



Effingham, Great Ridings, Little Bookham

Distance: 10 km=6 miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

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Author: Fusszweig

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Refreshments: Little Bookham, Effingham

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Map: Explorer 146 (Dorking) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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Woodland and nature trails, green meadows, urban greenway

In Brief

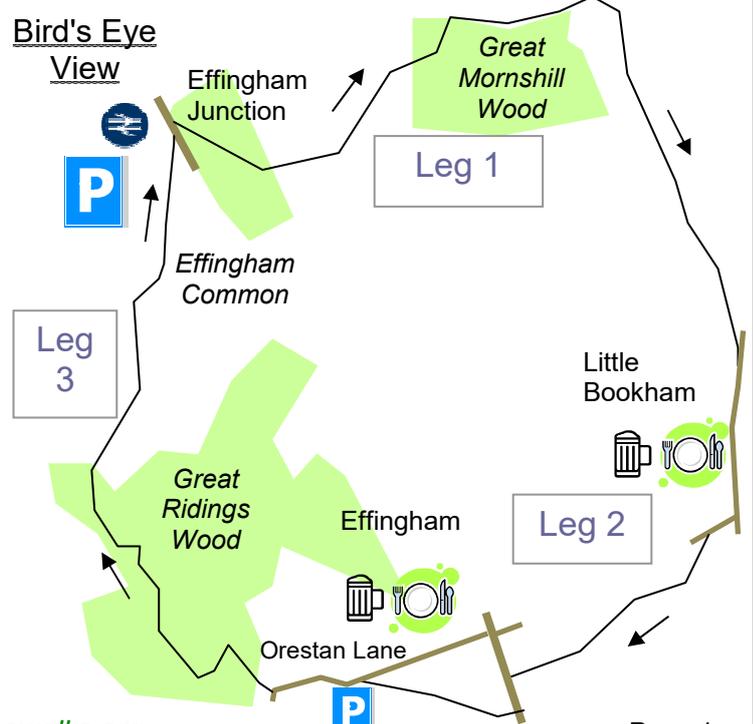
This is a little walk of great interest and variety, taking unexpected paths through deep woodland and a verdant trail through two villages, avoiding main roads. There are some worthy stopping places for refreshment along the way. (To enquire at the *Plough* in Effingham, ring 01372-303105.)



The paths along this route are generally wide and firm, with no claggy soil, making this walk suitable for the winter season. However, in a wet winter there will always be some waterlogged sections between drier grassy fields and this makes wearing boots essential. [In the wet winter of 2020-21 the railway arch in 2 was flooded, requiring wellies.](#) There were no nettles across the path when this walk was planned, and very few brambles. With only three compulsory stiles, this walk should be fine for your dog too.

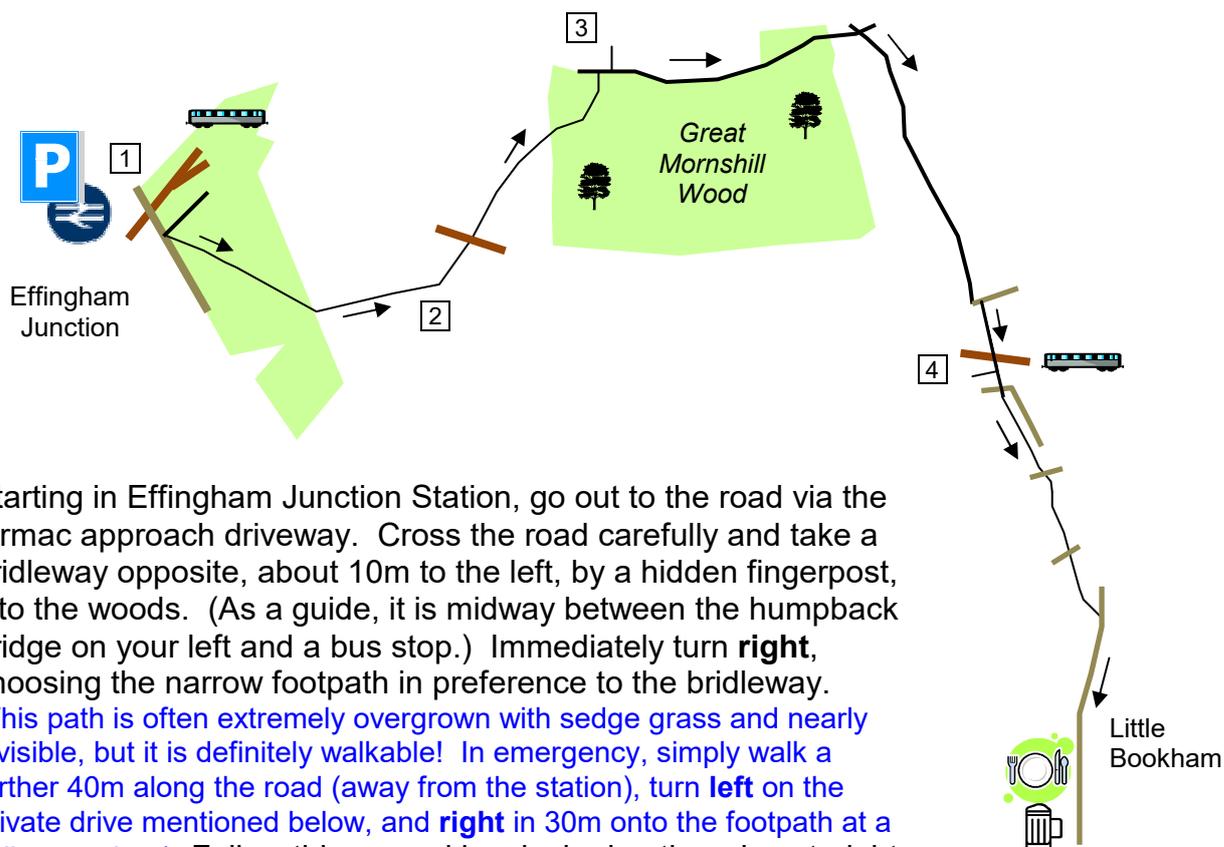


The walk begins at **Effingham Junction** in Surrey. There is a train regular service between London and Guildford and a large car park, postcode **KT24 5HX**. As of 2019, parking costs £3.50 on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays, and after 10.30 am Mon-Fri. There is another excellent free starting point in **Orestan Lane** in Effingham, postcode **KT24 5SJ**, where there is plenty of room on the roadside (start at Leg 3). For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



The Walk

Leg 1: Effingham Junction to Little Bookham 4 km=2½ miles



- 1 Starting in Effingham Junction Station, go out to the road via the tarmac approach driveway. Cross the road carefully and take a bridleway opposite, about 10m to the left, by a hidden fingerpost, into the woods. (As a guide, it is midway between the humpback bridge on your left and a bus stop.) Immediately turn **right**, choosing the narrow footpath in preference to the bridleway. (This path is often extremely overgrown with sedge grass and nearly invisible, but it is definitely walkable! In emergency, simply walk a further 40m along the road (away from the station), turn **left** on the private drive mentioned below, and **right** in 30m onto the footpath at a yellow marker.) Follow this ground ivy-decked path, going straight over a private driveway after 50m. You need to concentrate on your feet as the path is a little unclear. It twists at first but then runs fairly straight through the oak wood, with occasional yellow arrows to help you. 400m from the road, you meet a small enclosure surrounded by a wire fence. Before the first corner of the fence, turn **left**, going over a stile. *On your right is Norwood Farm, a 16th-century Grade II listed dwelling, whose gardens are open once a year during "Open House".*
- 2 Go ahead along the footpath and over a stile into a narrow meadow with a reedy ditch on your right. 500m from the last turning, your path takes you through an arch under the railway and straight on over a low one-step stile. You are now walking between pastures, some of which are home to a herd of alpacas. 300m after the arch, you go over another low one-step stile and a bridge with rails, taking you into Great Mornshill Wood. After 250m on the bendy woodland path, you arrive at a T-junction. Turn **right**, ignoring a path to your left and passing a sign for Bank's Common.
- 3 Follow this easy bridleway, with meadows on your left and woods soon on both sides. You pass a redbrick house, ignoring a footpath sharp left. Your path becomes a drive, veering right past some white houses as you enter Bookham Common. At a large 4-way fingerpost, veer **right** in the direction *Little Bookham*. Follow this tarmac lane, passing the thatched *Oaktree Cottage* on your left. You pass allotments on your right, after which the lane bends left. Immediately turn **right** on a lane (unsigned but revealed to be Maddox Lane), thus regaining your southerly direction. The lane goes

over a bridge across the railway. Ignore a footpath on the right just after, keeping straight on along the lane.

- 4 Cross straight over a residential road onto a footpath which runs parallel to a road on its left. You pass several properties, crossing their driveways as you go. At a 3-way fingerpost opposite *Fairlea*, ignore the right turn and keep straight ahead on a narrow path, crossing another drive. You are now walking between a fence and a hedge, passing beneath a fine stand of scots pines. Always keep straight ahead, ignoring residential roads, continuing on a narrow path between fences, crossing a stream by a small bridge. When finally you emerge on a road, Little Bookham Street, turn **right**. After 450m on this typical pleasant semi-urban road, you reach *Ye Olde Windsor Castle*. The “Castle”, recently refurbished, is a Chef & Brewer pub with a pleasant frontage. The Brewer half serves a fair tippale but the Chef has to juggle a huge menu, expedited using a microwave and a deep fryer. A worthy place for a pause nonetheless.



Leg 2: Little Bookham to Orestan Lane 2½ km=1½ miles



- 1 Continue up to the end of the road, passing some of the residual ancient houses of the village, including *Half Moon Cottage*, at no.2, a grade-II listed cottage dating from the late 1400s. Turn **right** at the mini roundabout onto Lower Road. In 100m or so, by the entrance to *Oast House* (a miniature variety in an unexpected setting), go diagonally **left** over a stile, beside a large (open?) metal gate, and in the same direction across a small meadow to the opposite corner and over a stile. Here, veer **right** on a path and immediately cross a road, Manorhouse Lane, onto a tarmac track on the other side, passing a sign for *All Saints Church*. Soon you pass the old church, a rare gem.

All Saints Church, Little Bookham dates from the 1100s, a simple interior with a modest bell-cote and several interesting original windows. This location on which it stands has yielded several prehistoric artefacts. The opening times for this church are rather erratic.

- 2 Go past the church, heading for some modern school buildings. As you pass the school, avoid several paths forking off left and stay close to the buildings. As the path enters woodland, stay close to the flint wall on the right, muddy in winter. Finally the path reaches the cemetery of St Lawrence's Church. Passing to the right of the church, go out to a road, cross it and go along Chapel Hill opposite to reach the main road, known modestly as *The Street*.

Effingham was named, just before the year 500, after the Saxon chieftain Aeffing, under a charter from Chertsey Benedictine monastery. Its assets

after the Normans came were "4½ ploughs, 5 acres of meadow, herbage and pannage worth 18 hogs", value £8. Effingham Manor house was where a current Regency mansion stands, HQ of the Golf Club (by the traffic lights on the A246). It was owned in Tudor times by Lord William Howard, commander of the fleet against the Spanish Armada. The village's most famous resident was Sir Barnes Wallis, inventor of the bouncing bomb (the "Dambuster"). He also designed the R100 airship. He lived in a house on Beech Avenue (just south of the traffic lights) for nearly 50 years. According to accounts at that time, he performed early experiments for the bouncing bomb in his garden using a washtub and his children's marbles. His gravestone is an irregularly-shaped one in St Lawrence's churchyard.

You now have a choice of routes depending on whether you would like refreshments in Effingham village. If *not*, follow section [3a](#) below. For a good refuelling stop, use section [3b](#).

3a **No Pub.** Turn **left** on the main road. In 100m, at the start of a row of shops (including a convenience store) turn **right** on a tarmac drive, marked by a small fingerpost. After a large tile-hung house, the path becomes narrow. Shortly after, at the corner of a field, turn **right** at a fingerpost through a gap and take a diagonal path across the field, which is sometimes cropped, sometimes fallow. On reaching the far corner, take a narrow path, up a step, between a hedge and a wire fence. Your path runs by garden fences, zigzags and turn right on a drive, to Orestan Lane. Turn **left** on this residential road.

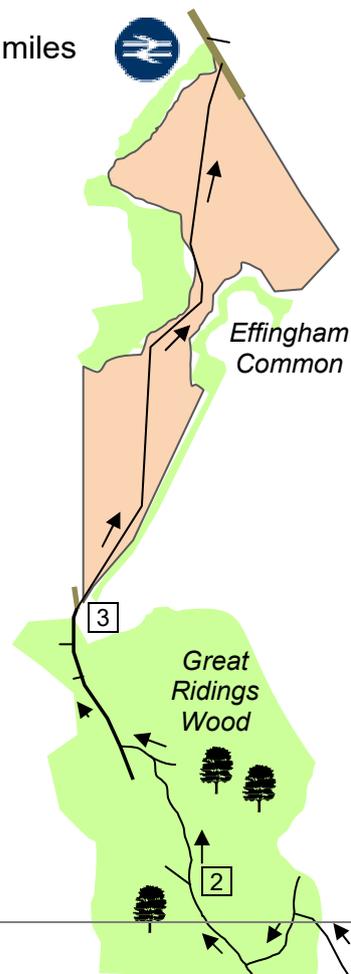
3b **Pub.** Turn **right** on the main road, passing the newly refurbished *Queens Stage* (pka *Douglas Haig*) pub. At the mini roundabout, turn **left** on Orestan Lane, immediately reaching a traditional rural pub *The Plough*, a *Youngs* inn with a delightful garden in the back. *This is the true villagers' pub, not a wayside inn, and it seems to know their finicky dining preferences pretty well. Walkers report attentive service, excellent food, likeable the décor and atmosphere.* After a break, continue along Orestan Lane.

Leg 3: Orestan Lane to Effingham Junction 3½ km=2 miles



P An alternative starting point.

1 Walking west along Orestan Lane, away from Effingham village, go to the end of the road where it bends left into Calvert Road. Leave the road here by continuing straight ahead on a track into woodland. In 100m, go **right** through a wooden swing-gate into Great Ridings Wood and immediately **ignore** a much narrower right fork. *This wood was previously a series of old private plantations, including Brambletye, Clayhangar and the Walleps. It was purchased in 1996 by donations from the local councils and restored by local volunteers. Great Ridings Wood is managed by the Woodland Trust.* Follow the main well-made path through the wood until after 200m you reach a T-junction. Turn **left** here on another good path, dry in summer. (If instead you turn right, you can take a longer option, a new circular walk on a good woodland path, following red stripes, which meets the route of this walk at the point marked "*" below.) In 200m your path ends at a T-junction with another path. Go ahead over a bank and immediately turn **right**, passing a post with a red stripe,



indicating part of a nature walk. This path takes you through beechwoods, in 150m passing a bench and going over a flat bridge across a (dry in summer) stream.

- 2 Immediately after the bridge, **ignore** a path that forks left past another post with a red stripe and instead keep straight on. You are on part of the Horsley Jubilee Trail, although in reverse direction. You will soon see a post with the trail's logo and you will be following it for another ½ km. Your path bends right at another post and veers left again. It now runs fairly straight under beeches and various species of oak. You pass more trail posts and, 400m from the bridge, you meet a 4-way junction with two paths on your right (*). Veer **left** at this junction to go, in 80m, through a wooden barrier by an information board for Great Ridings Wood. Veer **right** here to join a wide path popular with families and riders. This is the Old London Road, an ancient packhorse route and an official bridleway. Stay on this wide, fairly straight bridleway for 400m, avoiding all turnings off, including some little bridges over the ditch that runs on your left. The bridleway finally zigzags right-left past a house and becomes the start of a private residential road, Heath View.
- 3 Immediately turn **right** through a gap into the wide open space of Effingham Common. Your destination is the furthest corner, almost 1½ km away, near Effingham Junction and there are various paths you can use, or improvise. Your first destination is the centre of a strip of trees directly ahead. The common is in two sections joined by a wide gap which you can see ahead. If you keep near the right-hand edge, it is important to veer **left** a little after 300m, aiming for the **left**-hand side of the gap. Or you can keep to the left-hand edge, passing some elegant back gardens, veering **right** beside the trees to go through the gap. *In a wet winter the common may be squishy: you might need to navigate a path round the edge to avoid twisted ankles.* You will meet a ditch that bisects the common and you can cross it next to a silvery gated grid. After the gap, keep the trees on your left for about 350m until they curve away to the left. Now strike out across the centre heading for a fingerpost, visible ahead, roughly in the centre of the strip of trees, to the right of a line of pointy-roofed industrial units. Follow the path into the trees to meet a T- junction. Turn **right** here to arrive shortly at Effingham Junction station and car park where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: for Effingham Junction, if coming from the A3, one way is via Old Lane near Bolder Mere. Just SW of the M25 junction, go south on Old Lane near the *Ockham Bites* café. (If you are coming on the A3 from the London area, you need to exit and keep straight ahead at the M25 junction to re-join the A3 for a short distance on the slip road.) On your return journey, you cannot turn right on the A3 and you need to go through Cobham or Ockham.

For Orestan Lane, continue past Effingham Junction and, in 1½ miles, as you approach Effingham Village, turn **right** at the mini roundabout, passing the *Plough*. Park near the farm towards the end of the road (better than near the pub).

By train: regular daily service to Effingham Junction from Waterloo or Guildford or Epsom.