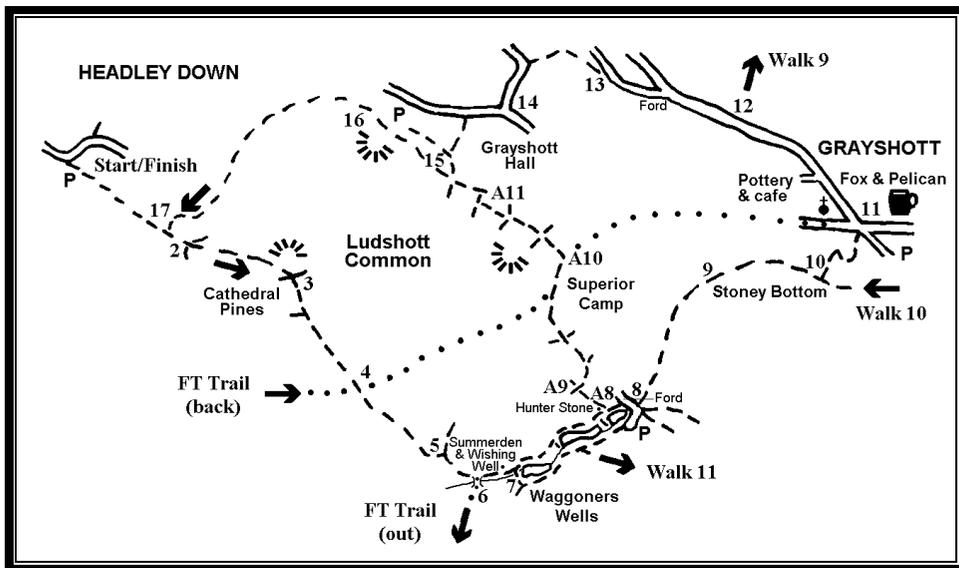


## Walk 8 – To Grayshott and back

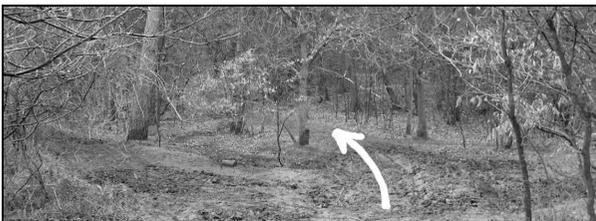
Distance approximately 6 miles/9.5km (option 3½ miles/5.5km)

This walk starts and ends at the National Trust car park in Pond Road, visiting Ludshott Common, Waggoners Wells, Stoney Bottom, Grayshott and Whitmore Vale. There is a shorter return route offered from Waggoners Wells visiting Superior Camp – see Walk 8a.



1 From the car park, follow the track up the valley to Ludshott Common.

2 At a junction of several tracks, continue along the centre path which rises between trees for about half a mile past another junction to a crossroads of tracks at the top of the hill with views across the common to the north. This is known locally as ‘Charing Cross’ (3).



Route at junction of tracks, Point 2

The heathland of the common has been used for Army training during both World Wars – in WW2 activities with tracked vehicles denuded it of most of its vegetation but the trees to the right on this hill, known as ‘Cathedral Pines’, were protected – however, after the heath fire of May 1980 most of the trees suffered root damage and were later felled.

3 Carry straight on, descending to a valley then rising. Keep straight on where the main track bears left, and cross a brideway to meet the track which runs

round the edge of the common.

*Note: The return leg of the **Flora Thompson Trail** from Griggs Green to Grayshott crosses our path here.*

- 4 Take the footpath straight ahead between holly trees. The path crosses a stile then goes alongside a fence across a field to another stile. Descending sharply through woods, it crosses a private woodland track to meet a bridleway at a stile.
- 5 Turn right down the bridleway, which soon meets the stream flowing from Waggoners Wells.
- 6 Do not take the bridge over the stream (where the outward leg of the Flora Thompson Trail goes, see photo p.52) but follow the path ahead to pass the National Trust's wishing well and the wall of *Summerden* on the left.



*The wishing well below Waggoners Wells*

Flora Thompson wrote that at the start of the 20th century, “the local belief was that anyone drinking the water and wishing would have their wish granted, provided they dropped in a pin”. *Summerden*, built in 1904, operated as tea-rooms from 1951 for nearly thirty years.

- 7 Continue uphill to the gate of *Summerden*, then turn right along the side of the valley to arrive at the dam of the bottom pond. From here you may choose paths on either side of the three ponds, crossing at each dam if you wish. *Note: **Walk 11** diverges halfway along the south shore of the middle pond.* Eventually you arrive at the ford which crosses the stream running into the top pond. *Note: There is a National Trust car park close by.*

The history of Waggoners Wells (or more correctly Wakener's Wells) is unclear. We believe they were constructed around the 1620s as 'hammer ponds' by Henry Hooke, lord of the manor of Bramshott and a local ironmaster who already had works in Hammer Vale and possibly also in Passfield – but nobody has ever found evidence of industry taking place in this valley. Note the small quarry in the north bank by each dam – it was from here that material was taken to build them, some 400 years ago.

*The shorter **Walk 8a** diverges here – see steps A8–A11 on p.49.*

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*The ford at the head of Waggoners Wells*

- 8 For the full **Walk 8**, follow the footpath up Stoney Bottom – *the start to this is not obvious; cross a ditch a few yards to the right of the photo above.* Keep left as you enter the mature trees, ignoring the more obvious track ahead, to find the path passing through a small gap in a bank and descending into the valley. This soon passes some more, smaller, ponds.
- 9 Passing through a barrier by an electricity substation, the path eventually become a track used by local residents' vehicles.

Stoney Bottom is one of the few local valleys whose 'bottom' was not renamed 'vale' in sensitive Victorian times! It was the haunt of heathland workers until the end of the 19th century, particularly the so-called 'broomsquires' who made brooms or besoms from the local chestnut, birch and heather.

- 10 A few hundred yards after passing a track leading up to the precipitous end of a road on the left, look for a sharp left turn up a concreted road giving vehicular access to the valley for light vehicles. Take this road which winds uphill between houses. At the top, turn left and proceed towards the silver Millennium memorial at the 'Fiveways' crossroads in Grayshott village (11).



*Approaching the Millennium Memorial from Hill Road, Grayshott*

Hill Road was named after William 'Body' Hill, a broom-maker who lived in the road and died in 1901 aged 83. This was one of the tracks which

Flora Thompson took to 'escape' into the country when she was assistant post-mistress in Grayshott from 1898–1900. The site of her post office, now demolished, was in Crossways Road where *Pendarvis House* stands (see picture p.77). Grayshott village's two streets offer you many facilities which would be the envy of a small town.

- 11 You might like to visit the *Fox & Pelican* pub, seen from the crossroads, as a halfway stopping point. There are also Public Conveniences near here. To continue the walk, go down Whitmore Vale Road leaving St Luke's church to your left. Follow the road out of Grayshott, descending into a tree-shaded valley with a stream.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's first wife and son are buried in St Luke's churchyard – they lived in Hindhead at the time. Also you should not miss the Pottery with its gift shop and café, just to the left off Whitmore Vale Road as it descends to the valley.

- 12 *Note: Walk 9 turns right after the 'Grayshott/ Hampshire' road sign.* Follow the road along the valley and take a fork to the left which crosses the stream (a ford in wet weather) and shortly afterwards take a 'byway' which forks uphill also to the left with views through the trees to the valley below.



*Junction of roads and seasonal ford in Whitmore Vale*

- 13 Follow the bridleway steeply uphill and over a couple of crossing paths – it eventually bears left and joins a road (Hammer Lane). Turn left along the road to its junction with the B3002 opposite the entrance to Grayshott Hall.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson stayed with his family for a year in 1865 at the lowly farmhouse which then stood on the site of Grayshott Hall. Construction of the present Hall began about ten years later and it has been further extended through the years. Owned between 1884–1927 by the Whitaker family, it is now a Health & Fitness Centre.

- 14 Turn right along the verge of the main road, taking care of fast traffic, and shortly take the bridleway on the left which leaves the road at right-angles

## Walk 8

and runs between a boundary fence and the Grayshott Hall grounds to emerge on Ludshott Common. (*Walk 8a rejoins here*).

- 15 Turn right along the wide sandy track which follows the northern boundary of the Common. Pass the National Trust's 'Dunelm' car park. *Note: there is a map of the common displayed in the car park for those wishing to walk a different route home.* There are good views across to Butser Hill on the South Downs and to the Selborne Hanger.



*Ludshott Common in 1924*

Ludshott Common has belonged to The National Trust since 1908. Along with similar properties in Surrey and West Sussex it forms part of an extensive area of 'lowland heathland' owned by the Trust in this region. Until the early part of the 20th century, the commons were grazed by a variety of different animals which cropped the vegetation and restricted the growth of tree saplings. Since then, this maintenance has had to be performed by man. The National Trust is carrying out plans to restore endangered species to their natural habitat – these include birds such as the nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler and reptiles such as the sand lizard and the smooth snake.

- 16 Follow the track as it bears gently left leaving the houses of Headley Down on your right, finally zig-zagging in descending to rejoin your outward route.  
17 Turn right and follow the track down the valley to your starting point.



## Walk 8a – Superior Camp and Grayshott Hall

A8 Follow **Walk 8** to point 8.

Take the path from the ford passing to the right of Sir Robert Hunter's stone – this becomes a bridleway rising steeply uphill between old earth banks.



*Sir Robert Hunter's memorial stone at Waggoners Wells*

Sir Robert Hunter, who lived in Haslemere, founded the National Trust with Octavia Hill and Canon Rawnsley in 1895. He died in 1913, and Waggoners Wells, the first local property to be acquired by the Trust following his death, is dedicated to his memory.

As the track flattens out, note some yards to the left among the trees a banked-up area which is usually covered in stinging nettles – this was the sewage treatment point for Superior Camp (see note below), well illustrating the adage: “nettles grow where man has been”.

A9 At a crossways of tracks, turn right. Shortly the track passes through the old perimeter bank (no longer very obvious) of Superior Camp.

Bear left at a fork and then cross a track below an electricity power line. Eventually you pass through a makeshift barrier and onto a concrete road which was at the centre of the old camp. Note some remains of hut foundations still visible to the left of the road here.

Ludshott Common was occupied by the military in 1941, and Superior Camp was constructed by the Canadian Royal Engineers. Note the dates in August 1941 scribed on the top of the concrete cylinders used as road blocks. The Camp was vacated by troops in June 1946, but occupied by squatters. In 1958 all properties were vacated and demolished when empty, and the area was cleared finally in 1964. You may notice some garden plants and hedges which have grown wild here since that time.

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*Concrete road through Superior Camp*

A10 Just before the road bends to the right, and opposite a privet hedge which has gone wild, take a track to the left. This passes an open area on the right which used to be the camp's parade ground and emerges from the trees onto the heathland of Ludshott Common. From here there are views to the south. Go straight ahead along a bridle path with views to the Oakhanger satellite tracking 'golf balls' ahead – the track drops to a crossways. Go straight ahead up a lesser track which meets a well-used track at a T-junction. Turn right, then shortly bear left to descend to meet the track passing along the northern perimeter of Ludshott Common. Behind trees to the right are the grounds of Grayshott Hall which has been a health centre since the 1960s.



*Perimeter track around the north of Ludshott Common*

A11 Continue along the perimeter track, which becomes more sandy and wider as it rises to pass the National Trust's 'Dunelm' car park. (Here we rejoin **Walk 8** at point 15, see p.48).