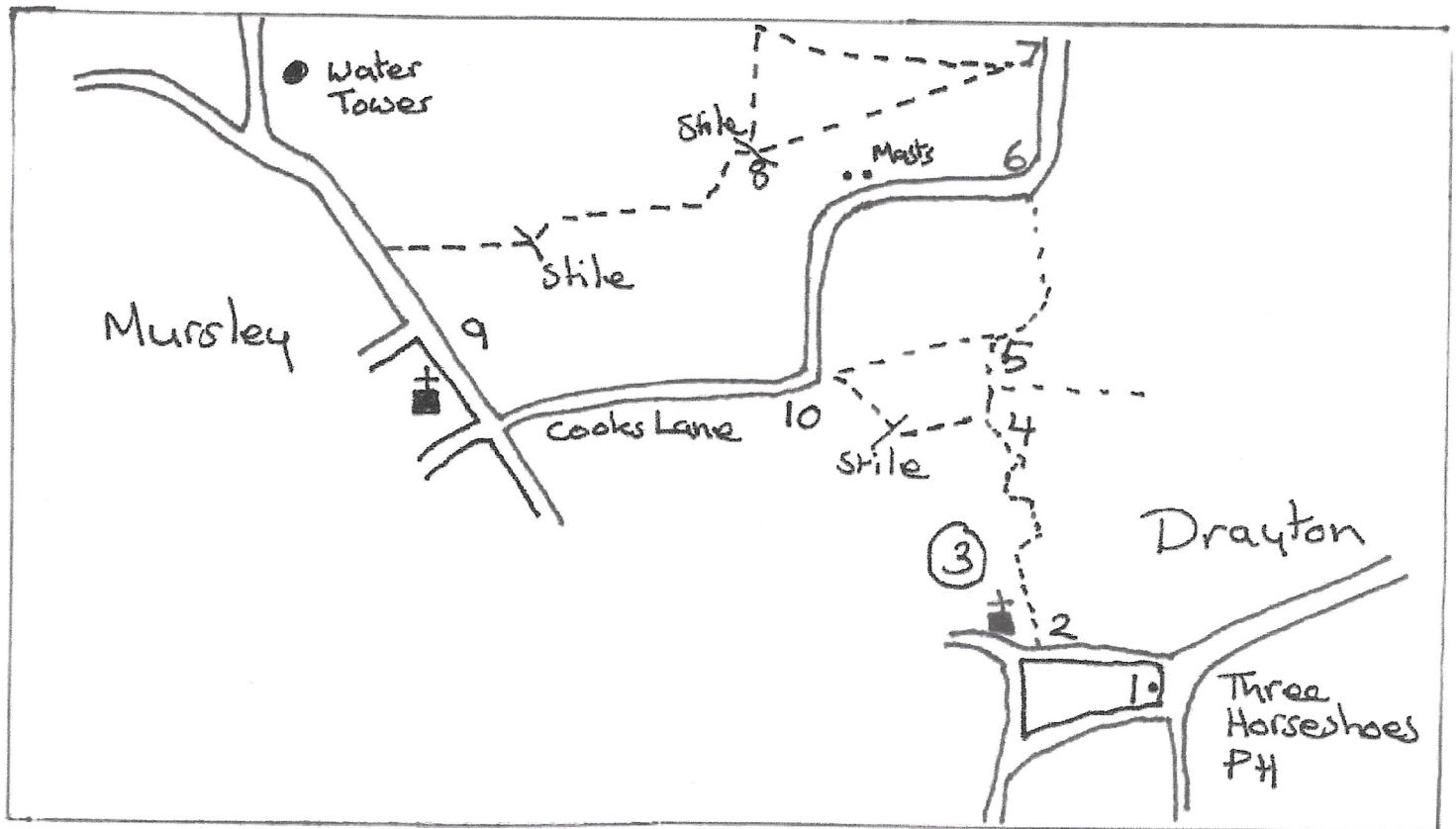


Jeremy's Walk Number 1: Salden and Mursley - 4 miles



This is a relatively easy walk on well-marked paths across undulating farmland. The walk is relatively easy at most times of the year, however, the stretch between points 4 and 6 can get boggy after prolonged rain. There are 3 stiles on the route, but, if these present a problem, a shorter walk with no stiles can be had by turning left at point 6 and walking up the lane to point 9. The walk starts from the War Memorial in Drayton Parslow.

1. From the War Memorial go left, up Main Road towards Holy Trinity Church.
2. Before you get to the church, turn right onto the bridleway known as Phillips Lane. I believe that the origin of this track was in the late 18th Century the wife of the then Rector wanted to shorten her carriage drive to relatives at Salden House.
3. Ignore the footpaths leading right and left as you enter the field known as Great Ground and continue along the track. As you walk up the slope past the beautiful copse on the right of the track, to your left you will see a large depression in the ground filled with trees and scrub. This is the remains of a quarry that provided materials for maintaining and re-routing the Mursley to Stewkley Road at enclosure in the late 18th Century.
4. When you get to the far side of Great Ground, ignore the footpath to the left and go through the gate in front of you. If you look to your right, you can see the curve in the hedgerow which is now the only obvious physical evidence of the site of Salden Windmill. The curve in the hedge marks the northern edge of the large earth mound on which the windmill sat. The windmill was demolished in the '1890s and was replaced by the steam mill that is now a house in Main Road. However, the mound was still clearly visible at least until the 1940s. The gate marks the boundary between the Parishes of Drayton Parslow and Mursley. Once through the gate, keeping the fence/hedge on your left, ignore the bridleway to the right and walk to the far side of the field.

5. At the end of the field, ignore the bridleway to the left and turn right, downhill, following the curve of the hedge to your left. Go through a couple of gates onto a track, still going downhill, until you get to another gate onto a narrow road which leads to Salden.
6. At this point, if you want to do a shorter walk avoiding stiles you can turn left and follow the road to point 10. Please note that, whilst the vehicles tend to be moving quite slowly, it is common to encounter vehicles on this road. However, for our walk, go straight ahead, following the road with the very attractive Salden Upper Pond on your left. Ignore the stile on your left which provides access for the members of the Winslow Angling Club to the pond and follow the road until you see a footpath on your left, just before you reach Salden House Farm.
7. The attractive and imposing Salden House Farmhouse is only part of one wing of the much larger and magnificent Salden House. Salden House was built for Sir John Fortescue, cousin and Chancellor to Elizabeth I, in the late 16th Century. Most of the house was demolished in the mid-18th Century. At the footpath go through the gate and ignore the footpath going straight ahead along the boundary of Salden House Farm. Instead go diagonally left, up the hill towards the point where the slopes of two hills (one coming down from the left and one coming down from the right) intersect. At the top of the ridge, you can look down on Upper Salden Pond to your left and Salden House Farm, behind you. Looking forward you should clearly see a field gate with a stile to the left in the hedge near the top of a further hill. Head towards this gate and stile.
8. Go over the stile into the next field and head diagonally left. If there is a crop in the field the path is usually easy to follow, but at the top of the slope you should see a hedge in front of you with a gate in it. The gate post has a footpath marker on it. Don't go through the gate, but turn right and follow the hedge, keeping the hedge on your left, until you get to a stile at the far corner of the field. While you are crossing the field, you will see the familiar landmark of Mursley Water Tower in front of you and to the right. But then again, there aren't many places in the area where you can't see Mursley Water Tower from! It was built on high ground in the '1930s to provide a reliable water supply to the area. The water tower was damaged during World War II when a Wellington Bomber crashed into it in poor visibility while trying to land at Little Horwood Airfield. Sadly, all four of the crew of the aircraft were killed.
9. Having crossed the stile you will find yourself on a narrow, but attractive footpath, which leads to Main Street in Mursley, where you turn left. The unusually wide Main Street owes its layout to a period in the 13th Century when Mursley was granted a charter for a market. However, after only a few years the market was taken away because the market at Leighton Buzzard complained about the competition! Walk down Main Street, past the church, before turning left into Cooks Lane. Walk up Cooks Lane until it bends sharply left.
10. If you follow Cooks Lane when it turns left it will take you back down to Salden Upper Pond at point 6. However, don't turn left, go straight ahead through the gate in front of you. If you want a slightly shorter walk, you can cut diagonally right across the field to a stile in the hedge and return to Great Ground on the other side of the hedge (turn immediately left after the stile to return to point 4 and then retrace your steps to Drayton). However, if you go straight ahead from the gate, keeping the hedge on your left you will come to the gate by point 5. Turn right here and retrace your steps to Drayton Parslow.

