



Hindhead Common

Distance: 4 km=2½ miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

Date written: 19-jun-2011

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Refreshments:

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Devil's Punchbowl Hotel

Punch Bowl Café



Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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Views!, woodland, hills, heath

In Brief



Hindhead Common (or Commons) is remarkable for its distant views and the iridescent colour of its heather and birch trees. This circular walk takes you on a circuit round the Commons without any steep gradients. It is perfect at all times of the year, including winter when the moss glows with an incredible sheen and the views are even better.



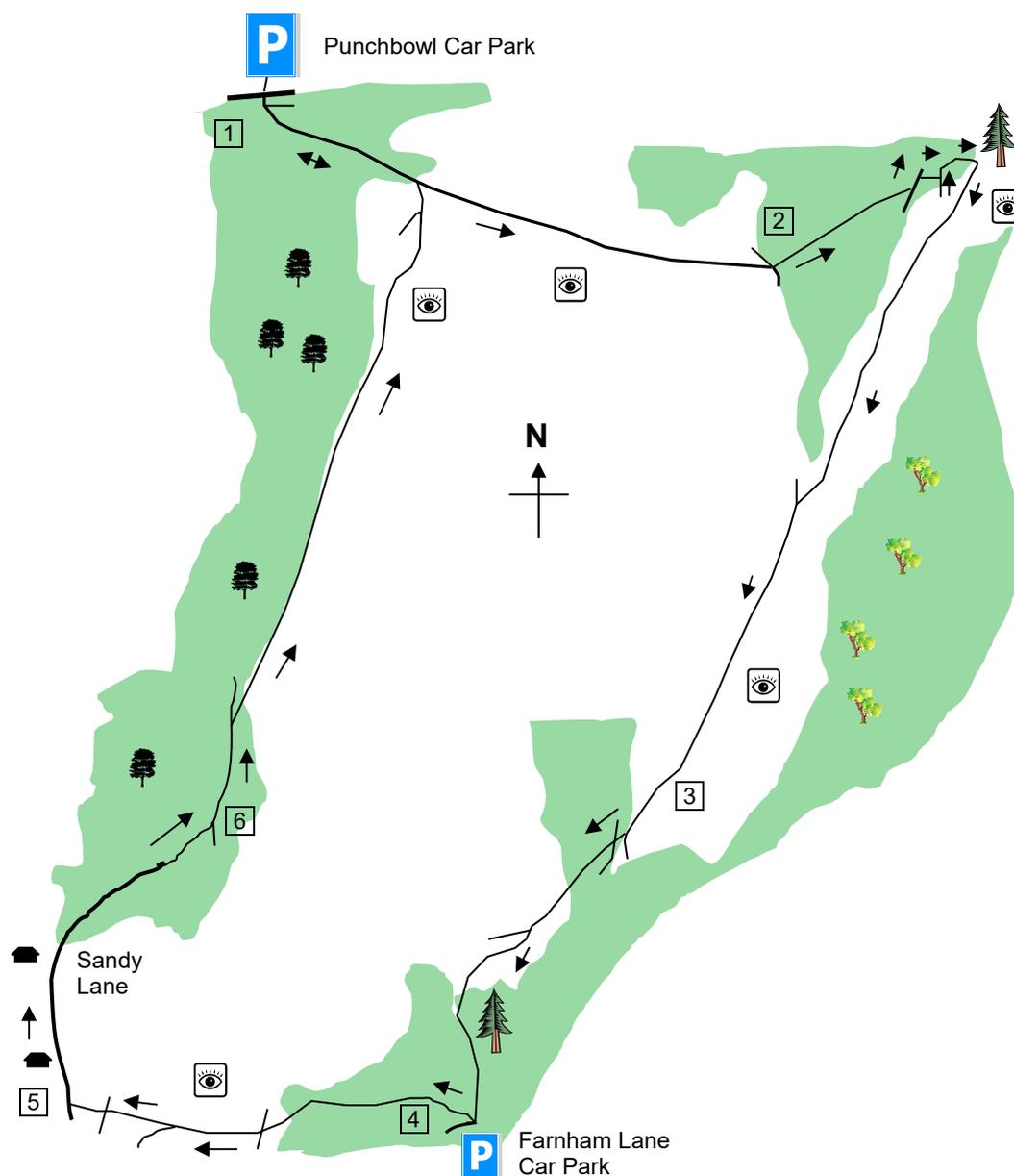
Any sensible clothing and stout footwear are fine. There are no nettles, so shorts should be ok. Your dog will thrive on this walk (there are no stiles), but please always have a lead handy because of the cattle and horses that roam almost anywhere in the area of Hindhead.



WC

The walk begins at the **National Trust Punch Bowl** car park (postcode **GU26 6AB**). There is a small charge to non-NT members (as 2017: £6). For travel details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**). Another possible starting point is the *free* car park at the end of **Farnham Lane** near Haslemere (postcode **GU27 1HQ**): start the walk at section 4, with a refreshment break in the Punch Bowl café.

The Walk



- 1 Leave the Devil's Punch Bowl car park by the *entrance* for vehicles, cross the approach road and bear **left** on a track opposite, signposted as a bridleway and the *Greensand Way (GW)*. The track takes you through a maintenance area and a wooden gate beside a larger one. You now enter an open area with great views over the heath to your right. *You may see some of the ponies that roam over the Commons. This track is part of the Greensand Way, a long-distance trail from Haslemere to near Ashford in Kent. Hindhead Common forms part of the Greensand Ridge.* Stay on the track for ½ km until it enters trees by a seat and reaches a junction. The track you were on curves away to the right, but your route is straight ahead on another track following the blue arrow marked GW.

2 In 200m you reach a major junction at a post with many coloured arrows. Turn **left** here and, in just 10m, turn **right** on a wide path, thus leaving the GW. In 20m, at a T-junction, turn **left**. In 20m you reach a bench under a pine tree where you have terrific views into the valley to Haslemere and beyond to Marley Common and the South Downs (*where there are other walks in this series*). Turn **sharp right** by the bench and follow the level path with the views on your left. You are on a spectacularly beautiful part of the Common with scattered pines and purple heather. You pass more benches and soon a seat under a large conifer where you join a wider path coming from the right.

3 In another 300m your path descends very gently and enters a more sheltered area of oak, birch and rowan trees. There is a distinct fork in the path here. Take the **right** fork, the wider option, a sandy descending path. In only 15m, cross straight over a sandy stony sunken path. Your path immediately curves left and runs parallel to the sunken path with good views to your right. In about 150m, at a fork, keep **left**, staying on the main path. In 20m, at another fork, keep **left** again, avoiding a green mossy path straight ahead. You approach a small car park at the end of Farnham Lane, an alternative starting point for this walk.

4 *Immediately* before the wooden gate into the car park, turn **right** on a rather rutted path in the trees. (If you are beginning the walk in this car park, exit by the wooden gate and turn sharp **left**.) In only 10m, leave the muddy track by forking **right** on a narrow path through hollies. Your path winds downhill and eventually comes out into the open. Here, go straight over a crossing path by a marker post and keep ahead on a grassy level path. In more than 100m, in front of some birch trees, keep straight ahead, avoiding a path that forks away left uphill. Keep straight on over a crossing path, heading for a small wooden swing-gate.

5 Go through the gate and turn **right** on a tarmac lane. You pass a sculpture studio with a stone lion (*note the "boy" on the roof*), then a house called *Lethendry*. You are on Sandy Lane and this prosperous area is known as *Polecat Valley*. Where the lane ends after the last house, *Downsend House*, continue ahead on a footpath through the trees. Finally you emerge through a wooden gate back into the open space of the Common.

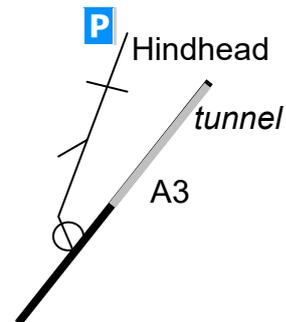
6 Turn **left** on a wide path, staying next to a wire fence on your left, going gradually uphill. In 100m or so, you reach a post with two blue arrows. Take the **right** fork here, a National Trust permissive bridleway, ignoring the gloomier left fork that runs steeply up through trees. The heath on your right opens out as your path climbs and, if you turn around, you will have a final chance to savour the views. At the top, you meet a level area with a grassy path coming up to join you from the left. Keep ahead until, at the top of a bank, you meet a wide gravel track. Turn **left** on the gravel track. (This is the same as the one you came out on.) The track takes you through a gate and finally back to the car park where the walk began.

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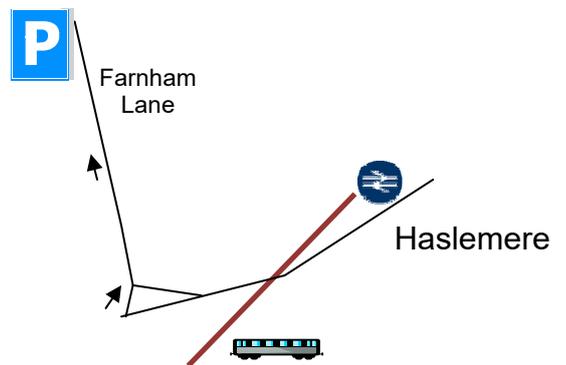
Getting there

By car:

Take the A3 and turn off, just south of the tunnel, to **Hindhead**. At the crossroads in Hindhead, keep straight ahead into a cul-de-sac. The car park is on the left. Refreshments are available at the Punch Bowl Café.



If starting from the **Farnham Lane** car park: coming from Haslemere, go past the station and turn **right** at the far end of a triangular green on your right, just before shops. Bear left on Farnham Lane, marked as a cul-de-sac. Follow the lane for 2 km=1¼ miles to its end, opposite the entrance to the Royal School, and park in the small car park on your left.



By bus and train: Several bus services from Haslemere station. Check the timetables.