

About Betty



This walk is named in honour of Mrs Betty Capper, who joined the WI as a founder member of Freshwater Central 45 years ago. Betty was born in 1923 and has lived in Freshwater all of her life. It was her memories of Old Freshwater that inspired us to produce this leaflet.

The Walk is approximately 1¼ miles long

Hooke Hill is the only uphill incline. Care is needed in the churchyard.

Refreshments and toilet facilities are available at the End of the Line Cafe at the start and finish of the walk. Food and drink to take away can be purchased at the Co-op store. The Red Lion Pub offers refreshment at limited times.

Buses 7 and 11 stop outside the Co-op where our walk begins

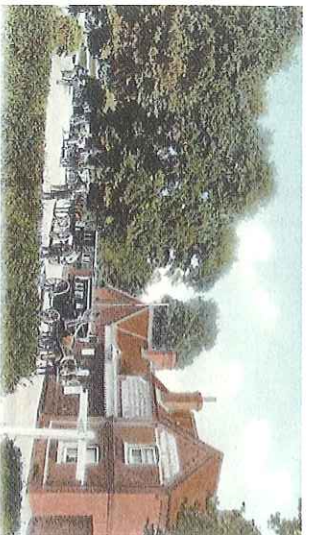
Produced by Freshwater Central WI

BETTY'S WALK

A circular walk round old Freshwater Village

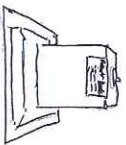


Parish Church and old cottages, Freshwater, I. W.



1 Our walk starts at the bottom of Hooke Hill, outside the Co-op supermarket. This is built on the site of Freshwater Railway Station. The railway came to Freshwater in 1880 and was instrumental in the repositioning of village amenities. Before this the heart of Freshwater was centred in and around Church Place.

Betty: "I can remember my mother telling me she ran up the hill to watch the first passenger train come into Freshwater".



2 Where Bow Bridge crosses the brook, stands a monument to Freshwater's most famous son, Robert Hooke (1635-1703). Overlooked for many years, Hooke is now getting the praise he deserves for his remarkable contribution to science. This monument was unveiled in 1966 by Lord Mountbatten. As we walk up Hooke Hill we shall pass the site of Hooke's birthplace on the right; a private residence now called "Heatherstone House".
Betty recalls that it used to be a farm with a cowshed in the front garden.

3 At the top of the hill we cross into Church Place, a picturesque cluster of old cottages. Emberly Cottage and Emberly House are two of the oldest houses. These were shops a century or more ago. The Red Lion Pub is one of the oldest on the island. Records show that in

1395 the Rector was arrested here for smuggling wool to France.

Betty: "The old stone cottages on the right of Church Place were once the premises of a milliner and a cobbler".



4 All Saints Parish Church has Saxon origins. It has a 15th Century tower. Take time to go inside to see the Victorian pews, exposed stonework and beautiful stained glass windows. In the Afton Chapel there is a wonderful bronze bust of Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Our walk also includes the churchyard. There is plenty to see and admire here, especially in the spring when there is a carpet of crocus. Lady Tennyson is buried in the family vault. Also of interest are the ancient yew, the millennium yew, the Silver Jubilee Oak and a Dawych Beech from Broadlands, planted in 1979.

Betty was married here in 1957 and her ancestors are all buried in the churchyard.

5 Leaving the church through the Lychgate, erected in 1911, we continue around the corner into the Causeway. Take care on this very narrow lane. Around two corners the vista of the Western Yar estuary opens up. Popular with "twitchers" the estuary attracts many species of wildfowl and waders. The old pillbox on the right was built in 1940 for the protection of the Yar and the railway from German invaders.



After crossing the old stone bridge we will be turning right, but a short detour to the left will take you to an information board and a seat by the river; a perfect place to enjoy a picnic and watch the wild life.



6 The cottage beside the river was the home of the level crossing keeper, for the bridleway we are now walking is the line of the old railway. On our left are the grounds of Afton Manor. Recorded in the Domesday Book as belonging to the Saxon Earl Tostig.

Betty had a friend whose father was gardener here and the girls used to sneak in to pick the daffodils.

7 This footpath takes us out to Afton Road where we turn right to the "End of the Line" cafe standing on the site of the former goods yard. Nostalgic photographs of the days of the steam railway cover the walls. Note another pillbox as you enter the car park.
Betty remembers when the car park was used as a coal yard for hauliers delivering coal to the area. She used to watch the huge Dray horses here whilst the wagons were being unloaded.

It is only a few hundred yards from here back to the Co-op store to complete our circular walk around Old Freshwater.