.

- 9 *Note: The walk from here to point 11 follows the **Royal Woolmer Way**.*

Follow Walldown Road for about a quarter of a mile until you see the Deadwater Valley Local Nature Reserve sign on the left. Turn into the wood here. This part of the walk is on a permissive path through land managed by the Deadwater Valley Trust.

You may like to make a short diversion to visit the Walldown earthworks – shortly after entering the wood take the track rising to the left beside a fence bordering school grounds on the right. After a stiff climb, enter the enclosure by way of a stile where there is a notice giving a brief history of the site. There are views to the east from the top. Retrace your steps downhill to continue the walk.



*The Deadwater Valley*

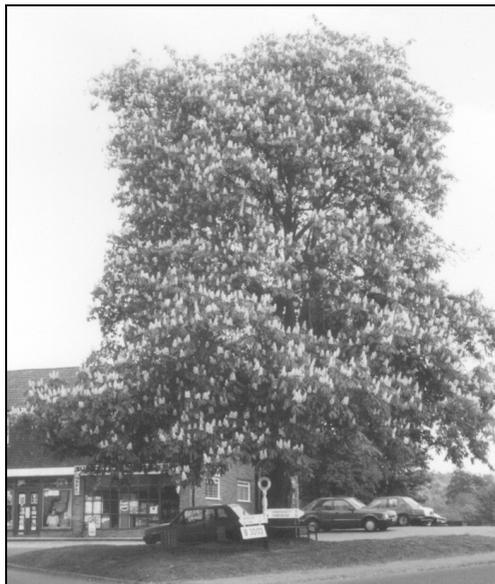
- 10 Follow the well-used path through the woods ignoring paths to residential roads on the left. Cross a driveway and continue along the woodland path which eventually passes Knox's Pond on the left before running close to the Deadwater Stream on the right. Keep the stream on your right until reaching a footbridge which crosses over. Cross the bridge and turn immediately left along the bank of the stream to meet Mill Chase Road.
- 11 Turn right along Mill Chase Road and, after passing one school on the left and two on the right, you arrive at Headley Mill. Here the road fords the River Wey at the mill's tailrace; you may cross by the footbridge.



*Rear of Headley Mill from the ford*

Headley Mill has been said to be the last commercially working water mill in Hampshire. There has been a mill here since the time of Domesday. The workings inside are not generally open to the public.

- 11 Cross the B3004 and go along Mill Lane, directly opposite the ford. At its junction with Headley Road turn right to climb the hill and return to Headley.



*The Chestnut Tree at Headley, taken in May 1991*



## Walk 5

### Short-cut via the Rioters' Walk

Follow **Walk 5** to point 3.

- A3 Cross the River Wey using the footbridge, and follow the road from the ford as it passes in front of the *Robin Hood* pub (changed in 2010 to a restaurant) to join the main road (B3004). Follow the verge path up the hill and pass both the Gospel Hall and the Methodist Church on the right.



*The Robin Hood, Standford*

- A4 Look for a path on the right leading to a kissing gate into National Trust land – part of Passfield Common fenced to keep grazing animals from straying. Head in a generally south-west direction across the common to find a kissing gate in the perimeter fence on the south side at the side of a road. *Be warned – there are no designated paths and it can be extremely boggy in places.* For those with GPS, start at SU81538 34169 and end at SU 80962 33667.
- A5 Turn right along the road. After a while (the distance depends on which gate you used out of the Common) take the track on the left leading to a Builders' Merchant. *(You may continue up the road for a further 300 yards to visit the Royal Oak pub if you wish, and then either proceed further up the road to rejoin the **Walk 5** at point 9, or retrace your steps to carry on here).*

An interesting diversion down paths to the left of the track takes you to the edge of Hollywater Pond, restored by the National Trust.

Follow the track across a stream and past the Builders' Merchant, then take the path to the left of *Stone Cottage*. This leads up to the old railway track, rejoining **Walk 5** at point 8 (see p.29).

