



Selborne Woodland

Distance: 9 km=6 miles or 5¼ km=3¼ miles

easy walking

Region: Hampshire

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Refreshments: Selborne

Map: Explorer 133 (Petersfield) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: feedback@fancyfreewalks.org

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Village, green meadows, woodland, lakes

In Brief

This is a gentle walk from the historic and lovely village of Selborne, Hampshire through the woodland north-east of the village. This delightful country was the life work of the naturalist Gilbert White. This walk takes you on gentler gradients than the hilly walks to the west, making it an ideal stroll for anyone who would like to while away a few pleasant hours in the country. The longer walk takes an unmapped path through the woods and returns through the moory country meadows this side of Oakhanger. The shorter walk gives you a quicker return, in time to sample the pubs and tea houses of Selborne and perhaps to visit the Gilbert White heritage museum.



There are no nettles on this walk, so shorts should not be a problem. In the drier part of the year the terrain underfoot is fairly dry so walking shoes or trainers are adequate. But in the wetter seasons good ankle-high boots are necessary. This walk would be fine with your dog.

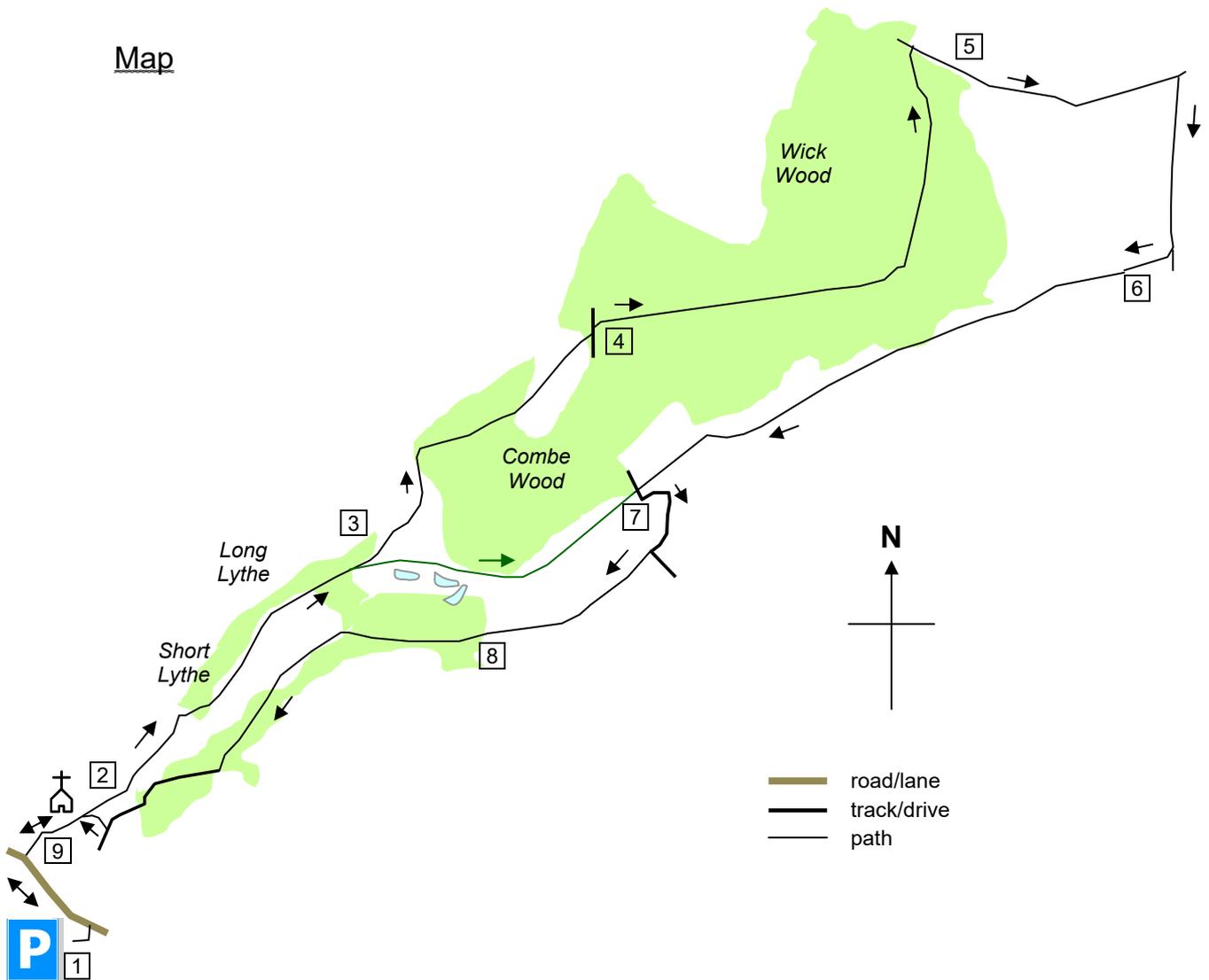
The walk begins at the **Selborne car park**, postcode **GU34 3JR**, www.w3w.co/producers.scarf.slips. This car park (modest charge) is behind the *Selborne Arms* pub in the middle of the village and is clearly marked with a brown tourist sign. There are also loos here. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

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The Walk

The historic village of Selborne is especially known because of its famous son, Gilbert White. For more details of the village, the church and of this world-famous naturalist, see another walk in this series "Selborne and the Zig-Zag to Newton Valence".

Map



- 1 Go out of the Selborne car park to the road and turn **left** through the village passing several interesting localities (of which more at the end). Opposite a large house (Gilbert White's), turn **right** on a brick path towards the church. *You will have another chance to visit the church at the end of the walk.* Go through the churchyard, with the church on your left, going under a yew and some massive cypress trees. At the other side, go through a wooden swing-gate into the a property of the National Trust (NT) known as Glebe Field (Church Meadow), passing an information tablet with a map. Go straight down, to go over a bridge across the Oakhanger Stream in the bottom left-hand corner. *You are on part of the Hangers Way (HW), a 21-mile Hampshire long-distance path.*
- 2 You are now in the NT's *Short Lythe*. *In Gilbert White's journal, he gives the origin of "Lythe" as Saxon for "steep slope". In his time the Short Lythe was a pasture and the sunny bank occupied by field crickets.* Follow this beautiful woodland path with a cottage on your right, ignoring some steps on your right. Your path takes you through a swing-gate to a 3-way fingerpost. Turn **right** and go through another swing-gate into the NT's *Long Lythe*. Your path runs along the left-hand slope of a valley. The path leads through a

wooden swing-gate into a large meadow with a string of lakes and a fork in the path.

Decision point. If you are doing the shorter (4¼ km=2½ miles) walk, skip to near the end of this text and do the section called the **Lakes Stroll**.

- 3 Take the **left** fork, keeping to the left-hand side of the meadow, still on the HW. The path veers away from the edge, goes over a bridge and through a swing-gate and veers left uphill in a sloping pasture. At the top, go **right** over a stile (*care! unstable*) beside a large metal gate onto a very neat path in Coombe Wood, soon passing a superfluous stile. The path leads you into a very undulating meadow. Keep straight on, going to the right of a small pond and passing an electricity pole. At the top, go over a stile to meet a crossing track. Turn **left** on the track for only 20m and then turn **right** over a large tree trunk that is used as a barrier. Continue straight ahead on the clear track into the deep recesses of Wick Wood.
- 4 This permissive path always comes as a surprise since it is not in the guidebooks. It runs dead straight through the wood although there may be some fallen trees to hop over. In spring, primroses abound. If the path seems a little overgrown at first, don't worry as it will get much better. Soon there is a ditch on your left. Avoid all turnings off till, after 600m, the path curves left. Keep ahead for another 500m. The large white golfball-shaped domes of RAF Oakhanger come into view at the same time as you have a path on your left and two on your right. Take the **second** path on the **right** here and follow it along the right-hand side of a large field.
- 5 In the far corner of the field, keep ahead at a new fingerpost to go over a plank bridge and stile [*care! bottom step broken*] and veer left across the centre of this moory meadow, heading for the remains of a fence and a one-plank bridge. Now veer a fraction right across the centre of the next reedy meadow, heading for a stile just to the right of a large metal gate. When you reach the stile, do *not* go over it but turn **right** to go along the left-hand side of the same meadow. Your path diverges a little from the edge and navigates a stile, a 2-plank bridge and a modern kissing gate in combination. Keep straight ahead over a farmer's path, continuing beside a wire fence on your right. Your path zigzags right-left through a modern kissing gate to another kissing gate. Go **left** over a brick bridge past a redundant stile and turn **right** in a large tufty meadow with the Oakhanger Stream curling its way on your right.
- 6 You pass a redundant stile. *Ahead of you are the distinctive tree-topped hangers near Selborne.* Head diagonally **right** for about 200m to the very far side of the meadow. When you reach it, go over another stile (*a challenge for a dog but there is a gap under the wire on your right*) and a 2-plank bridge, keeping ahead near the right-hand edge of the next meadow. Go over another 2-plank bridge and stile and continue similarly along the right-hand side of another meadow as Priory Farm comes into view. Half way along, go through a metal gate into the next field. Towards the end of this field, with Priory Farm now close, veer **right** to go over a concrete bridge. Go up into the next meadow and **veer** left in it. Now walk the length of the meadow, heading for a large metal kissing gate roughly in the middle of the far side. Go through this kissing gate and turn **left** on the track towards the farm buildings.

At this point the short option re-joins the main walk.

- 7 Go through a large metal gate into this organic dairy farm and veer **right** with the farm buildings on your left, soon passing the *Old Dairy*, a self-catering outfit. Keep to the main drive uphill and where it turns left, keep **right** on a narrower track, passing a newly-restored house on your left. Your path takes you through a metal gate and along the left-hand side of a meadow. The Selborne “hangers” are now prominent with Noar Hill beyond (see the other walk in this series “Selborne Common and Noar Hill”). You now cross the Oakhanger Stream, keeping to the left-hand side of the meadow, gently rising. Continue up to the far left-hand corner of this remarkable landscape and go through a small metal gate into Dorton Wood.
- 8 The path through beech and holly is excellent. It comes up into the light and runs along the left-hand side of the same valley familiar from your outward journey. At one point you are high above the stream down on your right near a large beech which has grown into a metal seat. Your path curves round to the right and takes you past an anti-motor barrier. Keep ahead on a drive beside the stream, past cottages. As the drive goes uphill and approaches a cottage on your left, turn sharp **right** at a 2-way finger-post and up some steps, over a V-stile, straight ahead up a slope and **left** through a swing-gate familiar from your outward journey. Continue through the churchyard, taking this chance to visit Selborne’s partly Saxon church of St Mary, with its Norman tower and nave, dating from 1180. Continue to the road and turn **left**.
- 9 Immediately opposite the church is *Gilbert White’s House*, now a Heritage Museum (with a charge for entry) with a shop, an excellent tea room (not requiring an entry ticket) and 18th-century garden. Continuing, you pass a shop and a tea room on the right, followed by an excellent pub. *The “Selborne Arms” is open all day at weekends and all the meat in its good reasonably-priced menu is locally sourced. (For information, ring Nick & Hayley Carter on 01420-511247.) The pub has an exit to the car park where the walk began.*



The Lakes Stroll

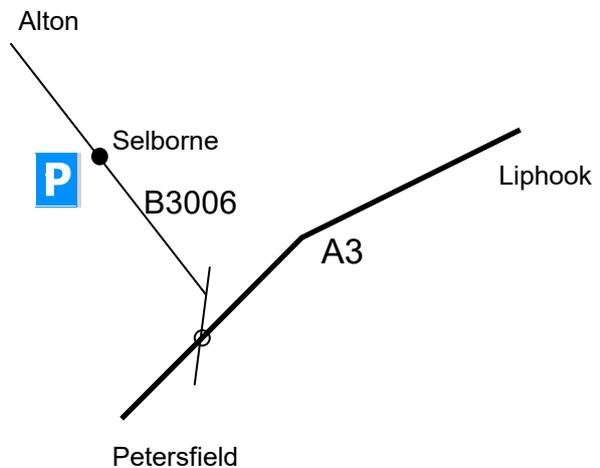
Take this route if you are doing the **shorter** option, avoiding the long woodland path.

Take the **right** fork, passing these pretty lakes on your right, and going between two of them. Your path takes you **left** through a wooden swing-gate and over a plank bridge into part of Coombe Wood. You immediately arrive at a fork. Take the **right**-hand option. In around 150m you arrive at a metal kissing-gate which leads you out into a meadow. Keep **left** between fences for around 250m to reach another metal kissing-gate at a wide crossing track near Priory Farm. Turn **right** on this track to the farm.

Now resume the main walk at section [7](#).

Getting there

By car: Selborne, on the B3006 road, is easily accessed in 3 miles from a roundabout on the A3 road just north of Petersfield, from where it is clearly signed. It is also accessed from Alton.



By bus/train: bus 38 from Alton station stops outside the pub, not weekends!
Check the timetables.

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