



Effingham and Polesden Lacey

Distance: 12 km=7½ miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

Date written: 26-feb-2010

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Refreshments: Effingham, Polesden Lacey

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Map: Explorer 146 (Dorking)

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

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Woodland, grassy meadows, views, historic house

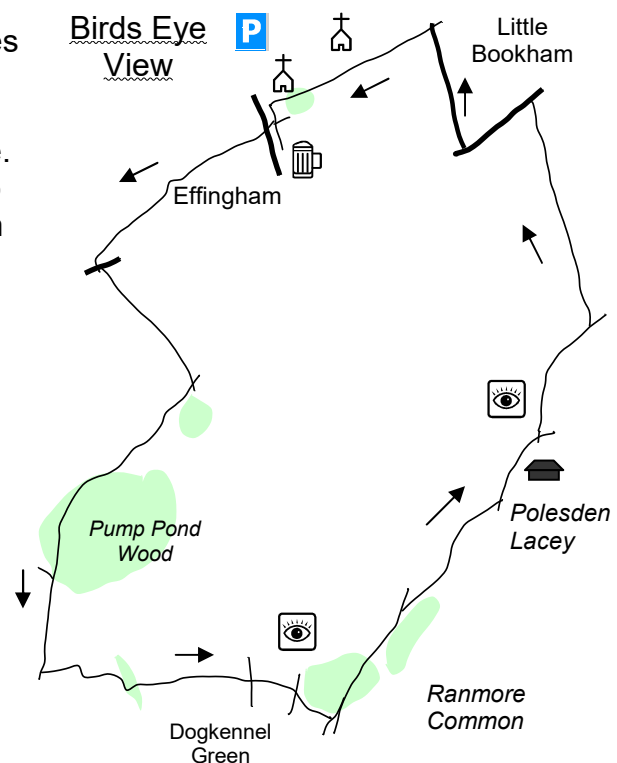
In Brief

This is an easy walk for any time of the year. It takes you from the cosy villages of Effingham and Bookham in quite rapid changes to the much wilder forested area just below the North Downs. On the way back, it passes by one of the great historical houses of this area.



The paths on this walk vary between woodland trails, pleasant grass and stony tracks. In summer this walk was dry, but in wet or wintry conditions you will find several muddy patches when normal walking shoes would be inadequate. There are a few patches of nettles and tall undergrowth in summer which make shorts uncomfortable. The stile count is average. You could also take a small dog, two of the stiles being an ordeal for a larger one.

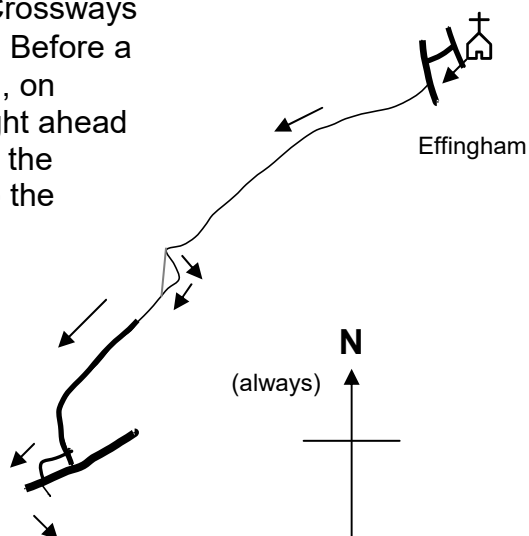
The walk begins in **Church Street** in **Effingham village, postcode KT24 5LZ**. Polesden Lacey, postcode **RH5 6BB**, is another possible starting point. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



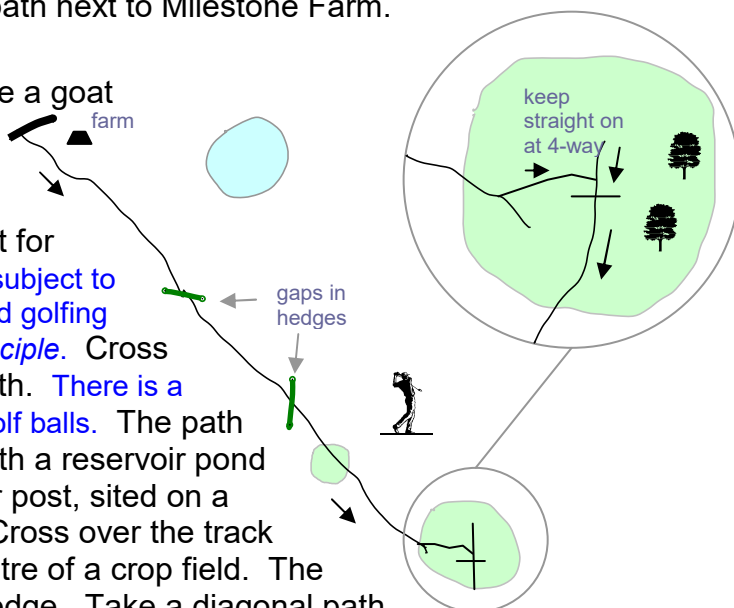
The Walk

Effingham gets its name from a Saxon noble called Aeffing. The church of St Lawrence dates from the 1100s and 1200s but is much altered.

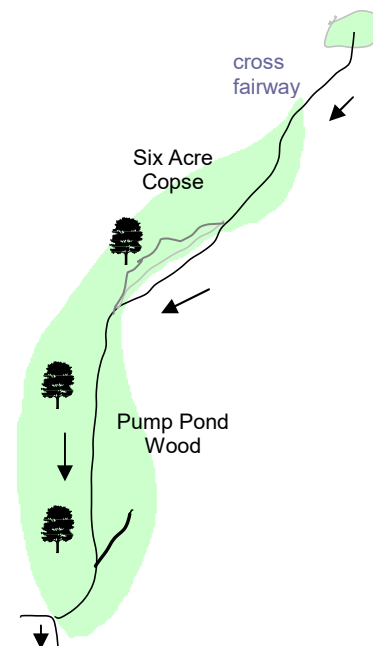
- 1 Walk past the church on your left and turn **right** on Crossways to the main road. Turn **left** on the road for just 10m. Before a line of shops, turn **right** on a signposted track. Soon, on reaching a field at a 3-way fingerpost, continue straight ahead between a brick wall and hedging. After 500m or so, the official bridleway goes across a field and veers left to the corner. On the rare occasions when the field is planted, you may have to turn left along the side of the field and right along the verge. You pass a house and reach a wide track. Turn **right** on the track which soon runs beside more houses. *Note the flowerpot ploughmen.* Continue as the track curves left towards the main A246 road. Just before the road, turn **right** on a bridleway running parallel to the road. Where the bridleway finally emerges onto the road, turn **right** for 15m, cross the road carefully and turn **left** by a small wooden gate on a footpath next to Milestone Farm.



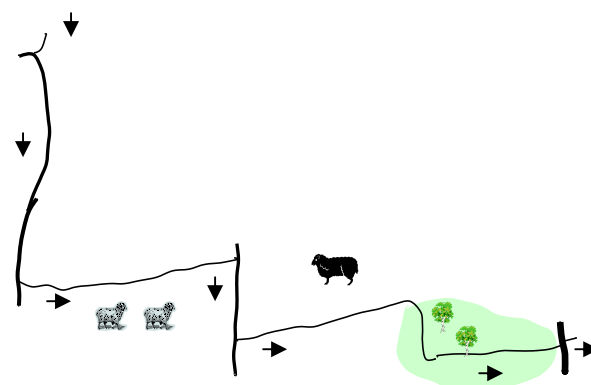
- 2 Follow the rather rough footpath beside a goat pen, through a small wooden gate, between a building and a fence, into a rough grassy meadow. You will be walking from here almost dead straight for 700m into a small wood. *This route is subject to seasonal changes due to undergrowth and golfing whims: these directions are correct in principle.* Cross straight across on a clearly marked path. *There is a belated sign telling you to watch out for golf balls.* The path crosses straight over a grass space with a reservoir pond on your left. Head for the 2-way finger post, sited on a crossing track, clearly visible ahead. Cross over the track and take the clear path across the centre of a crop field. The path leads you through a gap in the hedge. Take a diagonal path across the field to a gap in the hedge at a fingerpost. Turn **left** here. You are now back on the golf course in an area of rough grass. Your direction is acutely diagonally **right** on a faint path - heading for a 2-way fingerpost in front of an isolated group of trees. At the 2-way fingerpost continue **straight ahead** through lines of beech trees for 30m. Now turn **left** out of the trees, passing on your left a sand strip and a mown square teeing off patch. Continue dead straight on a wide path across the grass, heading for a clump of ornamental pines of various sizes. You pass on your left a drinking fountain, whilst over on your right is a small wooden hut. Continue dead straight to find, slightly left, a hidden path into the wood. You reach a new 4-way fingerpost in the centre of the little wood. Take the **first right** turning (it's *diagonally* right rather than squarely right).



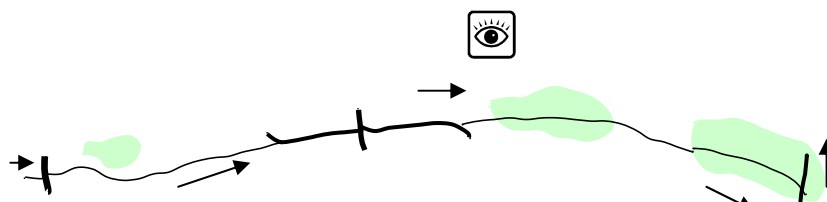
3 The path comes out of the little wood in 25m. Keep the same direction diagonally across the next fairway, passing close to a sand bunker on your left, aiming for a post with a yellow arrow just visible at the tree line ahead. Follow the path deep into Six Acre Copse, ignoring all turnings off, however tempting. In about 300m, you are walking within sight of a meadow on the left. After 500m and along a short section between wire fencing, the official path bends sharp **left** to a stile into the meadow, runs along the right-hand side and re-enters Pump Pond Wood over another stile. **However, if you want to avoid the stiles, you can keep straight ahead on an unofficial narrow path which snakes its way over or round several fallen trees and reaches the same point.** After 300m or so, the path is joined by a bridleway coming from the left at a marker post [Feb 2021 going round a large fallen tree]. The path later curves right and comes out to a drive by a house. Turn **immediately left** on a narrow path through trees which soon becomes fenced on both sides.



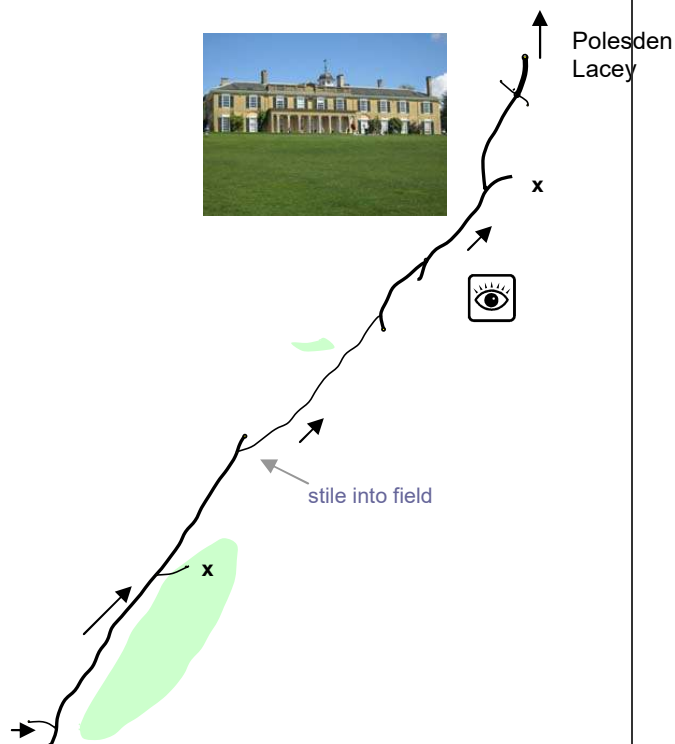
4 The path reaches a house on the left and joins its driveway. Just past the second house, *Old Malthouse* with its big double garage, turn **left** at a fingerpost on a footpath. The path goes through a modern kissing-gate up through an oak wood (a bluebell heaven in late spring). It then goes through another kissing-gate, along the left-hand side of a meadow and through another kissing-gate to a track. Turn **right** on the track. In 100m, just after going through a gate across the track, turn **left** through a very large metal kissing-gate stile. Go along the right-hand side of a sheep meadow. Just before the next corner, turn **right** through a kissing-gate. Follow the path through trees to another kissing-gate. Turn **left** through more trees with a meadow on your left. Go through a metal kissing-gate and continue down through a bluebell wood to a road.



5 Cross the road, a fraction right, and go through a wooden swing-gate opposite. Go uphill, over a stile beside a large metal gate and along the left-hand side of a meadow. After a wooden staggered barrier and a metal kissing-gate, you join a drive which leads down to a lane. Cross the lane to a drive marked *Haneys*. *You have a view of London on the left including, on a very clear day, Wembley Stadium arch.* Where the drive bends right, continue straight ahead on an enclosed bridleway uphill and then between meadows. Continue through woodland to a lane by *Gatehouse Cottage*. Cross the lane and continue on a cinder track, keeping straight ahead at all times. The track becomes a path and soon leads down to a wide stony track. Turn **left** on the track.



6 In 400m, 40m after a junction on the left, ignore a turning on the right. About 250m further, ignore a narrow path sharp right but turn **right** 10m later through a new wooden gate into a large open sheep meadow. The path goes diagonally up the meadow and runs along the top. Eventually it exits in the corner, via a new small wooden gate. Veer **left** on a wide track coming from the right. (As a short diversion, if you turn **right** here for 100m you reach a viewpoint and a bench.) The track runs towards Yew Tree Farm on the right. (On your left is a bench and viewpoint and on your right the Yew Tree Farm Orchard with benches and tables, perfect for a picnic) You join a track coming from the farm house. *Polesden Lacey* is now visible ahead. Half way down, fork **left** at a fingerpost on a brideway. The path runs along a fine banked yew avenue. At the end, go straight up the tarmac lane next to *Polesden Lacey*.



Polesden Lacey is an estate and house belonging to the National Trust. The current Edwardian house is the creation of a remarkable woman. Mrs Margaret ("Maggie") Greville was born in 1863, the daughter of the hugely successful scottish brewer William McEwan, "a plain blunt man" but with a fine eye for art, and Helen Anderson who at the time was married to a porter at the brewery. The Hon. Ronald Henry Fulke Greville had oodles of class but a smaller fortune and all he needed was a wealthy heiress ... and so the story unfolds. They found this site with its historic Surrey house and Maggie had it completely remodelled. Ronald died just after its completion and Maggie brought her new society friends from London to her new country estate for weekend parties. She possessed the most extraordinary gifts of a hostess, able to make kings and shy foreign dukes feel completely at ease. The future King George VI and Queen Elizabeth spent part of their honeymoon there in 1923. Another quality was discretion. Bedroom arrangements were kept in total secrecy. The house and garden are open every day except at Christmas. It has a good restaurant and tearoom.

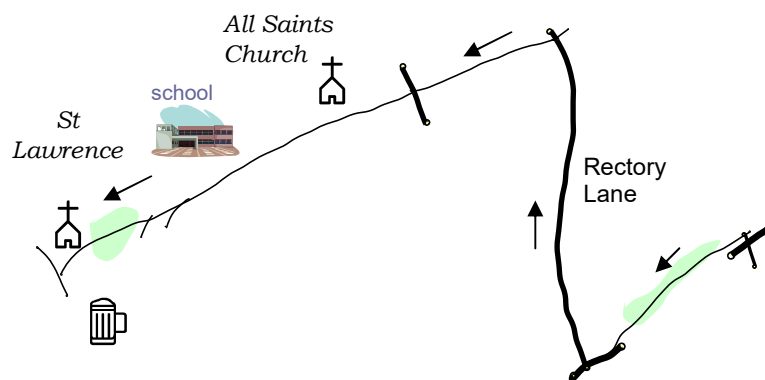
7 The lane runs under two bridges, the second being a kind of belvedere leading from the garden to the orchard. On reaching an open field, immediately ignore a brideway left. In 80m you pass a gate on the right into the car park. Ignore a signpost here pointing left across the field. (But this alternative route is preferred by many walkers; it leads you over fields and joins a track, Chalkpit Lane, coming out to the main road, almost opposite Rectory Lane where your route continues.) If you would like to visit the house and garden, go **right** through the gate. The farm shop, gift shop, café and restaurant do not require an entrance ticket. You need to return to this point afterwards. Stay on the main track for another 350m or so as you pass through a large metal gate. Ignore the track that joins you sharp left at a fingerpost and continue straight ahead. After only 5m you reach a junction. Turn **left** here onto a well-surfaced track signposted to Goldstone Farm. Follow the track straight through the farm and then for some distance between fields. You eventually emerge through a wooden gate to a road, the A246. Cross the road carefully to a footway on the other side and turn **left**.



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- 8 The path runs off-road through a grove and re-joins the main road. Turn **right** shortly after at the next road *Rectory Lane*. In about 600m, on your left, you pass *The Grange Centre*, after which the road has been narrowed. Just after this, there are footpaths left and right, with a new 2-way fingerpost on the right and a line of wooden bollards on the left. Turn **left** here on a narrow path. The path leads to a road. Cross the road *Manorhouse Lane* and take a tarmac path opposite past a sign for All Saints Church. Soon you pass the church, a real gem.



All Saints Church, Little Bookham dates from the 1100s, a simple interior with a modest bell-cote and several interesting original windows. This location on which it stands has yielded several prehistoric artefacts. Unfortunately, the church is usually closed.

Continue past the church heading for modern school buildings on the right. As you pass the school, avoid several paths forking off left and stay close to the buildings, avoiding a right turn at the corner. As the path enters woodland, stay close to the flint wall on the right. Finally the path reaches the cemetery of St Lawrence's Church. *Amongst the gravestones you will find an irregularly-shaped one belonging to Sir Barnes Wallis, inventor of the "bouncing bomb" in WW2.* You come out to the road where the walk began.



Close by, **left** at the mini roundabout is "*The Plough*", a Youngs inn with a delightful garden in the back, which is highly regarded.

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Getting there

By car: The walk begins in Church Street near the **Church of St Lawrence in Effingham village**. To get there, turn north at the traffic lights on the A246 Dorking-Guildford and turn right at the mini-roundabout and right again. Or you could take the following route:

Take the A3 to the M25 junction and leave the A3 there by the slip road, taking the middle lane. At the roundabout, go straight ahead, signposted *Guildford*, as though you had changed your mind and wanted to re-join the A3. In about 600 yds, leave the slip road by turning **left** onto a narrow road signposted *Effingham* that runs through the forest by a lake on the right. Follow the road all the way to a T-junction. Turn **right** and immediately **left** over a humpback bridge and past Effingham Junction station. Follow the road all the way to Effingham village. At the mini-roundabout, turn **left** and first **right**. Park considerately near the church.

By bus and train: no. 478 runs from Guildford to Leatherhead via Effingham and Bookham (for the station). No. 479 stops outside Effingham Golf Club, 400m from start of walk, including Sunday. No. 408 runs from Leatherhead. Both not weekends. Bookham station is about 1 mile = 1½ km from the walk. Check the timetables.

