



Limpsfield Common

Distance: 11 km=7 miles or 8 km=5 miles
easy walking with two short steepish sections

Region: Surrey

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Last update: 9-dec-2018

Refreshments: Limpsfield Chart, Moorhouse

Map: Explorer 147 (Sevenoaks) *but the maps in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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Woodland, heath, views, green meadows, historic house

In Brief

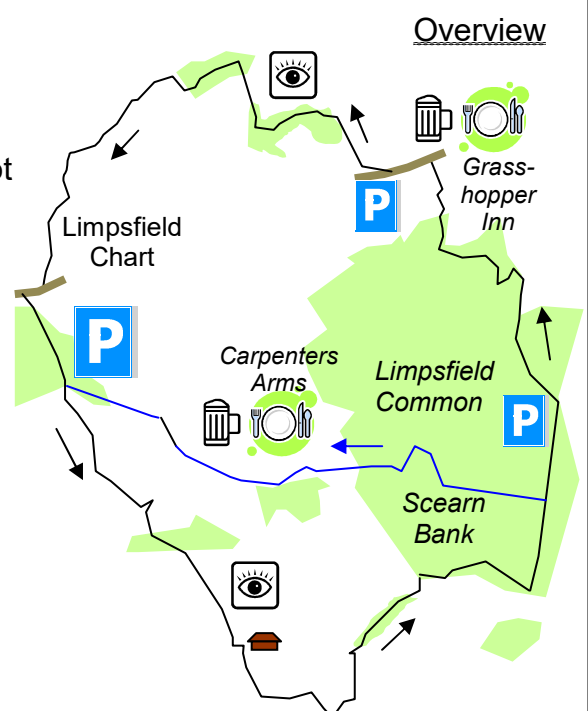
On a huge high sandy bank on the border with Kent, looking south over the Weald and north to the North Downs, lies a fascinating area of Surrey woodland known as Limpsfield Common. This circular walk traverses the Common, taking you on a brief excursion down into the first pastures of the Weald and (optionally) up again, almost to the foot of the North Downs.

There are two contrasting pubs along the route, depending on whether you take the longer option with a stopover of shameless luxury (for the *Grasshopper Inn* ring 01959-563136) or the shorter option with an iconic lively country pub (for the *Carpenters Arms* ring 01883-722209).



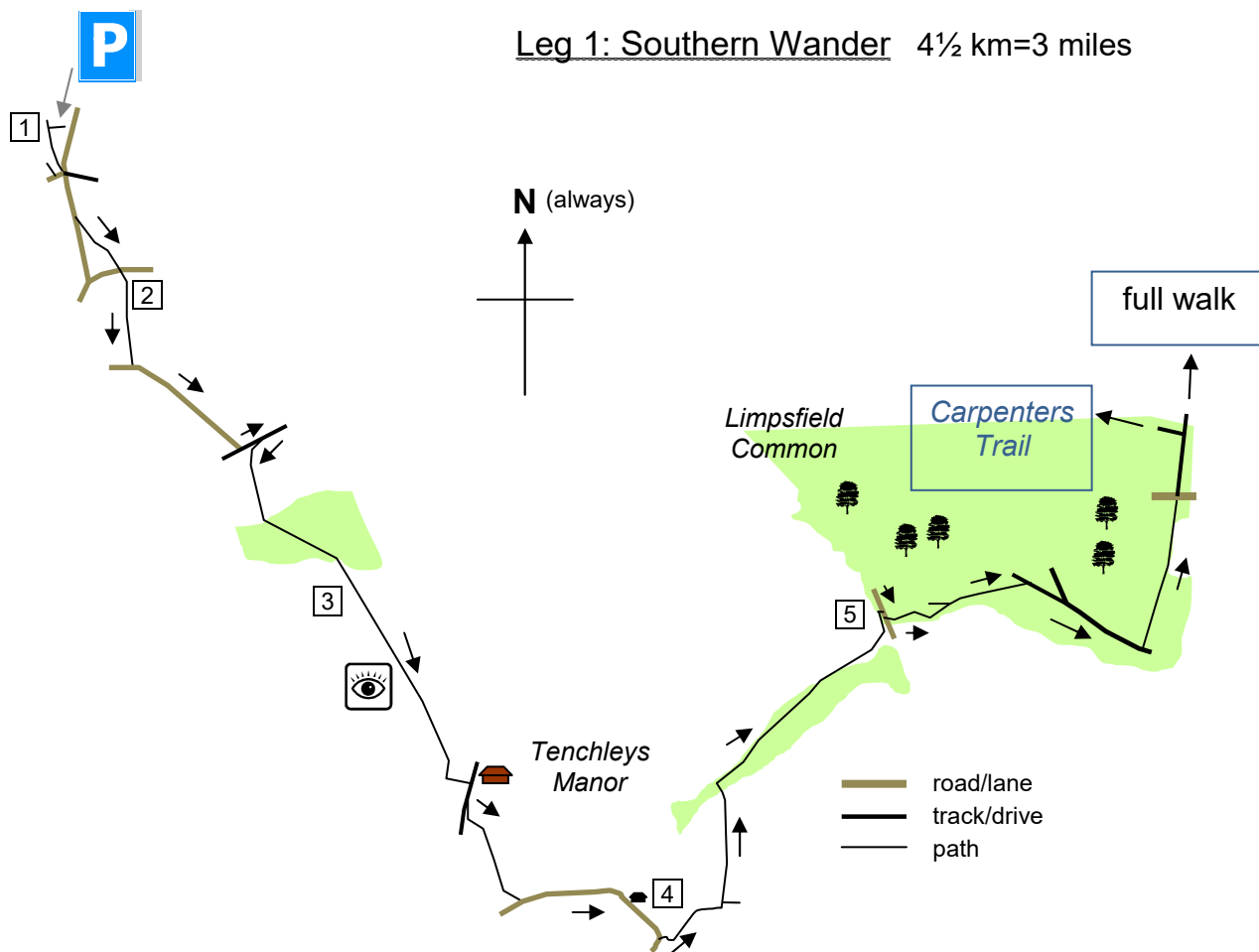
All the paths on this route are wide and clear of undergrowth. The paths are generally sandy or grassy, with only one or two confined muddy areas, but enough to make boots necessary outside a dry period. Your dog can also come but only if he is not too large, because of one awkward stile.

The walk begins at the **Brick Kiln Lane** car park, Limpsfield Chart. The *approximate* postcode is **RH8 0QZ** which points to the houses just beyond. Brick Kiln Lane is a turning off the Kent Hatch Road, 350m from the start on the right. The car park is 150m along on the right. A good alternative start is the **lay-by** on the main A25 Westerham Road, just west of the *Grasshopper Inn* (postcode **TN16 2EU**) (*beware new parking restrictions?*). The **Moorhouse Road** car park (nearest postcode **TN16 2ES**) is also possible. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).




The Walk

Leg 1: Southern Wander 4½ km=3 miles



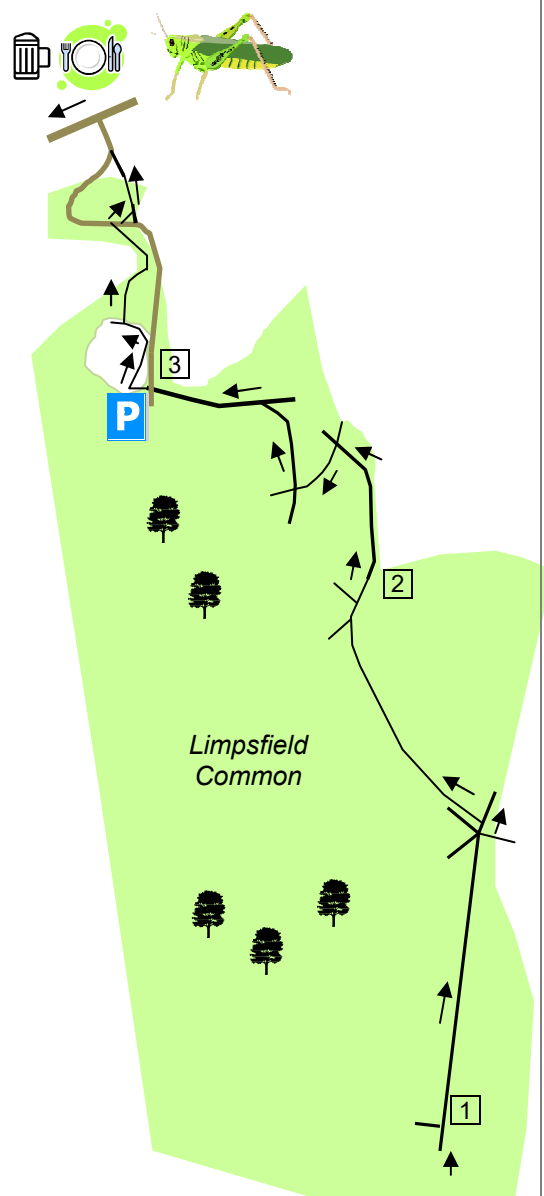
- 1 Starting in the Brick Kiln Lane car park, go out at the back of the car park, away from the road, and turn **left** on a woodland path. This path shortly takes you to a road junction near the start of Stoneswood Road. Go straight over to join the major road, Brick Kiln Lane, avoiding a bridleway on your left. In 80m, ignore a private drive on your left but, in another 10m, at a fingerpost, fork **left** on a footpath, part of the Greensand Way (GW) long distance trail. Cross a golf fairway diagonally, keeping the same direction, to come out to a road opposite Pains Hill Chapel.
- 2 Take a footpath on the other side, just to the left of the chapel, still on the GW. Your path runs between fences and beside a horse pasture, through an unneeded swing-gate to a wide tarmac, very quiet, residential road. Turn **left** on the road, passing several exclusive properties, with good views south over the Weald. At the end of the road, at a 4-way fingerpost, turn **left** on a tarmac drive uphill. Immediately you pass on your right *Pastens Cottage* with a plaque on the wall recording a short sojourn. *Stepniak (1851-1895) was a Russian revolutionary, author of "The Russian Peasant". As if out of the pages of Turgenev, born into a nest of gentlefolk, he became an anarchist and an assassin. In exile, he was killed in a bizarre accident on the railway line near Chiswick.* In 50m, just after a bamboo fence, turn **very sharp right**, on a narrow signed footpath, thus leaving the GW. Your path runs downhill by a garden fence, then between banks and, after 300m, takes you over a stile into a large meadow.

- 3  Enjoying the sudden view of the Weald, walk down the right-hand side of the grass, keeping a new fence on your **left**, in the direction of a large house with chimneys. (Previously, you would have walked straight ahead down the grass, but the farmer has erected a fence (end-Nov 2018) to keep you to the edge.) The mansion on the hill to your left is in *Tenchleys Park*. In the bottom corner, go through a new metal gate and follow a sheltered path. The path goes over a wide bridge, past a donkey field, turning left in the corner and over another wide bridge to meet a driveway. Suddenly facing you is the pleasing view of historic *Tenchleys Manor* with its pond and clipped hedges. *Dendrochronology of the house's beautiful timbers dates it to 1599 (the probable year of "Hamlet")*. Turn **right** on the drive. 30m after you pass the pond, fork **left** at a fingerpost diagonally across the grass. Your path takes you over a bridge and stile into a meadow. Keep to the right-hand side of the meadow, under wires. A stile beside a large wooden gate takes you onto a tarmac lane, *Itchingwood Common Road*. Turn **left** on the lane, soon passing *Moat Farm* with its capacious duck pond.
- 4 You pass a converted barn, a timbered cottage and one more dwelling. Immediately after this last building, *The Old Lodge*, turn **left** beside the wall by a hidden fingerpost onto a path beside a sloping meadow. Keep **left** beside a hedge, close to the house, and continue round to the top of the meadow. *Up on your left, the tree-covered Scearn Bank is your next destination*. Turn **left** to go through a shiny new steel kissing gate (*thank you, East Surrey Ramblers!*) into another meadow. Ignore a path right (part of the *Tandridge Border Path*) and keep ahead along the left-hand side. At the top, go through another shiny new metal kissing-gate into a narrow sloping meadow. Turn **right** keeping to the right-hand side of the meadow, soon going under trees. In the first corner, go over a stile and follow a woodland path, emerging at the other side through a (broken) swing-gate. Keep the same direction in another meadow which curves left uphill to take you through a (very tight) swing-gate beside a large wooden gate. A gravel track leads quickly to a tarmac lane.
- 5 Turn sharp **right** on the lane and, in 10m, go **left** at a fingerpost steeply up a narrow footpath. You meet a driveway coming in from the left: keep straight ahead, passing several houses including the nestling *Squirrel Cottage* and *Scearn Bank Farm*. Just after the next house, *Springs*, before the drive dips, fork **left** on a narrow path up into hollies. Your path goes fairly steeply up under birches and conifers, ending up a bank to a T-junction with a wide level path. Turn **right** on this path. In 100m or so, you meet a tarmac drive. Veer **right** on the driveway and in 150m, just before the entrance to *Scearnbank*, go **left** steeply up into trees. At the top, ignore a path to the right and continue straight ahead on a wide clear path between birches and along a line of cypress. Your path passes a large water tank on your right, passing a large metal gate and reaching the *Kent Hatch Road*. Cross the road carefully, past a large metal gate, onto a wide straight path across the *High Chart Woodland*. In 150m, on your left, under a large pine, is a wide forestry track.

Decision point. If you are doing the shorter (8 km=5 miles) walk, with a break in the *Carpenters Arms*, skip to the end of this text and do the **Carpenters Trail**.

Leg 2: Woodland Ramble 2½ km=1½ miles

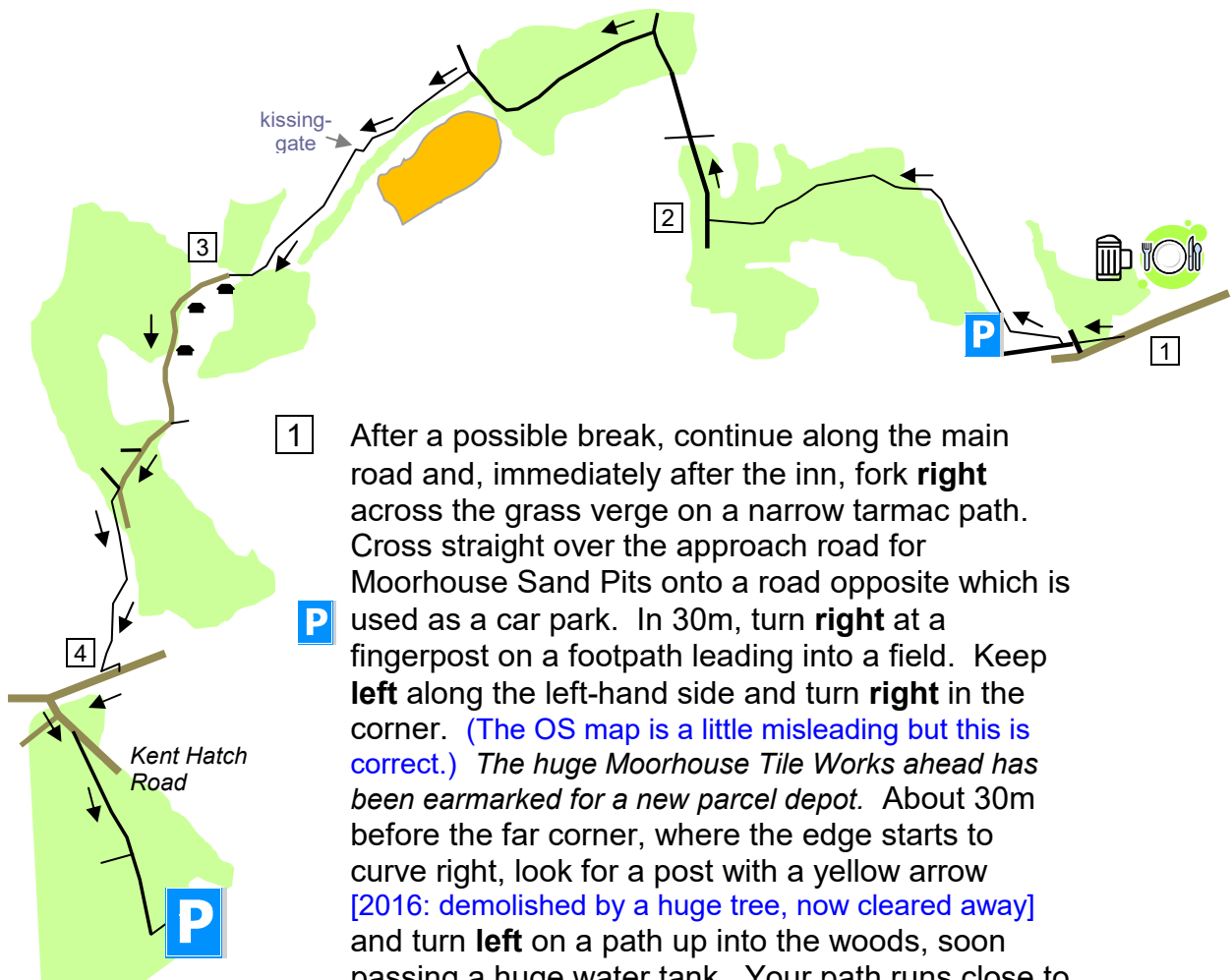
- 1 Ignore the wide forestry track and keep straight ahead. In 300m, your path goes straight over a narrow crossing path. In another 150m, you reach a major junction of five wide paths at a new 5-way fingerpost. Ignore a path on the right and take the **second** path from the right, just a fraction to the right of your original direction. **But**, in only 15m, turn **left** on a narrow path. (As a guide, there is a tall white pole here marking a gas pipeline.) Your path runs through a coppice and parallel to a wide track on the left until it diverges. *The earth bank on your right marks the border with Kent.* After 250m, avoid a branching path on your left and keep straight on. Your path winds through a woodland of oak and beech and reaches a junction of paths, where an open field can be seen ahead to your right. Avoid two paths on your left and head towards the field. Pick up a path which runs just inside the wood with the field immediately on your right.
 - 2 Stay near the field, ignoring paths off, until your path veers left and reaches the bottom of a dip. Just as the path begins to rise again, you will notice waymarked footpaths on your left and right. [2015: the path at an angle on your right has a yellow arrow and leads to a stile and a field, but the path on your left (the one you should take) has lost its marker.] Turn **left** on the narrow footpath. In 100m it leads to a wide crossing track. Turn sharp **right** on this track, uphill. This good surfaced way wheels left and passes a *welcome!* sign for the High Chart Woodland. Go through a wooden barrier to a T-junction with a driveway and turn **left** on it. In 200m you come out to a road opposite the Moorhouse car park.
- P**
- 3 Cross the road into the car park and immediately turn **right** along the right-hand edge of the open grassy space. After about 60m along the edge, keep round to the **left** for another 40m to the next blunt corner and look for an unmarked path on your right going steeply down into the woodland. (If you reach a bench seat, you have come about 50m too far.) This path goes down through birch, then holly, and veers right alongside a pasture on your left with a house beyond. It becomes a wide sandy path, finally coming out through conifers to the road again. Cross straight over the road, a fraction right, and take a rough driveway towards a row of stone houses. Turn **left** beside the houses and, after the last house, take a narrow path downhill. Your path passes another row of cottages at the bottom and joins a wide tarmac drive, re-joining the road for the last 30m, coming out to the main A25 road. Cross the main road carefully and turn **left** to the extravagant neo-Tudor *Grasshopper Inn*.





This site seldom puts a huge hotel and wedding venue on your route but a watering hole is just that – and they really want you to drop in and see that, at base, it's another friendly pub! The bar is by the main entrance. If you care to stop for lunch (best to book: 01959-563136) there's a good menu of substantial dishes of the "comfort food" variety. The name, by the way, comes from the Gresham family of Titsey whose name, a corruption of that insect, was bestowed on several nearby locations, including the other Grasshopper in Westerham.

Leg 3: Northern Meander 4 km=2½ miles



- 1 After a possible break, continue along the main road and, immediately after the inn, fork **right** across the grass verge on a narrow tarmac path. Cross straight over the approach road for Moorhouse Sand Pits onto a road opposite which is used as a car park. In 30m, turn **right** at a fingerpost on a footpath leading into a field. Keep **left** along the left-hand side and turn **right** in the corner. *(The OS map is a little misleading but this is correct.)* The huge Moorhouse Tile Works ahead has been earmarked for a new parcel depot. About 30m before the far corner, where the edge starts to curve right, look for a post with a yellow arrow [2016: demolished by a huge tree, now cleared away] and turn **left** on a path up into the woods, soon passing a huge water tank. Your path runs close to a wire fence on your right and runs beside a line of mature beeches, then pines, with Thrift Wood on your left. On reaching a tarmac lane, turn **right**. *You are on part of the Vanguard Way (VGW) and long-distance path running from Croydon to the south coast.*

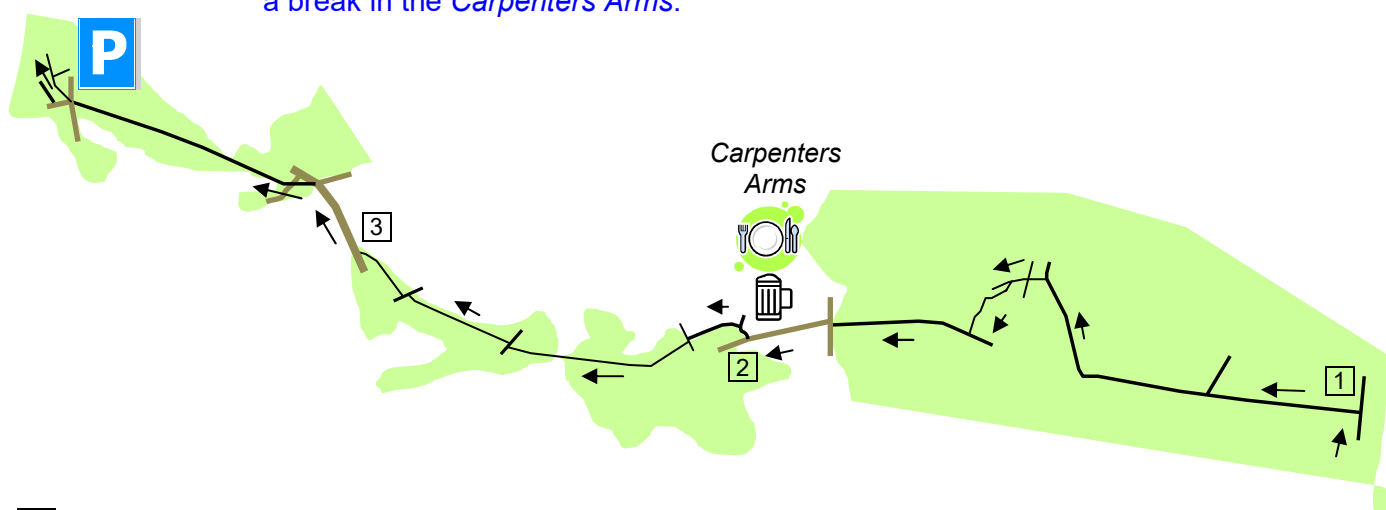
- 2 Cross straight over a track coming from the sand pit, passing Broomlands Farm and its farmhouse, and entering a forest track, via a metal gate. In 50m or so, you reach a major fork by a fingerpost. Turn **left** on a footpath, thus leaving the VGW, and follow this wide path beside overhead wires. Your path bends right by the edge of the quarry, affording a scenic view, and rises to a high point where fields meet with a view of the M25 and the North Downs. *Titsey church with its pointed steeple is visible beyond the motorway.* Go past a small wood on your left and **immediately** turn **left** into a very long and narrow crop field. *Don't stray into the open space ahead!* *You need to cross, sooner or later, to the right-hand edge of the field to find your next gate. If the field is heavily planted with maize, it may be best to take the right-hand edge*

from the start. After 100m, you pass a single tree in the centre of the field. Within the next 120m, you need to cross to the right-hand side of the field. Here, at the top of a rise, you will find a small metal kissing-gate. Go **right** through the gate and immediately **left** so that you are walking in the same direction on the other side of the wire fence. Walk the whole length of this long green pasture to reach the narrow far corner after 250m or so. Here, in the right-hand corner, you will find another metal kissing-gate (and perhaps a fair amount of mud). After the gate, a short woodland path leads to a tarmac drive beside houses.

- 3 Keep straight on along the drive, known rather indecorously as *Grub Street*, soon passing the historic Grade II listed *Sheiling Cottage*. After more properties, the drive bends right. Ignore a footpath sharp left here and stay on the drive. After a couple of twists, ignore a bridleway on your right. Where the drive curves left, you meet a fingerpost by a green space where a bridleway comes from the right. Go **right** here onto the green and turn **left** along the edge, keeping within the line of stumps and thus avoiding the golf links. After the last stump, by a tree, veer **right** a little, so that you are heading for a bus shelter visible ahead on the road, to the left of the big school building. You reach the main road by a golf tee. Cross the main A25 road by a staggered crossing.
- 4 Turn **right** along the road, quickly reaching the junction with the Kent Hatch Road. First, cross carefully over the junction and turn sharp **left** on the far side of the Kent Hatch Road, avoiding a side road, New Road. In 30m, **ignore** a fingerpost pointing into the trees and continue another 20m to a bus stop. Fork **right** here on an unsigned wide path into the woods. Keep straight ahead at all times as the path winds through a partially cleared area, ignoring a signed footpath on your right. A little further, after 350m on this path, on your left is the Brick Kiln car park, where your walk began.

The Carpenters Trail 3 km=2 miles

Take this option if you are doing the shorter (8 km=5 miles) walk, with a break in the *Carpenters Arms*.



- 1 Turn **left** on the wide forestry track. Your track runs straight for ½ km, being joined half-way by another track from the right. It bends right and, in another 200m, just before another right bend, it reaches a marker post bearing a yellow arrow, indicating that you have re-joined the GW. Turn **left** here on a woodland path. In 40m, your path crosses a NT bridleway at a marker post with blue and yellow arrows. In 50m, keep **left** before a

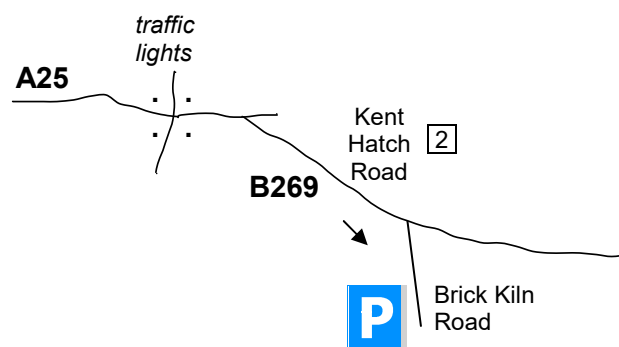


hollow and follow the main twisty path, which may be a little muddy, to meet a wide surfaced path in 120m. Turn **right** on this path. It leads, in nearly 250m, to the village in the centre of Limpsfield Chart. Cross a road and continue for 150m to reach the *Carpenters Arms*, a lively pub run by Westerham Brewery. *For a spirited account of this inn, see another walk in this series, "The Carpenters Arms (Pub Walk)".*

- 2 After your break, with your back to the pub, turn **right** and **right** again, beside the pub and immediately fork **left** on a shingle track beside some houses on your right. In 100m, cross over a tarmac side road, a fraction left, to a signposted woodland path with the GW marking. Your path curves right as it nears the main Kent Hatch Road. In 150m, this tarmac footpath runs beside the main road. Continue on the footway, ignoring a bridleway on your right. Just after, as you see the sign at the entrance to Lombarden Farm (also a dental practice), fork slightly right away from the road, cross the drive and take a footpath opposite, parallel to the road. In 200m, your path crosses a tarmac drive, a fraction left, and continues on a footpath opposite. In 100m through more trees, your path comes out to the road.
- 3 Cross the road carefully and turn **right** along the verge, which soon becomes much wider as it runs beside a grassy bank. Just before a side road, Chapel Road, veer **left** across the grass, cross over Chapel Road and take a signed bridleway opposite. Follow the bridleway, with golf links first on your left, then on your right, and through woodland for a further 400m. You reach the Brick Kiln Road at a side junction. Cross straight over to Stoneswood Road, but immediately turn **right** on an unsigned woodland path. This path is opposite the grass triangle at the junction and is 10m before another, signposted, path. Your path takes you, in 40m, to the Brick Kiln car park where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: if coming via the M25, come off at Junction 6, turn onto the A22 south, signposted *East Grinstead*, and go **left** at a roundabout onto the A25 through Oxted and Limpsfield and, after some traffic lights, fork **right** onto the B269 Kent Hatch Road, signposted *Edenbridge*. Go ¼ mile and turn **right** on Brick Kiln Road. The car park is within 200 yards, on the right.



If coming from the east, again take the A25. From the south, take the B2026 through Crockham Hill.

By train & bus: bus 594 or 595 from Oxted station.

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