



Petworth, West Sussex GU28
0AE

TRAIL
Walking

GRADE
Moderate

DISTANCE
4 miles (6.4km)

TIME
1 hour 30 minutes

OS MAP
**Landranger 197;
Explorer 133**

Contact

01793 342207
petworth@nationaltrust.org.uk

Facilities

**National
Trust**

nationaltrust.org.uk/walks

Petworth House and Park ancient trees walk

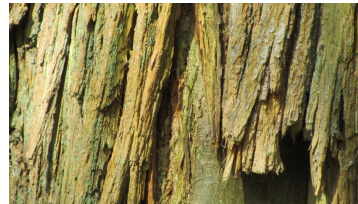
Petworth House is a magnificent house set in 700 acres of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown landscaped deer park. The parkland is home to an array of characterful veteran trees and was famously immortalised in the paintings of JMW Turner. The pretty town of Petworth is just a step away from the house.



Terrain

Terrain is steep in places and can be muddy underfoot. Dogs are welcome but must be kept under close control, as deer graze in the park. No dog bins, so please take any dog litter home.

Things to see



Storm casualty

This 285 year-old fallen sweet chestnut was a casualty of the 1987 storm. It now provides a valuable habitat for invertebrates and other wildlife (direction 6).

Gnarled old beauties

The gnarled bark of the old sweet chestnut beauties on Lawn Hill makes them natural, ancient works of art. Some of these trees show signs of having been struck by lightning (direction 7).

Largest lime tree?

Look out for this, the largest lime in the park and possibly one of the oldest and largest examples in the country. Many of Petworth's veteran limes have had extensive decay to their trunks, yet these almost hollow shells may continue to live for several hundred more years (direction 10).



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Start/end

Start: Petworth Park car
park, grid ref: SU966238 (not
Petworth House car park)
End: Petworth Park car park,
grid ref: SU966238

How to get there

By foot: Pedestrian access from
Petworth town and A272

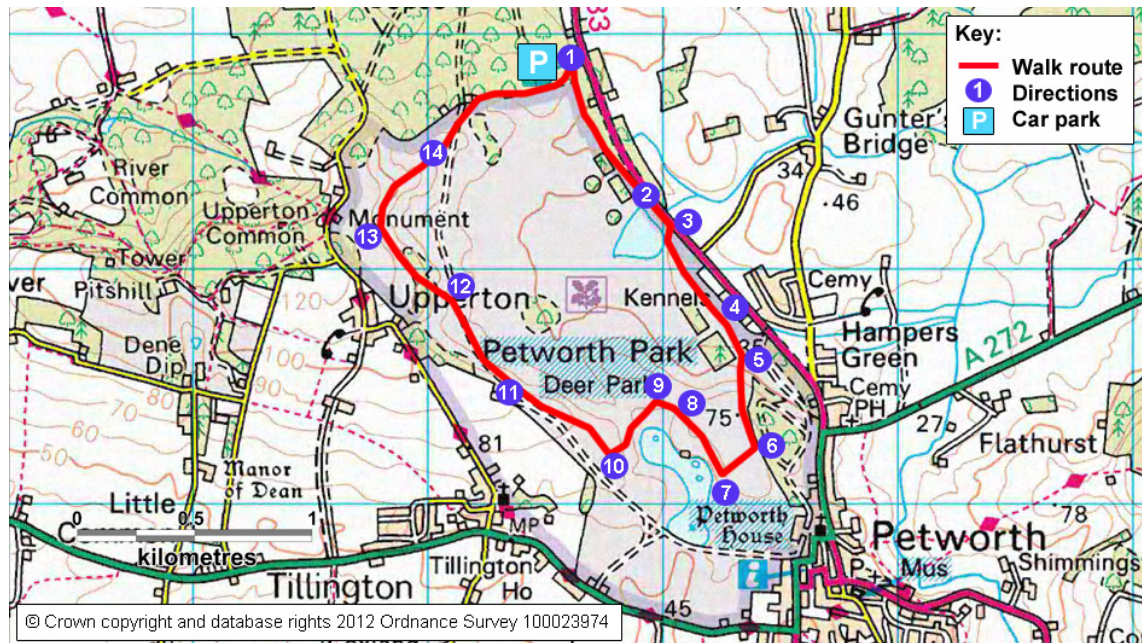
By bus: Stagecoach in the
South Downs 1, Worthing
to Midhurst. Compass 76,
Horsham to Petworth

By train: Pulborough 6 miles
(9.6km)

By car: In centre of Petworth
(A272/A283); both house and
park car parks on A283; No
vehicles in park. £2 parking fee
in Petworth Park car park for
non-National Trust members

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nationaltrust.org.uk/walks



1. From the ticket machine in the car park, and with the park wall on your left, walk through the gap in the fence and keep walking in the same direction. After the trees start on the right of the path you will find a stone square in the centre of the path. Turn left at this point and walk to the wall and you will find a large mature oak which is named the Beelzebub Oak and has its own plaque in the wall behind it. This oak is shown on maps as far back as 1779, when it helped mark the parish boundary. It has been suggested that the oak is so named because the territory outside of the parish was considered spiritually suspect!

2. Continue towards the Lower Pond, on the right hand side you will see a large oak which is around 400 years old. After this, just before the pond, look out for a sweet chestnut of around 250 years old. In 1603 this area was described as fowle and deepe of myre. In the 18th century, Capability Brown designed this pond and the drainage network that maintains the water levels. A tunnel runs below the A283 to assist the annual amphibian migration.

3. As you start walking to the left of the pond on the path you will see a dead tree which has been cut back but left standing. The policy is now not to remove dead trees but cut them to a safe height and leave for insect and fungi habitat. Continue past a large oak on the left hand side, where the roots are proud of the ground, and continue on the path towards the hill rising in front of you.

4. Pass the hound kennels and then the house on the left hand side. To the right you can see the two clumps of trees which were put in 1968 and 1972 to hide the intended Petworth Bypass which never came. Start walking away from the wall at this point, diagonally right on a grass track.

5. When you meet the gravel path, turn right onto it and walk uphill. You will soon meet the wall that goes around the Pleasure Ground and at this point you will find a very large sweet chestnut on the right hand side which is around 500 years old.

6. Further on the path you will come to a large oak on the right hand side which is around 1,000 years old. This ancient oak tree has survived all the major landscape changes since the 12th century and is a wonderful example of pollarding. As Petworth House comes into view move off the park to the right and head over Lawn Hill to a large fallen sweet chestnut which was a casualty of the 1987 storm. When the rings were counted it was found to be 285 years old.

7. Cut across Lawn Hill towards the Upper Pond. Here there are a number of interesting trees of varying ages and with some extraordinary trunk features.

8. With the lake on your left hand side bear right down the other side of Lawn Hill, ignore the first grass path and continue down to the second grass path. Follow this until you come to a T junction in the paths, turn left and take the wide path towards and up over Arbour Hill where you will find a clump of very old sweet chestnuts, aged from 400 to 600 years old.

9. From the sweet chestnuts go down towards the Upper Pond copse which is enclosed by black railings. Follow the railings to the right and turn right uphill on the grass path between the timber boxed trees just before you get to the black gate in the railings.

10. Turn right when you get to the cross paths onto another grass path that leads away from the Upper Pond and walk gradually up hill towards a short, wide and hollow tree. This is a lime tree with a huge girth and is possibly one of the largest and oldest in the country.

11. Keep walking on this path, over Snow Hill, until you get to a stone track where you should turn right. This is where some of the oldest trees in the park reside. Keep to this path for around half a mile (0.8km).

12. Shortly after passing a gate on the left hand side you will come to some of the oldest trees in the park. Pass a fallen dead wood on the right hand side and an enclosure on the left. Shortly after you pass between two huge sweet chestnuts turn left up a steep grass path towards the side of an enclosure.

13. Follow the vehicle tracks and you will come to the top of the hill and The Concave. The path round The Concave shows where the old carriageway to the House ran so that the guests could get a full view of the parkland leading up to the House. There are some old oaks here and a clump of Scots pines in the distance.

14. Continue around the path and down Monument Hill and you will find one of the oldest sweet chestnuts on the right hand side as you descend. Head towards the lodge on a grass path and continue over the track on the same path. Follow this grass path, going straight over any cross paths until you find yourself back at the car park after approximately a third of a mile (0.6km).
