



Hascombe and Hydon's Ball

Distance: 8 km=5 miles

easy walking with short steep sections

Region: Surrey

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Refreshments: Hascombe

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Maps: Explorer 133, 134 and 145 (mainly 133) (but hopefully not needed)

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

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Woodland, wooded hills, views, sheep meadows, bluebells in spring

In Brief

This is a varied walk with one or two steep ascents. It passes through some of the most delightful woodland. You can do this walk with the *Around Hascombe Hill* walk in the same series as a figure-of-eight. It is fine at any time of the year, but especially in the spring because of the lambs and the bluebells.



The *White Horse* pub, the start and end point of this walk, is an original coaching inn, dating back to the 1500s. It has a large garden and a restaurant serving good aspiring-to-gastro locally-sourced food to fill the stomach but lighten the wallet (according to some walkers). Note that the pub is closed all day **Monday** and on other days doesn't open till **12 noon**. The pub also offers coffee and afternoon tea and an imaginative selection of soft drinks. For enquiries, ring 01483-208258.



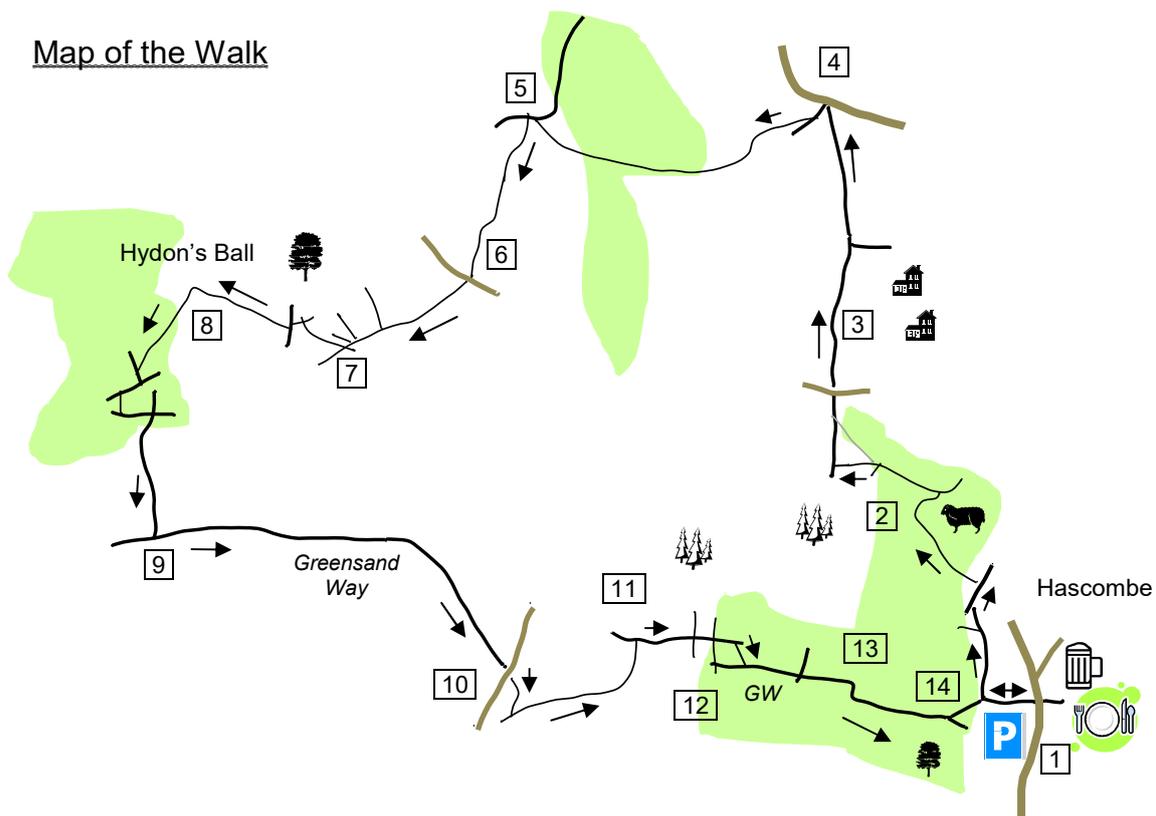
During the wet summer of 2021 there were several muddy patches, which mostly could be skipped around. In summer you may find some dense patches of nettles on the narrower paths. Your dog is welcome, with a lead of course.

The walk begins at the car park opposite the **White Horse pub** in Hascombe, Surrey, www.w3w.co/swordfish.composed.myself, postcode **GU8 4JA**. The Hydon's Ball car park, off Salt Lane, postcode **GU8 4BB**, www.w3w.co/requests.allowable.mushroom, is not exactly on the route, but you can begin there, with a short extra section at the start. For more details and for alternative transport see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

If you are beginning the walk at the Hydon's Ball car park, do as follows: Go back towards the entrance to the car park and turn sharp **left** on a wide path, shortly going through a metal barrier. Walk 600m, ignoring all turn-offs, until you see on your right a large green box. Turn **right** here uphill and join the walk at that point marked (*) in Section [7](#).

Map of the Walk



- 1** With your back to the pub turn **left** and first **right** to take the wide sandy path, leading away from the pub, between wire fences and fields. On reaching a tall hedge, turn **right** on a path that runs between the hedge and a meadow (*). Follow it into woodland and, 20m after, fork **right** at a yellow (not blue) arrow to a driveway. Follow the driveway away from a house for 60m and then go **left** up some wooden steps through a small wooden gate into a meadow. *If you come in springtime, you may find the lambs here quite tame, probably because they are used to the children in the adjoining house. They can sometimes be stroked and will nibble your shoes, your rucksack and anything else they can reach.* Continue through a (usually open) gate at the top **left** corner of the meadow.
- 2** Turn immediately upwards **right**, almost doubling back, going over a stile or through a large wooden gate, onto a woodland path. In 50m, at a marker post, and after a short incline, you meet a wide level grassy path at a bend. Turn sharp **left** here and follow this path through beautiful woodland with occasional tall pines. In about 200m, ignore a wide path left and in 20m fork **right** on a narrower path. *(This turn is optional: keeping straight on has the same result.)* Continue through woodland which in spring is carpeted by bluebells. *Bluebells are often indicators of the most ancient woodland. Their scent and colour are one of the great joys of springtime. The bluebell seen in suburban gardens is often the Spanish bluebell which has larger, paler flowers and no scent and is regarded as a serious threat to the native species.* The path leads to a stony track bordering a field. Turn **right** on it, crossing a tarmac lane in 100m, onto another wide track and follow it up to a small wooden gate beside a large one.



- 3 Through the gate, there is a culture shock. You are now in a road leading past expensive dwellings, many fenced off from view. *The 172-acre Hascombe Court (on the right soon) is one of DJ/TV presenter Chris Evans and Billie Piper's former homes and they were often seen visiting the White Horse. He sold it for £10 million in 2004. The new owner was believed to be the late Russian billionaire Boris Berezovsky.* There are fine views left and the good road surface makes the going easy. Ignore all turnings off while the road bends a few times and reaches a long straight stretch with tall pines and leads to a main road.
- 4 Do *not* cross the main road but turn sharp **left** almost looping back. This drive leads to houses (*The Old Dairy and High Barn*). Just before them, fork **right** on a darker signposted straight path. You will be staying on this path for 1 km total, avoiding all unmarked branch-offs. Your path curves round a lovely green valley, rises again and finally drops gradually until it reaches the bottom of a valley under majestic tall pines. Your path ends at a junction with a curving wide stony bridleway.
- 5 Turn sharp **left** on this wide track and, in only 25m, fork **left** at a marker post on a narrow path, marked as a bridleway. ([Keeping straight on and over a road will take you to the Hydon's Ball car park, if that is where you parked.](#)) The path may be a little overgrown and difficult to see. It goes steeply uphill and runs alongside the boundary of a sheep meadow on your left. It goes through a wooden gate and then quickly levels out. You pass along the left of a young coppice (trees cut down to the roots) and exit through another wooden gate. Your path then curves right and meets a road via a third wooden gate.
- 6 Cross the road to a signed footpath into the woods directly ahead. You are now on Hydon Heath, with Mallard Wood on your left. The footpath leads through coppices, with diversions through the trees in case of mud. In about 200m you go through an earth bank, near a large broken tree, and over a crossing path (now obscured by debris). Your narrow path continues directly over. In less than 100m more, the coppice ends abruptly and your path is joined by a path from the right at a marker post as it enters thick natural woodland with holly and tall pines. In another 60m, you meet a post bearing the symbol of the Octavia Hill Trail, joining a path from the right. *Octavia Hill founded a society in 1876 which became the National Trust.* A **second** post is in 10m and a **third** post in a further 25m. 10m after this third Octavia Hill post, your path comes to a narrow and rather obscure oblique crossing path. Turn **right** here through bracken.
- 7 Follow this narrow winding path for about 100m to a T-junction with another narrow path and turn **left** on it, immediately coming out to a very wide dirt track. ([Turning right will take you to the Hydon's Ball car park, if that is where you parked.](#)) Almost directly opposite is another broad track. Follow it steeply uphill, keeping to the right of a green box (*), to reach Hydon's Ball where there is a stone seat and good views across the Weald and west to Black Down. Hydon's Ball belongs to the National Trust. *For more details, see the walk in this series "Ladywell, Busbridge Lakes and Hydon Heath".*
- 8 Turn **left** and go just to the left of a triangulation pillar on a wide sandy path downhill for around 250m. At the end of the path, elbow **left** near the bottom and continue for another 40m to reach a T-junction with a major track, by a National Trust sign. Turn **right** on the major track for 40m and turn **left** at a wooden post on a track leading towards a field. In just 15m, turn **left** again, passing a wooden

seat, so that you are walking alongside the field on your right. In 120m, you meet a crossing with a sunken path ahead by a post with a blue arrows.

- 9 Turn sharp **right** here on a narrow path between fields. (If you find this path overgrown with bracken, don't worry as it is certainly walkable and it improves shortly.) This path goes for some distance and becomes a darker sunken trackway. After 400m or so in total, it emerges at a T-junction with a wide open track. Turn **left** here. *You are now on the Greensand Way, a long distance footpath which runs from Haslemere in Surrey to near Ashford in Kent.* The track curves right and passes through the smaller of two metal gates, to reach a farm and a house, *Little Burgate*, at a road.
- 10 Go over the road, opposite the house, and take a narrow unmapped horse path opposite. This path bends right at first parallel to the road, then quickly curves away from the road and veers **left** up a bank, now restricted to walkers only. It leads up through a moist wooded valley. Stay at all times on the main path and follow it as it turns sharply **left** near the top, going steeply up a bank. It emerges into beautiful open woodland where it continues straight ahead on a grassy path. In 50m, at a T-junction with another pleasant grassy path, turn **right**.
- 11 You are now in the Hurtwood and nearing the end of the journey. In 230m, after light wood and sparse saplings you come over a broad crossing path. The old coppice here has now been planted with young chestnut. Continue straight ahead with the chestnut on your right and some dark green spruces on your left. In another 200m, at the next wide crossing path, turn **right** on a broad sandy path. In 70m, go over a grassy crossing path and, in another 90m, turn **left** at a major crossing path which is broad and unmistakable, being fringed on the right with silver birch.
- 12 You are now back on the Greensand Way, although you wouldn't know this as there are no GW waymarkers for the moment. The path crosses another broad path where there are blue arrows and a GW symbol. In 180m, avoid minor paths left and right, keeping straight ahead on the signed GW. The path eventually acquires a new grey stony surface and leads down to a junction where you can see a steep descent ahead.
- 13 Keep straight ahead steeply down on a wide stony path. In only 50m, at a marker post with a yellow arrow, fork **right** up a bank onto a much narrower path with a wooden railing. Quickly veer **left** on a more comfortable level path with forest falling away to the valley on your left.
- 14 At a fork in the path, a GW sign leads you **left** very steeply down with wooden railings to a small (loose) wooden gate in a field corner. Follow a fenced path along the right-hand side of the field, through a small wooden gate at a crossing path (or, if you did not park here and do not mind missing an excellent pub break, turn **left** on the crossing path and resume the walk at section 1, at the point marked (*)). The path leads back to the *White Horse* and car park where the walk began.

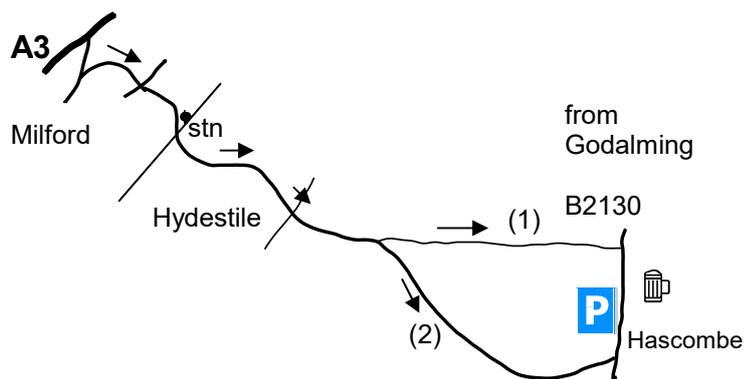
If you have time, Hascombe is definitely worth visiting. It is just a few metres down the lane to the left of the pub. The large pond, the cottages and the church form a pretty picture and a peaceful refuge.

Getting there

By car: The car park is the sandy area opposite the White Horse pub in Hascombe, Surrey. To get there: take the A3 through Guildford and later turn off for Milford. At the first traffic lights in Milford, turn sharp left. Along this road on your left is Secretts, a huge farm shop which sells an astonishing range of delicacies as well as organic produce. At the mini-roundabout turn right and then immediately left signposted *Milford Station* and *Hydestile*. Continue on this road, Station Lane, for 1½ miles ignoring all turnings off. Cross a major road at Hydestile and continue on Salt Lane. In ¾ mile, you pass on your left a junction signed to *Godalming*. The entrance to the Hydon's Ball car park is just after that, on the right. Otherwise, continue through fine woods for ½ mile to a junction where the main road curves right. There is a house on the left called *Mare Pond House*. Here you have a choice:

(1) For the *adventurous* driver, fork left along a very narrow lane. As there are not many passing places you have to hope that you'll meet nothing coming the other way. Eventually you come out to the village of Hascombe. Turn right when you reach the main road. The *White Horse* is close by on the left and the car park is opposite it.

(2) For the *cautious* driver, stay on the main road ignoring the left fork. You eventually come to a T-junction at a main road where you turn left. The *White Horse* is about a 1½ miles on the right and the car park is opposite it.



By bus: Arriva bus 42 or 44 from Guildford or Godalming. Check the timetables.

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