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THERE'S nothing like the suggestion of a Sunday afternoon walk to unite a family – everyone agrees, they don't want to do it. But they're wrong, they really do want to do it, and they'll love it once they've started. That's what I always say.

I understand walks are not as exciting as binge watching *Narcos* or playing *Civ*, my teen has even been known to suggest he has to stay in to do homework. I guess afternoon walks, like gardening, sunscreen and punctuality, are something you appreciate more with age.

But one of the main reasons we moved out of London to Surrey 12 years ago was to enjoy the countryside so I've insisted, on a more-or-less continuous basis, that we do just that. My husband has little patience with the sort of walk where there's a need to get into a car to commence, so last week we stretched ourselves a little by walking three-and-a-half miles to the Silent Pool, where the three mile walk I'd ear-marked officially begins. This provided plenty of opportunity for people to chorus: "Are we nearly there yet?" Indeed, the question ran through my mind, since there was rain in the air.

The Silent Pool is a favourite beauty spot of mine. It's a tranquil retreat and not without its own level of notoriety. In December 1926, when crime writer Agatha Christie infamously disappeared, her car was discovered abandoned at nearby Newlands Corner and it was feared that she'd drowned at the Silent Pool. She hadn't, she turned up in Harrogate. My dad suggested we leave him and my mum there. He said he wanted to look around the distillery, a rather pleasant way to catch his breath.

The rest of us carried on. I took up my mother's role by intermittently shouting: "Car approaching," which I'm certain they could see themselves and "watch that" when a dog owner hadn't done the proper thing.

We approached Shere, via Lower Street, spotting The



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO/GEORGE GREEN

The famous St James' Church in Shere

## Walk this way

*This month bestselling author Adele Parks encourages her family to appreciate the bountiful countryside on their doorstep with a Sunday afternoon walk*

Old Forge, The Old Prison and Weavers House – all charming and picturesque. We fed ducks and marvelled that the village hall is used as a cinema, how perfect! Shere is possibly the most quintessentially British village, certainly Hollywood producers think so. Some years back, it was the set for that Kate Winslet/Cameron Diaz/Jude Law movie, *The Holiday*. But, I imagine you know that; it's local legend.

Kate Winslet's cutesy cottage was just a set and is no longer there, but St James' Church

***"We fed ducks and marvelled that the village hall is used as a cinema, how perfect!"***

is real and standing in all its glory. The central part of the village has many beautiful timber-framed houses, shops and eateries, offering a tremendous selection of treats, trinkets and shelter. Particularly welcome, as by now it was raining in earnest. We decided against completing the route and settled down to play cards in the local pub. Later, my parents texted to say they'd caught a taxi and would swing by to pick us up.

Consensus was reached, this was one of our best 'walks' ever. ♦