



Frensham Great Pond and Dockenfield

Distance: 10½ km=6½ miles easy walking
or 12 km=7½ miles if you start at the Great Pond car park

Region: Surrey, Hampshire

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Author: Fusszweig

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Refreshments: Dockenfield, Frensham Great Pond

Map: Explorer 145 (Guildford) and 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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Lake, quiet lanes, woodland paths, water, river, views

In Brief

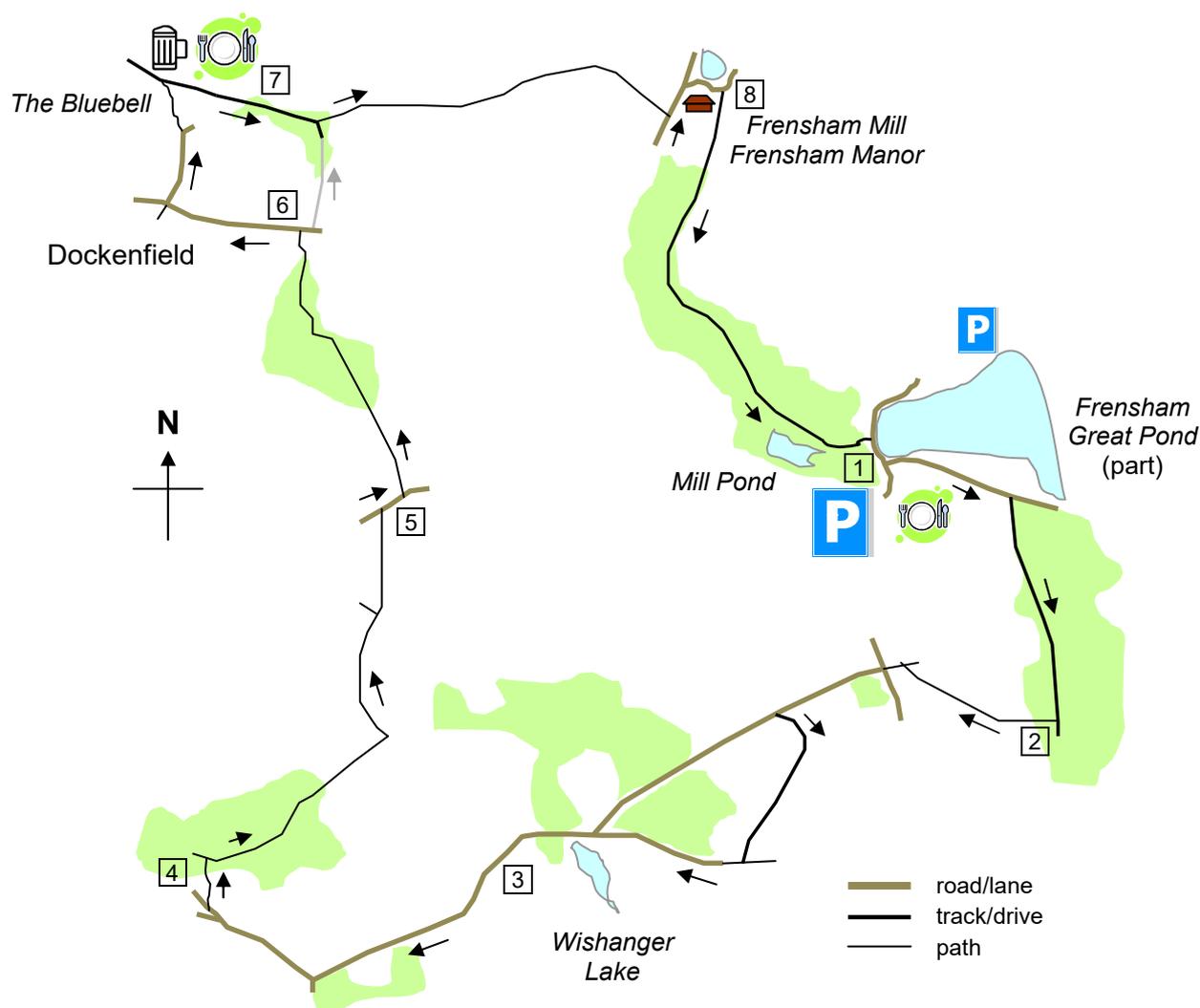
This walk takes you from one of Surrey's largest and most popular lakes to a valley of the River Wey and back via a picturesque Mill and Manor. At the half-way point is one of the iconic pubs of the region. (To enquire at the *Bluebell* in Dockenfield, ring 01252-792801).



There are few nettles and just a little undergrowth on this walk. This walk is ideal in dry summery conditions. The beginning of the walk is on wide tracks and quiet country lanes. When this walk was researched in winter, there were a pair of clammy fields and some mud after the mill. For this reason, boots are recommended. This walk should also be fine with your dog.

The walk begins by **Frensham Great Pond**, at the corner near the Frensham Pond Hotel, postcode **GU10 2QD**. The car parks opposite the hotel are restricted but there are informal free off-road spaces on dirt strips in Bacon Lane, and in Pond Lane (the two roads that circle the pond). Another good option now is to park in the Frensham Great Pond car park (payment required), with a pleasant extension to the walk in each direction along the pondside (simply walk with the pond on your left until the path meets the road and the Frensham Pond Hotel). You can also start in Dockenfield, either near the *Bluebell* pub (postcode **GU10 4EX**) or on the main road in the village (postcode **GU10 4JA**). For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



- 1 From the corner of the pond near the Frensham Pond Hotel, take the side road that goes past the front of the hotel (Pond Lane) with the pond on your left. You pass a little bridge (mainly used by the ducks and coots), the yacht club and a hotel extension of chalets with a sculpture of working horses. In 350m, just after a bend, turn **right** on a track marked as a bridleway, ignoring the footpath that branches left. Your track passes a smart converted house, an area of pine and birch and another large house. The track crosses under wires, passes another house, and immediately comes to an end, after a total of 650m. Ignoring the tempting path ahead into the forest, turn **right** on a signed footpath.
- 2 The path runs between wire fences and between banks and crosses two bridges over water channels coming from the pond on your left, taking you into Hampshire. Wooden railings guide you through a wooden swing-gate into a grassy meadow. Keep to the right-hand edge and, on the other side, go through a wooden swing-gate down to a tarmac drive. Turn **left** and go out via the entrance to *Field House* to a junction of lanes. Go straight over along Frensham Lane. In 100m, you pass the swanky entrance to *Kingsmead*. 200m further on, just 5m after the entrance to *Wishanger Place*, fork **left** on a signed bridleway. Follow this path as it curves left round the field, and turns right at the end of the field. Soon you pass several small houses, including on your left the world's smallest duckpond and on your right a field of (at the time of writing and still in 2019, returning in 2021?)

beautiful Balwen Welsh mountain sheep. Continue to a tarmac lane and turn **right** on it, ignoring the bridleway straight ahead. In 400m, at a road junction, keep straight ahead, back on Frensham Lane. *On your left, just visible over the wall, is Wishanger Lake, an anglers' paradise.*

- 3 The country opens out as you pass ponds and springs and converted oasts on your left with a large sheep meadow on your right. At a junction, keep **right**, soon passing *Moor House Barn* and, on your left (maintaining the connection with the oasts) *The Hoppery*. At the next junction, leave Frensham Lane by turning **right** in the direction *Dockenfield, Alton*. On your right is the valley of the River Wey, with a campsite, and the remnant of canal barges may be seen (although the river is not navigable at this point). On your left is the historic *Huntingford Cottage* with its ancient barn and Grade II-listed Forge, still with its furnace and some original tools. Immediately after, turn **right** on Heath Hill, crossing a bridge over the Wey. 25m after the bridge, go **right** through the smaller of two metal gates on a signed footpath.

- 4 Your path crosses the short end of a meadow, goes through a small metal gate and up steps. At the top, turn **right** at a T-junction on a path that runs through the bluebell birchwood, with the Wey valley down on your right, the start of the most natural and peaceful part of this walk. On meeting a stile in a fence ahead, go over it and keep straight ahead along a clear path through the wood.



Soon, at a high point, you gain the best views over the terrain you traversed earlier. The path ends at an unneeded kissing-gate with the River Wey below. Turn **left** into a pasture which may be squidgy if the weather has been damp. *There were no cattle here at the time of writing, or in 2021; both fields are wide enough if you need to go round them.* Continue along the right-hand side, over a stile beside a large (usually open) metal gate and into the next field. You are now back in Surrey. At the far side, go through a gap into a grassy meadow. Half way along the right-hand edge you come to a 3-way fingerpost. Avoid the direction *squarely* left but follow the finger pointing **diagonally** across the sheep meadow, on a rather unclear path, heading to the left of a group of three tall narrow poplars visible in the distance. Go through a wooden gate in the hedge, cross the bridge and go straight across a small pasture. A wooden swing-gate leads you onto a tarmac lane.

- 5 Turn **right** on the lane and, in 70m, go **left** through a swing-gate beside a tarmac drive for Abbots Farm into a pasture. *Sometimes there may be cute young cattle in this field but they can be given a wide berth if you feel it necessary.* Walk not far from the left-hand edge and, as you pass the corner of a wood on your left, 100m before the far corner, go **left** through a new circular metal gate into the wood. Follow this clear woodland path through *Flat Copse*, soon going over a 2-plank bridge. As you approach a large meadow under wires, veer **left**, following the wires. In 50m, a yellow arrow directs you diagonally **right** into the meadow, and into a wood. At a marker post, veer **right** as you join another woodland path. The path ends at a small (disused) sports field. Keep to the right-hand side of this field to come out to a road in the village of Dockenfield. *(If you do not wish to visit an excellent pub, you can cross straight over the road and follow a tarmac lane, turning sharp right on a track at the top, re-joining the walk further down where shown *.)*

- 6 Turn **left** on the road, passing the church (built in 1910). On your right is *Ivy House* and later the old well. After a dip in the road, go **right** on Lake Lane, marked as a cul-de-sac. *Note the tiny (foot high) "house", complete with garage on your left in 160m.* After 170m on this lane, ignore a footpath on your left but, a little further, at a bend, turn **left** at a fingerpost and continue on a narrow path which bends right through woodland. At the top, veer **left** on a clinker track, immediately reaching, on your right, the welcome sight of *The Bluebell*.



It's the remoteness of "The Bluebell" that makes it such a draw, its peaceful location only disturbed by the merry sound of families (it is child-friendly), some popping over from the nearby Alice Holt adventure centre (see that walk in the Hampshire section of this series). The stone floor rooms link a small bar with several dining areas, spilling out in summer to a garden terrace and lawn. Ales are Hogs Back TEA, Triple fff Moondance and guests such as Frensham (see the "Frensham and Bourne Wood" walk in this series). Food comes from a sensibly short menu, with a Sunday roast and summer barbecue. The Bluebell is open all day Saturday and till 8pm Sunday (as 2016). For booking and enquiries, ring 01252-792801.

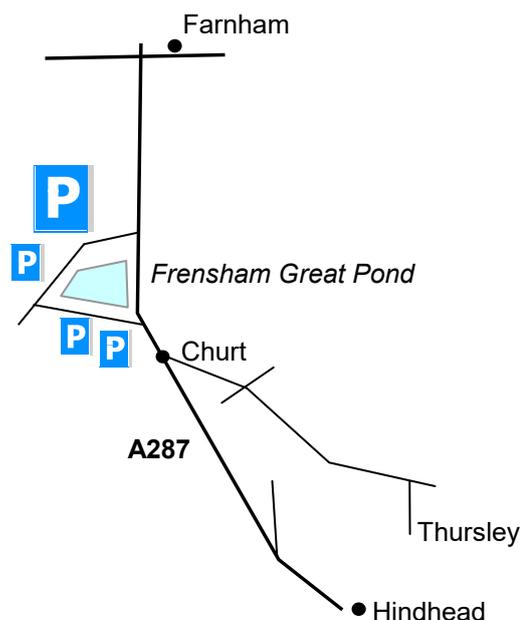
- 7 After your break, turn **left** out of the pub, back the way you came, but continue straight on along the track. Shortly, before private gates, the clinker path forks **right** to pursue the left-hand side of a meadow. (There is a long bench seat on your right, by the notice board for *Bealeswood Common*, with a view of the village.) Follow a stony path, then a tarmac lane, by a house, *Bealeswood Cottage*. As the lane bends right, leave it by continuing straight ahead on a track. (* [The short cut re-joins the walk here.](#)) The track becomes a narrow path beside a meadow on your left. Ignore a stile on your left and keep straight ahead on a freshly-laid stony path. After nearly 1 km total, the path ends at a road. Turn **left** on the road and, in 100m, fork **right** on Mill Lane, signposted *Frensham Church* (see the adjoining walk "Frensham and Bourne Wood"). This road immediately takes you over the outflow pond of Frensham Mill, with its model horses and ducks, from where you can hear the mill race and the modern water screw in action in the grounds to your right.

Frensham Mill first appears on John Roque's map of 1768 but this ancient mill dates back at least to 1217 when the Bishop of Winchester, who built Farnham Castle as his residence and owned most of the land in these parts, had the mill listed for rent collection. A toll was probably paid to the owner of the river which supplied the mill and in 1706 the manors of Dockenfield and Frensham Beale went to court in disputed ownership. The mill had two mill ponds as insurance against running dry, one from the main river and the other on a tributary of the River Wey which you will shortly see as you pass.

- 8 Turn **right** through the entrance to the Mill House, along its shingle drive which soon becomes a shingle path through the wood known as The Hanger. Up on your left are *Frensham Manor* with its extensive grounds and farm. Down on your right is a tributary of the River Wey carrying runoff from the Great Pond. In 300m or so, ignore a long footbridge over the river and keep straight on. Your path now runs quite close to the river's edge in many places. Another 400m from the footbridge, just after some wooden fencing on your right, **ignore** a yellow marker arrow pointing right and stay on the main path. Soon you pass the huge mill pond on your right. The path takes you up to the road with an excellent view of the Great Pond straight ahead. Turn **right** or **left** on the road, depending on where you parked, quickly back to the point where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: Frensham Great Pond is off the A287 road, just north of Churt, Surrey. It can be reached via Farnham to the north, or via the A3 and Hindhead to the south. A pleasant “scenic” route is via the A3 and Thursley. Go through the village and turn **left** at a T-junction on the Thursley Road. At a junction with the Tilford Road opposite the *Bel and Dragon*, go straight over. This road leads, in 1½ miles, to the A287. Turn **right**. Look for a brown tourist sign for *Frensham Pond Hotel* and turn **left**. There is parking shortly on your right in various off-road dirt strips. More road-side parking is right at the junction, on the left of the road. The big Great Pond car park is much further along on the right.



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