



**Casual Games for City Walkers**  
HG Playful Map 002

Written on residency in Winchester, supported by Winchester City Council, Hat Fair and Winchester Action on Climate Change (WINAOC), and inspired by the streets and backways of small cities everywhere. These games are designed to be read and played by walkers and gamers of any level of experience, as part of relaxed and incidental walking around towns and cities.

Feet First is Winchester City Council's campaign to promote walking as the norm for short journeys, or as part of a longer journey, to school, shops, work and public transport links, as well as for leisure. Hat Fair is the UK's longest running festival of outdoor arts, which takes place in Winchester over the first weekend of July every year.



Everyone playing Casual Games for City Walkers does so at their own risk. Participants are responsible for assessing their own risk, the suitability of themselves and other members of their group, and Council, Hat Fair and their partners will not be liable in respect of any personal injury (including without limitation serious injury or death) that participants may suffer or sustain directly or indirectly as a result of playing Casual Games for City Walkers.

www.harrygiles.org

**Key**


Game difficulty and length

Equipment needed


**Winchester City Council** **FEET FIRST** **HAT FAIR** **ARTS COUNCIL** **ENGLAND**

PLAYABLE MAP SECOND SERIES


 WINCHESTER EDITION

**CASUAL GAMES for CITY WALKERS**

HARRY GILES


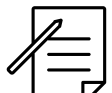
FEET FIRST 2016  HAT FAIR 2016

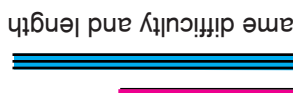
**NEW DIRECTIONS**



Choose a walking route that seems very familiar to you. Write down the exact directions, the turns you must take to reach your destination: first right, third left, and so on. Now, follow those directions to the pavement. Track where you would have to climb, go where you're going without ever touching the ground, leap and swing. Make sure not to fall in!

Advanced rules: complete the same route with the same lava but as your actual height.

Equipment needed:  

Game difficulty and length: 

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**ESPIONAGE**

You are a secret agent. Choose a route you need to travel and the uniform of your enemies: one item of clothing of a particular colour (like a red purse or a green shirt). Head from your safe house to your target as quickly as you can, but whenever you see an enemy spy you have only ten seconds to escape from their sight or your vital message will be intercepted.

Adjust the difficulty by selecting a longer route, a busier time of day, or a new uniform: striped ties are a small agency, but blue jeans are highly funded and very powerful.


Advanced rules: instead of playing with moving spies, play with CCTV cameras. Look everywhere to make sure you don't miss one. Try not to seem too paranoid.

**PAVEMENT IS LAVA**

As you walk, imagine that you are three inches tall and that the pavement is lava: three-inch-you must go where you're going without ever touching the pavement. Track where you would have to climb, go where you're going without ever touching the pavement, leap and swing. Make sure not to fall in!

Advanced rules: complete the same route with the same lava but as your actual height.

**THE OTHER FOOT**



Walk a mile in someone else's shoes. They don't have to be particularly challenging — they could just be oversized sandals — but they do have to belong to someone else. Just a mile will do. Your score is the number of times you fall down and pick yourself up again. Make your score into a badge of pride and pin it to someone else's coat.

**IN TOUCH**



Choose a common walking route, like your path from home to work or a stroll to the shops. Try to complete that route:

(a) While always stepping on the cracks in the pavement. Spaces between paving slabs and between different surfaces count; any break, any join, if you fall, help lay a smoother path for someone else.

(b) While always in sight of a tree. You do not always have to be looking at a tree, but a tree must always be able to look at you. If you fall, plant a tree so it'll be easier in a few years.

(c) While always touching a wall. If you need to, you have six seconds after letting go of one wall before you must touch another. If you succeed, make a level and lower others.

**PRIVATE GALAXY**


 

Take a wander through town with a printed map and a pack of sticky gold stars. Try not to navigate by your map but rather by where your feet want to go. Whenever you encounter a sign that says "Private" or "No Entry" or "No Right of Way", work out where you are and place a gold star on your map. Repeat over enough wanders to cover the area of the map. Now, link up the stars into constellations. Name and frame your new zodiac.

**RUBBISH TALES**



Walk with friends. Pick up any litter you pass on your way; you may race each other when litter is spotted. When you reach your destination, each player tells a story incorporating any product names written on the litter they picked up. Be inventive with what the names might mean. When the stories are told, each player votes for their favourite. You may not vote for yourself. The winner takes all the litter to the nearest recycling point.

**ANAGROADS**



Whenever you pass a street name plate, come up with a decent anagram of it. You may not turn onto a new street until you've satisfied yourself. Try to get where you're going without being late, but also without compromising yourself. This game is best played in teams, as a race.

**TIME ORACLE**

Choose a question and a time limit. Start walking. Whenever you see a clock, follow the direction of its minute hand. 12 is forward, 3 is a right turn, and so on. Keep going in that direction as best you can until you see another clock. If you get stuck (or bored), look at your watch and follow that instead. The game is over when you are out of time. Look around for your answer; it will be there.

**RISE AND FALL**

As you walk, look out for steps and stairs. When you take a step down, remind yourself of a time you raised yourself up. When you take a step up, remind yourself of a time you let yourself down. Later in the day, make sure to retrace your steps: if in one direction you ended up behind, in the other direction you'll always come out ahead.



## ROOFLINE

Take a seat on a bench where you can see an unbroken line of rooftops. That line tells the fate of a distant society: a house, a village, a nation, a planet, a galaxy. Slopes up mean periods of change, considered by many to be progress, while slopes down mean famine, war, plague or disaster. Gradient determines severity; sudden verticals are very dramatic. Flat roofs are times of peace and plenty.

If there's more than one of you, work together to tell the story of the society, changing turns as the slope changes. Be detailed. Create characters, dynasties, lasting currents of social movements, possibilities. When the story is complete, walk on.

This game may be played at street level or from the top of a hill: your choice may well change your perspective and your story.

## A TO B

Choose start and end points for your walk. Now, find as many different routes between A and B as you can, taking a new one each day. Draw up a score card, and mark each route you find for length, beauty and peace. When you've covered all the possible routes, throw the score card away and take whichever walk you like.

## THE MESSAGES

Take a seat, and write down every word you can see. If you can't make out the letters, you don't have to write it down: everything you can easily read should be enough. When you've found every word, count the number of words you've written down. You may now take that many steps in a straight line in the direction of your choice. When you're done, pause and start a new round by writing down all the words you can see from your new spot. Play as many rounds as it takes for you to arrive somewhere where there are no words to see at all. Your aim is to get to a place with no written language in as few rounds as possible.

Try playing this game from different starting locations, or with friends as a race. Do you like playing more in busy shopping streets, where you can take a lot of steps in a single round? Or do you prefer parks and suburbs where you have to hunt out words to move with? Which do you find harder to escape?

## HOMING

Stop, and point in the precise direction of home. Now walk. Use a compass to keep your bearing honest: always take the street that's closest to the direction you originally pointed. Keep going until you are home, or until you are certain that you're a long way past it. If you miss your home on the first point, then try again. You have as many goes as you need to get there, but you can only ever go home in straight lines.

## LOCAL HISTORY

Sketch a simple map of your walk to work. Each time you take that walk, tell yourself a story about one of the buildings or sights. Who lived there last century? What happened a thousand years ago? When was this built, and what was there before? You can play with historical or imaginative truth (or both). When you arrive, note the new facts on your map. Repeat until the history trail is complete.

## SPEED TEST

Choose a short walk, five to fifteen minutes, and time it. The next day, take it again at exactly twice the speed. The next day, take it again at exactly half the speed. On subsequent days, set trickier and trickier targets: two thirds the speed, 115% of the time, eight seconds slower. Score a point each time you hit your target. Score a point each time you notice something new. Don't stop counting.

## Walking Small Cities

These games were written in and for Winchester, a small city with a long history on the western edge of the South Downs. Writing about walking is often about the exploration of large cities or cafes for lunch. Games you can play in ten minutes, walk from home to work, or round the corner to the Parisian flâneur to Nan Shepherd's meditations on walking the Cairngorms — a piece which seem inexhaustible, where walking discovers new delights each day. It's easy to forget about the walking pleasures of small cities, places neat enough to circumnavigate in a day, where a week's walking could reasonably cover every street. When you think you know everywhere in your town, how do you make walking exciting again?

And in places as old as Winchester, with impressive architecture and weighty history, it's too easy to think that only the tourist trails are worth walking. But these places can offer a different kind of walking: less about discovery and more about presence. The challenge is to find a new way to walk down the street you walk every day, to turn down the alley you always pass, to make the familiar unfamiliar, to take pleasure in the small details you might otherwise miss.

## GAP SITE

When you encounter an empty space on your walk, draw a picture of how you might fill it with something better.

Advanced rules: draw a picture for full spaces too.

The game is over when there's nothing left to draw.

Whether you're playing these in Winchester or in places as old as Winchester, with impressive architecture and weighty history, it's too easy to think that only the tourist trails are worth walking. But these places can offer a different kind of walking: less about discovery and more about presence. The challenge is to find a new way to walk down the street you walk every day, to turn down the alley you always pass, to make the familiar unfamiliar, to take pleasure in the small details you might otherwise miss.

I wanted to write games that you can play — in your mind or with a pen and paper — when you walk from home to work, or round the corner to the cafe for lunch. Games you can play in ten minutes, or in little bursts over the course of a year. Games that are about walking not as a grand mission or as strenuous exercise, but that make us alive to the few steps we take each day. Each game is about noticing something in the way you walk, or how your city is built, or how people move and interact in ordinary and extraordinary ways. Some of them are strange, some are silly, some are hardly possible, some only take a moment: all of them can make walking new again.

## SANDWICH

Make a box of simple sandwiches: cheese works well, or hummus and salad has wide reach. As you walk, offer a sandwich to anybody who looks like they need one. You win when you've given them all away. Don't stop till you've won.

## FEAR ITSELF

Walk to an unfamiliar location. When you arrive, write down everything that scares or discomforts you. Now, over a series of rounds (or years), make a move to make you feel safer and happier. Sometimes this will involve changing yourself; Sometimes, the world. You win when your list is all crossed off.