



## Headley Heath, Mickleham, Box Hill

Distance: 13½ km=8½ miles, easy-to-moderate walking

Region: Surrey

Map: Explorer 146 (Dorking)

written: 4/09/11

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revised: 20/11/11

Refreshments: Mickleham, Box Hill and Boxhill village

Problems, changes? *We depend on your feedback: [feedback@fancyfreewalks.org](mailto:feedback@fancyfreewalks.org)*

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*Woodland, hills, heath, views*

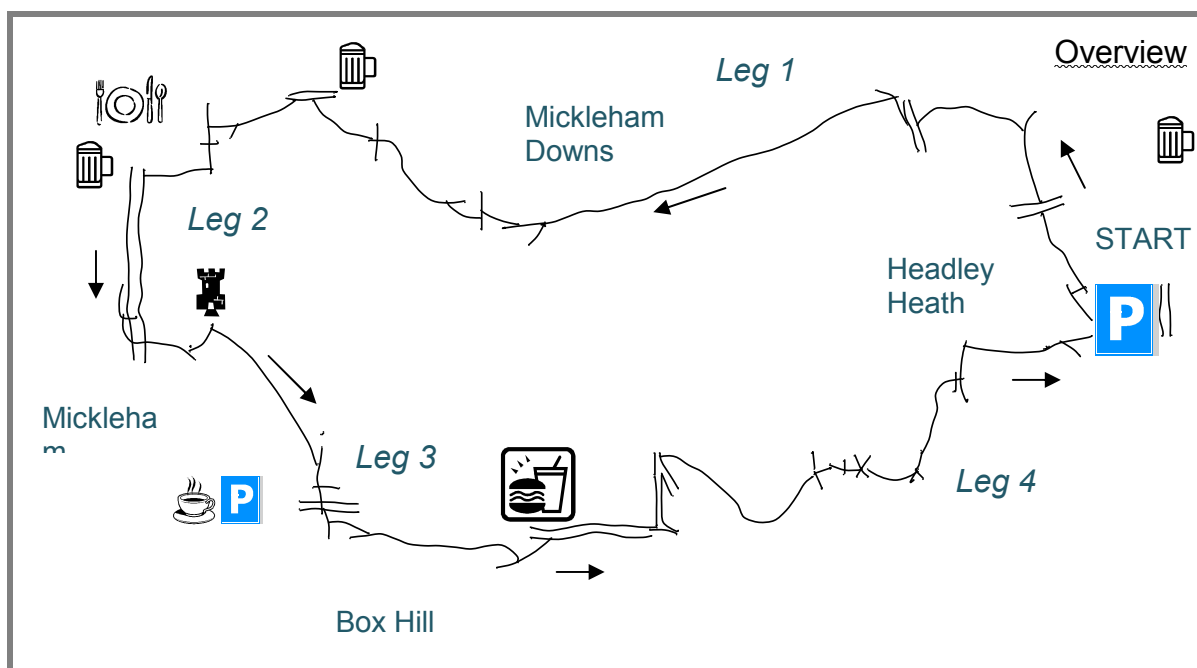
### In Brief

This a variation on a classic walk, noted for its sudden great views, from the beautiful Headley Heath to Surrey's best known hill. This walk shows their unexpected beauty and complexity. This walk seems longer than it is because of the gradients and is longer than the given distance when these are taken into account.



Despite the hilly terrain, this walk has long pleasant stretches on level paths. The stile count is **zero**. Any kind of footwear and attire are ok. This walk is fine for dogs too.

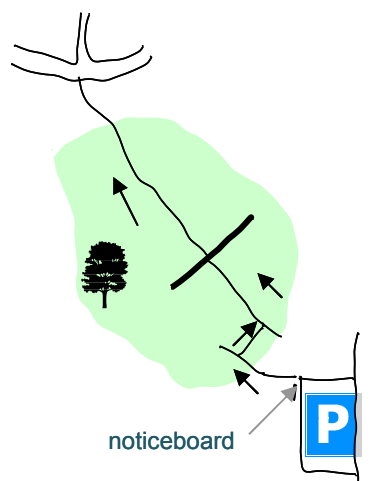
The walk begins in the **Headley Heath National Trust** main car park. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



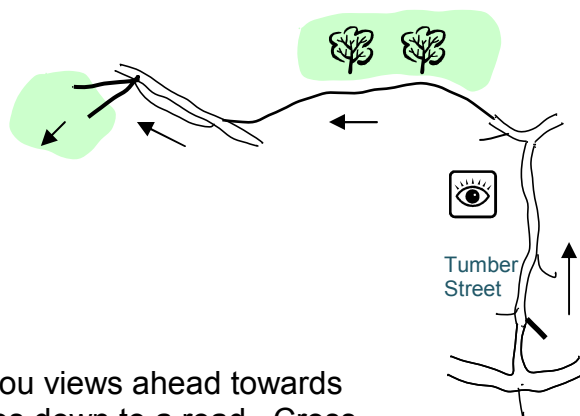
## The Walk

### Leg 1: Headley Heath to Mickleham, 4½km (3 miles)

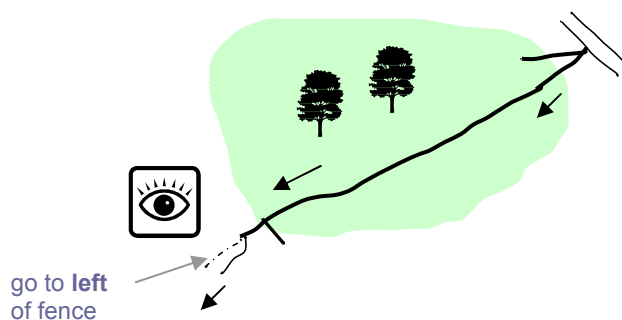
- 1 You need to concentrate a little, just at the start here. With your back to the road, go to the **right**-hand side of the car park, where there is usually a little mobile snack bar. Go forward across the right-hand edge of the grassy space for only 12m (20 paces) and take a narrow path half **right** into the woods. In 50m, the gorse on the right gives way to an area of small oaks. Turn **right** here. After 60m, turn **left** at a T-junction. Within 100m, the path meets a tarmac drive by a signpost. Go straight ahead on a footpath as indicated. This path runs for some distance with gardens on the right through bracken and woodland. Eventually, it comes down to a junction of sandy tracks and a road.



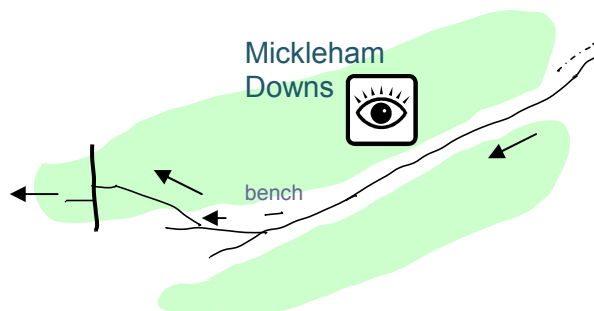
- 2 Cross the road to a lane opposite, called Tumber Street. Avoiding little paths branching off, you pass various cottages and a stud farm and finally ascend to a Y-junction. Take the **left** hand lane, Langley Lane, ignore a footpath left, and continue on a track where the lane ends. *The track passes Nower Wood on the right, an 80-acre area of ancient woodland run by the Surrey Wildlife Trust as an educational nature reserve.* The track emerges from the trees, giving you views ahead towards Box Hill and Ranmore Common, and comes down to a road. Cross the road and turn **right** on a footpath that runs parallel to it. Soon you come to a small parking area with two signposted bridleways leading off.



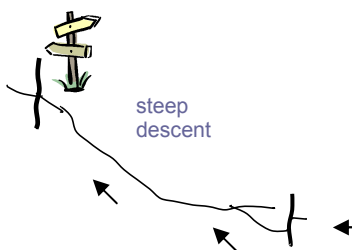
- 3 Take the **left** hand bridleway. This path runs under some fine beech trees and continues straight for almost 1km. Suddenly the fence on the left ends. Ignore a track on the left here. You are now out of the trees on the open Mickleham Downs. From the start there is a wire fence separating walkers and riders. Keep to the **left** of the fence, just before the noticeboard and sign, and continue straight ahead down the beautiful grassy slope. The spire of St Barnabas church, Ranmore, should be visible on the hill in the distance exactly in the direction you are walking.



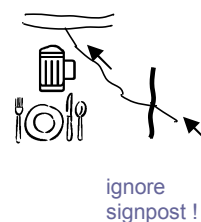
- 4 Continue along the grassy slope for some distance until you pass a bench on the right, after which the path forks. Take the **right** fork, slightly to the right of your original direction. This wide grassy path goes along the right side of the clearing. When it rounds a curve and forks again, take the **right** hand fork, the lesser path, that stays close to the trees on the right, goes past a triangulation pillar and enters woodland. Continue through the sycamores to a wide crossing path. Cross over to a narrow path on the other side, a couple of paces left.



- 5 After a short distance, veer **left** on a wider path joining from the right. This path runs through more woodland and then descends for some distance quite steeply. Eventually it reaches a wide crossing path, an ancient track, with a signpost.

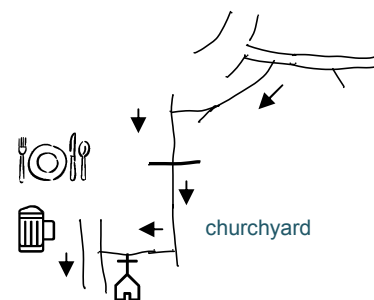


- 6 Go straight ahead over the track on another path, ignoring the signpost. The path goes down shallow steps past Mickleham Alms Houses and then alongside the King William IV pub. *The King William IV (locally known as the "King Billy") is an atmospheric pub dating from 1790 that serves several real ales and many good, if rather pricey, dishes. (There are two other eateries en route.)*



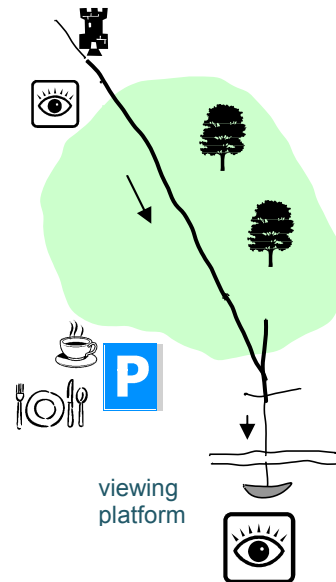
### Leg 2: Through Mickleham, 2 km (1 mile)

- 1 Turn **left** on the track outside the pub. Before reaching the busy A24 road, turn **left** into School Lane. Where the lane curves left, carry straight ahead on a track. Avoid left turns into a children's playground by continuing straight ahead on a narrow hedged path next to houses. At a T-junction, turn **left** on a footpath. The path runs alongside a field on the left and crosses a lane with yellow markers. *The large tree on your left usually has an amusing notice pinned to it. One such, all by itself on the trunk, said "do not throw stones at this notice".* You soon reach the churchyard of St Michael's.

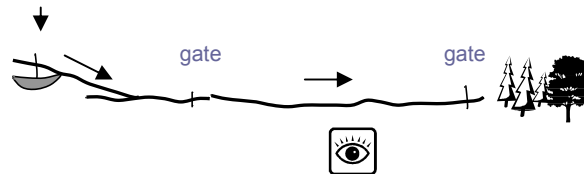




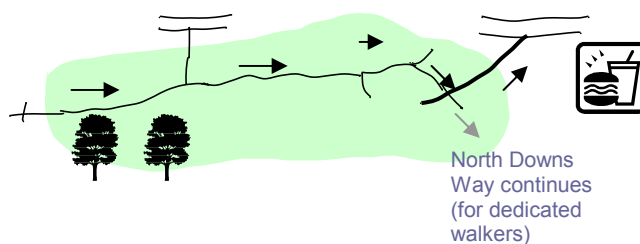
2 From the tower, continue in the same direction. Immediately there is a fine view westwards over the Mole Valley and the hills beyond. Stay on this wide pleasant level track as it runs through woodland and, after some distance, reaches the open grassy and usually well-populated, space that adjoins Box Hill car park over on the right (an alternative starting point). *There is also a shop and small café through the car park. A controversial new restaurant is planned.* Continue forward over the grass in the direction of the open hillside. Shortly, cross a road and reach the stone viewing platform with views down to Dorking and Brockham and the valley of the westward-flowing River Mole.



3 Turn **left** from the viewing platform on a well-made path that joins a gravel track. You will see from the white acorn symbols that you are on the North Downs Way (NDW). *The North Downs Way is a long-distance footpath running along the North Downs from Farnham to Dover, via Canterbury or Folkestone. Part of its length coincides roughly with the ancient Pilgrims Way.* At a fingerpost, fork **left** uphill with the NDW. The path runs close to the road and later goes through a gate with more fine views left. After a while, avoid a gate up to the left and go through a second gate ahead into woodland with a group of yews and beeches.



4 Keep on the main fairly level path following any white acorn symbols and avoiding turn-offs. Eventually, at the second of two posts with a white acorn, turn **right** as indicated down and up steps, then down more steps to a sunken path. Your route continues straight over the sunken path. **However, for refreshments, or for a short cut, turn left on the path, thus leaving the North Downs Way, shortly reaching the road at Box Hill village with a colourful restaurant on the right.**

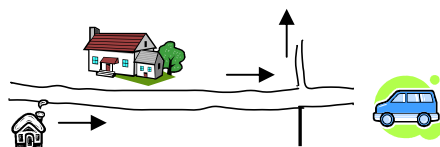


*The Smith & Western Bar Grill Diner is a fun family eatery providing burgers, nachos, BBQ ribs and the like, plus cold beer. The piped music has been assessed by tranatlantic visitors as a woeful introduction to country music.*

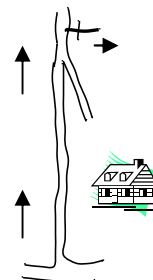
**Decision point.** *The following is a short cut from here, avoiding the gradients of the next section. It gives you ten minutes of easy walking before the delights of Headley Heath but is disdained by purists. Cross the road, turn **right** and walk along Boxhill Road for about 900m. This is a quiet road with a variety of properties on either side, ranging from some quaint cottages to large dwellings set in sizeable grounds. Continue as far as the first decent left turn, Headley Heath Approach, a sandy residential track, just after St Andrews Church and Village Hall. Turn **left** here. Resume the walk at section **2**.*

**Leg 4: Box Hill village to Headley Heath , 4 km (2½ miles)**

- 1** If you visited the restaurant, return to the point where you met the sunken path and turn **left**. After crossing the sunken path, follow the undulating path, still the NDW, through woodland. Eventually, your path goes up two flights of steps, **right** along a wide level path, down a long flight of steps at the other end, and **left** at a T-junction with a broad rising track. After a gradual, slightly tedious, ascent, you reach a 3-way fingerpost and noticeboard. Leave the NDW here by ignoring the right branch and keeping straight on. You arrive at the road opposite the sandy drive Headley Heath Approach.

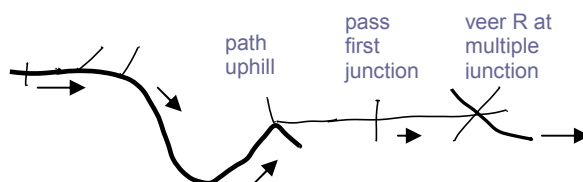


- 2** Follow Headley Heath Approach for some distance past various properties. After nearly 1km, the track comes to a Y-junction where it joins another residential track coming from the right. *At the corner is Brackenhurst with its tolkienesque gateway.* Continue for 10m and turn **right** through a gate onto Headley Heath.

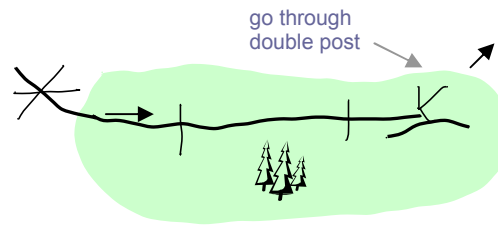


*Headley Heath has a complex topography and there are many routes back to the car park. The beautiful route described here avoids the muddy horse tracks and also stays mainly on level ground. Watch out for the Belted Galloway cattle.*

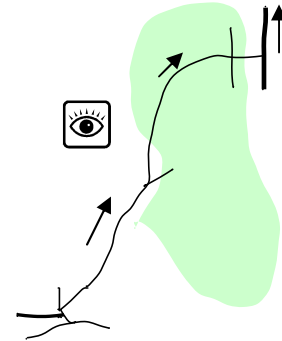
- 3** Go straight ahead on a broad track and keep to the main track, shortly avoiding a wide left fork and all other paths branching off, and follow it as it curves right downhill and bends left again on an ascending course. At the top, leave the track where it bends sharp right again and instead go **left** and immediately **right** between posts on a path uphill. The stony path levels out and gradually becomes a pleasant grassy one. Soon, go straight ahead over an oblique crossing track. Next, you reach a more complex junction of six paths with a *Box Hill Hike* post on your right. Take the **second** path from the **right**, i.e. not on the narrow path straight ahead but on the wider track to its right.



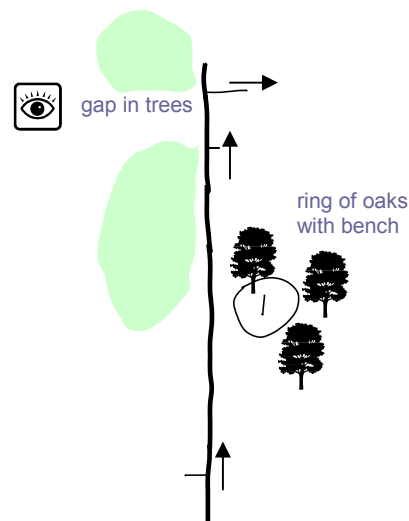
- 4 The wide track, which is rather rutted at first, curves left, descends, goes over a crossing path and ascends. At the top it reaches a multiple junction of paths and tracks. Avoid the first path sharp left (with the blue arrow) and take the **second path left**, a somewhat narrower path.



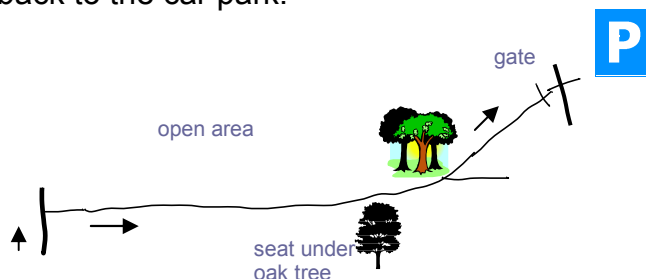
- 5 Soon there is open heath on the left with fine views. 70m after the start of the open heath, ignore a path forking right into woods and stay next to the open heath with extensive views ahead. Stay on this pleasant narrow path for another 200m until it curves right and crosses another grassy path. Soon it comes to a prominent wide straight stony track. Turn **left** onto it.



- 6 In 100m you pass on the right a circle of oak trees with a bench in the middle. In another 80m, there is a gap in the trees on the left. In another 30m, the gap ends and the trees begin again on the left. At this point, turn immediately **right** on a narrow grassy and stony path.



- 7 Follow the path through gorse bushes and by an open area on the left. Keep straight ahead past a seat under a large oak. The path passes under more oaks on the left and comes to a crossing track at a sharp angle. Veer **left** here. The path takes you through a gate, over a horse track and back to the car park.



*For refreshments, the Cock Inn is about ½ mile (700m) north up the road. St Mary's church nearby is also definitely worth visiting.*

## Getting there

By car: Park in the Headley Heath National Trust main car park. To get there from the London area, if coming from Chessington, Oxshott or Ashted, take the A24 Leatherhead bypass signposted *Dorking*. Ignore a left turn signposted *Headley and Tyrell's Wood* and take the *next left* at a roundabout signposted *Headley*. Follow the narrow road, avoiding minor turn offs, all the way to Headley village. Finally, at a T-junction, turn right. The big car park is a little way along the main road on the right. Coming from Reigate or Sutton, take the Pebblehill Road past Betchworth Station and turn left onto the B2033. Park in the *second* car park on the left, the larger one.

Box Hill National Trust car park is an alternative starting point (begin at Leg 3, section 3).

By train: From Box Hill station, cross the A24 and take the well-known walk up the Whites of Box Hill, or over the stepping stones, and begin the walk from the middle of Leg 3.

