



Frensham Little Pond Devil's Jumps, Sculpture Park, Heather Trail

Distance: 8½ km=5½ miles or 9½ km=6 miles
(not including the Sculpture Park) easy walking with one steep ascent

Region: Surrey

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Refreshments: Little Pond

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Churt: *Bel and the Dragon*

Map: Explorer 145 (Guildford) and 133 (Haslemere)
but the maps in this guide should be sufficient

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

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Lakes, heath, woodland, hills, sculpture park

In Brief

This is a most unusual walk incorporating a landscape of lakes, sudden surprise views, a *heather trail*, some geology and a cultural treasure-trove. Frensham Little Pond is almost as large as the Great Pond, but wilder and greener. At the half-way point, you have an option to visit *The Sculpture Park*. This is a vast and beautiful arboretum with lakes, water features and 600 pieces of professional sculpture of impressive quality, arranged in three coloured circuits, surprisingly little-known. An entrance fee, reduced for concessions, is payable. En route, on the outward leg only, you cross the rocky summit of the eastern of the three Devil's Jumps, a stirring venture which few people undertake.



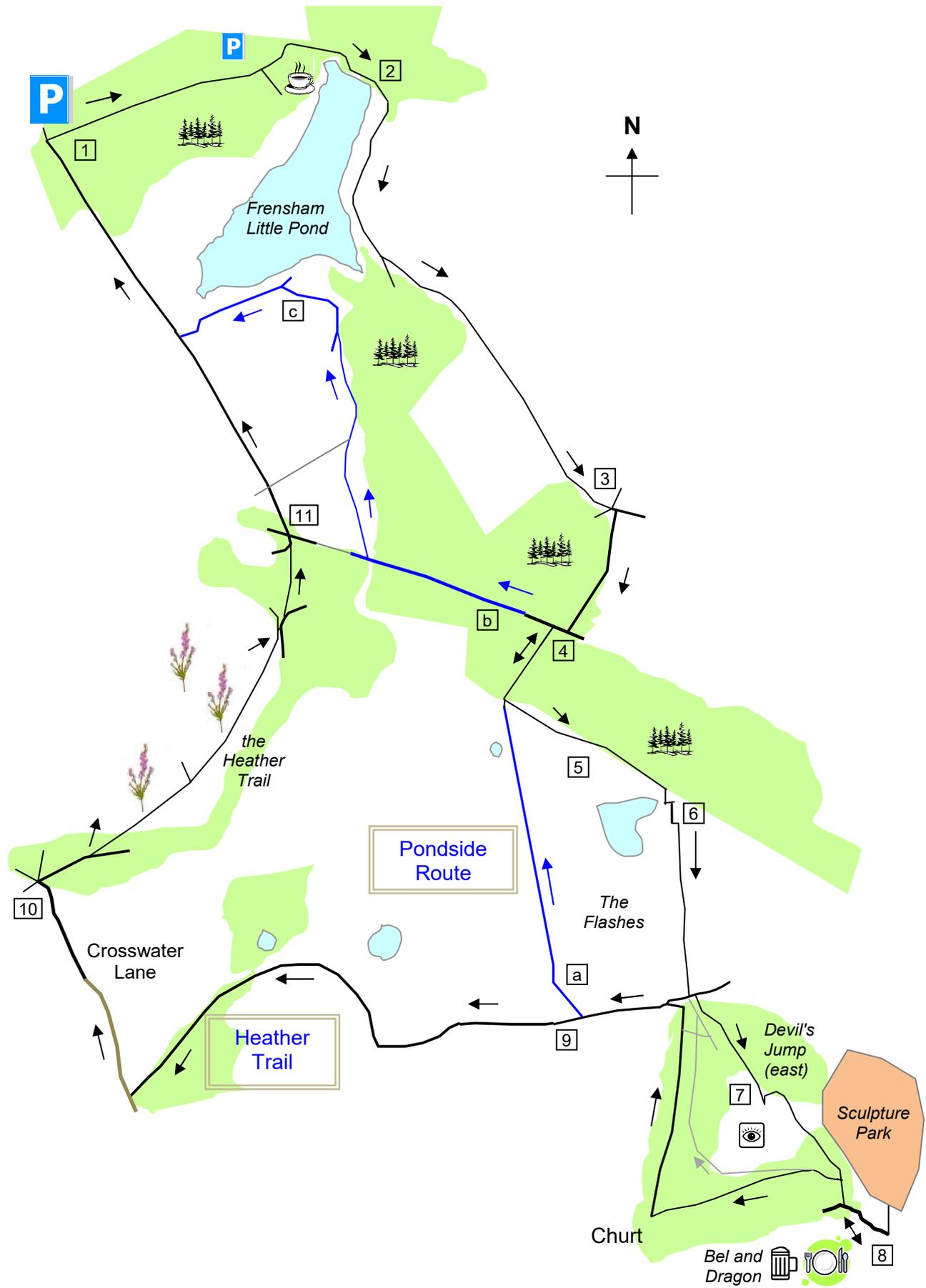
The Little Pond has a small café (closed on quiet winter days) and the *Bel and the Dragon Hotel*, opposite the Sculpture Park, incorporating a pub and restaurant (not really a café) with a garden, is a good half-way stop.



There are no nettles on this walk. The terrain is sandy, so any sensible footwear should be fine. Dogs are allowed in the Sculpture Park on a short lead only and will be fine everywhere else. This is an all-season walk.

The walk begins at the smaller **first** Frensham Little Pond car park (still *free* in 2019), www.w3w.co/stirs.rehearsal.engineers, nearest **postcode GU10 3DW**. This is **before** the main large car park. Access is via Priory Lane off the A287 and the car park is on the right at the double bend. If the first car park is full, continue to the larger main car park which charges non-NT members **in coins only or by mobile** £4 or £6. There must be other free spots around the route (please let us know). For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



- 1 Go to the end of the car park and turn **left**, avoiding the wide track ahead, on a sandy path, going past a noticeboard on your right. Follow this path, with the hilly ridge on your right concealing the pond, and with woods and the road on your left. Soon you pass the main car park on your left (**alternative start**). Keep straight ahead, ignoring a well-used path on the right which leads to the pondside, passing another noticeboard. You quickly reach a small open area with a cottage visible over to your right, and the Tern Café adjoining it. Keep straight on over a crossing path, very near the road on your left. Follow a yellow arrow on a path indicating a permissive path and crossing a driveway. You pass the head of the pond on your right.

- 2 Continue on a signposted footpath, still following the yellow arrow, on a path that runs along the eastern edge of the very reedy pond. Your path goes over a bridge by an old wall. It then curves right, along the bank. *On your way, you pass a bird hide on your right from where you can observe the large number of waterfowl species that use the pond.* Roughly 700m after the head of the pond, you reach a clear fork. Take the **left** fork, following a yellow arrow, alongside a fence. At a junction, continue straight ahead between wire fences. You have heath and pinewoods each side, later a horse pasture on the left. Finally your path takes you through a barrier to join a track.

- 3 You meet bridleways right and left: ignore them both and continue ahead for another 20m to the corner of a garden. Turn immediately **right**, with the garden on your left, on a straight dirt track. The track leads to the tarmac of Sandy Lane. Turn **right** and, in 20m, go **left** at a fingerpost through a small metal gate. Take a wide path straight ahead with a dense pinewood on your right and grass and conifers on your left.
- 4 At the other side, go through a wooden swing-gate [**Nov 2023: grounded**] onto the open heath. Ignore the wide track ahead and immediately turn **left** on a narrow ill-defined path tight by the wire fence. *Shortly, the rhododendrons and smaller pines over on your right conceal the Axe Head Pond, worth a peek if the parched conditions improve. It was the subject of much restoration work by Waverley Council in 2013 but recent years (2018) with little rain have reduced most of it to a marsh.*
- 5 Stay close to the fence till you pass a yellow arrow, cross a bent 2-plank bridge and come to a T-junction. Turn **right** here on a narrow path, immediately **left** over another small bridge and **right** on a wide sandy horse path indicated by a blue arrow, avoiding the yellow-arrowed bridge and footpath ahead.
- 6 In 50m, as you come out of trees, turn **left** and immediately **right** on a narrow path parallel to the horse path. (This path is much more comfortable than the thick squidgy sand of the horse path.) *This open space is part of Frensham Common known as "The Flashes", owned by the National Trust.* The path eventually merges with the sandy horse path and splits away once more, all the time getting closer to those small rounded hills, the Devils Jumps, visible ahead. You reach a wide crossing track by a faded blue-topped post. *(See the "Elstead and Frensham Ponds" walk in this series.)* Go straight over onto a woodland path marked by a yellow arrow, thus leaving the horse track (which goes right and left). Your route is now steeply up the slope of the eastern Jump and this is the only strenuous part of the walk (and unavoidable!). Near the top, which seems to get ever steeper, there are steps to assist you. Finally at the top of the Jump you find two benches just before the precipitous rocky crag that marks the

summit, hence the name *Stony Jump*. The views all around repay your effort many times over.

The three outcrops known as The Devil's Jumps were formed at the time of the later dinosaurs, although it was uneven erosion that gave them their particular shape. They form part of a fragmented line of sandstone that stretches to Folkestone in Kent, made harder by the presence of carrstone which contains iron. A folklore tale relates that the Devil had fun jumping from one peak till the next till the god Thor (from nearby Thursley?) threw a boulder at him (the one you see on the eastern Jump). Another folk tale relates that the witch Mother Ludlam chased the Devil on her broomstick to recover her stolen cauldron, causing him to kick up these mounds.

- 7 After admiring the view and a possible breather, turn **left** in front of the benches on a downhill path. In 30m, fork **right** down towards a marker post and a bench. Keep straight on past the bench following a yellow arrow downhill. Your path widens and veers slightly left towards a fence. It then runs between fences to reach a road. Turn **left** on the road, quickly reaching a road junction near Churt where, on your right, is the *Bel and the Dragon* Hotel and Bar / Café, with a charming dog-friendly beer garden. Immediately opposite is the entrance to the Sculpture Park, a rare unknown treasure-trove.



The Sculpture Park is an arboretum containing mature conifers and broadleaves of every kind, interspersed with two lakes and various water features such as waterfalls, ponds with bridges, and peninsulas. It is a commercial enterprise displaying 600 works by prestigious living artists, made of every material imaginable, some grotesque or nightmarish, some smooth and restful. They are organised into four twisty circuits in which you follow coloured arrows. You can easily spend two hours there. It is well worth the entry price of £15 (£10 for concessions). From the entrance, you need to follow a path to the reception hut, giving you a foretaste. Ask for a free returnable catalogue. The Park is now open every day, closing at 5pm.



- 8 After your visit and possible refreshment, retrace your steps along the road and **right** on the same narrow path between fences. Where you emerge onto the heath, instead of scaling the Jump again, turn **left** on a narrow path and fork **left** on a path running close to the fence on your left. (You can take an alternative route, shown in grey on the map, by instead forking **right** on a fairly clear path through the bracken, skirting round the lower slopes of the Jump on your right. Finally you go over a crossing path and join a footpath coming down from the summit on your right. In 50m, it leads to the main horse track where you should turn **left**.) The path is a minor one (and so unclear that some walkers have to improvise a route) but it is easy to follow simply by *staying within touching distance of the wire fence*. After 400m, the fence ends at a corner. Turn **right** here on a wide path. This is a beautiful woodland bridleway that runs level between the eastern Jump that you climbed earlier and the central and western Jumps which are on private land. When you come out, after 400m, into the open space of Frensham Common again, turn **left** on the main horse track, using a side path as a short cut, running beside a sloping meadow on your left. In 200m, the horse pasture on your left ends. Here you have a choice of two return routes.

The shorter *Pondside Route* retraces part of your outward journey and gives you another chance to walk beside the Pond. The slightly longer *Heather Trail* uses a wide arc to take in the wildly beautiful heathland south of the pond.

The Heather Trail

- 9] Avoid a wide track on your right across The Flashes and keep straight ahead on the main track. It bends right by some railings and zigzags several times before entering trees and running along a permissive horse path, with pastures and some of the buildings of Crosswater Farm on your right. You emerge after 1¼ km at a T-junction with tarmac Crosswater Lane. Turn **right** on the lane. The lane becomes sandy and, as it begins to ascend, now just a rough track, it passes whiteboarded *Harold's Hill* on your left. Finally you are in the wilds of Frensham Country Park and are faced with a bewildering choice of paths.
- 10] Turn sharp **right** on the bridleway furthest to your right. In only 100m **leave** the main bridleway by forking **left** on a much narrower path. [This is the Heather Trail, a lustrous stretch of heath across a wild landscape.](#) Ignore side paths going up to the crest on your left and stay on the level path as it gradually curves left. After a pleasant ¾ km, your path forks as it nears the bridleway again. Bear **right** at the fork and veer **left** to re-join the horse path. But in only 30m **leave** the bridleway where it bends right at a blue arrow and instead keep straight on on a narrower path. Where, in 100m or so, you meet a driveway, veer **right** onto it. You quickly arrive at a wide crossing track by *Mole End*.
- 11] Cross directly over to follow a straight very sandy path. In 100m or so, go over a wide crossing path. [\(But turning right here would allow you a short diversion to see the south side of the Pond.\)](#) In another 350m, you meet a path coming from the right near a corner of the Pond as you pass some trees. [\(If you parked in the main car park, take the next right fork, keeping to the lakeside.\)](#) Stay on this very wide sandy track. After lines of pines it leads up into woodland, then down to the car park where the walk began.

The Pondsides Route

- a] Turn **right** on a wide sandy path across the centre of the Common. The path becomes wide and grassy, then straight wide and sandy, veering right to cross The Flashes again. You pass a small pond on the left and reach a wooden swing-gate into a plantation, familiar from the outward journey. Continue along the left-hand side of the plantation and emerge once again, through a small metal gate, on Sandy Lane. Turn **left** on the tarmac.
- b] Stay on the lane, ignoring paths off, until you cross a footbridge beside a ford. In 20m, opposite a driveway for *Grey Walls*, turn **right** beside a wooden barrier [\[Feb 2020: fallen down\]](#) on a footpath running through heather, birch and tall pines. (This is a slightly longer return to the start, giving you another view of the lake.) Ignore several minor paths off. Where the path comes out into an open area, at a multiple junction, keep ahead to merge with a much wider sandy path coming in from your left. The path wheels left and meets a lakeside path.
- c] Veer **left** beside the lake, with more final views of the Little Pond. At a T-junction with a wide track, turn **right**, immediately avoiding paths forking away on the right. [\(But if parked in the main car park, take the first right fork, staying on the lakeside.\)](#) Stay on this very wide sandy track. After lines of pines it leads up into woodland, then down to the car park where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: you can reach the A287 via Hindhead and the A3 in the south or from Farnham in the north. The entrance to Priory Road is 1 mile after the Great Pond just before a red timbered house on the right (if coming from Hindhead) or just south of the Bridge Hotel, over the bridge and on the left (if coming from Farnham). It is marked *Frensham Little Pond*. You can also approach it from the other side, from Rushmoor via Tilford or Elstead or Thursley.

