



Devil's Punch Bowl and Waggoners Wells



Distance: 16 km=10 miles

moderate walking

Region: Surrey, Hampshire

Date written: 8-aug-2013

Author: Schwebefuss

Date revised: 5-jul-2015

Refreshments: Grayshott, Hindhead

Last update: 12-mar-2022

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

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

Public rights are restricted to printing, copying or distributing this document exactly as seen here, complete and without any cutting or editing. See *Principles* on main webpage.

Woodland trails, heath, views, lakes, villages

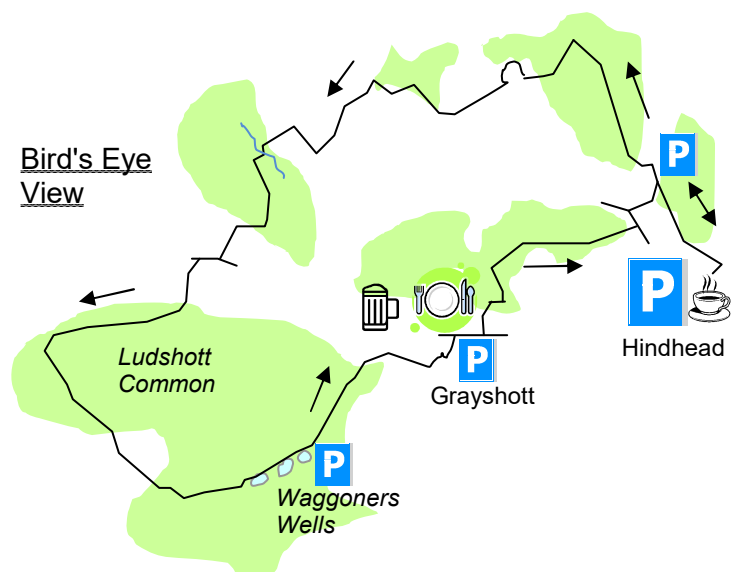
In Brief

This remarkable walk takes you on an excursion on rarely-used paths into Hampshire to visit that picturesque string of lakes in the forest. On the way, you pass through an ever-changing landscape of deep wooded valleys, heather-topped crests and moors.



There are just one or two patches with nettles and brambles, so bare legs might be uncomfortable. The terrain is generally firm, so strong walking shoes or trainers should be fine. There is 150m along a main road and three low stiles just before the lakes but these should not prevent your dog from joining you.

The walk begins at the **National Trust Punch Bowl** car park (postcode **GU26 6AB**), free to members, a small charge for others. Alternative *free* car parks are available. For travel details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



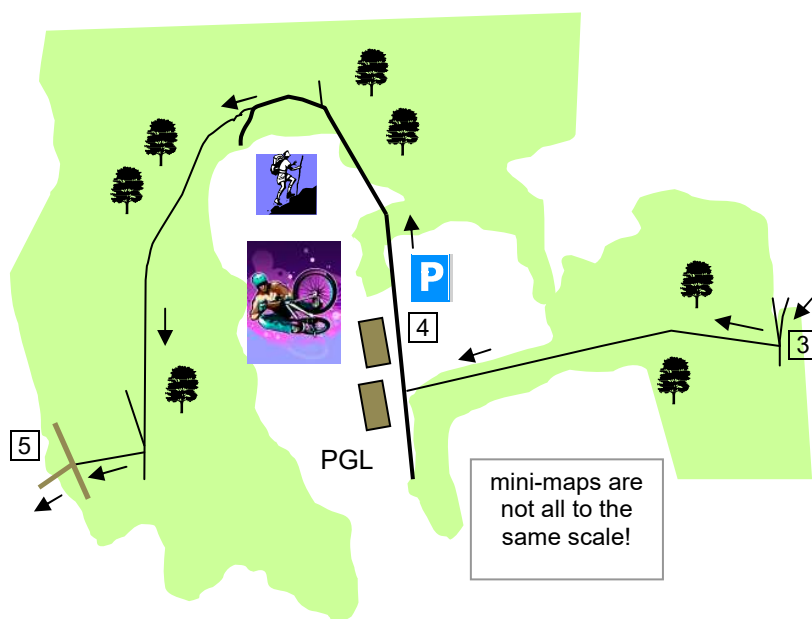
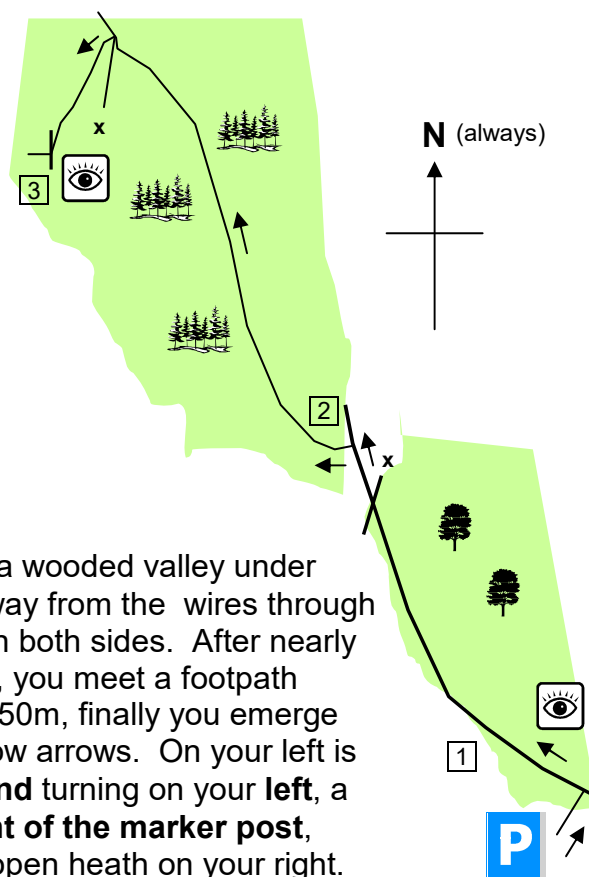
The Walk

Leg 1: Hindhead into Hampshire 5¾ km=3½ miles

- 1 Go forward from the car park, past the notice-board and the Surrey Hills pole, to the famous viewpoint over the Punch Bowl. Turn **left** here along a wide level path, passing a group of mature pines. After about 700m with fine views, you reach a junction of tracks near a prominent relay mast and a sign for Highcombe Edge. **Ignore** the wide path used by most people that forks right past a small car park to a noticeboard. Instead take the **left** fork, a narrower straight gravel driveway signed *Broom Acres*, marked with a yellow arrow as a footpath. In 150m, as you pass under wires, turn **left** at a yellow arrow on a narrow path downhill into woods.

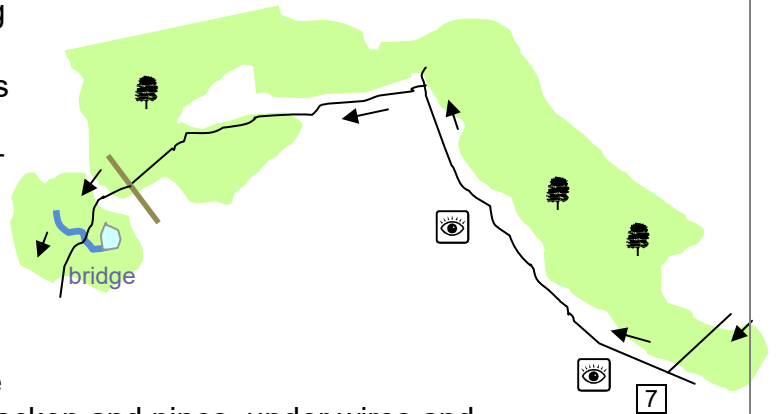
- 2 The path bends right and runs along the base of a wooded valley under wires. Soon the path narrows and veers right, away from the wires through rhododendrons. The valley is now steep-sided on both sides. After nearly 1 km of dramatic isolation along this lonely valley, you meet a footpath coming down steeply from the right. In another 250m, finally you emerge into a more open area by a marker post with yellow arrows. On your left is steep woodland and open heath. Take the **second** turning on your **left**, a narrow **unsigned** path steeply up, just to the **right of the marker post**, running between deep woodland on the left and open heath on your right. This knobby path is well-trodden and easier than it seems, the main hazard being overhanging branches. In 350m, you reach the top of Beacon Hill with one of the best views over Thursley Common.

- 3 Turn **left** on a wide crossing track, immediately reaching a wooden fence. Do *not* continue ahead (into a teaching centre and adventure area) but turn **right** on a narrow path between fences. The path runs by a sports pitch on your left and a large wooden climbing apparatus on your right. Where the path turns abruptly left, **leave** it by turning **right*** through a wooden gate into *The PGL Merchants Hill Adventure Centre*. Turn immediately **left** and then **right** on the tarmac driveway. (* Should the gate be closed, turn **left** with the path to find a wooden gate 100m after the corner, and turn **right** on the tarmac driveway.)



6 Your route is straight ahead over the fairway between two sand bunkers (look left for golf balls!) then steeply up past a marker post. At the top, keep ahead over a golfer's path, past a group of pines, to a tarmac drive. Turn **left** on the drive and, in 25m, fork **right** on a gravel path following a yellow arrow. At a T-junction, cross straight over a tarmac drive to a very narrow path opposite, quickly reaching the main Churt Road. Carefully cross the road to a fenced path opposite, minding the few brambles and nettles. The path ends at a wooden swing-gate leading to a wide wild hillside overlooking the Whitmoor Vale – always a stunning surprise, even if you know the territory. The hillside has heather growing in profusion and semi-wild ponies.

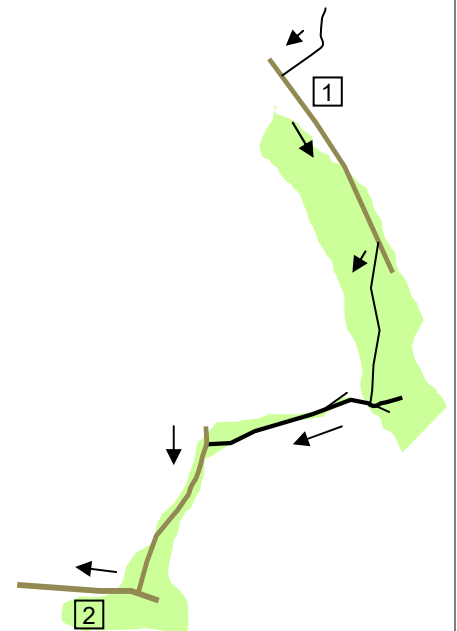
7 In 20m, turn **right** on a level path, giving you ample time to admire the unbroken view across the valley. You shortly pass a bench overgrown with colourful heather. Two more seats follow as your path curves left round the head of a valley on a spectacular level course. Ignore a path forking left as you reach another seat and a swing-gate. Go through the gate and turn **left** on a path downhill beside a fence on the left. The path snakes its way downhill through bracken and pines, under wires and down to a lane. Cross the lane to a signed footpath beside *Woodland View*. At the bottom, your path crosses a 2-plank bridge over the stream in Whitmoor Bottom. This is a magic spot, with the gurgling and meandering stream and a silent pool on your left. Welcome to Hampshire!



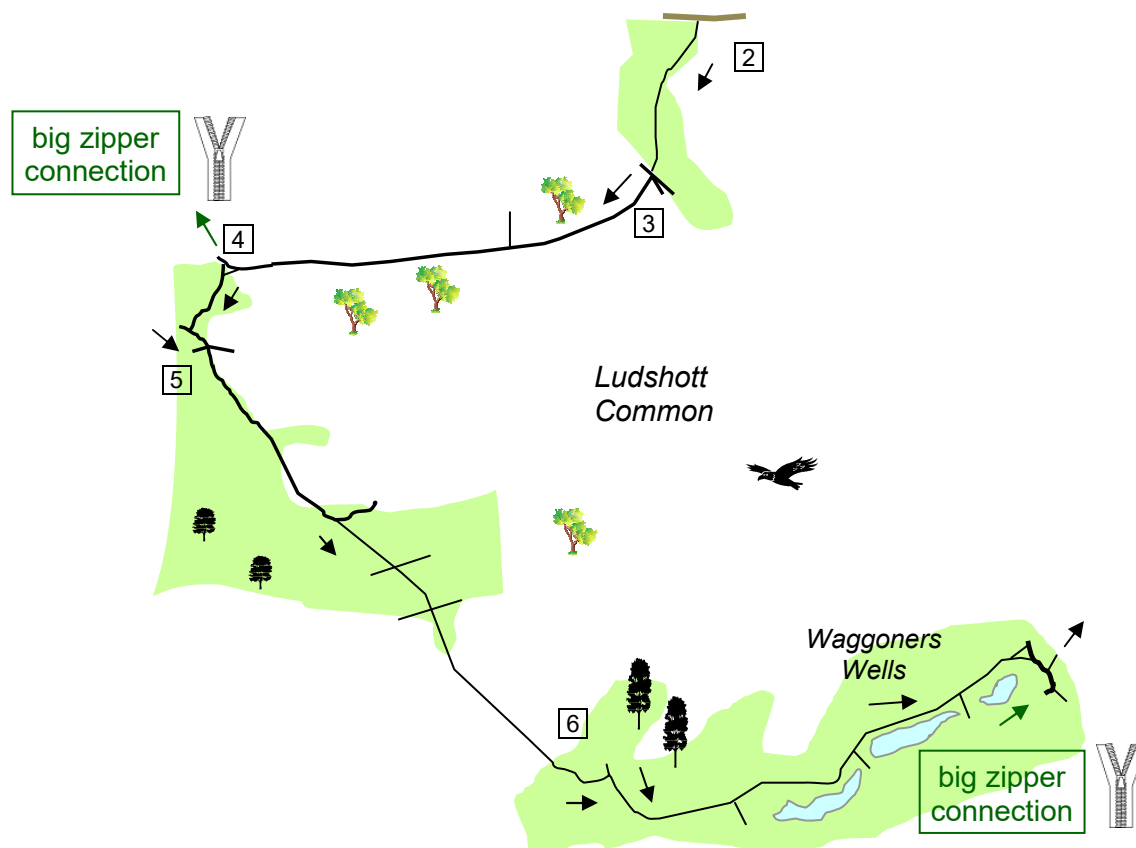
Leg 2: to the Lakes 5¼ km=3¼ miles

1 Your path rises and curves round a garden fence to a tarmac lane opposite the orange-coloured *Grey Cottage*. Turn **left** on the lane. The lane zigzags past a house, *Starfields*. After another 100m or so, fork **right** on a signposted footpath uphill through trees. *Don't miss this turn!* The path goes steadily uphill over a track, passing two marker posts, to a junction of paths at the top by a marker post. Turn immediately **right** on a wide path, reaching another marker post in 50m or so. Keep straight ahead here on a byway. Your path joins a drive coming from a house on the right. At a tarmac lane, Hammer Lane, turn **left**. The lane ends at the main Headley Road opposite the Grayshott Spa. Turn **right** on the road, making use of the new footway.

2 **See mini-map overleaf.** In nearly 150m, carefully cross the road, and turn **left** on a bridleway just before the corner of a paling fence. Keep next to the fence on your right. Where, in 200m, the fence ends at a sharp corner continue ahead following a blue arrow and, 15m later, take the **right** fork. Keep to the main path, ignoring several minor paths off. After another 100m, your path finally comes out to a junction of sandy paths on the sweeping open heath of Ludshott Common.



Ludshott Common is a unique large area of heath in East Hampshire, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Protection Area (SPA), home to several rare bird species, butterflies, spiders and fungi. During the last war, it was used for tank training. A fire in 1980 enabled the scrubland to be restored to its historic primeval state of open heathland.



- 3 Cross straight across a wide sandy path onto a level twisty path, still on the
bridleway. This path leads for some distance across the Common without
branch-offs, except for a junction on your right which you pass regardless.
After a total distance of 1 km, your path enters woodland and bends right.



If you are doing the **Waggoners Wells Big Zipper**, switch now to the other walk
Waggoners Wells & Ludshott Common, beginning at Leg 1 section 2.

- 4 **Leave** the main path before the bend by forking **left** on a narrower path. In
30m, at a T-junction, turn **left** on another wide path. This path winds uphill
for 130m. At the top of the slope, at a T-junction, turn **left**. In 50m you
come out of the woods to a junction of wide paths with a seat on your left.
Go straight over along a wide path that runs beside pinewoods on your right
[Mar 2022: now denuded after a rather brutal harvesting of the pines (not helped
by recent storms): a temporary footpath has been provided, indicated on the left].
- 5 Your path goes down a dip, passes a 2-way fingerpost [Nov 2021:grounded]
and rises again. About 300m from the junction with the bench you pass a
deeply rutted track on your right. In a further 100m you reach a distinct fork in
the path. Take the **right** fork, a path into the woods, leaving the wider sandy
path which curves away left. In nearly 200m you meet a 4-way fingerpost at a
crossing path under wires. Keep straight ahead, reaching, in 100m or so,
another crossing path at a new marker post. Again, cross straight over. You
are now out of the forest, with a garden on your left and a meadow on your

right. At the other side, go over a stile [Mar 2022: demolished by a fallen tree] and keep ahead with a large meadow on your right. After a stile at the other side, your path takes you down into the deep dark wood.

- 6 The atmosphere has changed and the tall pines add to the brooding expectation as you descend. An avoidable low stile takes you to a crossing path. Turn **right** on this bridleway through more deep forest. Shortly, ignore the lower path on the left which is reserved for horses and stay on the raised path with give you a view of the Cooper's Stream and springs below that feed the lakes. You reach a wide bridge over the stream. *Another walk in this series "Waggoners Wells and Ludshott Common" takes the right-hand bank, so this walk stays on the left side. You can of course cross the bridge: either way, you finish at the ford.* You pass a wishing well where the poet Alfred Tennyson composed a well-known poem. Your path passes the garden of a house after which, at a junction, keep right. Shortly, you pass the first lake. Steps lead up through trees to the second lake and, soon after, the third lake. At a fork, keep **right** by the lakeside, soon reaching a tarmac lane. Turn **right** over a bridge by a ford.

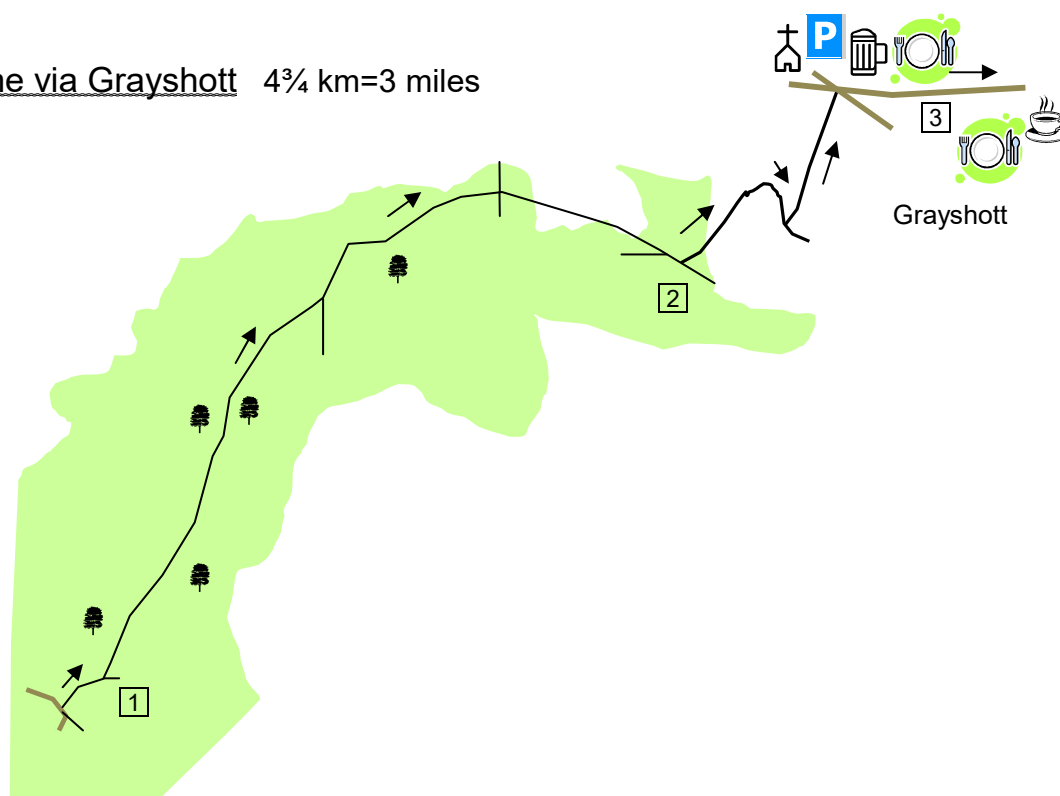
Waggoners Wells were created by damming the Cooper's Stream, a tributary of the River Wey, during the 1600s by the Hooke family of Bramshott and were originally called Wakeners Wells. Like so many similar ponds, they served the iron industry as "hammer ponds".

In 30m, you see the lane bending right ahead and a rough wide track straight ahead. Shortly **before** you get to either of them, turn **left** at a fingerpost on a bridleway.



The **Waggoners Wells Big Zipper** joins this walk here.

Leg 3: home via Grayshott 4¾ km=3 miles



- 1 Follow the main path which runs between low banks. In 100m your main path veers **left** up a bank onto a splendid wide woodland route. After a pleasant walk in mature forest for 500m, you join another path coming from

www.fancyfreewalks.org

the right at a fingerpost [Jan 21: broken and lying in the brambles]. Soon you pass an electric relay station and the path runs beside large gardens on your left. Just after *Kingswood Ruffs*, ignore a bridleway on your left uphill and at the same time ignore a footpath on your right. After another 350m, a footpath joins from the right at a fingerpost. Just opposite, on your left, is a marker post. Fork **left** here on a path uphill. *Don't miss this turn!*

2 You join a driveway uphill, passing a bungalow on your right and other individual houses. The driveway bends right and reaches a dusty junction. Turn sharp **left**



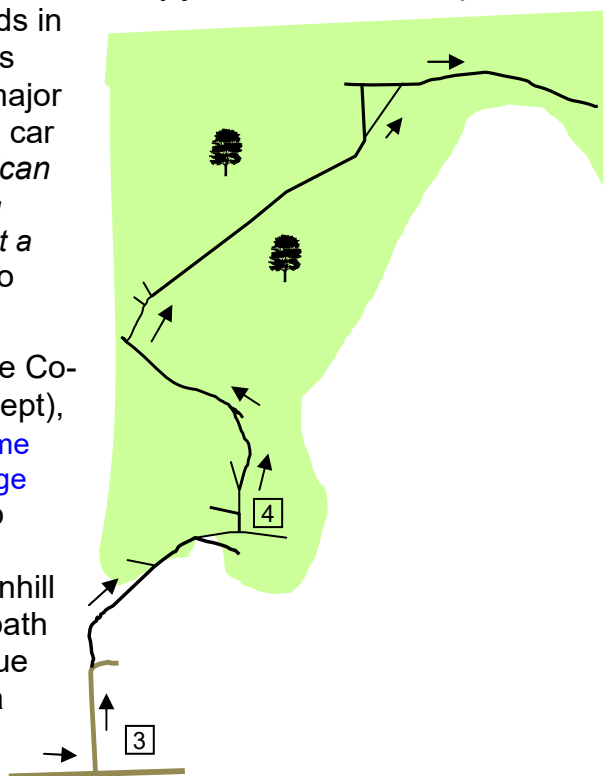
WC

on a drive leading straight up to a crossroads in the centre of the village of Grayshott. Cross over the minor road and turn **right** on the major Headley Road. On your left is a public free car park with loos. You reach the *Fox and Pelican* pub. The "Fox and Pelican" (Fullers) has a big garden on the side, ideal for taking lunch or just a drink. The pub is open all day. There are also several ethnic food outlets nearby.

3 Continue along the road and, just before the Co-Op and the Blue Hair salon (a riveting concept), turn **left** on Avenue Road. (But, for a welcome cup of tea, keep going another 15m to the village café.)



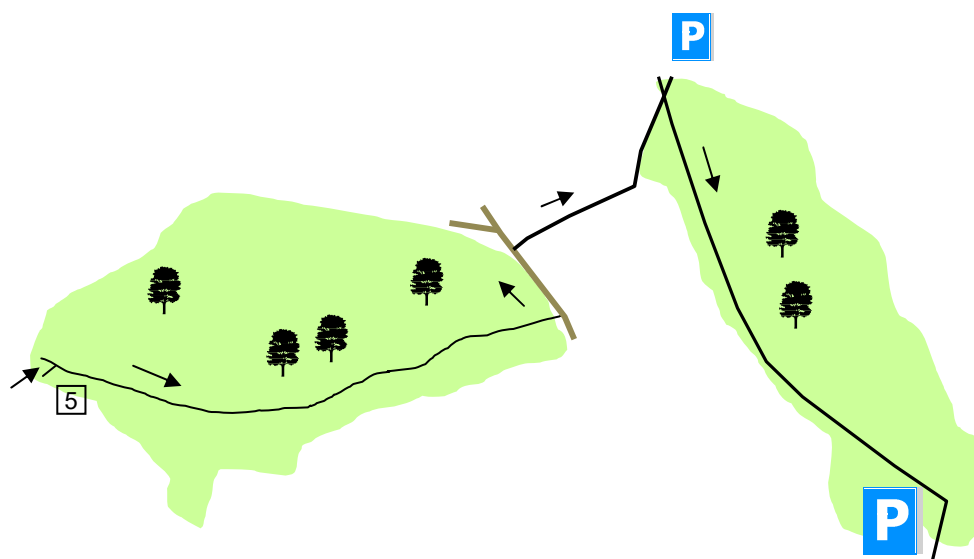
Where the road bends off right, keep ahead on a tarmac drive. The drive curves right, degrades to a dirt track and runs downhill under beeches. In 50m, ignore a marked path sharp on the left between posts and continue on the curving track. The track goes past a large gate, down into woods to a junction and a marker post with yellow arrows. Turn **left** at the marker post.



4 **Care! this section is tricky.** In 10m, your path forks. The left fork is a wide path that curves away left past a marker post [Nov 2021:grounded] into tall trees. The right fork, more directly ahead, is narrower and in summer it goes between two patches of nettly undergrowth. Take this **right** fork. In 20m, the path forks again. Take the **right** fork, the steeper option. In 50m, your path veers **left** on an easier gradient. You are back in Surrey! Your path gradually ascends on a straight course. Note the earth bank on your right. In nearly 200m, the main path abruptly turns **right** through a gap in this earth bank. (If you find yourself on a narrow section going up a steep natural step, you need to backtrack 10m to find the turning.) In 30m, keep right by a small open area, avoiding several paths off to your left. You are now on a perfect wide woodland path known as the *Golden Valley Walk*.

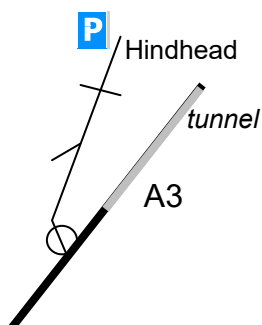
5 **See mini-map overleaf.** In 300m, as you near a crossing path ahead, fork **right** and turn **right** at a T-junction, following a *Golden Valley* icon, onto the crossing path. You will be following this wide level path through woods, avoiding side branches, for the better part of one km. The going is easy, except for one or two muddy patches near the end. The path finally ends at a barrier and the main Tilford Road. Turn **left** on the main road, using the generous grass verge. In 100m, turn **right** on Gorse Hill, a semi-tarmac drive, by a sign for *Highcombe Pines*. Follow the track as it elbows left beside a fence. At a junction by the relay tower, turn sharp **right** on a wide

path, familiar from your outward journey, leading back to the Devil's Punch Bowl car park where the walk began.



Getting there

By car: If coming via the A3 road, turn off just south of the Hindhead tunnel, at a sign for **Hindhead**. At the traffic lights in Hindhead, keep straight ahead into a cul-de-sac. The car park is on the left. Refreshments are available at the Punch Bowl Café. There are alternative *free* car parks at (1) Highcombe Edge at the end of Gorse Hill (see the map of the walk above); (2) at Waggoners Wells, placing the lunch break at Hindhead; (3) in the public car park in Grayshott; (4) on the roadside in Beaconhill, or other places along the route.



By bus/train: various buses from Haslemere station. Check the timetables.

fancy more free walks? www.fancyfreewalks.org