



Albury Heath to Blackheath

Distance: 6½ km=4 miles or 4 km=2½ miles, easy walking

Region: Surrey

Written: 18/07/2009

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Revised: 19/09/2011

Refreshments: Little London

Map: Explorer 145 (Guildford)

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

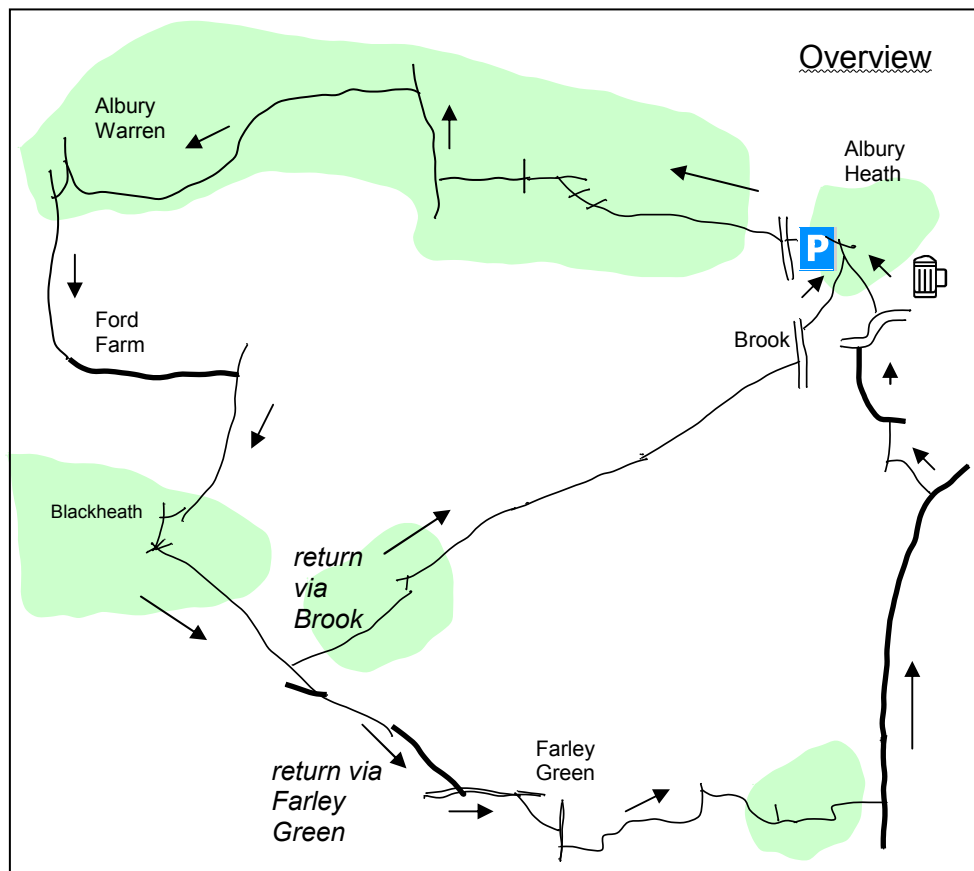
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Woodland trails, villages, hills

In Brief



This circular walk starts in Albury Heath, Surrey, and takes you along unmarked and unmapped paths to Blackheath, then back by a choice of route. It is ideal on a bright winter's day when the pine trees hold their green and the heath glistens in silvery dew.

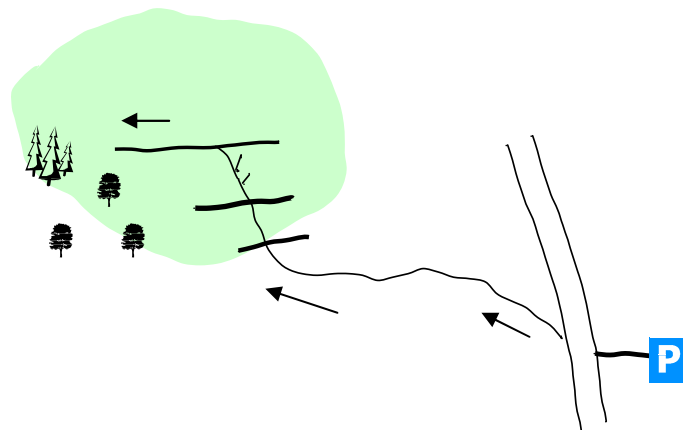


The walk begins at **Albury Heath, Surrey**, postcode GU5 9DB, in a local car park down a sandy track east of the road, just north of the level crossing. For full details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

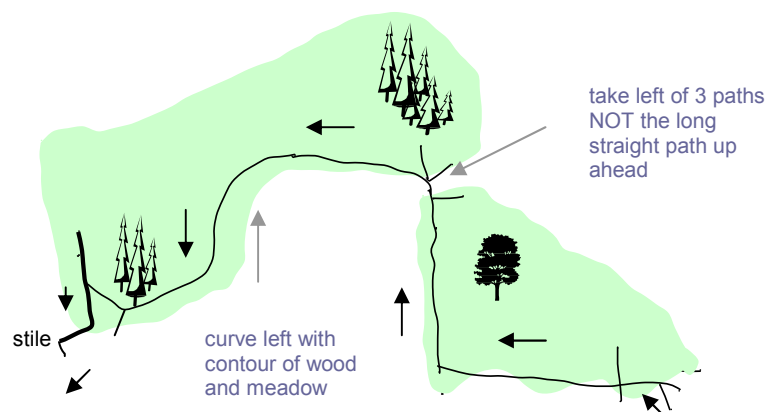
The Walk

Outward Leg 3 km=2 miles

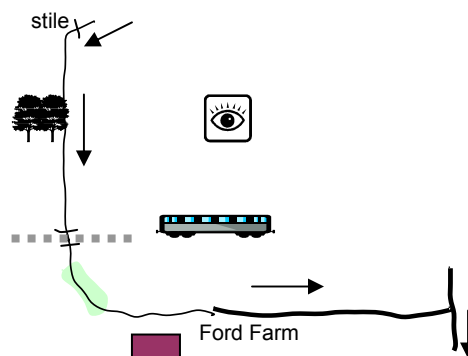
- 1 Exit the parking area to the main road, cross it, turn **right** for just 2-3 paces and take a narrow sandy path half **left**. The path widens and passes a bench on the left and, over on the right, a large wooden sculpture. The path narrows again and curves right to meet a wide track. Cross straight over on a narrow path. Keep at all times to the main path, avoiding all minor turnings off. The path meets a rough tarmac track. Again, continue straight over. Stay close to the dip on your left and avoid all lesser paths leading off right. Very soon, the path meets a much wider path. Turn **left** on this wide path.



- 2 At first there are overhead wires on your left. Keep them on your left, avoiding a left turn. Later, the path goes over a crossing path and leads down through conifers towards a field with a fence ahead. Turn **right** before the fence. Stay on this unmarked path for some distance with good views left across the meadows and on the right the mixed woods of Albury Warren. At a corner of a wire fence, go straight ahead ignoring a path right. Within a few steps, you are in a forest of tall pines with three possible paths ahead. Ignore the wide straight middle path going up through the pines and take the **leftmost** of the three paths, close to a meadow on your left. Soon the forest extends left round the corner of the field and the path bends left to follow it. There are more fine views across to Blackheath. About $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way along the side, avoid some minor paths off and stay on the main path as it curves **right** away from the meadowside. The path meets a crossing track at an angle. Turn sharp **left** onto the track shortly meeting a stile. Turn **left** after the stile into the meadow.



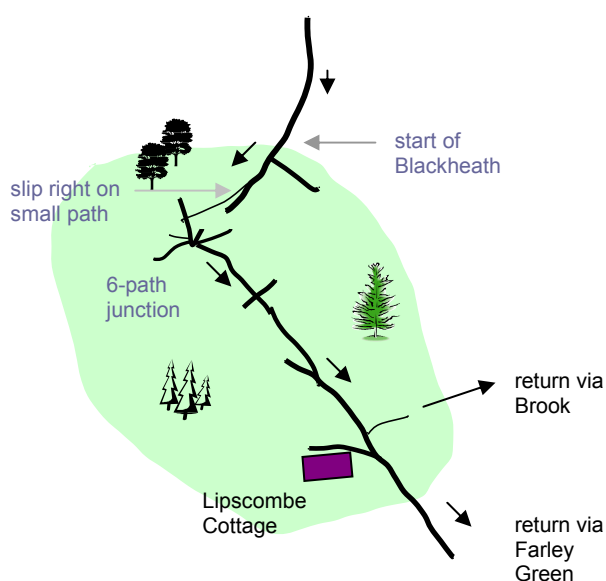
- 3 Cross the meadow staying about 20m from the right hand side, passing a group of trees on the right and reaching a railway crossing. Cross the railway line carefully. Continue ahead down a small sunken avenue of hazel, through a metal gate, and follow the path **left** beside the lovely isolated period farmhouse of Ford Farm, going through a gate to a gravel track. Keep straight ahead on the track past a converted barn and past on the right what used long ago to be water-cress beds. At the end of the track, turn sharp **right** onto a sandy bridleway.



Ford Farm in winter colours



- 4 The bridleway runs for some distance along a sunken track and finally comes to a junction of paths by a post as it enters the wooded expanse of Blackheath. There are wide paths left and straight ahead. Take the wide sunken path **straight ahead**, but only for 10m. Leave the sunken path by veering off **right** on a narrow rising path. The path levels out and runs through bracken to a T-junction. Turn **left**. In 30m, you reach a junction of six paths (plus numerous small ones). The *first* path from the left is the sunken path you were on. The *second* path from the left is a footpath marked with an arrow. Avoiding



both of these, take the **third** path from the left, a broad sandy horse track, exactly ninety degrees to your original direction. In about 150m, the track goes over a crossing track. It then joins a wider track coming from the right by a seat. Soon the track reaches a 1-bar barrier and the enchanting *Lipscombe Cottage*. (See the walk *Shere Heath and The Hurtwood* for a picture.)

Blackheath in
winter sun



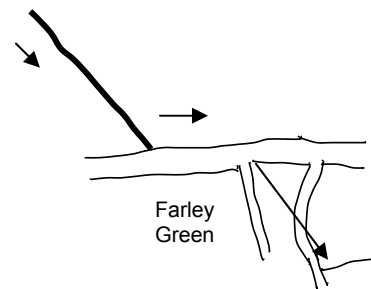
Here you have a choice.

Return via Farley Green takes a varied route back, visiting a pretty village and some contrasting landscapes.

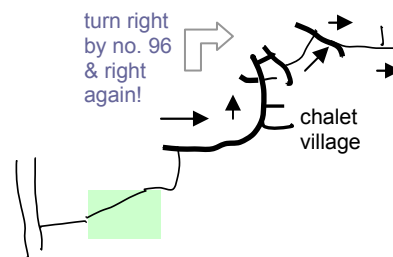
Return via Brook is the shorter return leading you across the fields directly back to Albury Heath.

Return via Farley Green 3½ km=2 miles

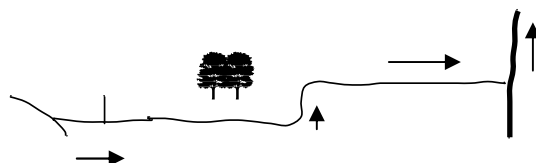
- 1 Turn **left** on the unmade road that runs past Lipscombe Cottage and follow it for some distance all the way to the road at Farley Green. Turn **left** on the road passing timbered *Greenacres* and, on reaching the triangular green, turn **right** along the sandy path across the right hand edge of the green. On reaching the road at the other side, turn **right** and curve left with the road. Just after the end of the green, turn **left** on a signposted footpath running beside the front lawn of a house.



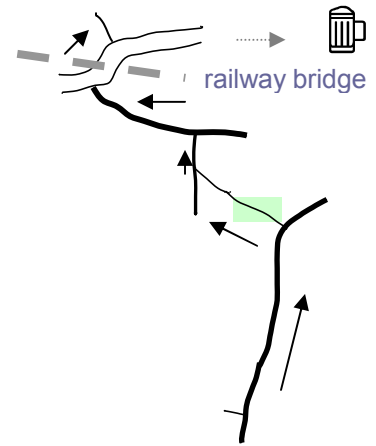
- 2 The path reaches a swing-gate and a small meadow. Head slightly **left** up to the corner and go through another wooden swing gate. Follow the fenced path round the field eventually reaching a swing-gate and an impeccable chalet village. Turn **right** at a fingerpost on the tarmac road which immediately curves **left**. The route through the chalet village is labyrinthine and you need to follow these directions carefully. Follow the tarmac as it curves left again and goes slightly downhill, ignoring two junctions right. Next, you pass and ignore a major junction left opposite a smaller road right. Just as the road bends left, turn **right** by chalet no. 96. At a T-junction, turn **right** again. Go to the corner of the road and turn **left** on a fenced footpath. On reaching another road, turn **right** for 15m and take a footpath straight ahead next to a holly hedge, going through a swing gate.



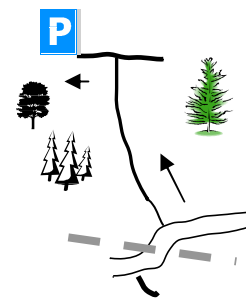
- 3 Immediately, at a signpost, ignore the path left and carry straight on. There are fine views on this path, first left to the North Downs and soon right also. The path goes through a grove of trees all of which are thickly coated with vines and then runs over a robust footbridge. It then zigzags left-right and finally takes you over an unneeded stile into the broad ancient byway known as Ponds Lane. Turn **left**.



- 4 After about 500m, when the byway is on a right curve, look out for an opening in the trees on the **left** with a metal gate and a hidden stile. Go over the stile and, after a few metres in the meadow, go over a stile on the **right** into the next meadow. Cut across the corner of this meadow to another stile. Keep the same direction in the next meadow to a stile in the corner, go down to a track and turn **right** onto it. At a T-junction, turn **left** onto a tarmac farm lane. The lane soon reaches the road called Little London. Turn **right** on the road. The *William IV* pub is a short distance along this road but requires a small diversion from this route.

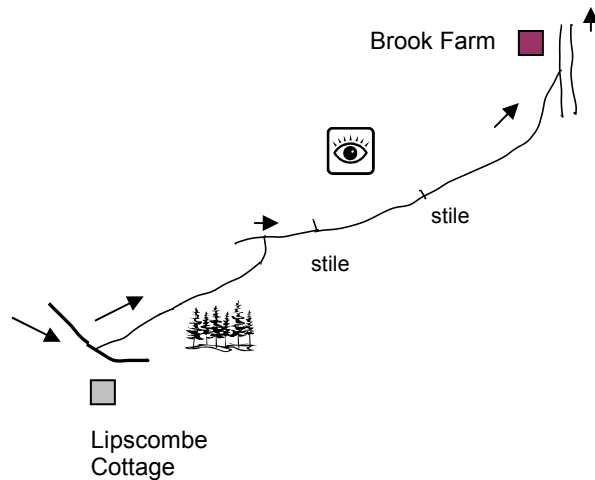


- 5 The road goes under a railway arch. Immediately after the arch, take a signed footpath **left**. The path runs beside a garden and reaches Albury Heath. Keep straight ahead on the main sandy track. At a T-junction, turn **left** and arrive back at the parking area where the walk began.

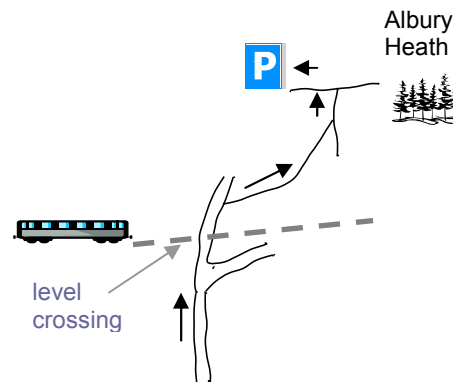


Return via Brook 1½ km (1 mile)

- 1 Immediately after the 1-bar barrier and before you reach the cottage, take a narrow signed footpath **left**. This path is also marked as part of the *Fox Way*. Follow the path up to an unneeded stile and go straight ahead through pinewoods. (At the time of writing, a tree trunk has been placed across the path and you need to bypass it.) At the end, go over a crossing path and through bracken and at a T-junction turn **right** to go over a stile into a large meadow. You now have a fine view of the North Downs with the hamlet of Brook ahead. Follow the path between fields, going over a stile in the middle, and where the hedge on the left ends, join a farm track leading to the road. Turn **left** on the road. The road passes Brook Farm on the left with its magnificent redbrick house.



- 2 Ignore a road forking right and continue over a level crossing. Immediately after the crossing, turn **right** on a narrow path between banks. Once out of the very thick bracken, at the start of the more open heathland, go half **left** across the mossy clearing to pine trees on the other side. Turn **left** here on a narrow path. At a T-junction, turn left on a track and immediately turn left at another T-junction, arriving back at the parking area where the walk began.



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Getting there

To get to Albury Heath there from the London area, take the A3 and, after crossing the M25, exit at the next major junction at a sign for Ripley. Take the B2215, signposted Woking, through Ripley and, 2 miles (3 km) after the village, turn left at a roundabout on the A247 signposted West Clandon. After 2 miles (3 km), pass West Clandon Church and the entrance to Clandon Park and cross over the A246 dual carriageway, signposted Dorking. Pass the car park for Newlands Corner. There are terrific views on the right.

After the road, Shere Road, becomes a dual carriageway, slip into the right lane and take the A248 right, signposted *Godalming and Albury*. At a junction where the A248 bends sharp right, turn left (really straight ahead) on a road signposted *Albury Heath, Farley Green, Peaslake*. Go past a road junction on the left and continue with Albury Heath on both sides of the road until you approach a large warning sign for a level crossing 100 yards (90m) ahead saying **Stop When Lights Flash**. Turn **left** just **before** the sign into a layby and sandy track. This parking space is not marked from the road but it is shown on the map and is much used by visitors and locals. You can park anywhere on the side of the track, especially a little further where there is more space on the left.

