



Chipstead Pub Walk with Shabden Park

Distance: 4¾ km=3 miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

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Refreshments: White Hart

Map: Explorer 146 (Dorking) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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Village, pub, sheep meadows, views, woodland

In Brief

The *White Hart* was always a welcome pitstop for drivers escaping the A23 and Croydon and making a beeline through Banstead. Always memorable as a friendly spot, visitors often stayed longer than they intended. The owners Brunning and Price are not a pub chain but a group dedicated to reviving old pubs and keeping their original character. The *White Hart* draws drinkers and diners from a wide circle, running a cheery bar with genuine locals and two dining areas, including one with a windowed panorama of the terrace-by-the-junction. Drinks include B&P's own brew plus ales such as Northern Lights and Surrey Pilgrim. Comestibles include light bites such as crab linguine and bubble'n'squeak. The full three courses offer some interesting choices. Walkers report good attentive service. For enquiries, ring 01737-554-455.

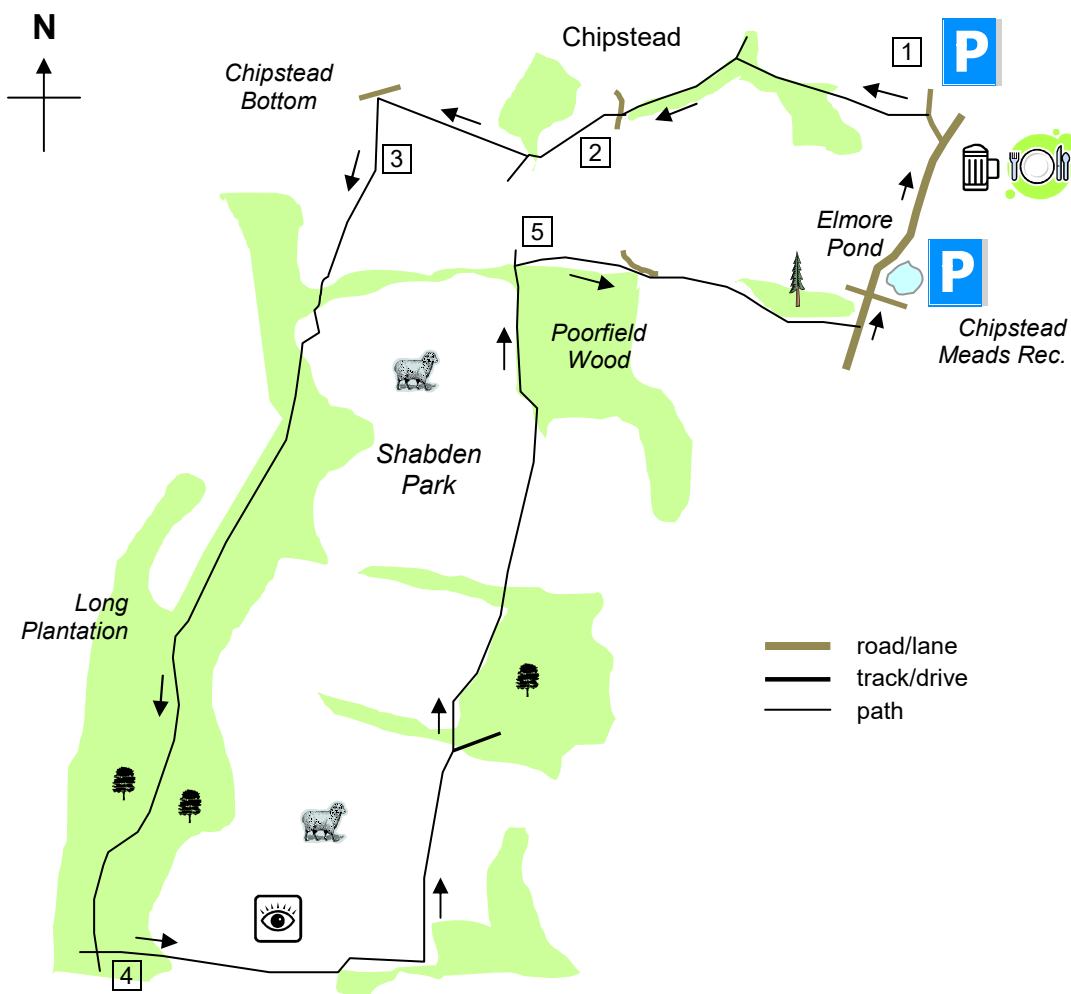
Shabden Park offers a sweeping panorama of sheep pastures, worthy of a few photo stops. This walk takes in woodland and meadow-sides with views at several points.



There are no nettles and no undergrowth on this walk and the terrain is dry, except for a few winter muddy patches on the Long Plantation which can be skipped round. Boots are therefore optional. Your dog can come along (there are no stiles) but a short lead is essential for the sheep pastures.

The walk begins at the car park of the *White Hart* inn, Chipstead, Surrey, postcode **CR5 3QW**. If the pub car park is full, or filling up on a popular day, there is also the large **Chipstead Meads Recreation Ground** car park, just 150m (say 200 yds) south along the road on the left, which has bags of room when there is no big sporting event. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



- 1 Facing the front of the pub, where the road forks, take the minor road Hazelwood Lane that forks **left**. In only 20m, turn **left** at a fingerpost on a footpath by a flint shed, going past a large metal gate. [Sep 2020: this turning was not possible as the shed was in disrepair and a metal gate barred entry. Instead take the *next* turning on the **left** (a sign in the wall points to the Courtyard Theatre). After a few metres turn **left** where you will see the theatre. Cross the car park and turn **right** to join the intended path.] The path runs between flint walls. Soon, on your right, is small the Courtyard Theatre, home to the Chipstead Players, an amateur group who put on an ambitious programme. A wooden barrier takes you on a dirt tarmac path and suddenly you are in the open with a view of Chipstead Bottom and horse pastures. Keep **left** at a post with a yellow arrow. Your path goes gently downhill to a tarmac lane. Cross straight over through a wooden swing-gate into a sheep pasture, part of Shabden Park Farm which surrounds most of this walk.

Shabden Park was Chipstead's great country house estate, built in the 1700s, the home of a Lord Mayor of London. Sold to Surrey C.C. in 1936, it was given over to intensive farming and most of its wild parkland was lost. After a long restoration, managed by the Surrey Wildlife Trust, Shabden Park regained its rich wildflower grassland, with a tenant farmer who carefully preserves the wildlife and natural habitats. Shabden Park Farm is a farm shop and agricultural showpiece for young families and tourists.

- 2 Take a clear path diagonally across the pasture and go through a wooden swing-gate on the other side. This leads into a large sloping meadow, part of Shabden Park, passing a 3-way fingerpost. Ignore the left turn and keep straight on down the grass, veering away from the trees, heading for the distant corner by a road and some houses, where you can see a notice board and a small gate in the corner. The railway bridge and viaduct are over on your right. (Your route will be sharp left in the corner, going up the edge of the meadow: for this reason, some walkers take a short cut to the left of a line of oaks to meet the edge half way up. Otherwise ...) When you reach the corner, by a notice board, do *not* go through the little gate but turn sharp **left** up the right-hand side of the grassy space.
- 3 Follow the edge gently uphill, through bushes and a swing-gate, out into another meadow. Your path goes right and left round the perimeter, then right, up a bank of yews and left at the top. A horse path quickly joins you (adding a little to the mud in what is generally a nice dry walk). In nearly 400m you pass a woodland of young beeches on your right and the path curves left a fraction uphill. In another 150m, you come to a fork. Take the **right** fork, the official footpath. The path winds through a clearing. Immediately after this, as the path begins to descend, you come to a crossing path by a marker post, roughly 300m after the fork. Turn **left** at this junction.
- 4 Your path descends through an old beech coppice and leads you through a wooden swing-gate into a sheep pasture. Go straight across this meadow, walking downhill between shallow banks of thornbushes, making a fine show in early summer, with a wonderful view to your left of the sweeping sheep meadow. When you reach the bottom, **avoid** a swing-gate leading into woodland and stay on the right-hand side of the open pasture on a signed permissive path, uphill. At the top, you meet a swing-gate and a fingerpost. Ignore the gate and turn **left** along the top of the field. Where the woodland on your right ends, keep straight on beside a grassy bank towards a very distinct area of compacted white chalk at a metal gate. At the far side, your path leads through a small wooden gate. Ignore a flinty track ascending on your right and keep ahead on a wide path which has been similarly compacted with white chalk, beside another sloping meadow. The first meadow is followed by another large sheep meadow. Your path zigzags left-right and you come to a large wooden gate with a small gate beside it.
- 5 **Ignore** the wooden gate and instead turn **right** uphill, through a small wooden gate [Jul 2020: off its hinges, on its side, partly blocking the gap in the fence] beside a fingerpost. The gate is now on its side partially blocking the gap in the fence] beside a fingerpost. Go up the right-hand side of a pasture (possibly familiar from your outward journey). At the top you pass a swing-gate and a road on your left. In only 5m pass through another swing-gate and continue ahead up the left-hand side of the next field. You pass a small wood on your left with some tall pines. Before the far corner, look **left** to go through a wooden swing-gate and follow a path through trees to a road, next to a covered well. Cross the road to a footway opposite and turn **left**, passing some neo-Tudor houses and coming to a crossroads. If you parked in the Recreation Ground car park, turn **right** at the crossroads and **left** on a footpath. Otherwise ... Keep straight on at the crossroads, passing the Elmore Pond, quickly reaching the *White Hart* where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: if coming from the A23, south of Croydon, turn west by traffic lights on Star Lane (by the BP filling station). Stay on the major road for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, all the way to the crossroads with the High Road, by the pond and Recreation Ground, with the pub a short distance on your right.

If coming from the West London or Sutton area, your route is via the A217 road, signposted Reigate. $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Sutton, at a major crossroads with traffic lights, turn **left** in the direction *Coulsdon Chipstead Banstead*.

Immediately, at a mini roundabout, turn **right** on the B2217, Boulters Lane. Follow this road through a series of junctions, passing Banstead Village on your left and reaching open country, now on the B2219, Holly Lane. At the end, turn **right** at a mini-roundabout, avoid a residential road on the left but take the next **left**, at a mini roundabout, signposted *Chipstead Hooley*. Follow the winding road uphill all the way to the pub whose car park is sharp left. For the Recreation Ground car park, veer **right** at the Y-junction (giving way!) and continue for 150m.

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