



Greensand Hills from the South

Distance: 19 or 20 km=12 or 12½ miles, moderate walking
with two provisional shorter options of 13 km = 8 miles each

Region: Surrey

written: 18/09/09

Author: Schwebefuss

revised: 30/10/11

Refreshments: Forest Green, Ewhurst

Maps: Explorer 145 (Guildford) & 146 (Dorking)

(if required)

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Hills, woodland, views, sudden vistas, fine houses

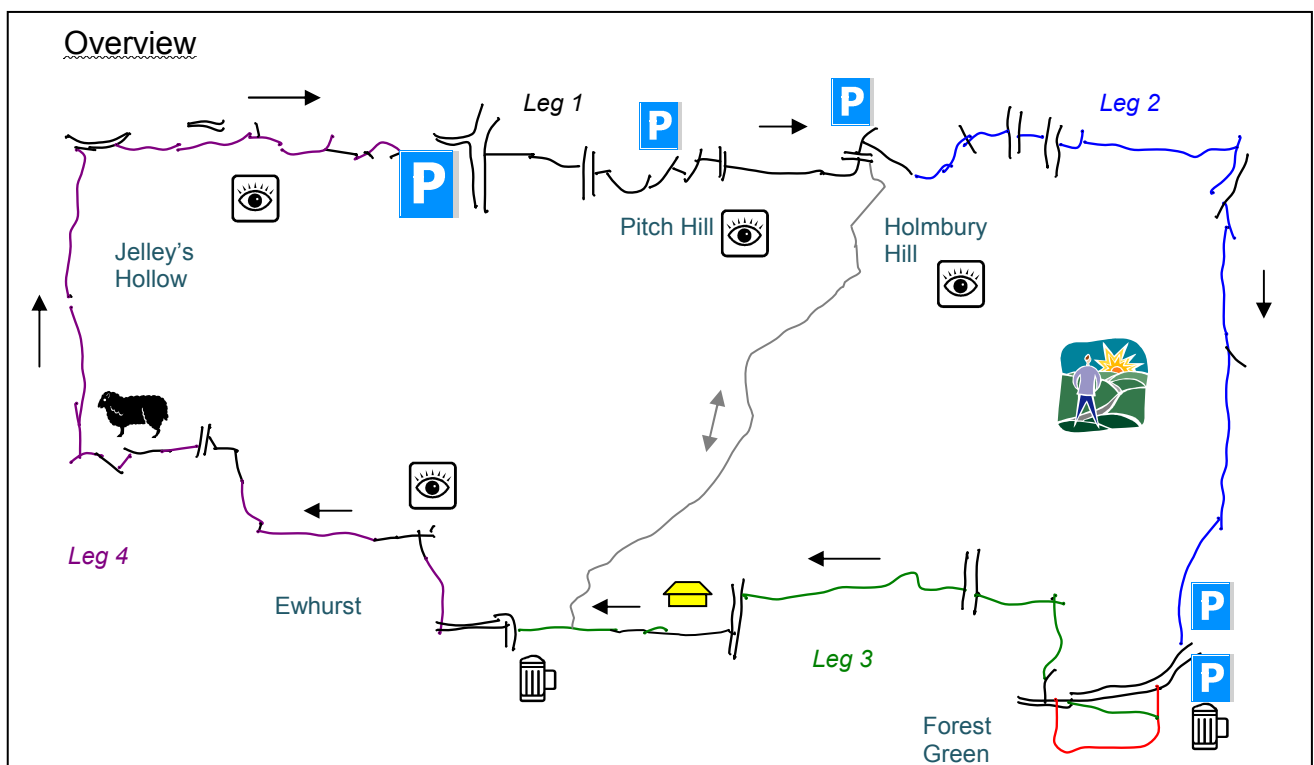
In Brief



This radiant circular walk takes you over the Greensand Hills (Pitch Hill and Holmbury Hill), then south to the villages on the edge of the Weald and back again. This walk is probably a little tougher than other walks of this distance but the fine views and the green forest and meadows are so gratifying that your legs will feel as light as a feather.

Boots are recommended because of the distance, although there is little mud. There are no nettles and the route seems fine for a dog too.

This walk has a **provisional** short cut splitting it into two walks. See below. To do the (provisional) Eastern Walk, begin at Forest Green or Holmbury Hill.

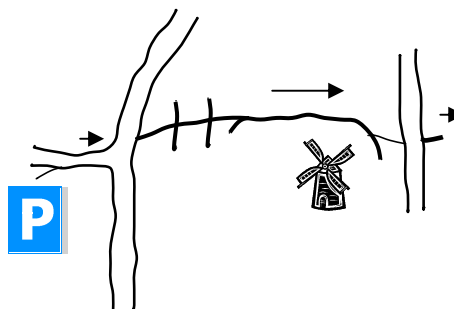


The walk begins at the **Hurtwood Control car park No. 4** between Ewhurst Windmill and Reynards Hill. For more details see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

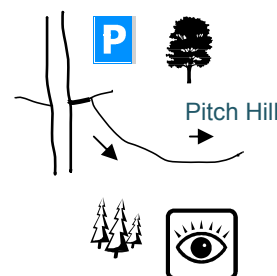
The Walk

Leg 1: Winterfold to Holmbury Hill, 4 km (2½ miles)

- 1 From the car park, go out to the road, turn **right** along it for a few steps to a T-junction with another road. Cross the road to a track marked as a footpath and as part of the Greensand Way. The path goes over two crossing tracks and joins a track coming from a house on the right. A little later, it runs close to Ewhurst Windmill on the right. *Ewhurst Windmill is now a converted private house.* Turn **right** on a tarmac track and in a few paces at *Four Winds* take a narrow path **left**, soon going down steps, to a driveway and a road.

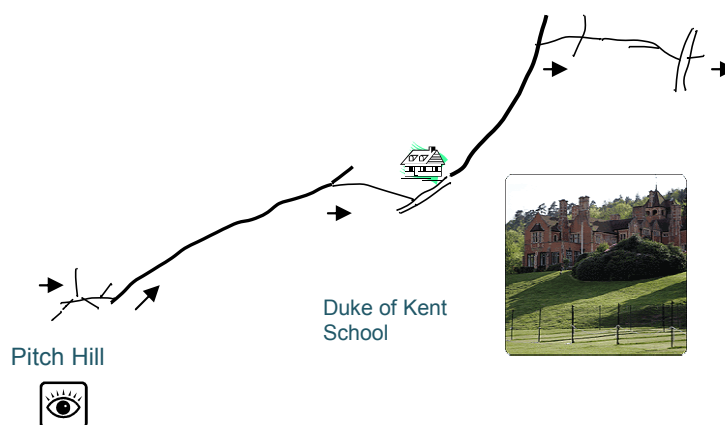


- 2 Cross the road, with Hurtwood Control car park No. 3 on your left, and turn immediately **right** on a track that rises rather steeply at first with a quarry (now disused and reclaimed by nature) on your left. Stay on this track on the edge of the hill. Eventually you come to the open area of Pitch Hill with its concrete pillars, seat and viewpoint on the promontory.

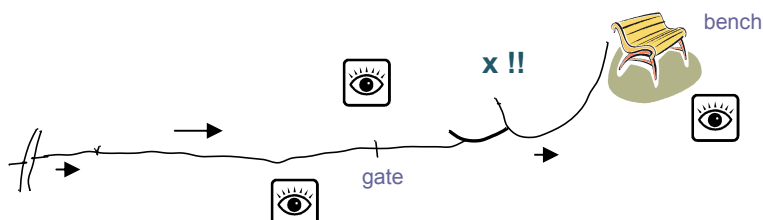


At 257m (843 feet), Pitch Hill (sometimes called Coneyhurst Hill) is the fifth highest point in Surrey and the views from here over the Sussex Weald are magnificent. Nearest on the right is Hascombe Hill with Gibbet Hill behind it; the long outline of Blackdown is to its left; Ewhurst is in the valley to the left.

- 3 After admiring the view, resume your original direction, going down a sandy track between posts and continuing alongside railings, always staying on the edge of the hill. You are joined by a path from the left. Look for the next metal seat on the right. About 50m after the seat, there is a junction with a blue marker. Fork **right** here downhill, still on the GW. At the bottom turn **left** on a tarmac drive past a house and continue through posts on a track. After about 100m, ignore an unmarked path on the right. 250m after the house, turn **right** on a path marked with the GW sign. The path winds downhill, crosses another path, goes down steps and reaches a swing-gate. Go through the gate and steeply down into the grounds of the Duke of Kent School. *This beautifully-sited school offers independent co-education from age 3 to GCSE.* The path joins the main driveway and exits through a gate to a road.



- 4 Continue straight over the road, a fraction left, on a signposted footpath between fences. The path crosses a stile and ascends between fields with a fine vista in all directions. At a field boundary it continues between larger fields. *On your left is Coverwood and its outbuildings and farm. Coverwood Lakes and Gardens are open several days in the year. The gardens are famous for their rhododendrons in late spring. The site also hosts several concerts and other events.* The path goes through another gate, labelled *The Mc Kinney Gate*, and is joined by a track from the left. At a T-junction turn **right**, thus temporarily **leaving** the Greensand Way. This path leads round to an exquisite spot with a metal seat and one of the best views in the area. *The perfectly planted pines and the nearby green hillock combine with receding views of Ewhurst, the Weald and South Downs to frame a memorable picture.*

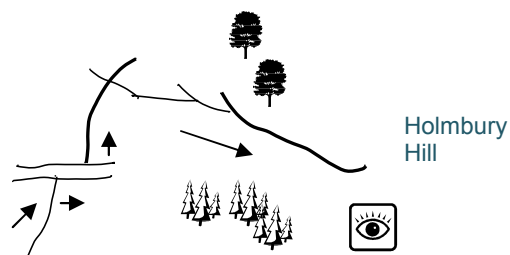


Continue to a road and turn **right**.

Here there is a remarkable but **provisional short cut** making a shorter walk from the **Western part** only. If you would like to try it, go to the end of this text and do the **School Run (South)**. Otherwise ...

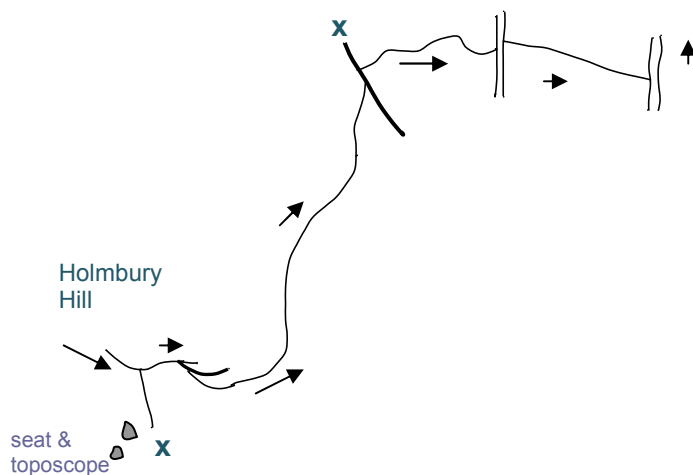
In a few metres, turn **left** on a stony bridleway uphill.

- 5 The bridleway shortly levels a bit and curves right under the trees. Here, go up steps on the **right** on a narrow path marked as the Greensand Way. The path crosses a track, runs across an exercise area and twice goes through posts joining a path coming from the left. Stay on the edge of the hill until you reach the open area of Holmbury Hill with its round seat and toposcope. *At 261m (857 feet), Holmbury Hill is the fourth highest point in Surrey.* You are on the highest point of a huge part of the Holmwood with many opportunities for roaming. (See the walk *Holmbury and Pitch Hills* in this series.)

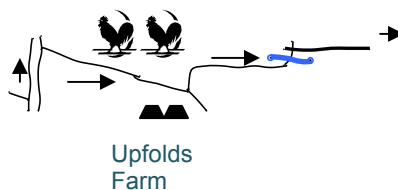


Leg 2: Holmbury Hill to Forest Green, 5 km (3½ miles)

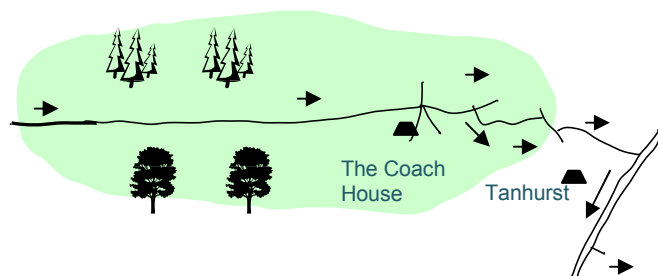
- 1 After admiring the view, do **not** take the narrow path leading south straight down the hill but resume your original direction on a sandy path that descends on the left, marked as the GW. In 50m fork **right** on a narrower path between railings as indicated by the GW sign and in 15m fork **right** again on a path downhill that quickly becomes a level grassy path. After some distance along the edge of the hill, the narrow path rises a little and later descends and goes between railings. 50m later, it reaches a marked 3-way junction of wide tracks. Veer **left** here, still on the Greensand Way – but not too hasty! In only 10m, turn **right** on a grassy unmarked path. The path goes under wires and descends steeply following the wires down to a road. Cross the road over a stile on a footpath beside a garden meadow on the right, over a stout footbridge and, via two stiles, out to a road. Turn **left** on the road.



- 2 In 80m turn **right** on a signposted driveway. You pass small fields leading to Upfolds Farm, usually with some fancy hens pecking away on the left. The bridleway signs direct you **left** and **right** around the fine old wooden farm buildings and onto a path with woods on the left. Eventually the path zigzags left-right over a bridge by two gates to continue on a wide track.

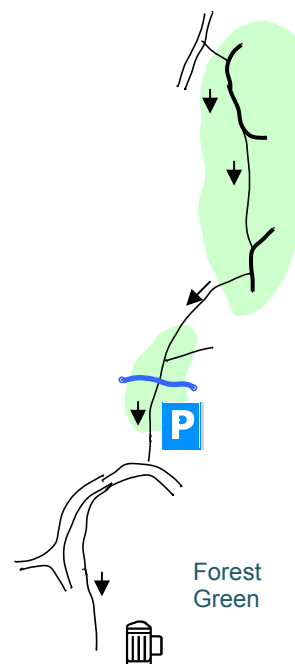


- 3 The track now ascends gently for about 500m through forest. Eventually you come to a major junction by *The Coach House*. Continue straight ahead uphill, but only for 30m. Turn **right** on a narrower path marked with an arrow and follow a very winding path through woodland for some distance, finally reaching wooden steps. Go down the steps to a sunken track and turn **right**. In 50m, just before a garden of a house, turn **left** up more steps. The fenced path runs along the side of *Tanhurst* and eventually reaches a road. Turn sharp **right** on the road. In 120m, turn **left** at a sign for *Leith Hill Place*.



The house Leith Hill Place (not on the route) was built about 1600 and was the home of the Wedgwood family and the composer Vaughan Williams at various times. The woods and gardens are owned by the National Trust and are famous for their azaleas and rhododendrons. This walk only sees one corner of the estate which is worth another visit.

- 4 Go downhill on the path and at a junction keep straight ahead on a broader path marked with an orange-topped post. In 170m, where the main path veers off left at another orange-topped post, keep straight ahead. Stay on this woodland path for another 250m until a track joins from the left at a mauve-topped post. In another 40m, you come to another mauve-topped post. Turn **right** here on a beautiful grassy path. The path runs for about 300m to join another grassy path coming from the left and shortly goes over a wide wooden bridge. It then continues through woodland for another 250m and finally comes to a small parking area with a noticeboard (an alternative starting point) reaching a main road via a one-bar gate. Turn **right** along the road, past Collins Farm and shortly reaching Forest Green. Cross the road to the left-hand side and go ahead on the wide grass verge. In 100m, you reach the Parrot Inn.

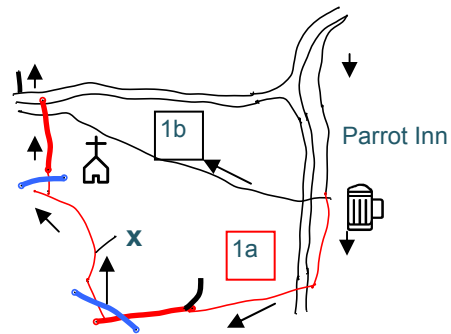


Forest Green appears in the records from 1580 when it was referred to as "Folles Green" but the oldest surviving cottage, Tillies Cottage (see 1a below), dates from the 15th Century. The Green itself is roughly triangular and covers approximately 10 hectares (26 acres). On the north side of the Green is the old Smithy. The Mill (see below) was acquired by Marylebone Grammar School in 1908 for summer adventures and the young visitors, known locally as the "Mill Boys", worked on many improvements.

The Parrot Inn, about 300 years old, is now a notable gastropub. The pub has a number of real ales poured direct from casks on the counter. The restaurant is eclectic with a modern touch and it uses the home-grown produce in its dishes. Some walkers have found the service a bit gruff. Next to the Parrot is the Butcher's Hall and Country Grocer, a quality deli where you can pick out a very decent 3-course takeaway meal at a bargain price and sit outside at the tables to eat it. One speciality of theirs is "real mince" pies, i.e. old-fashioned generous sweet- and-savoury pies containing beef !

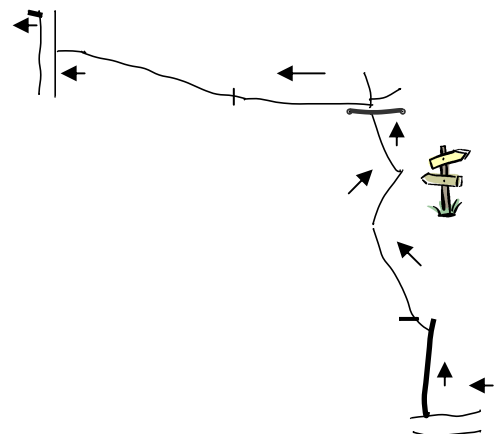
Leg 3: Forest Green to Ewhurst, 5 km (3 miles) or 5½ km (3½ miles)

1b **The little circuit.** This is an optional loop, slightly longer than the route straight over the green, below. Continue in the same direction from the Parrot Inn beside the road. Soon you pass Tillies Cottage on the left, still with its old slate roof. Continue until you pass the Old Police House on the right and take a signposted footpath on the right that leads to a stile into a meadow. Continue to another stile into the next meadow. Go across the centre to a stile in the hedge and continue straight ahead on a concrete drive. Cross a bridge and, just before a barn, turn right on a path that goes over a footbridge and over another stile into a sheep meadow. Keep to the right hand side of the meadow and in 20m avoid a stile on the right. Continue for another 100m and cross the next stile right, in the corner. Go over a bridge, up a bank and along a drive which has a multitude of different tree species to the main road. Turn left on the road for a few metres.

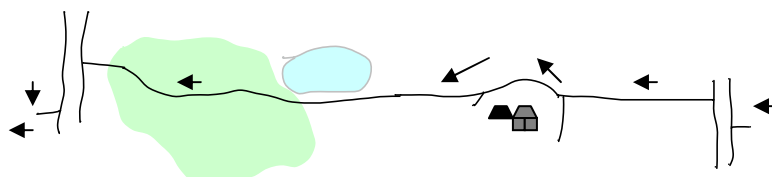


1b *This is a shorter option, avoiding stiles but also missing some attractive bridges. (Same map as 1a.)* Turn **right** in front of the *Parrot Inn*, cross a minor road and take a path across the grass, in the direction of some cottages on the edge of the green. Keep in a dead straight line all the way, crossing several tracks and drives, gradually getting closer to the main road on the right. You pass on the left the interesting late Victorian church of the Holy Trinity. *The church was built by Charles and Christina Hensley as a memorial to their son who was born on Trinity Sunday. He was accidentally shot by his cousin while rabbit shooting in 1892.* Reach the roadside and soon ignore a driveway on the left marked as a footpath.

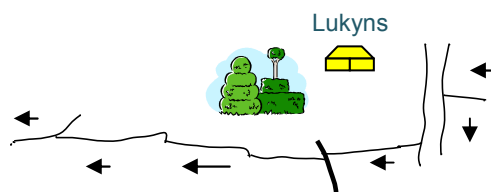
2 Cross the road and go down Mill Lane on the **right**. In about 100m, opposite *Park Cottages*, just before the mill (now owned by the William Ellis School), fork **left** on a waymarked footpath. In 30m, avoid a track left leading to a farm and continue ahead. The path goes over a stile into a meadow and runs along its right-hand side to a fingerpost at the corner. Here, veer **right** as indicated, continue to another fingerpost and veer **left**, and proceed to a driveway and a fence with a 4-way fingerpost. Cross over the stile here and turn immediately **left** along the left-hand side of the meadow. In the corner, go over a stile and continue straight across the centre of the next meadow, heading towards the buildings visible in the gap in the trees, to a metal gate and out, over a stile, to a road. Turn **right** on the road.



- 3 In just 30m, turn **left** on a driveway leading gently uphill to Tyndrum and Holmbury Farms. On reaching the farm buildings, veer **right** around them. The footpath curves left, passing on your right a dog cemetery, and then forks right downhill alongside a fence. You pass a small lake on the right (opposite some steps, unfortunately not a right of way) and after some distance reach a road. Turn **left** on the road.

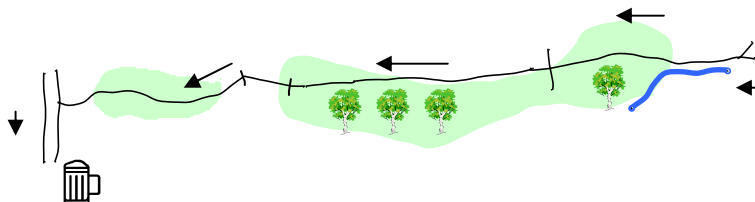


- 4 After 100m, turn **right** on a footpath passing some fine topiary with the house *Lukyns* and its lawn and gardens on the right. *Lukyns* was the residence of Sir Kenneth Lee, the first and last of the Surrey branch of the Lee Baronetcy. On reaching a driveway, go straight over it, through a gate by a duckpond on your right and along the edge of the meadow. The path goes over a stile in the corner and zigzags through a metal gate on a path between fields. Later, the path zigzags again and gets narrower, eventually coming out via a stile to a junction of paths.



Here there is a remarkable but **provisional short cut** making a shorter walk from the **Eastern part** only. If you would like to try it, go to the end of this text and do the **School Run (North)**.

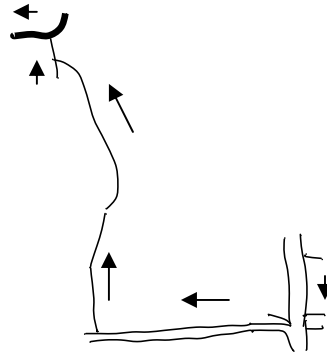
- 5 Go straight ahead at the junction, over a concrete bridge, along a grassy path between a stream on your right and a fence and continue ahead finally through a gate into woodland. After some distance in woodland, the path comes to a junction of paths, where it continues ahead, and runs close to a field on the right. Soon, ignore a footpath right going between fields. The path then runs downhill where it crosses another stile. Continue across the next meadow, through a modern kissing-gate, over a footbridge and stile and along the right-hand side of the next field. You now cross another stile and go along a woodland path that finally comes out to a road at Ewhurst. Turn **left** along the road to a small roundabout by the *Bulls Head* pub.



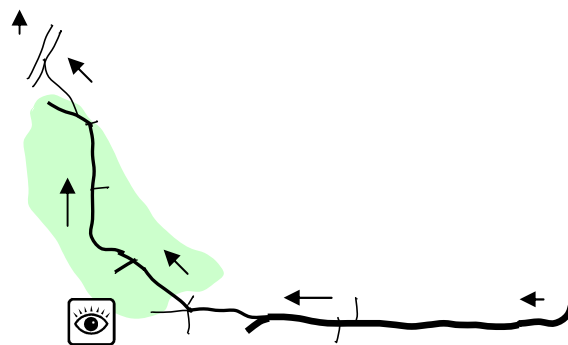
Ewhurst is a village and a parish on the edge of the Weald at the foot of Pitch and Holmbury hills. It is well-known for its cricket club and has some notable residents, such as Eric Clapton. During the war it was a billet for a number of servicemen with the surrounding country a refuge for evacuees who often witnessed the war in the air being fought near the village and over the hills. The Bulls Head is a quiet one-bar pub with a skittle alley which also offers simple accommodation.

Leg 4: Ewhurst to Winterfold, 5 km (3 miles)

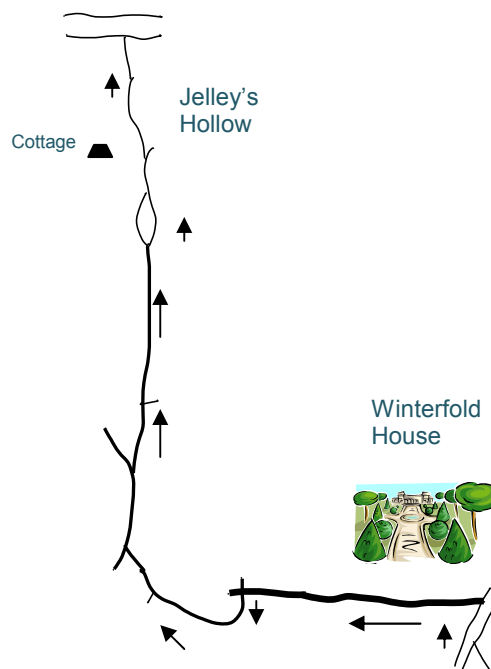
- 1 Turn **right** at the roundabout onto Wykehurst Lane. About 80m after the last house, turn **right** on a track uphill, past a metal gate, through woods. In 100m, go over a stile and follow a path between fields. Note the touching tribute on the bench at a zigzag in the path. Pitch Hill is now visible straight ahead. Finally, the path goes through a gate, curves left and reaches a gravel drive opposite a colourful workshop. Turn **right** here. At the end of the drive, turn **left** along the lane.



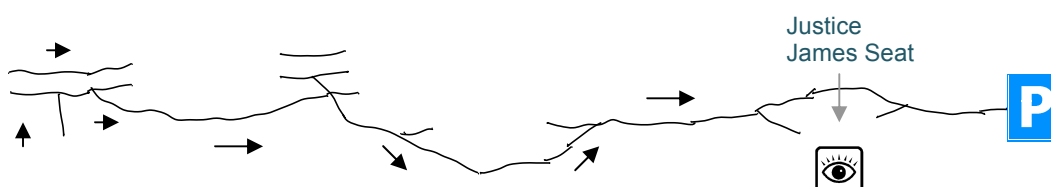
- 2 Continue along the lane until you reach the entrance to Wykehurst Farm where the route continues ahead on a bridleway. At a junction with several wooden gates and a choice of three possible routes, veer **right** next to a farm entrance. *First though, it is hard to drag oneself way from the view over the gate straight ahead, with the shapely green valley in the foreground and the hills of the South in the distance.* Stay on the bridleway, ignoring a bridleway branching off left and turning right with the path until it goes over a bridge. 30m after the bridge, pass a green gate on the right and, 20m after the gate, take a small path on the **right**, up a bank. (If you miss this turning, just continue to the road.) Turn **left** alongside a fence, keep to the right in a small meadow and come out to a road. Turn **right** along the road.



- 3 In 100m, turn **left** on a marked bridleway. The track goes past the magnificent house and garden of Winterfold House on the right. In 250m, before the gateposts of Colman's farmhouse, turn **left** with the track. Bear **right** with the track where another track joins you from the left and continue past the entrance to the farm on your right. 30m later, at a marker post with blue arrows, take the **right** fork. The track runs alongside a fence and begins to ascend. After some distance, at a fork, take the **right-hand** higher path. Soon Jelleys Hollow Cottage is on the left and the path ascends steeply up through Jelleys Hollow and reaches a road. Turn **right** along the road for just a few paces.



- 4 Branch **right** on a footpath marked as the Greensand Way that initially runs parallel to the road. The path comes close again to the road at a junction of paths. Turn half **right** here, slightly downhill on a wide path, always staying on the edge of the hill with fine views to the right where the trees permit. Later, the path joins a wider path coming in from the left. Not long after, the Greensand Way forks **left** and passes a viewpoint with a seat on the right known as Lord Justice James' seat. Shortly after this, the path descends to the Hurtwood Control Car Park 4 and the start of the walk.



Tillies
Cottage

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The School Run (South) 1¾ km (1mile)

This is an extraordinary but **provisional** short cut. It has a critical section which probably belongs to Hurtwood House School and is **not** a statutory footpath. It is certainly well used, probably by local residents and pupils. We do not know whether they permit “outsiders” to use it. Please treat this path, as always, with the greatest care and respect. If you are a group, it may be unwise to use this option. This route will remain provisional until we have further experience or feedback. It will be withdrawn if use of this route is questioned, in which case hopefully a new short cut will be found.

- 1 Ignore the footpath left by the little parking space and continue for only a further **10m**. Here, turn **right** on a very narrow steep unsigned path down into woods. In 30m, before a yew, turn very sharp **left** round a beech tree, going past a ceramic decorative water fountain. Stay on this narrow level path, going past a similarly-tiled little store house on your left. At a T-junction, turn sharp **right** downhill on a much wider path. After a straight section, your path becomes rassy and curves left. Leave it here by forking **right** on a narrower grassy path downhill. You pass a beautiful japanese maple and pine trees. A house is visible high up on your left. This section is full of springs and you may need to hop over a short marshy section. The next section is infested with a less welcome Japanese import: knotweed. Your path goes past a tennis court on your left and reaches a T-junction. Turn **right** here on a bridleway.
- 2 Follow this bridleway through pleasant country, with meadows on your left and trees and occasional thicker woodland on your right. After about 800m, about half way along the edge of a grassy meadow, at a fingerpost, turn **left** over a 2-plank bridge and stile into the meadow. In the opposite corner, go over a stile (or through a metal gate) near farm buildings, turn **left** on a farm track and immediately **right** over a stile onto a narrow path that runs round the edge of the field on your left. You pass a pond on your right and reach a junction of paths. Turn **right** on a wide path. Continue from **Leg 3 section 5**, going over the concrete bridge as indicated.

The School Run (North) 1¾ km (1mile)

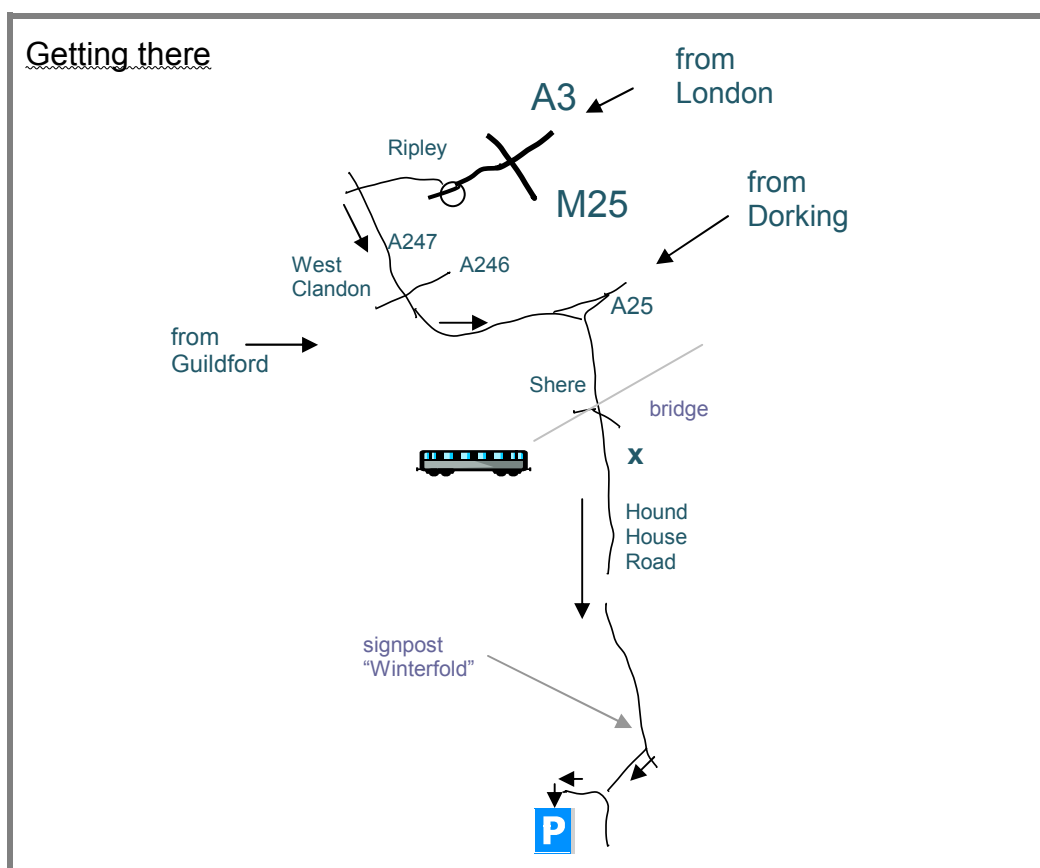
This is an extraordinary **provisional** short cut. See the note at the top of the *School Run (South)* above.

- 1 Take the **second** of two paths on the **right**: not the path that goes into the field but the one that goes around the edge. You pass a pond on your left with a fence on your right and eventually go over a stile. Turn **left** on a farm track near farm buildings and immediately go **right** over a stile (or through a metal gate) into a meadow. Cross the centre of the meadow, aiming for a fingerpost visible ahead. There, go over a stile and a 2-plank bridge and turn right on a bridleway. Follow this bridleway through pleasant country, with meadows on your right and trees and occasional thicker woodland on your left. The bridleway begins to wind uphill. About 800m after joining this bridleway, just before a tennis court and a house, turn **left** on a narrower unsigned path.
- 2 The next section is infested with an unwelcome Japanese import: knotweed. Your path goes past the tennis court on your right. This part is full of springs and you may need to hop over a short marshy section. A house is visible high up on your right. You pass a beautiful japanese maple and pine

trees. Soon, a wider path joins you from the right. Continue on this path until it goes uphill and begins to turn right towards a house and lawn (part of Hurtwood House School.) Do *not* approach the garden but immediately turn sharp **left** on a narrow level path through trees. The path goes past a little tiled store house on your right and passes a ceramic decorative water fountain. Just after here, turn very sharp **right** round a beech tree and go steeply uphill, quickly reaching a road. Turn **left** on the road. In only 10m, at a tiny space for cars, turn **right** on a stony bridleway uphill. Now resume the main walk at Leg 1 section **5**.

Getting there

To get to Hurtwood Control car park No. 4 from the London area, take the A25 road and turn onto the B2127 through **Shere** (or bypass it via Albury Heath). At a road junction by a railway bridge, keep straight ahead for Ewhurst, avoiding the left turn to Peaslake. About 2½ miles (4km) further on, after an interesting drive through deep cuttings, turn **right** at a signpost for **Winterfold** (don't miss this turning!). About ½ mile (600m) further, turn **right** on a minor road and immediately **left** into the car park.



Alternative starting points are (1) the small National Trust car park in the south west corner of Leith Hill Place near Forest Green (2) the car park behind the Parrot pub in Forest Green (it does not seem to be restricted to patrons of the pub) (3) the Pitch Hill car park (reached via Peaslake).