



Hascombe and Winkworth Arboretum Downs Link Path, Smithbrook Kilns

Distance: 18 km=11 miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

Date written: 7-may-2016

Author: RDC

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Refreshments: Winkworth Arboretum tearoom, Smith Brook Kilns *Bricks* Restaurant, *White Horse* in Hascombe

Map: Explorer 134 (Horsham) and 145 (Guildford)
but the maps in this guide should be sufficient

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

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Rolling country, old rail line, canals, views, craft centre, arboretum

In Brief

This walk take you from one of Surrey's prettiest villages, through a National Trust arboretum, tracking through some lovely Surrey hillside and giving you some interesting historical insights. It is not as taxing as you might think, despite the distance and the three hills, thanks to the 2½ miles along the level disused railway.

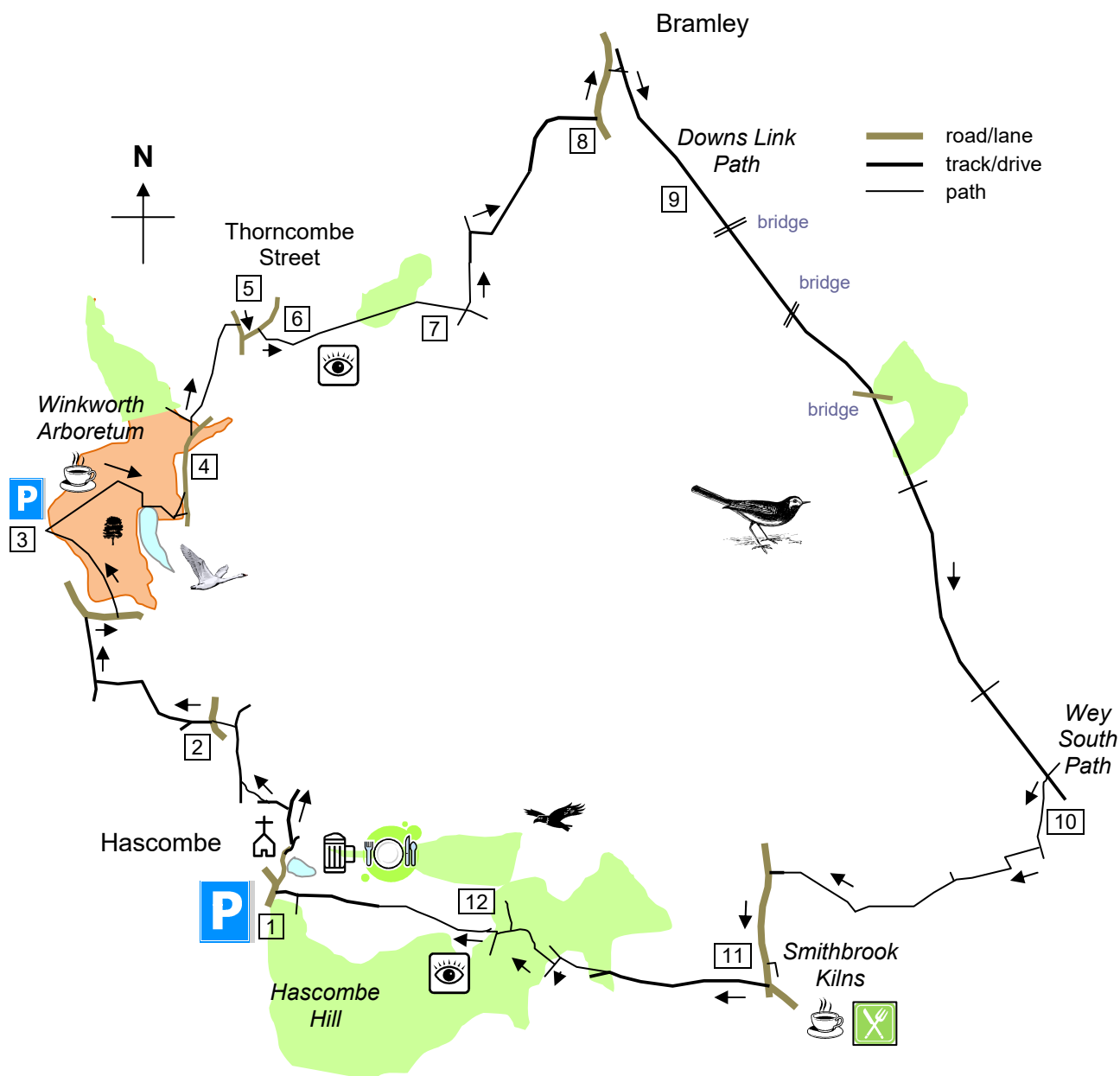


Shorts are inadvisable because of one or two fringes of nettles. In high summer, the path leading to Smithbrook Kilns may be very overgrown, and every walker may need to wield a stick or two until this path is gradually cleared. There are long stretches along good dry surfaces but one or two spots will be muddy after rain, so boots are advisable. This walk will be fine for your dog too as all the stiles have a gap.

The walk begins at the car parking area in front of the *White Horse* in **Hascombe**, Surrey, postcode **GU8 4JA**. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



The Walk



- 1 Follow Church Road, to the left of the *White Horse*, passing some lovely old cottages. You should stop and enjoy St Peters church, one of the prettiest in Surrey, dating back to 1220, rebuilt in the mid-1800s. Passing the duck pond to your right, follow the tarmac lane round to the **left**. At Upper House Farm, you will see a fingerpost with a bridleway: turn **left** here. After 100m veer **right** through a new metal kissing-gate into a grassy meadow. Cross the meadow diagonally to go over a stile in the fence. At the other side, go through a kissing-gate and turn **right** on a wide path. At a large fingerpost with a sign for *Mill Lane*, go straight ahead regardless. Your path goes through a gate, passing *Forge Cottage* and a series of sheds and garages. At a 3-way junction near some old sheds, under a junction of overhead wires, go **left** towards a cream coloured building in the distance which marks the main road. At the bottom of the hill, go through a large (usually open) metal gate and cross the B2130 road.

- 2 Go uphill and, by *Yew Tree* and *Pine* cottages, keep **right** on a rough driveway. This bridlepath goes quite steeply uphill past *Elm Cottage*. At the top of the hill, by a large brick wall opposite *Winkworth Hangar* go **left**. Carry on along the tarmac drive, passing a number of very substantial properties and, after 200m or so, at a T-junction, go **right**. Walk down this tarmac drive for 300m to another meeting with the B2130 road. Turn **right** and walk along this busy road with care for 150m or so. Just before the road descends, turn **left** at a fingerpost and follow a narrow footpath between a succession of wooden fences, hedges and chicken wire for 600m to reach Winkworth Arboretum.



Winkworth Arboretum is a highly popular natural landscaped garden belonging to the National Trust. There is a café at the entrance (not requiring a ticket). There are footpaths through it, indicated by yellow arrows, which you must follow unless you are a member or have paid the entrance fee. For a longer description, see the other walk in this series "Winkworth".

- 3 [2020: the route below has changed temporarily to a one-way system due to the health restrictions; you may need to explain at the entrance that you are only using the right of way.] Turn sharp **right** following the footpath sign, through a large wooden gate, passing the ticket booth, café and toilets on your left. Keep straight on following the yellow arrows, ignoring all side paths. At a sign for *Fiona Adam Steps*, go **left** steeply down steps. At the bottom, turn **right**. When you get to the bottom of the grassy area, where a path joins from the left, turn **right**, immediately reaching a lake and a boathouse (used for the picnic scene in the film *The Wedding Date*). Turn **left** here and walk along the end of the lake. On your left is a newly created swamp type environment shown as a lower lake on the OS maps. At the end of the lake follow the path round to the **left**. In 50m, fork **right** across the grass following a yellow arrow, through trees, to reach a small wooden gate which takes you out onto a tarmac lane. Turn **left** on the lane.
- 4 The lane passes six multi-coloured cottages on your right. 250m later, where the road bends to the right, on your left is a private drive with a footpath sign. Turn **left** into the drive of *Phillimore Cottage*. At the top of the slope you will see a small garden hut on the far right [2021: now gone? take care not to miss this path!]. Just to the left of this hut is yellow arrow and three steps (easily missed!). Follow this footpath into a green field and keep to the right-hand side, passing on your right several beautifully converted barns. Walk along the field edge to a metal gate and keep going straight through the next field. At end, this path goes through some brush and trees and bends to the right. Keep straight ahead, passing a redundant stile, with a chain fence on the left-hand side. You reach a metal gate and a wooden gate after which the path goes downhill, curving **right**, shortly coming down to a tarmac lane.
- 5 Turn **right** on the lane into the village of Thorncombe Street. The lane crosses a small stream. This section of the road is often slightly flooded, though it isn't a problem. At a T-junction in front of two houses, turn **left** as for *Bramley*. You pass an old corrugated roofed village hall (now a gigantic beehive) on your left. In another 30m, turn **right** up a drive on a signed footpath.
- 6 After 50m, when you see a metal farm gate, fork **left** on a good newly-restored (in 2016) path through undergrowth. This path takes a dark sunken course through trees and shrubbery with horse pastures visible on

your right. You meet two stiles, one redundant, one skitable (in 2016) round to the right. The path becomes quite steep in parts as it ascends under hollies. Finally at the top, pause to get your breath and turn to enjoy the lovely views behind you, including Winkworth. Up a few steps and over a (dismantled) stile, go straight on with a chain link fence to your left. Soon the path levels off and you reach a wooden barrier with a stile with two arrows on its left. Go over this stile and follow the yellow arrow into a wood, winding gently downhill. At the end of the wood, go over a stile and cross a sheep field (in 2021 enclosed by new fencing with extra stiles and planting for a new mixed hedgerow) straight on to the bottom. You can see the North Downs on the skyline in the distance.

7 At the bottom of the field is an old metal gate. Go over the stile on its left and in 5m take the bridleway to the **left**, ignoring the Greensand Way which is straight on. This path can be muddy for the next 200m if it has been wet. After about 200m you pass a house on right: keep straight on along its driveway. After another 200m, ignore the path ahead and follow the drive to the **right**, downhill to a farm house. At the bottom of the slope, follow the path round to the left. You pass a series of corrugated iron barns and, on your right, some stables. Keep ahead through a metal gate, with chain link fences either side. Keep on this concrete farm lane for 500m, passing *Birtley House Nursing Home* and some tennis courts, until you reach the main road, the A281, on the outskirts of Bramley. *Birtley House has a sculpture garden open each May.*

8 Cross the busy road carefully and turn **left** on it, passing Birtley Courtyard on your right. After 250m, just before a sign bearing the name *Singh*, turn **right** by a bridleway sign. After 50m, bear **left** up to the Downs Link path. This is an old railway line, made redundant by Dr Beeching, which could take you some 40 km=25 miles to Steyning (*see the "Chanctonbury and Steyning" walk in the West Sussex section of this website*). Turn **right** along the Downs Link path. For the next easy 4¼ km=2½ miles, you will be walking dead straight on a level path, perfect underfoot. *You are also walking alongside the old Wey & Arun canal which is being restored. It used to link the River Wey to the Arun and thus the Thames to Portsmouth and was used to ferry munitions to the fleet in Napoleonic times.*

9 The path is always interesting, sometimes high, sometimes through a cutting, with every kind of tree and a varied landscape. After 1 km, you go under *bridge no. 1*. In 400m you pass an information board. 150m later, you go under *bridge no. 2*. In another 550m, you go under *bridge no. 3*. In 450m, ignore a crossing path. In another 350m or so, you cross a bridge which crosses the Wey & Arun Canal (*see the information plaque*). In 900m, ignore another crossing path. In 500m, you meet another crossing path with small waymarker arrows indicating the **Wey South Path**. As a guide, there are a few indistinct steps each side and a modern kissing-gate on your left. Turn **right** here down the steps. *Don't miss this turning!*



- 10 Follow this path as it curves left and, after 350m, turn **right** over a bridge across a stream. In 200m, take a **left** bend at a T-junction (you will notice a metal gate on your right saying "Private"). In 100m, turn **right** opposite some metal gates. Follow this pleasant grassy path, enclosed on both sides by chain fence, until, after 300m or so, you reach a tall 3-way finger-post [2020: loose and leaning against a tree]. Keep straight ahead on a path which may be overgrown in high summer, crossing a little stream in 200m by a 2-plank bridge, followed by a stile. In 70m go over another stile, going beside a tall wooden fence on your right. In another 200m or so, at a third stile, follow the yellow arrow diagonally **right**, crossing a grassy field to a stile and a bridge over a stream. You are approaching the busy A281 again and will notice the traffic. Go over second stile, heading towards some buildings dead ahead. You cross another small stream over a 2-plank bridge and through a modern kissing gate. The path is straight ahead, enclosed by two fences and you quickly reach the main road. Turn **left** on the road, using the verges on the left. Those of you with an OS maps will see a non-existent "PH" on your left. However, refreshments are a little further on the left.



Smithbrook Kilns is a new development on the site of the old Smithbrook brick-works. The various units are rented out to bijou shops, selling antiques, jewellery and various artisan type shops. You can watch glassblowing and have a meal or a cream tea at the Bricks Restaurant.

- 11 After your break, continue 100m along the main road to where it bears left. Here, turn **right** on Telegraph Hill, a tarmac drive marked as a bridleway. Follow the drive, gently uphill and getting gradually steeper, for about 800m where you pass *The Pheasantry*, a large house on your right. Shortly after, the tarmac lane goes through a broken wooden gate by a sign "Strictly Private". Fork **right** here onto a rough track, as indicated. In 150m you reach an open yard with large metal gate across the track. Turn **left** in the direction of some tennis courts, with a large house further down on your left. 20m before the tennis courts, opposite some large wooden-clad outbuildings, take the first track on your **right**. The path has been eroded by water forming a deep channel and you may need to balance along one edge. After 300m, you reach the top of Hascombe Hill and can take a pause to admire the view ahead.

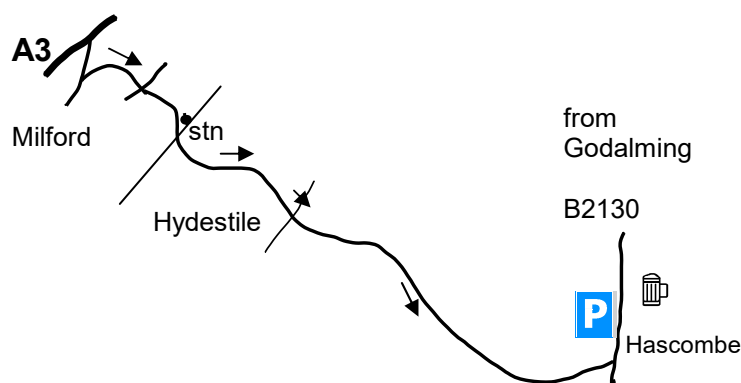
- 12 Perversely, the top of the hill is always muddy! *If your legs still have some strength left, there is a scenic route which goes left uphill shortly at a yellow arrow, descends to veer right at a T-junction and takes a long looping route, always on the main path, over the site of the Celtic hill fortress (see the walk "Hascombe Hill" in this series which takes this path in the opposite direction).* Go straight ahead, downhill following the blue arrow. *If the start of this section is very muddy, you can take a parallel path for the first 100m on the right along the edge of a meadow.* In 700m you pass a house, a large farm, a manor house and a walled garden on your right. Shortly after, you reach the B2130 road in Hascombe village, opposite the very welcoming *White Horse*, where the walk began.



Getting there

By car: The car park is the sandy area opposite the *White Horse* pub in Hascombe, Surrey. It can be reached on the B2130 from **Godalming**. If coming from the A3, an easier approach is as follows. 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 for 1½ miles ignoring all turnings off. Cross a major road at Hydestile and continue for just over a mile. Ignore a turning left for Godalming and then pass some fine woods. After ½ mile (800m), stay on the main road ignoring a left fork. You eventually come to a T-junction at a main road. Turn **left**. The *White Horse* is about a ½ miles on the right and the car park is opposite it.

Alternative car parking spaces are (a) Winkworth Arboretum, but only for visitors to the Arboretum or NT members – but note it opens at 10am and closes at 6pm in summer; (b) Thorncombe Street where there is a dirt patch beside the road to Bramley; (c) Smithbrook Kilns, placing your mid-walk break in Winkworth.



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

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