Fancy Free Walks

point your feet on a new path

East Clandon and West Hanger

Distance: 10 km=6½ miles — easy walking

Region: Surrey — Date written: 17-jan-2016

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Refreshments: East Clandon

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

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

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Woodland, views, village, pub, bluebells

In Brief

This is a gentle walk between one of Surrey's most charming villages and the wooded hills of the North Downs. The walk is easily accessed from the London or Guildford area and the paths are all well-surfaced and easy. If you do this walk in late April / early May, you will be rewarded with the sight of millions of bluebells turning the woodland floor a deep, luminous blue.

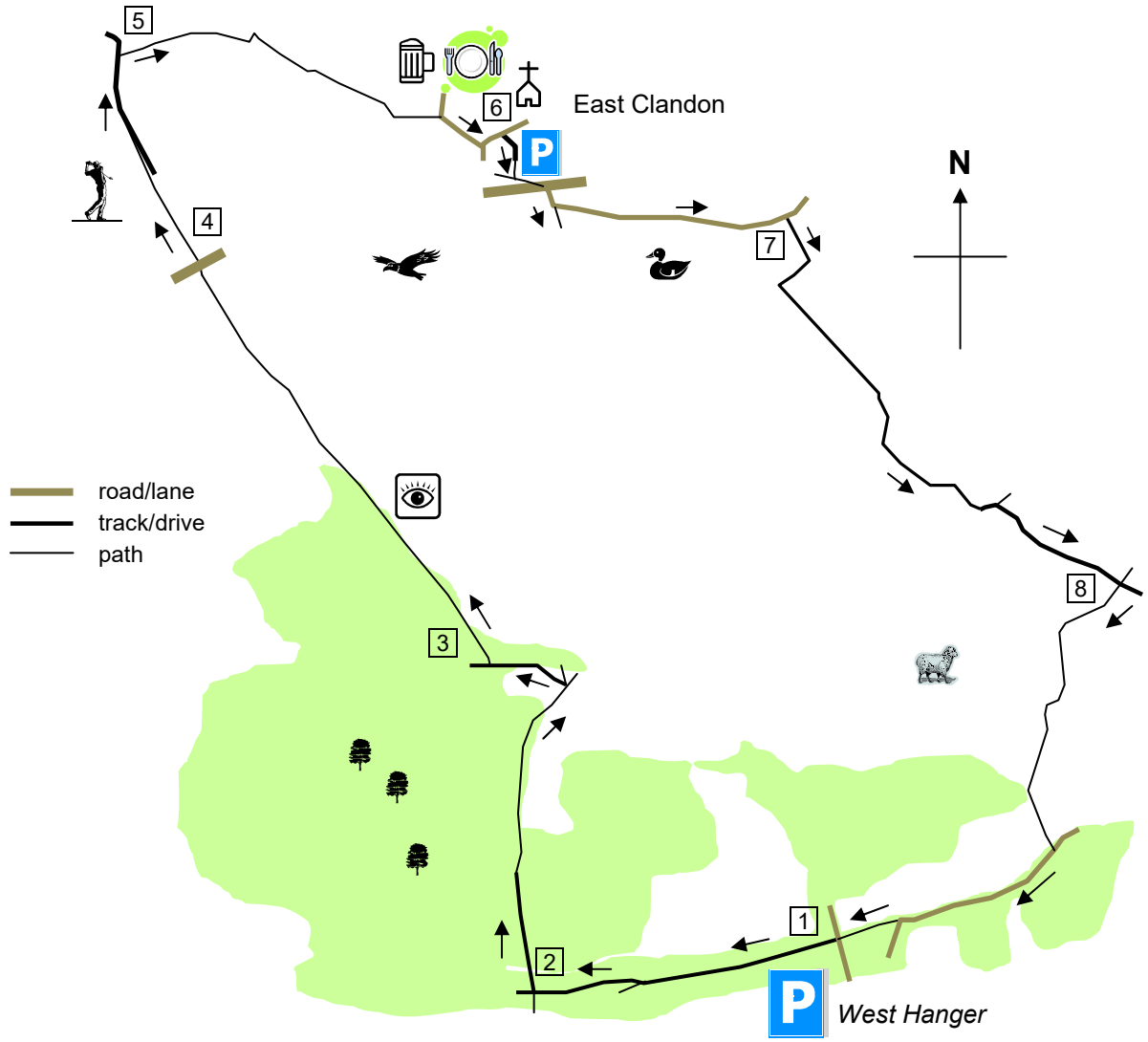
The centrepoint of this walk (or the endpoint if you start there) is the traditional village pub, the *Queen's Head* in East Clandon. For enquiries, ring 01483-222332.

There is no undergrowth on this walk to worry a wearer of shorts. In the winter and after wet conditions, there are some muddy patches, especially along the path up to Combe Lane and along the North Downs Way, making boots a necessity. This walk is fine for your dog.

The walk begins at the **West Hanger** NT car park, Staple Lane, near Guildford, Surrey, postcode **GU5 9TE**. You can instead park in **East Clandon** village, placing any possible refreshments at the end. In this case, park in the cul-de-sac of the **Old Epsom Road**, postcode **GU4 7RN**. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

On weekends and Bank Holidays you may find a refreshment van in the West Hanger car park, selling drinks, hot and cold snacks and home-made cakes.

The Walk



1 Beginning in the West Hanger car park, go past the main notice board, on a wide path into Shere Woods, marked as the North Downs Way (NDW). Follow this wide, fairly straight path with a field visible on your right, under beeches and tall conifers. After ½ km, at a fingerpost, ignore a bridleway that forks off to your left. In another 350m, you reach a 4-way junction with a signpost on your left pointing to the *Silent Pool*. Turn **right** at the junction, thus leaving the NDW.

2 Follow this path, soon passing a black storage tank, with the woods of Clandon Downs on your left. *(See the walk in this series "Newlands Corner, Secret Woods".)* Continue straight ahead past timber stacks. Your path joins a track coming from your right which runs past New Scotland Farm. Keep ahead now, on a wide grassy path. The path descends past a large metal gate to the larger Old Scotland Farm. Go straight over, past the house and cow sheds and up a concrete track. In 20m, turn **left** on a bridleway [care! in summer undergrowth the sign is easy to miss], avoiding a yellow-arrowed footpath to its right. After 250m, you reach a 3-way finger-post. Turn **right** here on a narrow path.

3 Your path runs beside a field on your right and a bank of yews. You come out into a clearing and suddenly there are great views ahead to the North Surrey sands. Keep right, staying close to the field, on a very narrow path in the yew forest. Your path resumes through lighter woodland. Where the

path finally emerges, continue straight ahead along the right-hand side of a large field, with a hedgerow on your right. When you reach the far corner, go over a stile and carefully cross the westbound carriageway of the main A246 road. Go through a gap in the central hedge and cross the other carriageway.

4 Take a narrow signposted footpath straight ahead, just to the left of the entrance drive to the Clandon Regis golf club. (If you are wearing shorts in summer, it may be better to use their drive because of tall nettles.) Avoid a footpath on your left and keep straight on, soon walking along the grass verge and then on the tarmac driveway itself, passing a 20 mph sign. Stop as you draw level with the big clubhouse on your left where you can see the main drive bending left about 30m ahead. Now, immediately next to another red-circled sign for **20** mph, turn **right**, going over a small bridge, straight over a golfer's path, and take a cinder path ahead, running beside a hedgerow on your right.

5 *Watch out for flying balls! Not all the players are pro level.* You pass a finger-post as the path rises over a bank. Keep ahead along the top of the bank, parallel to a sandy golfer's path visible down on your left. Your path zigzags left-right at two fingerposts. Keep the same direction along the left-hand side of the grass. 150m after the zigzag, your path veers left by a disused kissing-gate onto a woodland path. *Don't miss this turn!* Follow this old trackway, gradually nearing the houses of East Clandon. At the end, turn **right** on a tarmac lane. Soon, on your left, is the *Queen's Head* pub. Welcome to East Clandon, the nicer little brother!

The Anglo-Saxon Clandons are "clean" by name but the "Clan" part really means "open", i.e. unwooded. East Clandon is dominated by Hatchlands Park, the great country house (now National Trust), on the site of the old Manor. The villagers were treated handsomely by the various owners who designed and built new houses (to add to the many period cottages already there) and entertained the local folk with Christmas parties (an ongoing tradition). The most notable son of the village was the minor Jacobean dramatist Thomas Goffe, author of "The Raging Turk" and "The Careless Shepherdess". At the end of the 1600s, John Aubrey penned him a section in "Brief Lives", and his hilarious gossipy account can be read on-line and is not to be missed! (Just search "Aubrey, Goffe" under "Google Books".)

East Clandon church is dedicated to St Thomas of Canterbury and dates from 1110, a grade-I listed treasure. The stained glass inside includes a new window depicting Thomas à Becket just before his assassination. If it is locked, one of the villagers will let you in (see the roster).

The Queen's Head is one of the best traditional village pubs in the Guildford area with consistently good food and ales that include local Ranmore and Hog's Back. A delightful stopping place, winter and summer. To book, ring 01483-222332.

6 After your break, turn **left** out of the pub towards the church. Just before the church, turn **right** on St Thomas Drive, a residential cul-de-sac. At the end, a fraction on the right, take a narrow path between a hedge and a fence. At the end, turn **left** on the Old Epsom Road (alternative start). Walk a short distance beside the main road and, at the end of a metal barrier, cross the road carefully and take Blakes Lane opposite. At the entrance to High Clandon Farm, keep **left** on the lane. You pass Blakes Lane Farm on your right with its ducks and chickens. About 150m further, turn **right** on a signposted bridleway, slightly uphill.

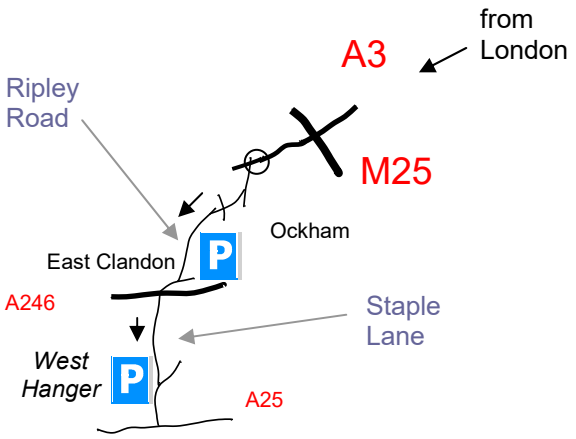
7 Keep to this very solid track, turning **right** with the track in 150m and **left** with the track after 100m to resume your direction uphill. As you pass under trees, the surface becomes gnarled with the roots of the tall beeches. Your track curves left with rolling fields down on your right. *To your left, the views of London open out with the Shard, the Gherkin and Canary Wharf all visible, and even the Wembley Arch on a clear day.* Under trees again, you approach a large house, *Fullers Farm*. Turn **left** on the tarmac drive beside the house and keep **right** on it, avoiding a bridleway on your left. The drive ascends the hilltop and drops down, eventually reaching the hamlet of Hookwood Manor with its Nordic-style development.

8 Turn **right** by the corner of the house at a fingerpost onto a bridleway. This enclosed path passes a tennis court (where in muddy conditions you may need to keep to one far side or the other) and zigzags between fields mainly used for grazing sheep. Any early muddy patch is quickly dispelled, although you will have to straddle or hop over some more stretches of mud again in winter or if the weather has been wet. (NB: Along part of this path the mud has forced walkers to form another short path very close to the barbed wire fence on the right. Where this path re-joins the original one, it is very easy to overlook another lower rusty double barbed-wire fence: *be careful* not to walk into it!) After a 1-km long very bendy course, eventually you come out to a road, Combe Lane. Turn **right** on this quiet road. In ½ km, were the road bends left, leave the road to keep straight ahead on a signposted footpath. At the end of this short path, cross another road into West Hanger car park, where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: **East Clandon** is off the A246 Leatherhead-Guildford Road. You can also reach it by a gentle route via Hungry Hill Lane / Ripley Road from Ockham and the A3. The Old Epsom Road cul-de-sac is the **first** road to the **right** after turning into East Clandon (if coming from the A246) or the **last** road on the **left** before the main A246 (if coming through the village).

For the **West Hanger** car park, you can take Green Dene / Combe Lane from West Horsley **or** cross the A246 East Clandon opposite and go up Staple Lane. The car park is on the right, in the woods, just before a road junction.



By bus: bus 479 from Guildford to East Clandon; bus 765 from Dorking. Check the timetables.