

A HISTORIC WALK AROUND ABBEY FIELDS, Windsor Street, Chertsey, KT16 8AT for People with Dementia

INTRODUCTION

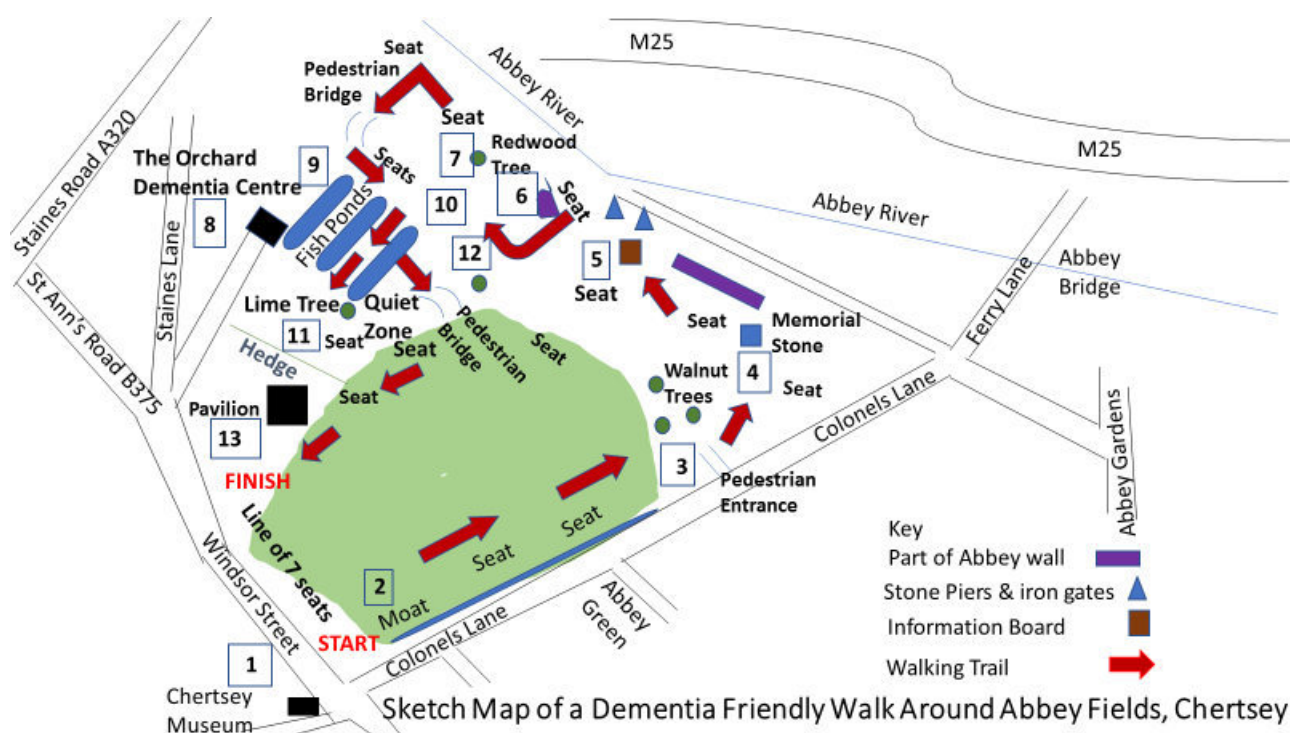
Plan your visit at a time of day when the person with dementia functions best eg mid-morning. You could collect items as you go around your walk to make a memory box to bring out on a wet afternoon, and to plan your next outing. If you are worried the person you care for with dementia may not want to go home, you could put out the tea/coffee items out on the table before you leave so the person has something to do or look forward to when they return home.

If you are anxious about going for a walk on your own, you could join a group such as Dementia Carers Support, which organises activities, including walks and outings, Telephone 01932 342910 or email frances@dementiacarerssupport.co.uk

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Please wear shoes or trainers that are comfortable, that provide adequate support and do not cause blisters. Make sure your mobile phone is charged, and has credit for a phone call, just in case you need help, or to summon help for someone else. You may want to take some water, healthy snacks, and a first aid kit.

Please stay on the path or grassed areas, as there are hidden tree roots in areas that are not well maintained. The dry moat and dry fish ponds have a steep drop, so please stay well away from the edge.



START

There is on road car parking in Colonel's Lane, Staines Lane, Windsor Street, or there is a disabled parking bay outside Chertsey Museum.

You can make the walk as long or short as you wish. You may want to start at the open access green off Windsor Street and just sit in one of the 7 seats, near the disabled toilet. Or you may wish to sit in a garden area on a seat near the fish ponds or sit in a seat with a view of the Abbey River.



There are cafes along Windsor Street with toilets. Chertsey Museum has a disabled toilet. Chertsey Museum is opposite the green, near the corner the green of Windsor Street and Alwyns Lane, and **is open Tuesday to Friday 12.30pm to 4.30pm and Saturdays 11am to 4pm.**



Chertsey Museum, Windsor Street, Chertsey, KT16 8AT (number 1 on the map)

History of Chertsey Abbey

Chertsey Abbey was originally founded in 666 AD by Saint Erkenwald who was the first abbot and from 675 AD the Bishop of London.. **abbey at Chertsey**. The area which is now the playing field would have been used as a market garden and orchards. Under the rules of the Benedictine order,

monks were required to be completely self-sufficient. All around the walk there are fruit trees eg walnuts, crab apple, hazlenuts etc.



During the 9th and 11th centuries Chertsey Abbey was subject to several Viking attacks. The raiders travelled from along the Thames leaving their boats somewhere near Staines and walked over the fields to the abbey. The original wooden abbey was burnt to the ground during one of these raids in 871. A Viking sword discovered in the gravel pits that now form part of Thorpe Park, can be seen in Chertsey Museum in Windsor Street, just past the green on the opposite side of the road.

In 964 the Abbey was re-founded having been sacked by Vikings, and later re-built in stone. Chertsey Abbey than became one of the largest monastic houses in the country. In its heyday it owned land covering over 50,000 acres. Much of its development came under the supervision of Abbot John de Rutherwyk, Abbot from 1307 to 1346. It was said that the buildings on the site of Chertsey Abbey resembled a “small town”. You can see a computer-generated model of how Chertsey Abbey may have looked, in Chertsey Museum.

The moat you can see to the right of you is part of the Abbey moat. It marks the boundary between the abbey precinct and the town of Chertsey. It runs around the perimeter of the abbey site, although the western part was covered when Windsor Street was widened in 1958.

Walk Around Abbey Fields.

If you walk along the dry moat parallel to Colonel’s Lane, there are two seats you can stop and take rests, before walking into the wooded area.

Start of the dry moat (number 2 on the map)

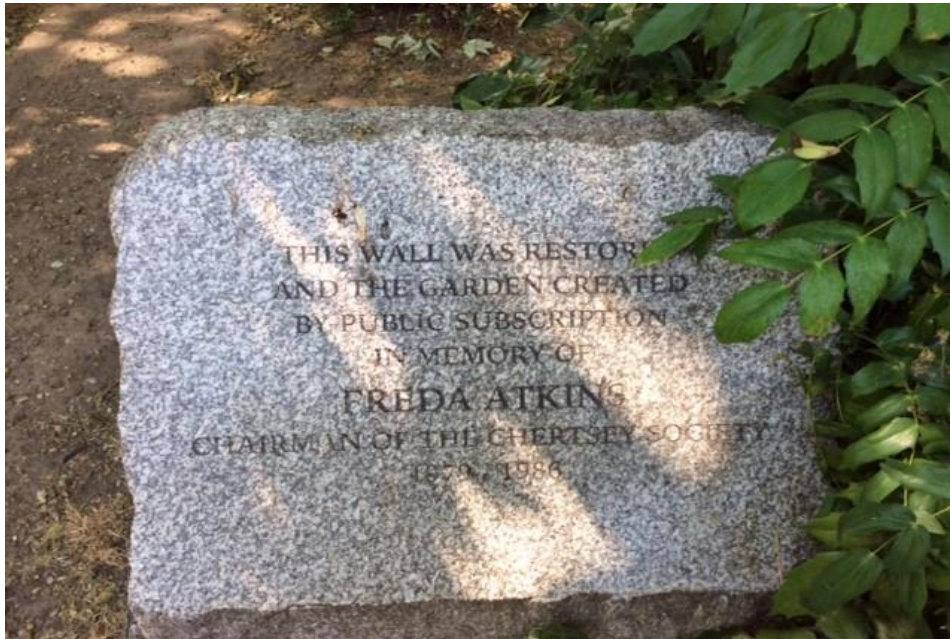


When you reach the wooded area you will find three walnut trees as identified on the map.



Walnut trees (number 3 on the map)

Once past the walnut trees you will see a seat in the far corner, and on your left, a stone memorial and part of the former Chertsey Abbey wall (**number 4 on the map**).



The inscription on the memorial stone reads:

This wall was restored and the garden created by public subscription in memory to Freda Aitken Chairman of the Chertsey Society 1979 – 1986.



The above view of the stone wall is taken looking back into the wooded area (**number 5 on the map**)



With your back to the stone wall you will see an information notice in front of you and an iron gate with four stone piers on your right.



To the left of the stone piers, which are all that remains of a Victorian house built on the site (**number 5 on the map**).

You will see another fragment of Chertsey Abbey wall with ground plaques and a seat.



(number 6 on the map)

These low walls are all that remains of the out-buildings. Dormitories, kitchens the dining hall and the storerooms would have been located in this area. To your left are the remains of a bread oven. There would have also been toilets with running water, fed from the Abbey River, and an infirmary where sick monks and town's people would have been treated.

King Henry VIII ordered the dissolution of the monasteries in England in between 1536 and 1540. As a result, the monks from Chertsey Abbey were sent to Bisham Priory, Berkshire, in 1537 and Chertsey Abbey was gradually and systematically dismantled. Many of the outbuildings were taken down stone by stone and transported along the river to Weybridge where they were used to construct Oatlands Palace for Anne of Cleves, King Henry VIII's fourth wife.

With your back to the stone piers take the path straight ahead. **Please stay on the path** as on the left of the path is a steep drop and a dried-up ornamental pond. Continuing on the path you will see a redwood tree on the left, its huge trunk is 'furry', please feel free to touch the tree and notice how the texture is different to all the other trees on Abbey Fields.

It was not far from here in Abbey Gardens that, in 1852 during building work on the Abbey site, workmen uncovered a tiled floor. These tiles, described as the finest Mediaeval tiles in England, had been laid in the Abbey church in the late 13th century. Examples of these tiles can now be seen in Chertsey Museum.



Redwood Tree and bark (number 7 on the map)

Once past the redwood tree you leave the wooded area behind and you will find yourself in another open grassed area with two seats, with a view of the Abbey River, and another part of the dry moat behind you. The monks, who are said to have widened the Abbey River by hand, also built weirs on the river to help catch fish which was the staple part of their diet. Meat was only eaten on special occasions.



Willow over the Abbey River

If you walk ahead on the path towards the second seat, on the left you will see a pedestrian bridge. Walk across the pedestrian bridge and on your left are two seats together in front of a garden border and opposite two of the monastery's dry fish ponds.

Originally there were seven ponds, although only three remain. The monks would have caught fish in the Abbey River and kept them alive in these ponds until they were needed in the kitchens.

Vegetables such as beans, onions and leeks would have been grown here, as well as herbs used in the kitchens and in the infirmary. Orchards in this area would have supplied the monks with fruit, and grapes for wine making were grown on the slopes of St Ann's Hill. Bees were also kept by the monks. The honey was used to sweeten food as sugar was not yet known, and candles were made from the wax.

To your right you will see The Orchard Dementia Centre building with one of the fish ponds in front (**number 8 and 9 on the map**).



The Orchard provides a variety of activities which includes:

- **Arts & Crafts**
- **Shopping**
- **Baking**
- **Gardening**
- **Reminiscence**
- **Walking**
- **Seated dancing and music**

To contact The Orchard Dementia Centre, telephone 01932 561245 Email: info@orcharddementiacentre.co.uk website www.orcharddementiacentre.co.uk Address: Staines Lane, Chertsey Surrey, KT16 8PS.

To the left of the seats is a very tall eucalyptus tree and you will find many eucalyptus leaves on the ground.



Eucalyptus Tree (number 10 on the map)

The eucalyptus tree is native to Australia where it is the staple diet of the koala bear. Eucalyptus oil is made from the leaves of the tree, which are crushed and then distilled. Sometimes a red resin exudes from the bark of the tree, which is where its other name 'gum tree' comes from. The eucalyptus is evergreen, so its leaves are green all year round.

The third dry fish pond is surrounded by hazelnut trees. If you walk past the third fish pond you will come to a large lime tree and seat. Behind the seat is a bean tree and to the left of the tree is a judas tree. At the end of May, and the beginning of June, the lime tree flowers and you will smell a beautiful perfume. Bees love lime tree flowers and lime homey has a distinctive taste.



**Seat with bean tree behind and lime flowers in the foreground
(number 11 on the map)**



Lime flowers on the lime tree.

If you walk past the seat you will find yourself in a very quiet part of the garden with a fir tree, smaller eucalyptus tree and Ginkgo tree.



The Ginkgo Tree

The Ginkgo tree is also known as the maidenhair tree. It is often known as the 'living fossil' tree, as it is the species existed over 200 million years ago, in Europe, Greenland and the United States of America. The Ginkgo is deciduous. Towards the back of the quiet area on the right is a fir tree and you may find some fir cones.



Fir Cone



Fir Tree and its Bark (number 12 on the map).

If you turn around with your back to the fir tree you will see another pedestrian bridge ahead of you. Walk over the pedestrian bridge you will find yourself back on the green with a seat to your right and the pavilion building on the same path.



Pavilion (number 13 on the map)

This is the end of the walk.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

Chertsey Museum has regular exhibition and has a model of Chertsey Abbey, as well as a wonderful collection of Bronze Age, Saxon and Viking finds. Chertsey Museum is opposite the green near the corner of Windsor Street and Alwyns Lane and open Tuesday to Friday 12.30pm to 4.30pm and Saturdays 11am to 4pm.

Surrey County Council have a reminiscence collection. For further information about their collection, please ask at your local library or contact the Library Information Service on 01483 543599 or email libraries@surreycc.gov.uk.