Fancy Free Walks

point your feet on a new path

Bookham and Effingham

Distance: 14 km=9 miles or 12 km=8 miles — easy walking

Region: Surrey — Date written: 7-jul-2014

Author: Schwebefuss — Last update: 10-aug-2016

Refreshments: Ockham

Maps: Explorer 145 (Guildford) and 146 (Dorking) *hopefully not needed*

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

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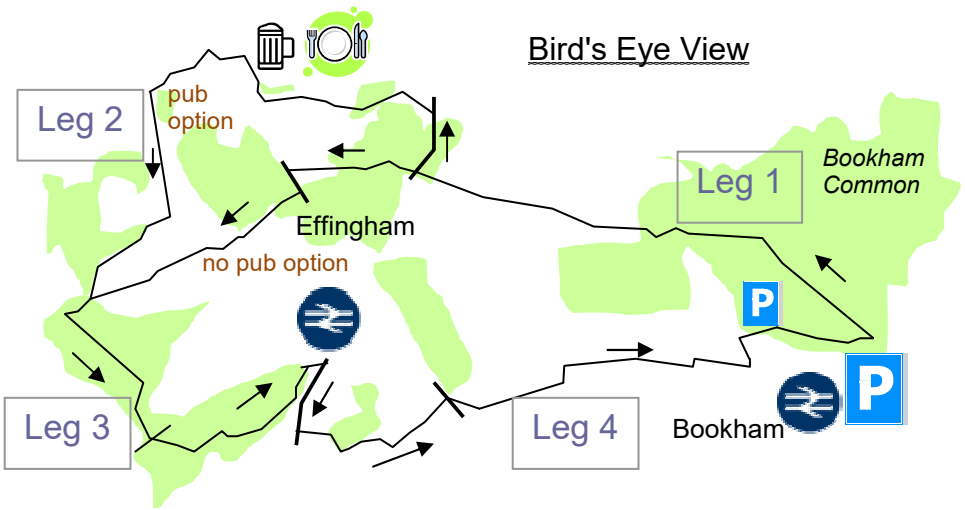
Woodland, green meadows, views, gardens, nature reserve

In Brief

Everyone who knows Surrey does this walk (or a similar one – it is unusually standard for this site). No hills - but plenty of views. One or two plain sections are suddenly followed by areas of great beauty. Always changing, always interesting. For those who want a full day out, there is a really good lunch stop (to enquire at the *Black Swan*, ring 01932-862364).

There are some nettles and briars in the wooded sections, so shorts are not recommended. Underfoot is generally dry but you will encounter some muddy patches in the woods, so boots are recommended except during a dry summer. Your dog can come too if he is not too large and can manage the stiles.

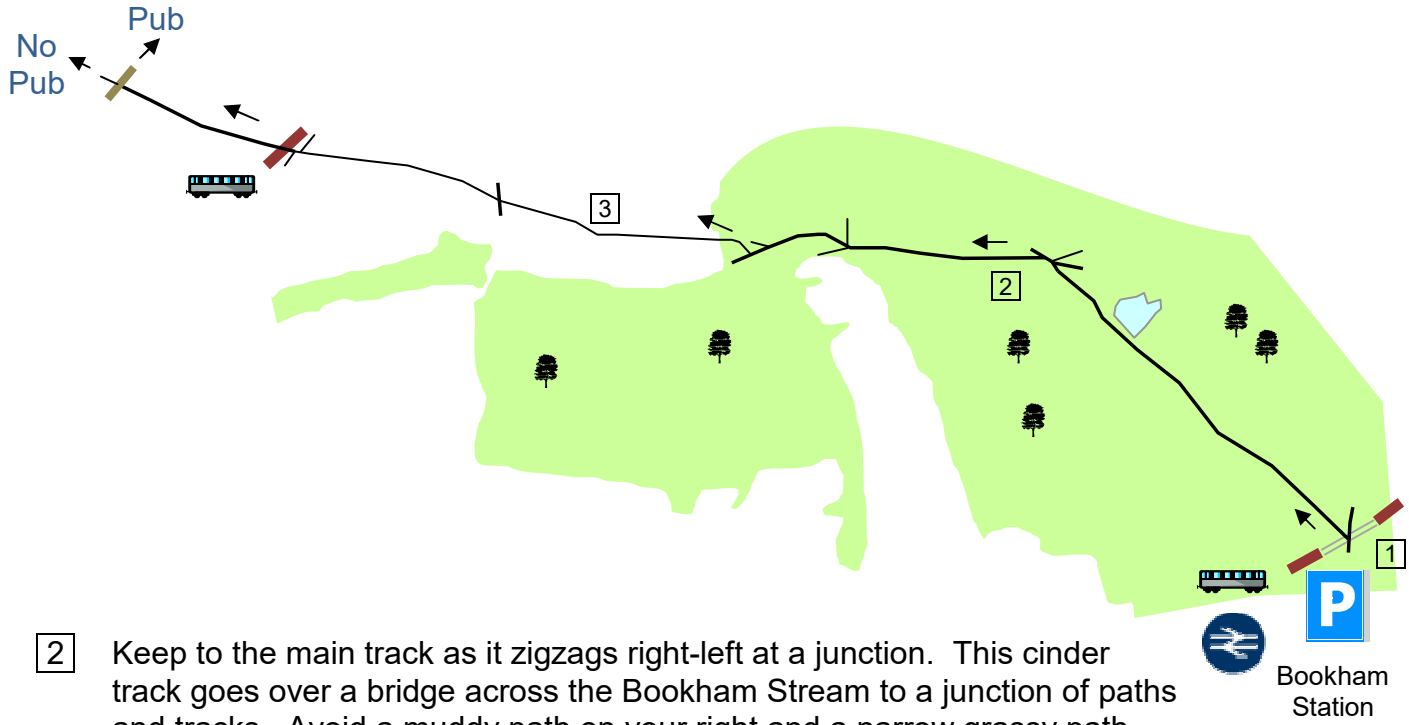
The walk begins at **Bookham railway station** or the **Tunnel car park** 300m east of the station, postcode **KT23 3ET**. The Tunnel car park makes a small charge, payable by mobile phone, free to NT members. For **free** parking, try the small **Plains car park** in Maddox Lane, postcode **KT23 3HS**. If you want the pub break more than half way round, you can park at **Effingham Junction**, postcode **KT24 5HX**, which is free on Sunday and only £2 on Saturday. There are many other possible starting places along the walk. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



The Walk

Leg 1: Bookham Common to Horsley Road 3 km=2 miles

1 If starting in **Bookham station**, go **left** on Church Road and, in 150m, at a right bend, turn **left** into the car park. From the car park, take the main path, going past a noticeboard. In 20m, fork **left** on the main track with a notice for *Handleys* and *Merritts Cottages*. Immediately **ignore** a narrow footpath on the left at a yellow NT sign. As you go, you will pass several more of these side paths, all to be avoided by staying on the main track. After 600m you pass a large pond on your right, followed by *Handleys* and *Merritts Cottages* with a field all on your left. *This tiny group of cottages is known as the Isle of Wight for some reason and the pond you passed is called the IoW Pond.* You reach a noticeboard. Turn **right** and immediately **left** with the track and, in 20m, fork **left** on a bridleway marked *Effingham Common*.



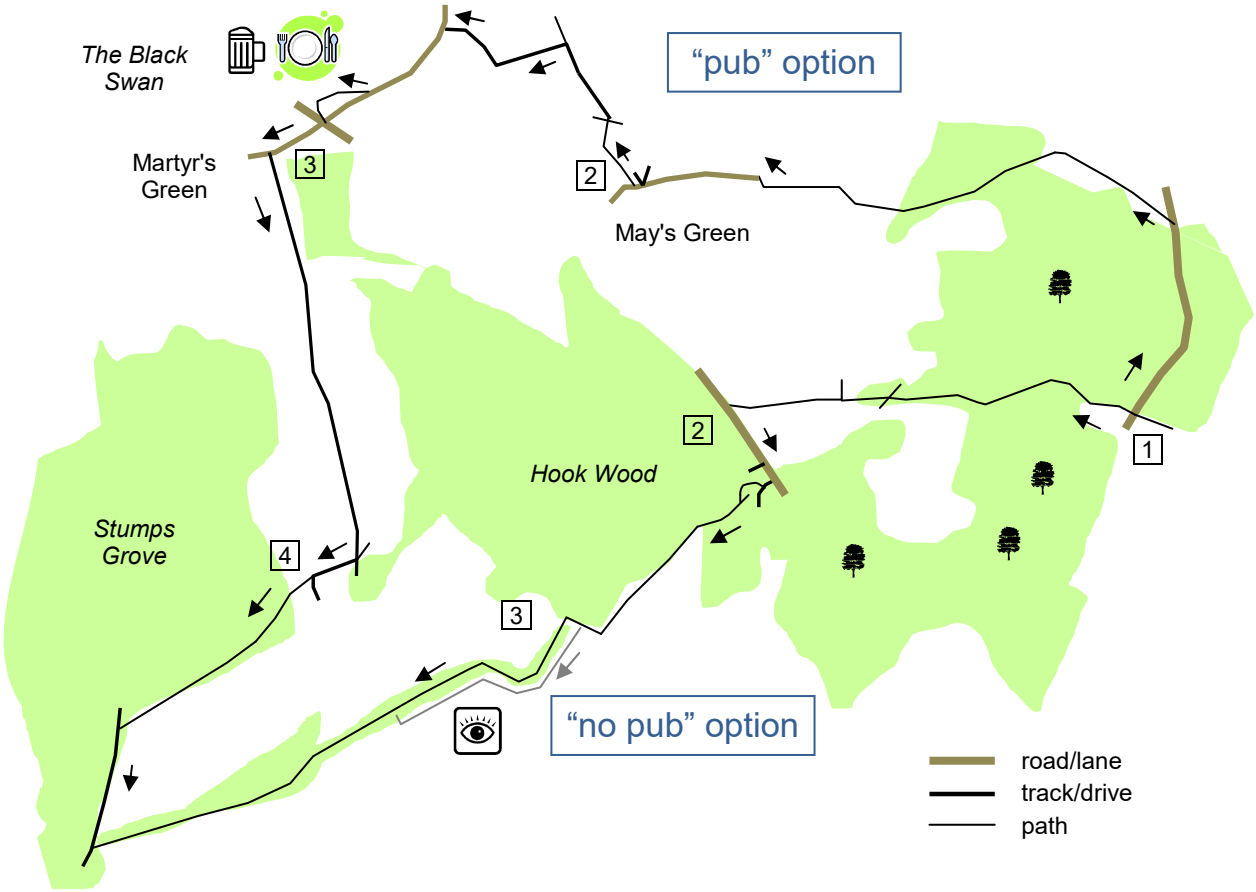
2 Keep to the main track as it zigzags right-left at a junction. This cinder track goes over a bridge across the Bookham Stream to a junction of paths and tracks. Avoid a muddy path on your right and a narrow grassy path ahead by veering **right** on the main track. The track passes *Five Halls* and *Ivy Cottage* on your left. Immediately ignore a right fork which only leads to a large cottage but take a footpath on your **right** immediately **after** the cottage. The path goes over a 3-layer stile and straight across the centre of a large hay meadow. As you near the far side, look for a post with a yellow arrow half way along the hedgerow. Go over a stile here, followed by a bridge and a small wooden gate, into another meadow.

3 Keep ahead across the centre of the meadow and through a similar wooden gate. Your path now crosses a grassy track and goes over a (broken) stile into a large meadow that is often used for clay pigeon shooting. Veer a fraction right and stay near the right-hand edge of the meadow, aiming for a railway arch visible in the distance. In the far corner, your path takes you through a wooden swing-gate and over a makeshift bridge [Mar 2015: both disused at present]. Go under the railway and keep ahead on a wide track through Newmarsh Farm [2014: a little unsightly due to building works]. At the end of the track you meet the Horsley Road.

Decision point. The main walk now takes you for refreshments to the excellent *Black Swan* pub. If you prefer to take a shorter option, forgoing the chance for food and drink, skip the following Leg 2A and do **Leg 2B** (which is also interesting in its own right).

Leg 2A: Horsley Road to Blue Ride With Pub 4½ km=2¾ miles

1 Turn **right** on the Horsley Road and walk 400m until you reach the entrance to the *Delta Force Paintball Centre*. *This is big business here where young people dress in decontamination suits and fire pop-guns in a scene of action movie props. You will probably hear the rat-a-tat in the woods as you pass.* Cross the road and turn **left** over a small stile into a hay field. Cross the field diagonally heading for a pair of trees, passing the corner of a wood on your left. Head for a fingerpost at the edge of the woods on the other side. (The fingerpost is just to the right of a jutting corner.) The footpath takes you into the woods. If this section is rather overgrown, don't worry: it soon clears. Your path goes over a stile and through more woods. Suddenly, over a 2-plank bridge, you are out into a wheat field. Your path goes straight across to a solitary oak, then veers right to another post at the corner of some trees. Veer **left** at the post on a grassy path beside a field on your left. After 150m go **right** over a stile and **left** on a tarmac drive, soon passing a redbrick cottage and approaching more houses of May's Green.



2 Just before a left curve, you will see two tracks on your right opposite a fingerpost. Avoid the tracks but continue another 5m to go **right** over a stile across grass, passing to the left of a garage. Your path goes over a bridge and between wire fences, ending over a stile. Go straight over a crossing path on a path (known as Downside Walk), then on a concrete track by

Orchard Farm, keeping ahead on a tarmac drive with excellent views on your right. Where the tarmac drive bends left, turn **left** with it, thus leaving the footpath. The drive bends right and comes to a T-junction. Turn **left** on Ockham Lane, to reach the entrance to the car park of the *Black Swan* at Martyr's Green in 200m. Turn **right** into the car park and **left** through a wooden gate into the pub's garden.

The Black Swan, Ockham, used to be a bikers' pub famous for real ale binges. A few years ago, under new management, it was transformed into a superior gastropub which will not disappoint, although it might make a small hole in your wallet. One innovation is the "Black Swan Parlour Board", an array of victuals to share. Try the chicken liver starter or the oatmeal-crusted mackerel (the menu changes often). Beer is Surrey Hills and three other craft pulls. The garden and patio are charming as is the service. Google their website for menus and ring to enquire: 01932-862364.

3 After your break, continue in your original direction to a crossroads just by the pub. Go straight over the major road to a road opposite with signs for *Ockham Village*. In 100m turn **left** onto a signed footpath on a tarmac-and-concrete drive with a sign for *Blackmoor Farm*. Your track goes down a dip and rises, passing a dog care centre, and continues between crop fields. The track passes a line a trees into a new field: keep ahead on the track. You come level with *Stumps Grove Cottage* on your right at a junction of tracks. Turn **right** here, staying on the main concrete drive, passing the cottage.

4 As the concrete track bends left, leave it by going **right** on a narrow path, over a wide bridge, into woodland. At a marker post, fork **left** on a bridle-way running just inside the wood of Stumps Grove. After nearly 400m on this beautiful woodland path, you come to a T-junction with a wide track. Turn **left** on this track. In 200m, you pass a fingerpost on your left by a low bar and meet a path coming from a field on your left.

The "No Pub" option for Leg 2 meets you here. Your route continues with **Leg 3**.

Leg 2B: Horsley Road to Blue Ride With No Pub 2⅔ km=1⅔ miles

Take this route **instead of Leg 2A** if you want to shorten the walk by omitting the paths to May's Green and the *Black Swan* pub.

1 **See map under Leg 2A.** Cross the Horsley Road and take a wide track opposite, to the right of a large redbrick house. The track quickly leads to a path through woods – a contrast from the preceding terrain. The path is fairly wide but unclear in parts: just keep straight on through the wood between banks. At a post with a yellow arrow keep right, staying in the wood and avoiding an open area on your left. You reach a wide track: turn **left** on it for 10m and then turn **right** on a narrow unsigned path, just to the right of a small pond. [Mar 2015: this path may be full of brambles and later swampy; if it is not passable, go back to the wide track, turn **left** on it, go past the paintball centre and continue past a field of hens until you reach a large red metal gate, taking you back on the route.] You meet another wide track at a bend: keep straight ahead along the track. In 250m you reach a road, Old Lane.

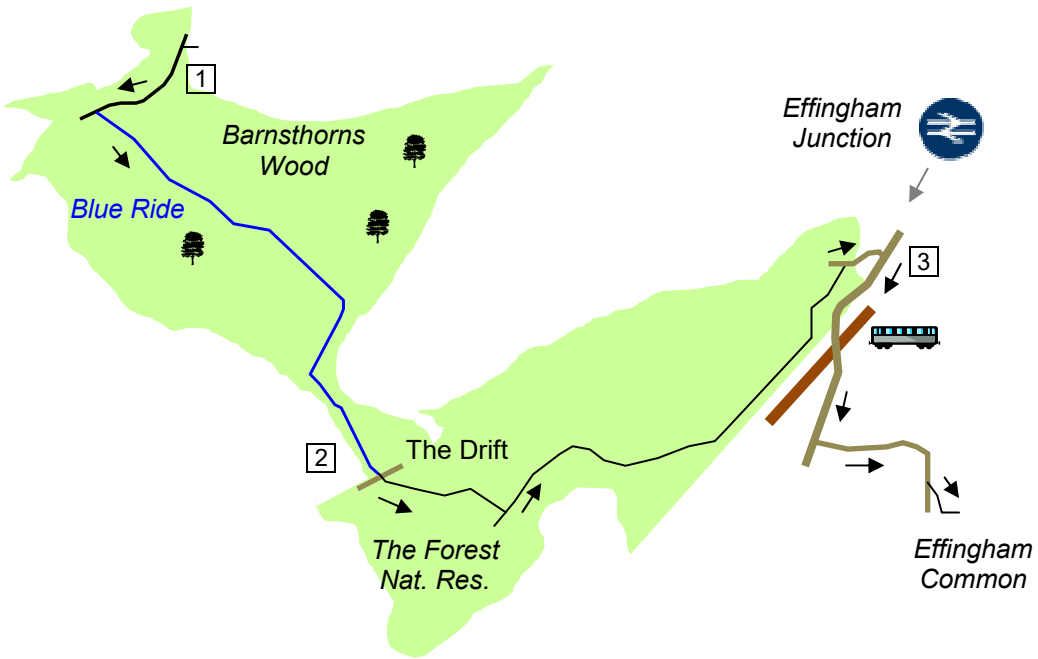
2 Cross Old Lane and turn **left** along it. *On your right is part of the Paintball Centre, which this walk neatly avoids.* Ignore the first track on the right, by a metal bar, but take the **next** turning **right**, after 180m on the road, on a drive at a sign for *Lake House*. In 10m, before the electric operated

wooden gate, turn **right** through a large swing-gate which leads on a rather winding course to a T-junction. (The old footpath in fact comes from your left here, made redundant by changes to the driveway.) Turn **right** at the T-junction. This raised path goes through Hook Wood, over a bank and over a bridge into an open meadow.

3 Keep ahead along the right-hand side of the meadow, passing to the right of an open barn. In the next meadow, bear **right**, continue into the trees and turn **left** at a yellow arrow on a narrow path along a woodland strip parallel to the meadow on your left. (Hardly anyone uses this path because it is always overgrown. There has never been a problem with staying on the edge of the meadow on a nice wide path.) The woodland path curves right and left. (Or if using the field-edge path, turn **right** and **left** along the edge of the next field. *On your left there are wide views with no habitation in sight giving a feeling of deep country.*) After another 150m the path breaks cover and on your right is a private drive to the redbrick Blackmoor Farm. Continue ahead on the woodland path. (If you were using the field-edge path, you should zigzag right-left at this point onto the woodland path because the path is decently wide and quite attractive.) After 500m the woodland path ends at a low metal bar and leads immediately to a T-junction with a wide track. Turn **left** on the track.

The "With Pub" option of Leg 2A meets you here and you now continue together.

Leg 3: Blue Ride to Effingham Common 3⅓ km=2 miles



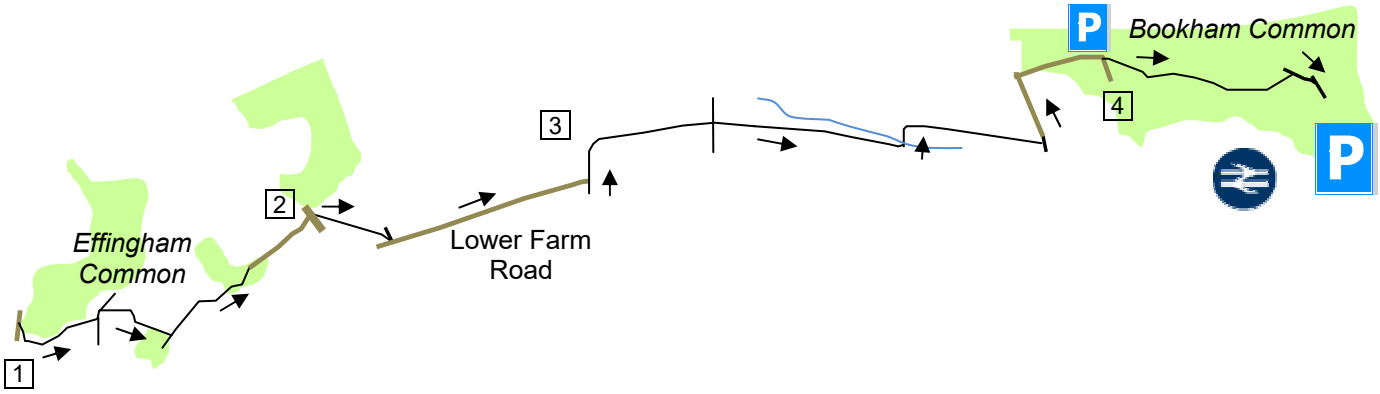
1 In 200m, turn **left** at a fingerpost, going over a small bridge, on a path through rhododendrons. This part of Barnsthorns Wood is the so-called *Blue Ride*, rather ironically as horses are not allowed. Follow this beautiful wide path through mixed woodland. After more than 600m, the path wheels **right** through rhododendrons, approaches a meadow and turns **left** beside it. After running beside a wire fence for 200m, the path comes out to a tarmac lane known as The Drift.

2 Cross straight over the lane past a fingerpost into a woodland nature reserve known simply as *The Forest* and part of the Horsley Jubilee Trail (HJT). You pass an open-air classroom. Keep ahead, avoiding all side

paths, to arrive at a T-junction in over 200m. Turn **left** here, following the yellow arrow, still on the HJT. In 60m, you reach a 4-way junction with a marker post. Keep straight on and follow this nice wide path through more woodland. The path curves right and left and, after about 400m, you become aware of the railway on your right. In another 350m you come to an information tablet about the nature reserve. Go over a little bridge and turn **right** on The Drift. (You can veer right before the bridge and keep to the path, although it is rather overgrown.) In 100m you reach a T-junction with Forest Road.

3 Turn sharp **right** on Forest Road using the footway. The road curves left over the railway. 200m after the bridge, turn **left** on Heathway which is also marked as a footpath and as the HJT. *On the opposite side of Forest Road is one of the Earl of Lovelace's old flint buildings, Forest Farm (see the walk "The Lovelace Bridges of Horsley" in this series).* Continue past bungalows to the end of the road and turn **right**, still on Heathway. In 50m, go **left** between posts on a path into trees. Care: do not stray! In 20m, at a junction, turn **right** for 15m to reach the open space of Effingham Common by a noticeboard.

Leg 4: Effingham Common to Bookham Common 4 km=2½ miles



1 Take a path along the left-hand edge of the common. It curves left round the edge, then right again and, after 150m total, reaches a junction of paths. Turn **left** over a ditch (by a new cattle grid or a small bridge) and immediately turn **right** on a path across the centre of the common, alongside the ditch. At the other side, fork **right** in the direction of a post with a yellow arrow and follow the path through a wooden barrier near a yellow coated house. Turn **left** on a tarmac drive, past Hooke Farm on your right, and follow it as it becomes gravel and tarmac again, passing a cricket pitch on your left, leading out to the Effingham Common Road.

2 Cross this main road carefully to a drive on the other side for Norwood Farm. Do not join the drive but immediately turn **right** on a path diagonally across the grass. In the far corner, go through a band of trees, veer **right** on a gravel drive and immediately turn **left** onto Lower Farm Road. *You could hardly imagine a more essentially residential road of middle England, with every possible style of house and garden, some one-storied, some opulent.* At the far end of this cul-de-sac, go over a small ladder stile or through a large metal gate into farmland.

3 Turn **left** on a track and turn **right** with the track in the corner in 100m, along a line of oak trees. Your path leads you through two large metal gates. Where the track bends left through a locked gate, keep straight ahead over an unusual H-stile. The path now leads through pasture with a

stream on your left. [2015: there is now an awkward arrangement of electric fences half way down. Remove the first fence using handles next to a tree and follow a corridor between fences. The exit is on the left, clearly marked ***out***, leading into the adjoining pasture.] In the far left-hand corner, go over a concrete bridge and a stile with large farm buildings ahead. Turn immediately **left**, avoiding the farm, going over a long bridge. Your path turns **right** past a disused stile and then over a stile onto an enclosed path, running beside the railway. At a T-junction with a wide track, turn **left**, going over a railway bridge. You are now on a residential track, Maddox Lane. At the end, turn **right** passing the old *Bookham Grange Hotel*, now being turned into apartments and executive homes. At a bend, you reach the small Plains car park (alternative start).

4 Keep straight ahead to the **right** of the car park, beside a National Trust sign and a noticeboard, and go through a swing-gate. Continue on a winding path over a wild grassy area and, in 150m, go **left** over a bridge with rails across a stream. Keep dead straight under overhanging trees, still on a grassy, slightly marshy, path. Go through another swing-gate and veer **left** over a bridge with rails. Ahead are three possible paths. Take the path on the **right** and, at a T-junction, turn **right** again and **right** at a wooden barrier onto a track and **right** again into the car park where the walk began. **Bookham station** is 150m to the **right** on Church Road.

Getting there

By car: Bookham lies just off the Leatherhead-Guildford **A246** road but the station is rather out-of-the-way. If coming from the Leatherhead direction, you need to continue 1 mile after the big Bocketts Farm-Fetcham roundabout (follow a brown sign for *Polesden Lacey*). Go through one set of traffic lights by an Esso station. You will see a road sign *Bookham Church, Station 1*: turn **right** onto **High Street**. Continue past quaint shops to a crossroads with traffic lights and go straight across on Church Road with the church on your right. Proceed for ⅔ mile where the road curves left and, at the next left bend, go **right** into the car park. If coming from the **Guildford** direction, turn **left** off the A246 at the traffic lights by the Effingham Golf Club. Follow the road past the *Sir Douglas Haig*, turn **right** at the mini-roundabout and continue from (a) below. If coming from the direction of **Effingham Junction** (e.g. from Cobham or the A3 road), turn **left** at the mini-roundabout at the start of Effingham village. (a) go ⅔ mile and turn **left** at a mini-roundabout onto Little Bookham Street. In ¾ mile the main road bends right and passes the Station. Continue onwards to a right bend and here go **left** into the car park.

If you start at **Effingham Junction**, from the car park, go **right** (away from the main road) on a driveway. 20m after the start of some factory buildings, at a fingerpost, turn **left** onto the wide green space of Effingham Common. Turn **right** along the edge. In 150m veer **left** on a path across the centre. 130m after passing trees on your right, veer **left** to the corner of a cricket pitch. Pass the pitch on your left and turn **left** on a tarmac lane. Resume at Leg 4 section 2. Memorise the landmarks for the return at the end of the walk.

By bus/train: start at Bookham or Effingham Junction station; regular service from London Waterloo.

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