



Holmbury and Pitch Hills

Distance 10 km (6½ miles) moderate-to-easy walking

Region: Surrey

Author: Schwebefuss *comments please to feedback@fancyfreewalks.org*

Refreshments: Peaslake

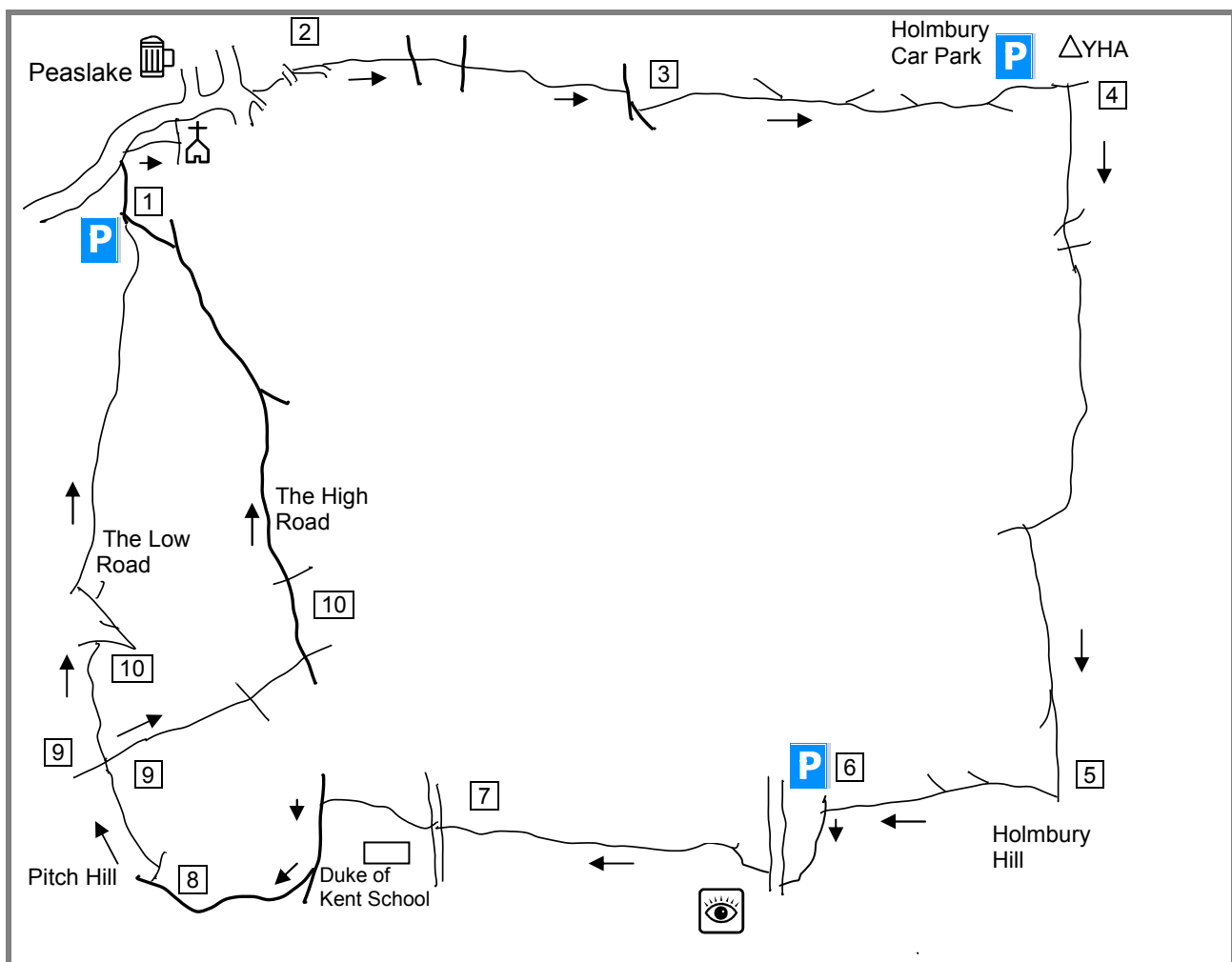
Maps: Explorer 145 (Guildford) and 146 (Dorking)
but the map in this guide should be sufficient

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, extensive views

In Brief

Two hills for the price of one! This walk shows off some of the best views in Surrey from two of its best hilltops overlooking the Weald of Sussex. It seems longer than it really is because of the enjoyable ups and downs.





The walk starts at Peaslake's **Hurtwood Control car park 2** or at the car park by the **Holmbury Youth Hostel**. For full details of how to get to the start of the walk, see **Getting There** at the end of this text.

Underfoot is sandy or grassy all the way, so it's fine any time of the year. There are no nettles and it is fine for dogs too.

The Walk

Begin here if parked at the Peaslake car park.

Go out of the car park to the road and turn **right**. Immediately take a footpath **right** running parallel to the road and then rising. At the top you have a good view over the whole village of Peaslake. Turn **left** onto a metalled track that goes past the church on your left.

Peaslake is one of Surrey's quietest villages, apart from at weekends when mountain bikers swarm. The village is highly spread out, with only a handful of buildings in the centre. The name comes from the source nearby, originally called "Pise Lacu". The Hurtwood Inn serves food, including afternoon tea, as well as some real ales. The local Peaslake Village Stores also serves tea and coffee, pizzas etc. and has an excellent delicatessen counter.

- 1 At the road, turn **right** and cross the village centre to the shop. Turn **right** facing the shop and fork **left** on Radnor Road. In a few meters, after a driveway, take a marked footpath **left** steeply up a grassy bank. At the top, go through posts and straight over a lane to a lane facing you. You pass some fine properties and continue through a barrier along a narrow enclosed path when the roadway turns right into the last house.
- 2 *(The following notes take you more or less straight on for over 2 km to the Holmbury Car Park.)* The path emerges into open woodland where you continue straight on. It immediately crosses a path, descends and crosses several more paths in the valley. At a post, take a narrow rising path straight ahead. After 100m on this stony path, near a fence on the left and just before the path sinks even lower, turn **right** up a bank onto a more comfortable parallel path running through woodland. Eventually this path rejoins the original path. At the end of the fence, the path zigzags through a gap in a bank and immediately reaches a T-junction. Turn **right**.
- 3 In 30m, at a post with arrows, turn sharp **left** on a broad path. The path descends, is joined by other paths, runs between banks for a while and widens to a very broad sandy track. It soon runs between two ponds and winds upwards left and right. At a junction of wide paths, continue straight on, slightly left, by a bank with tall beeches. Soon you reach the Holmbury car park. Continue straight on to the far corner of the car park.

*Begin here if parked at the **Holmbury** car park.*

The nearby Youth Hostel serves teas and snacks except when it is booked by a private party on off-peak weekends.

- 4 From the back of the car park, take a narrow path in the direction of an electricity pole. Continue on this sunken sandy path parallel to a line of electricity poles. *(The following notes take you for nearly 2km straight to Holmbury Hill.)* The path passes through some fine pinewoods and in 500m crosses a path diagonally. In 250m, it crosses a wide sandy track and, after 500m through deciduous woodland, it crosses a junction of paths. Eventually, your path veers right before a large conifer and meets a crossing track. Turn **left** here on a wide grassy path, thus regaining your original direction. The path crosses another major path diagonally. At a fork, choose the **left**-hand, more sandy, path. This path curves left and right and rises to the top of Holmbury Hill with its circular seat and, down to the right, a triangulation point. The view from here over the Weald is magnificent. “Weald” is a Saxon word meaning simply “forest” (“Wald” in German).

Holmbury Hill is the site of an iron-age fort, which stood for about 150 years until the Romans arrived. Excavations in 1930 and 1974 revealed various implements and weapons. The hill is 261m high and from here you can see [Chanctonbury Ring](#), [Bignor Hill](#) and [Black Down](#) (all West Sussex walks from this site) and back to the London City and Canary Wharf landmarks.

- 5 After admiring the view, walk back from the main stone seat/compass point overlooking the Weald and approach the smaller concrete pillar (a donation box) set back from the edge of the hill. Take the sunken sandy path immediately to the **left** of the pillar. Keep to the wide path with the edge of the hill on your left, avoiding paths that fork off to the right. You pass a seat and at junctions, always keep to the **left** path, staying on the edge of the hill. All this time, you are following the Greensand Way, as indicated by an occasional GW sign. Stay on the main sandy path until at a left fork you pass through a barrier marked “Footpath Only”. You now follow a beautiful path along the edge of the hillside, with fine views left across the Weald. Next, you go between posts and cross a wheelchair circular route, go between yet more posts and down to a wide stony sunken path. Turn **left** on the sunken path (unless you are parked at Hurtwood Control Car Park 1 which is straight on).
- 6 Follow the stony path down to a lane and turn **right**. In a few metres, just past a house, turn **left** on a marked footpath. Shortly you reach a bench on the left with a captivating view of the pine-topped hillock, the Weald and the South Downs. Continue to a junction and, at a T-junction with a path at a bend, go **left** through posts. Fork **left** before a farm gate onto a narrow path running between fields across a lovely valley, passing through the wooden “McKinney Gate”. *To the right is Coverwood, a farm-hamlet and riding centre with famous gardens and lakes.* Cross a second valley, then an enclosed footpath and a stile and reach a road.

- 7 Cross the road and continue on the driveway of the Duke of Kent School. As the driveway curves left, take a tarmac parallel path on the **right** leading gradually upwards on steps and into woodland. Go up through rhododendrons and turn **left** up to a wooden swing gate in a fence. Continue up steps in the same direction, cross a level path and continue up more steps the other side, still on the GW. At the top, turn **left** on a very broad sandy path. Immediately after a house on the right and some tarmac, turn **right** at a post on a path uphill. At a T-junction at the top turn **left** on a wide path. There are fine views on the left. At a fork, keep **left** through a barrier on a narrow path, keeping to the side of the hill. Shortly you go through another barrier to the open area of Pitch Hill. Turn **left** to reach the seat, information board and viewpoint.

Pitch Hill is 257m high. From here you can see Holmbury Hill on the left and Hascombe Hill, Gibbet Hill and the long sharp outline of Blackdown on the right. In the valley below are the villages of Ewhurst (left) and Cranleigh. Pitch Hill and its neighbours are checkpoints on several annual 50-mile "challenge" walks.

- 8 With your back to the view, fork **left** up to the trig point. Turn **right** on a marked bridleway opposite the two concrete pillars. In 40 metres, fork **left** on a wide path. In 180m, the path comes to a cross-paths with the main path turning left, another broad path on the right and a narrow path ahead.

Decision Point. Here you have a choice of routes back to Peaslake. The "low road" is more interesting but involves a *steep* descent and perhaps some mud, both of which can easily be avoided. The "high road" is simpler and has a short cut if you are going on to the Holmbury Car Park.

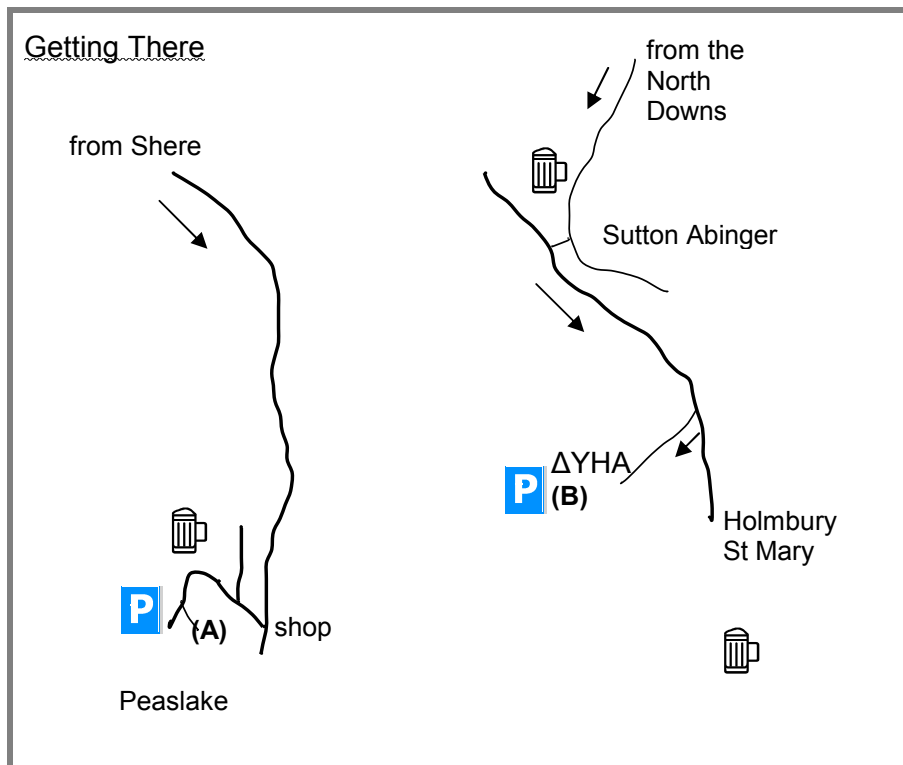
The Low Road

- 9 Continue **straight ahead** at the cross-paths on the narrow path. After 100m the path curves left. In another 40m, at a junction, ignore several paths on the left. In another 100m the path suddenly descends very steeply. You can avoid this steep section by taking two hairpins on the right. At the bottom, turn **right** on a wide path.
- 10 After 30 metres, turn **left** on a broad sandy track. Immediately ignore a path forking left and a little further on ignore a rising path on the right. The track ends at a T-junction at the bottom in the woodland. Turn **right** here. This path takes you, after a long woodland walk of nearly 2km, to the Peaslake car park.

The High Road

- 9 Turn **right** at the cross-paths. Continue straight ahead at a junction, on a wide rising path. On meeting a wide crossing path, turn **left**, ignoring the narrower sunken path ahead.
- 10 At a junction of forestry tracks, go straight ahead on a very wide sandy track. After nearly 1km with some more crossing paths, a very wide track joins from the right. After another 100m there is a fork in the track. For the Peaslake car park, fork **left** downhill and at the bottom, turn **right**. To continue the walk to the Holmbury car park, fork **right**, later pass the cemetery on the left and continue past the church at Peaslake, resuming the notes from the beginning, omitting the first paragraph.

Getting there



- A. For the *cautious* driver: take the A3 and turn off at the Ockham roundabout. Pass under the A3 and turn immediately left on the A247 signposted “Woking”. 2 miles (3 km) after Ripley village, at a roundabout, turn left through East Clandon. After 2 miles (3 km), on the right is East Clandon church and Clandon Park (National Trust). At the traffic lights on a junction with a dual carriageway, go straight on. After a mile (1½km), on your right is Newlands Corner, a favourite beauty spot. The road curves left with terrific views on the right and becomes a dual carriageway. On the left is the Silent Pool (worth a visit). Continue until you see a signpost to “Shere, Ewhurst”. Turn right here. Soon turn right again through the centre of Shere village. Continue uphill until, just after going over a railway bridge, there is a signpost left for Peaslake which you follow. After 2 miles (3 km) you reach the village of Peaslake. At the centre of the village there is a junction of roads and Peaslake Village Stores. Turn sharp right here and stay on the main road for a quarter of a mile (300m) until a sandy track on the left marks the entrance to Hurtwood Control Car Park 2.
- B. For the *more adventurous* driver: take the A3 as far as the M25 junction; go down to the roundabout but do not turn left or right for the M25; instead continue straight on (signposted Guildford) as though you had decided to re-join the A3. From the sliproad, take the first road left, signposted to Effingham. Basically, you continue straight on for 7 miles (12 km). The road passes Wisley Common lake on the right, later a pub at a minor crossroads and eventually reaches a T-junction where you go right and immediately left thus regaining your original direction.

In Bookham village, continue straight on over 2 mini roundabouts and cross a major road at traffic lights. Stay on this narrow but attractive road for 2 miles (3 km) until you have to give way at a crossroads – careful! (For another day, if you turned left here you would reach magical Ranmore Common.) Continue straight over, pass the White Hill Car Park on the right and pass through a hair-raising narrow stretch of road cut through the North Downs. After a zigzag and another mile (1½ km), you reach the A25 Dorking-Guildford road. Cross this road straight over (careful!) to another small road the other side signposted Holmbury St Mary and Abinger Common. Follow this winding lane for 2 miles (3 km) through varied landscapes until suddenly on your right is the legendary Volunteer pub. Continue a little further through the very spruce Sutton Abinger village with its half timbered houses to a T-junction. Turn left here, signposted *Holmbury St Mary*. After ½ mile (1 km), on your right is a signpost on a triangle of grass, pointing on the right to the YHA (Youth Hostel). Take this narrow road, going straight ahead on an even narrower road (there are occasional passing places) and at the end reach the Holmbury car park. You need to start the walk from section 4.

fancy more free walks? www.fancyfreewalks.org