



Hascombe from Afar

Distance: 15 km=9 miles, with 2 optional diversions 1-2 km each
easy walking

Region: Surrey

Date written: 9-may-2010

Author: Schwebefuss

Date revised: 29-mar-2014

Refreshments: Hascombe

Last update: 16-feb-2018

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere) + Explorer 134 (Horsham) (small part)
but the maps in this guide should suffice

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, hills, bluebells in spring, lambs, villages, churches, views

In Brief

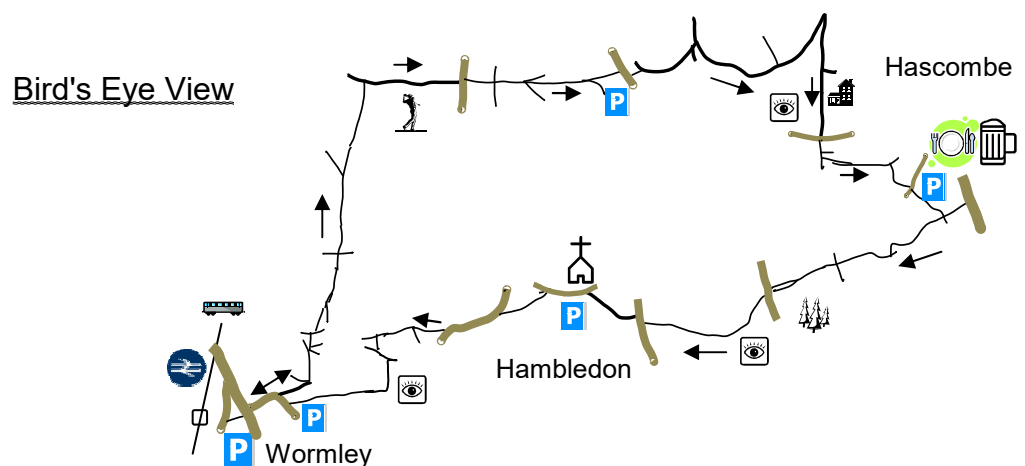


This is a gentle circular walk through wooded areas of South West Surrey, easily reachable by train as well as by car. It is particularly fine in late spring when bluebells garland the walk for much of the way. This walk also has some rare optional diversions on unmarked paths. At the half-way point there is an excellent pub, the *White Horse* in Hascombe (ring 01483 208 258 for enquiries). Energetic walkers could also do the short *Round Hascombe Hill* walk as a memorable centre-piece to this walk.



There are no nettles on this walk and the going underfoot is excellent with only a few seasonal mud patches. There are some fallen trees which are quite easy to dodge round. The walk is fine for your dog too.

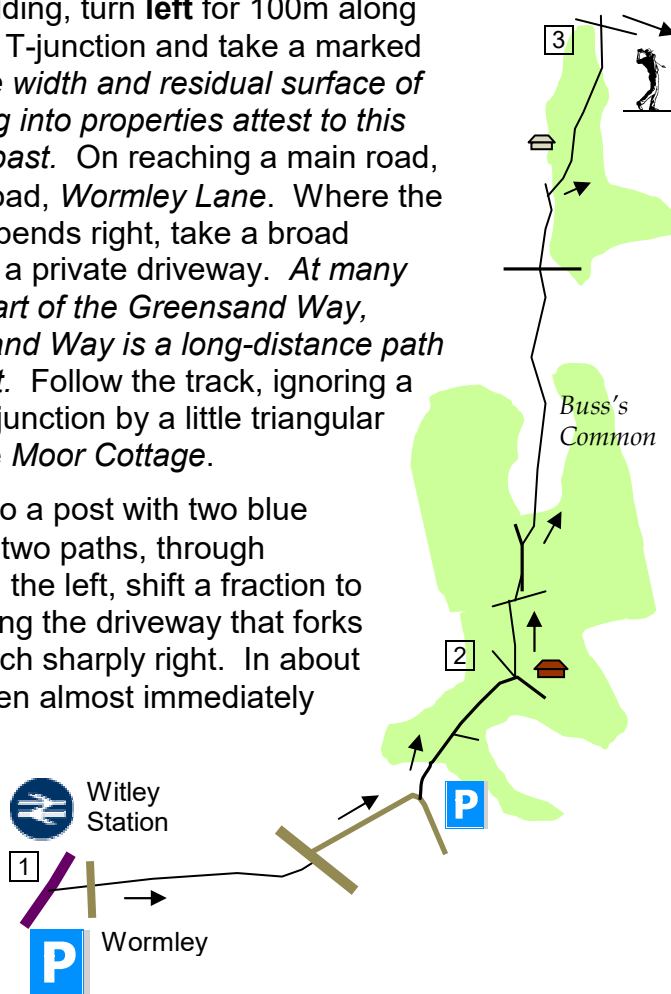
The walk starts at **Witley Station**, by train or by car (**postcode GU8 5TB**). For a map and guide and alternative starting points, see the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



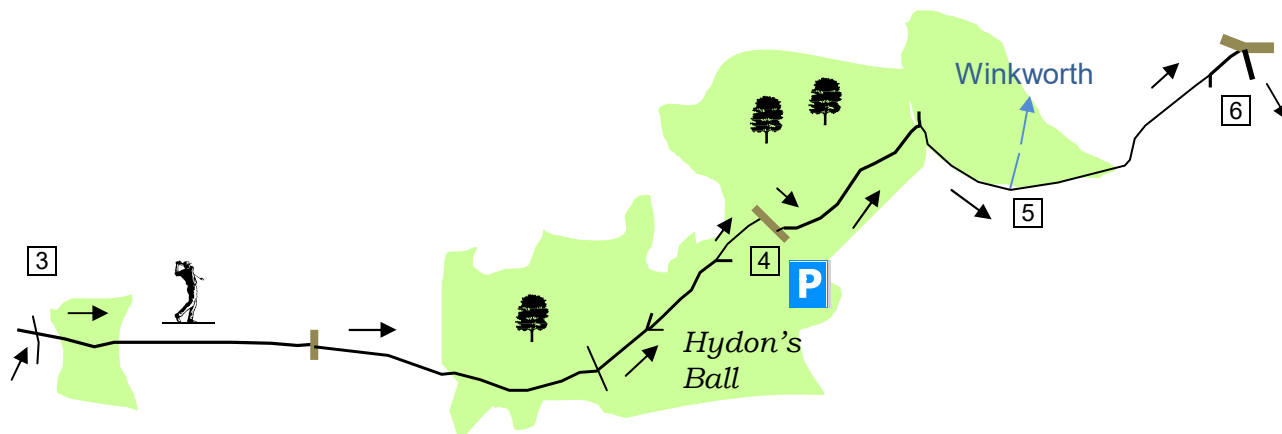
The Walk

1 With your back to the main station building, turn **left** for 100m along the station approach, *Robin Way*, to a T-junction and take a marked enclosed footpath directly ahead. *The width and residual surface of this path and the old iron gates leading into properties attest to this path having been a road many years past.* On reaching a main road, turn **left** and shortly **right** to a minor road, *Wormley Lane*. Where the road reaches a junction of tracks and bends right, take a broad signposted track ahead, to the right of a private driveway. *At many points on this walk the route follows part of the Greensand Way, marked by a "GW" arrow; the Greensand Way is a long-distance path that runs from Haslemere to East Kent.* Follow the track, ignoring a bridleway on the right, till you reach a junction by a little triangular green in front of a fine timbered house *Moor Cottage*.

2 Just before the little triangle, turn **left** to a post with two blue arrows and take the **right**-hand of the two paths, through woodland. In 250m, beside a shed on the left, shift a fraction to the right to stay on the footpath, ignoring the driveway that forks left and ignoring minor paths that branch sharply right. In about 50m, at a T-junction, turn **right** and then almost immediately **left** on a footpath marked with a yellow arrow. The path shortly merges with a forestry track and runs with it for 40m before forking **right**, as indicated by the yellow arrow, with a felled area on your right. The path leads across luminous Buss's Common. Go straight on over the next wide crossing path by a marker post, then through a small metal gate and into a meadow. Keep to the right in the meadow with Enton Hall visible up on the left, soon passing a tree-shrouded lake on your right. Near the far corner of the meadow, 20m before a wooden gate visible ahead, take the **right** fork down into trees and to the right of a small house. The path leads over a footbridge and rises through woods with a valley and stream down on the left. In springtime, bluebells are abundant. The path emerges onto an open hillside. Stay on the left side of the meadow, avoiding golf balls from the links up on your right. At the bottom of the valley, on meeting a broad bridleway, turn sharp **right** across the golf course, still watching out for flying balls.



- 3 The track crosses another fairway and passes in front of a large wooden barn and a few houses. Continue reach a road in another 400m. Cross the road, a fraction right, to a track on the other side and continue between fields.



In 400m there are coppices on each side and your path rises with a wire fence on your right. The path crosses a footpath and enters open woodland. *You are on an Octavia Hill Trail, one of many named after the National Trust's eminent founder.* Shortly after this, you come to a junction marked by blue arrows with a choice of three paths. Take the **middle** path, still following the Trail. Where, in 300m or so, the path bends right, leave the Trail to continue straight ahead on a narrower path with a large white house visible on your left. You reach a road and a sign for Hydon's Ball, near a car park.

- 4 Turn **right** along the road for 40m and go **left** through a wooden barrier and **right** onto a broad surfaced path. Follow this splendid grassy path down a valley until, at the bottom, there is a steep wooded hillside ahead where the main track wheels away left. Here, **leave** the main track and instead turn sharp **right** on a narrower signed bridleway. The path rises and levels out. *In late spring the path is lined with bluebells.*

If you would like to visit Winkworth Arboretum, there is an unusual diversion from this point, described near the end of this text.

- 5 The path descends into another delightful valley and eventually joins a driveway coming from the right from a house *High Barn*, shortly reaching a main road.

- 6 **Map continues overleaf.** Do *not* cross the main road but turn sharp **right** on a tarmac lane, almost looping back. Ignore all turnings off while the lane follows a long straight stretch with tall pines and bends a few times. In 350m ignore a signposted junction on the left. There are fine views right and the good surface makes the going easy. The lane leads past *Hascombe Court* (once home to Chris Evans and Billie Piper as well as Boris Berezovsky) and other expensive dwellings, many fenced off from view, and, after a less prestigious bungalow *Deer's Leap*, comes down through a gate to a narrow lane.



- 7 Cross the lane to a track opposite. Ignore two narrow paths left close together (one blocked up anyway) and, in nearly 100m, turn **left** on a path through woodland which in spring is carpeted by bluebells. Ignore a junction on your right and continue through beautiful woodland with occasional tall pines. Where, after 250m, the main path wheels left, the official footpath leaves it to go **right** on a path downhill into trees.

*However, if you would like to take a gentle walk around Hascombe village, and in springtime see more bluebells, turn **left** with the main path. The **Hascombe Village Loop** [2014: now a little more adventurous] is described at the end of this text.*

8 The official footpath, which is unsigned at the time of writing, is easily missed. *On this south facing sheltered bank you may see the first bluebells of spring, as early as late March.* The path leads to a stile or a large wooden gate and into a large sheep meadow. Make a very tight loop now **left** to go through another wooden gate into another sheep pasture. *In the springtime the lambs here are very tame.* Stay on the right-hand side of the meadow, go through a small wooden gate and down some steps to a drive and turn **right** on it. Where the drive curves right towards a house, turn **left** onto a footpath. Ignoring a track on the right soon after, continuing for a short while through trees and then between a field and a hedge. When you reach a junction with the *White Horse* pub visible on your left, your route continues **right** through a small gate.



However, every visitor to Hascombe likes to take a break here by turning **left** on a very wide new sandy path up to a car park, the main road and the pub. You need to retrace your steps afterwards.

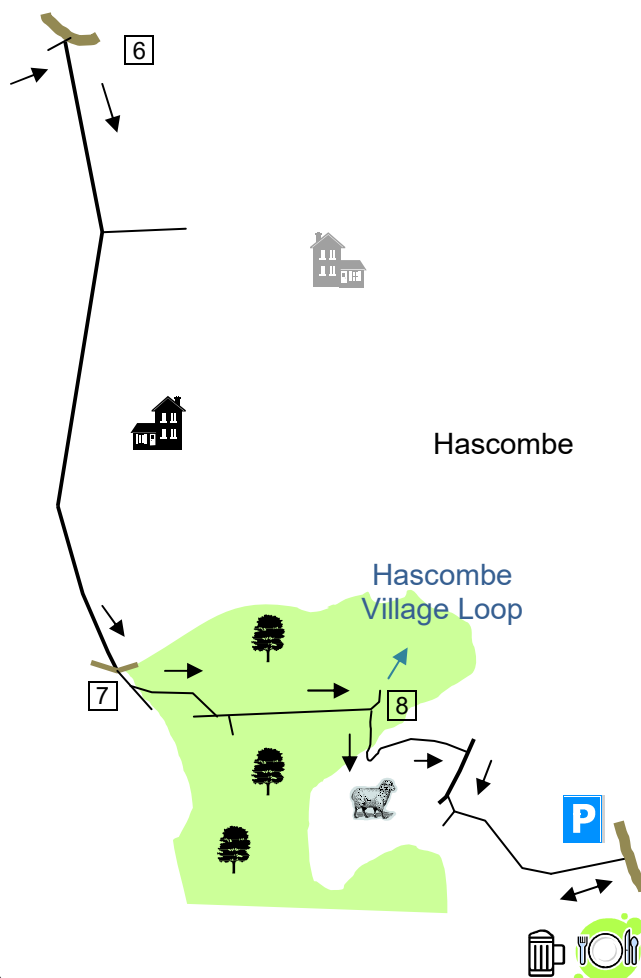


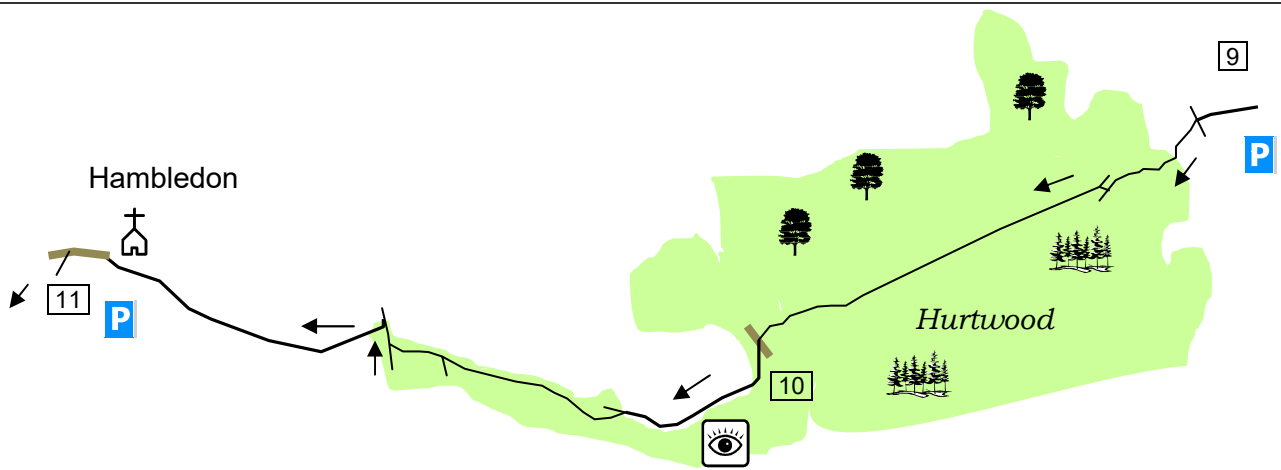
The White Horse serves good food and a selection of real ales and has a garden. Down the lane to its left, the lake at Hascombe with its beautifully decorated Victorian church and its cottages is a sight not to be missed.

If you are feeling energetic, you now have a chance to do the short **Round Hascombe Hill** walk from this series.

After your break (or if you are beginning the walk here), take the very wide sandy path leading from the car park away from the pub over a field, go straight over a crossing path and through a small gate ahead.

9 **Map continues overleaf.** Continue between fences, up some steps and through a gate leading into woods. 10m from the gate, fork **right** on a steeply rising path with wooden rails. At the top, turn **right** on a more level path. It later rises quite steeply and meets a junction at the top. **Care! this next move is tricky.** Turn sharp **right** here and in 20m turn **left** to regain your direction on a fairly level grey stony path between newly-planted trees, later becoming narrower and sunken. The (unsigned) Greensand Way now leads over the beautiful Hurtwood on a broad path with birch and pine trees, now with a newly felled and planted area on your left. Stay on the broad path for 750m, ignoring all paths off. Eventually the path descends into woods and splits into two parallel paths. It's best to take the **right** option, thus avoiding the very sunken and overgrown path on your left, thus temporarily leaving the GW. Either way, your path leads down between posts to a road.



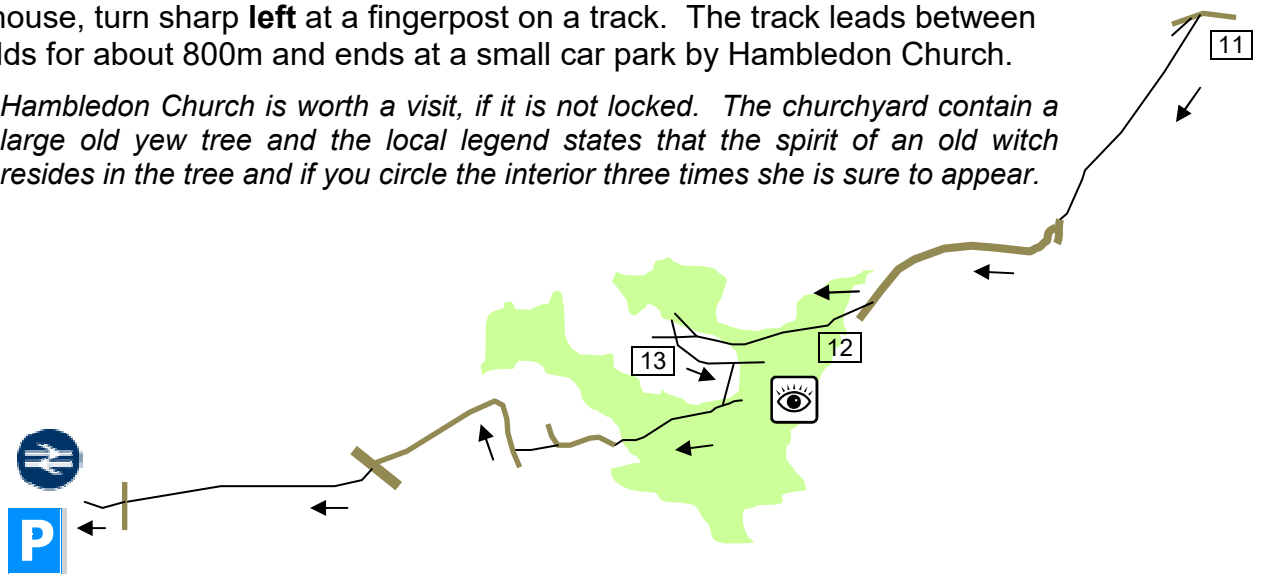


- 10 Cross the road to a bridleway on the other side, forking immediately **left**. (This path may be very sunken and narrow. If the bridleway mud makes it impossible to walk on, head uphill on the bank running parallel to the path and just pick your way through the leaves and trees to the top, where you can re-join the path.) This path leads uphill and follows the left-hand edge of two meadows, with terrific views to the left. At the end of the second meadow, **leave** the broad bridleway by forking away **left** on a narrow path in the corner. *Don't miss this path! the signpost is missing.* (The author loves this woodland path but other walkers **strongly** advise against it and **ignored** the turn by staying on the sandy horse gallop with wonderful views, turning left later.) Your path goes



down through trees and follows the edge of a wooded hill. [2014: you need to duck under a tree.] After about 350m through thick woodland, your path meets a marker post and a path coming up from the left. It curves up by a field and runs parallel with it. The path eventually reaches a sandy stretch of Upper Vann Lane. Turn **right** on the lane for 20m and, before reaching a house, turn sharp **left** at a fingerpost on a track. The track leads between fields for about 800m and ends at a small car park by Hambledon Church.

Hambledon Church is worth a visit, if it is not locked. The churchyard contain a large old yew tree and the local legend states that the spirit of an old witch resides in the tree and if you circle the interior three times she is sure to appear.



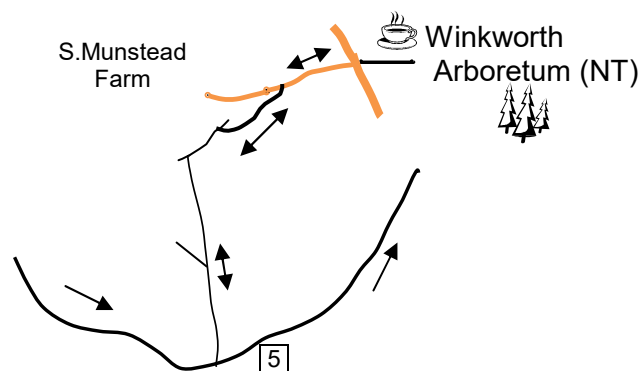
- 11 Continue down the road with the church on your right to find, in 20m, two signed footpaths on your left. Turn **left** at the **first** footpath sign, going through a small gate and across a wide open meadow with good views around. Aim for the furthest corner. *Looking back, Hambledon Church remains in view for most of the time.* The path leads through another small gate, crosses a smaller field in the same direction and eventually goes down steps to the driveway of a house and to a road. Continue in the same direction along the road, passing a footpath and a side road on the left, among the attractive houses of Hambledon village. After passing the *Old Malthouse* on the left, turn **right** on a signed footpath by St Dominic's School.

12 This path leads upwards and reaches a seat. Ignore a small path leading downwards and stay on the level. Soon you reach heathland with stunning extensive uninterrupted views to the west across to Blackdown – a mesmerising conclusion to the walk. Continue to a viewpoint with a wooden railing and to a bench seat beyond. 20m after the bench, fork **left** on a narrow path through heather.

13 In 20m, turn **left** on a sandy crossing bridleway. After 120m, at a post, just before the path enters woodland, turn **right*** downhill with heather on your right and woods on your left. (* If you did not park in Witley, you could instead stay on the Greensand Way as far as Moor Cottage, re-joining the walk at section 2.) At a T-junction and a post, turn **right** on a path through trees. Follow this twisty path until you see a brick tower. Zigzag right and left through a gate into a superior residential road. Where the road curves right, keep **left** on the pathway, shortly going through a wooden swing gate. Turn **right** when you reach the road and **left** where it bends, leading down to the main road. Cross the road to a footpath ahead. This footpath leads back to Witley Station where the walk began.

fancy more free walks? www.fancyfreewalks.org

Diversion to Winkworth Arboretum



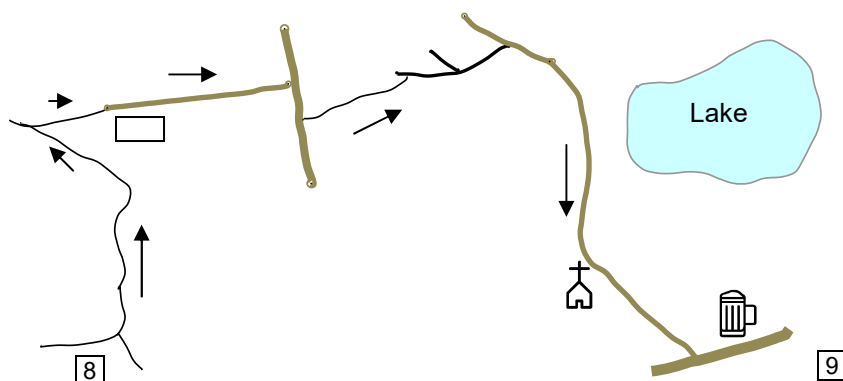
When you reach the level section of the path, continue another 150m till, on your left, you see the start of an old wooden fence (which may disappear or change over time). Turn sharp **left** immediately before the fence post. Follow this permissive horse path, avoiding a wide left fork after 250m and eventually going downhill to reach a T-junction. Turn **right** here on a footpath. (Make a mental note of the route as you will need to retrace your steps.) The path soon becomes a rough driveway by South Munstead Farm. When you reach a tarmac lane, turn **right**. The lane leads to the main road with Winkworth Arboretum directly opposite.



Winkworth Arboretum is an extensive area of rare trees and plants belonging to the National Trust. After an initial level section, it occupies a steep hillside with lakes at the bottom and a waterfowl reserve. It has a spectacular spread of bluebells in late spring. There is an entry charge for non-members, although the café and, in spring, some of the bluebells can be enjoyed gratis.

Because of the slightly awkward arrangement of footpaths, you need to retrace your steps to get back to the walk.

Hascombe Village Loop



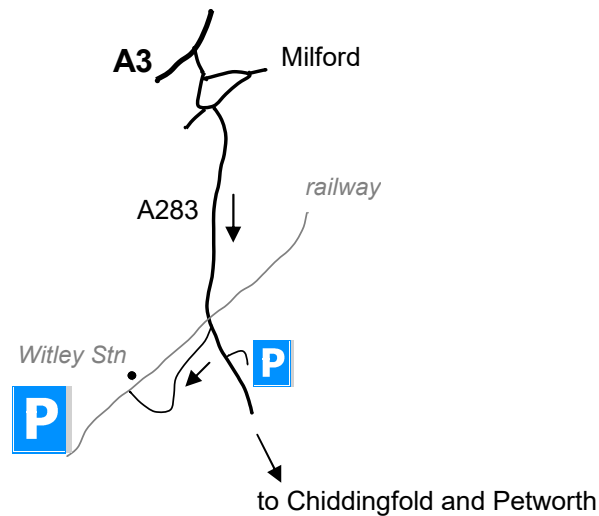
Having turned **left** with the main path through rough woodland, you soon reach a steep section zigzagging downwards through the trees. [2014: the main path is completely blocked by an impervious fallen tree. No problem! Simply go **right** over a mound and **left** steeply down to re-join the path.]

Follow the path at all times as it levels out and winds onwards, wheels left and becomes a sunken path between banks. [2014: there is another fallen tree blocking the path. Simply go **right** over a mound to take a shortcut to the village hall car park mentioned below.] The path descends towards a field where it meets a narrow path coming from the right. Just before the field, turn very sharp **right**. The narrow path leads towards a little gravel parking area for the village hall. Exit **left** under a bar to a road. Turn **right** on the road past playing fields and some modern houses.

When you reach the village centre at a main road, turn **right**. In 30m, opposite a drinking fountain, turn **left** on a signed footpath. The path goes over a stream and runs alongside a meadow on the right with views across to the village. At a T-junction, turn **right** on a track. The track soon joins a wider track coming in from the left. At a T-junction, turn **right** on a quiet road coming from *Upper House Farm*, part of the GW again. Follow the road until you reach the peaceful village lake. *Hascombe goes back more than 2000 years and was well established even before the Norman invasion. Its church was completely rebuilt in Victorian times and is absolutely **unmissable** for its remarkable decorations, especially the chancel (the east end). Hascombe has its own website: www.hascombe.com.* Continue on the road past the church and houses on the right until you emerge by the *White Horse* on the left. Resume from paragraph [9] above.

Getting there

By car: the walk starts in the car park of Witley station.



Take the A3 to Milford and take the Petworth Road. Witley station is marked on the right on entering the village of Wormley, after passing King Edward's School. There is a charge for parking on weekdays, in which case an alternative location can be found on the roadside verge in Wormley Lane, **postcode GU8 5TS**, further down the main A283 on the left or, failing that, at Hambledon church, **postcode GU8 4DS**, or opposite the *White Horse* in Hascombe, **postcode GU8 4JA**, or at Hydon's Ball, **postcode GU8 4BB**.

By train: begin at Witley Station.

fancy more free walks? www.fancyfreewalks.org