



Newlands Corner, Secret Woods

Distance: 7½ km=5½ miles or 6½ km=4 miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

Date written: 3-jan-2010

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Refreshments: Newlands Corner

Last update: 2-jan-2017

Map: Explorer 145 (Guildford)

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

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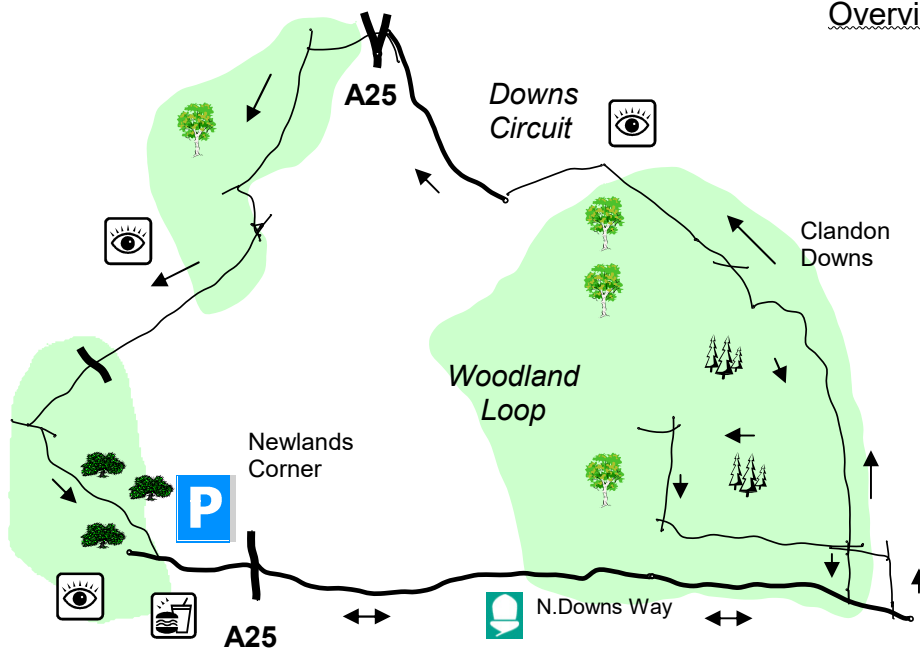
Secret woodland, views, quiet paths

In Brief



Newlands Corner is a tip-top favourite place for families and for very polite motorbikers. Many people just walk over the Downs, enjoying the views. There are good walks south to Blackheath (see e.g. *Gunpowder and Profound Silence* in this series). These two walks, in contrast, take you through some lesser-known paths in the woods over Clandon Downs. The *Woodland Loop* takes you through the secret woods and back the same way. The *Downs Circuit* goes a little further over the Downs. (It is also possible to explore more of the secret woods before finishing the Downs Circuit.) **These woods are privately-owned but walkers are tolerated. Note however that during forestry work access may be restricted or suspended. There is an alternative path for the Downs Circuit, but not for the Woodland Loop.**

Overview

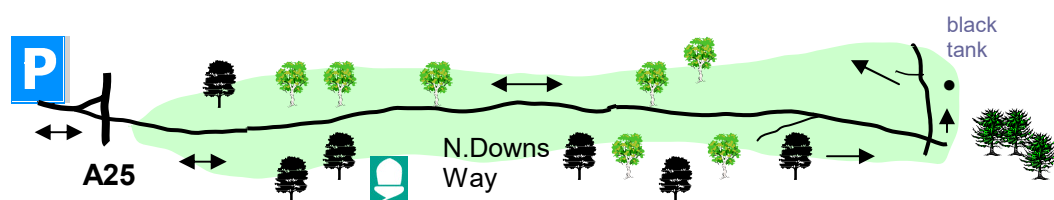


These are good walks even in winter because of the green of the pine and yew trees. There is very little mud but just a few nettles that might catch bare legs. This walk should be fine for your dog too, with a short lead. There's a good hotdog stall in the Visitors' Centre.

The walk begins at the **Newlands Corner car park**, postcode **GU4 8SE**. Note that, from spring 2016, the SCC is planning to charge £1 per hour (maximum £4) for parking. Await further news! To locate this car park, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

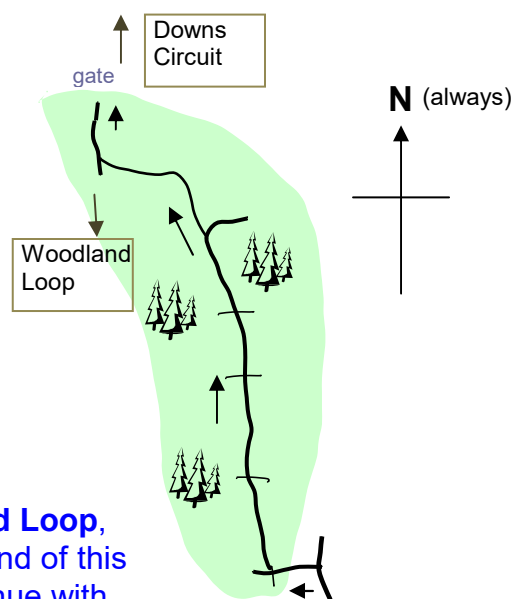
The Walks

- 1 From the car park, walk **back** towards the road and fork **right** on a path with a post and a blue arrow to a fingerpost just before the road indicating the North Downs Way. Continue straight on and cross the main road, re-joining the North Downs Way on the other side. *The North Downs Way is a long-distance footpath from Farnham to Dover.* (In the mini-map below, the two-way arrows show how you return by the same return route in case you are doing the Woodland Loop.) In about 1½ km you are joined on the right by a permissive horse ride and, after 200m or so, there is the first definite crosspaths with a smart new fingerpost, just before a darker area of yew trees. The *Silent Pool* is on the right but your route here is sharp **left** on a good path through the remains of a gate. In about 100 metres or so, you pass an elevated black tank on the right. Shortly after, turn **left** into the woods. These are the secret woods of Clandon Downs. *Not long ago there was a waymarked nature walk here, now disrupted by forestry work.* (In case forestry work makes access impossible, avoid the woods by keeping straight on at the black tank and taking the next waymarked path **left**.)



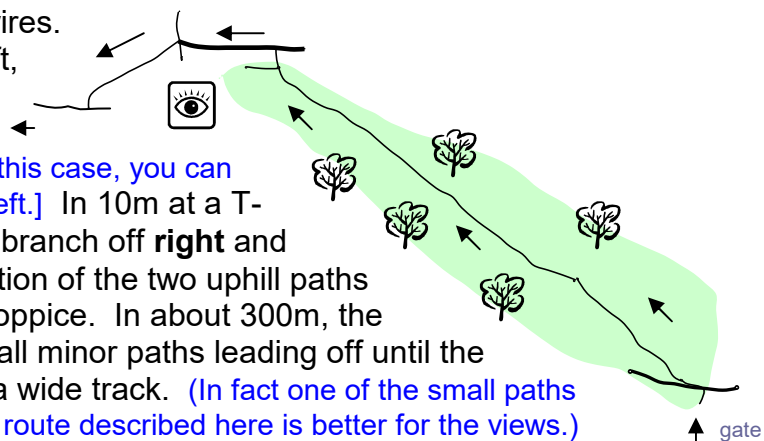
- 2 In about 100m, at the first junction, turn **right** on a wide path. Stay on the path over three crossing paths. When the main path wheels right, keep ahead on a narrower path that descends through woods and swings left and reaches a T-junction.

Decision point. If you are doing the **Woodland Loop**, go to the **Conclusion** of that section near the end of this text. If you are doing the **Downs Circuit**, continue with the next section.

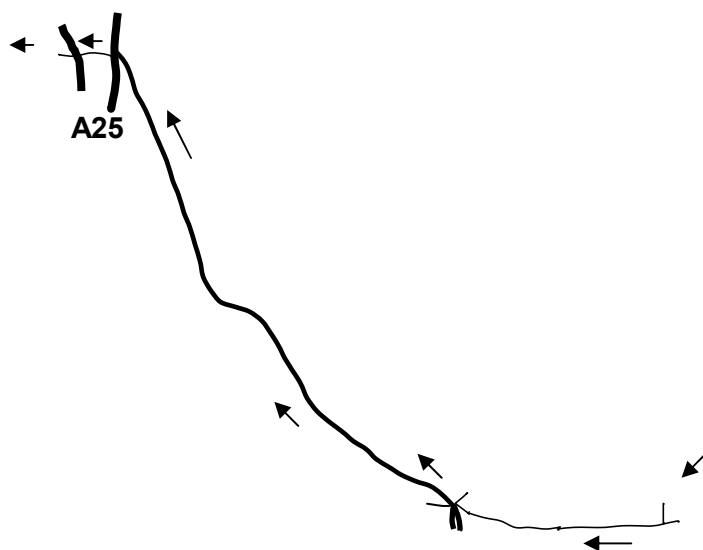


- 3 Turn **right** at the T-junction to arrive at a wide forestry path running under wires. Cross the forestry path, a fraction left, to a narrow path on the other side. Go through a small metal gate.

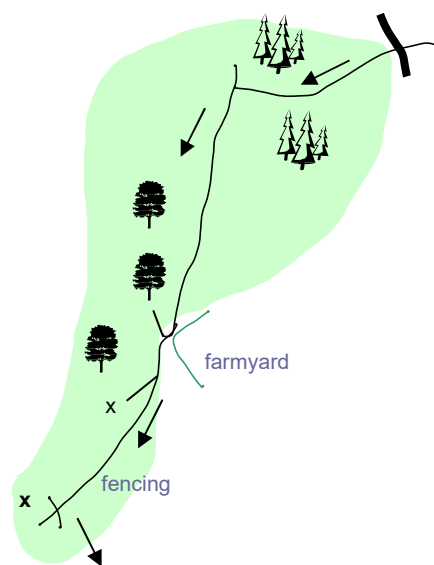
[This gate is periodically padlocked. In this case, you can get over the fence a few metres to the left.] In 10m at a T-junction turn **left** on a path. In 10m, branch off **right** and take the **left**-hand, more gradual, option of the two uphill paths now before you, leading through a coppice. In about 300m, the path runs next to a clearing. Ignore all minor paths leading off until the path veers right to a T-junction with a wide track. (In fact one of the small paths leading off is an official footpath but the route described here is better for the views.) Turn **left** on the track. In a short distance there are fine views at a junction by the corner of a field. Ignore the right-hand path and take the path on the **left** around the edge of the field, aiming for the far left-hand corner. In the corner, exit the field **left** and turn **right** on a path running alongside a fence.



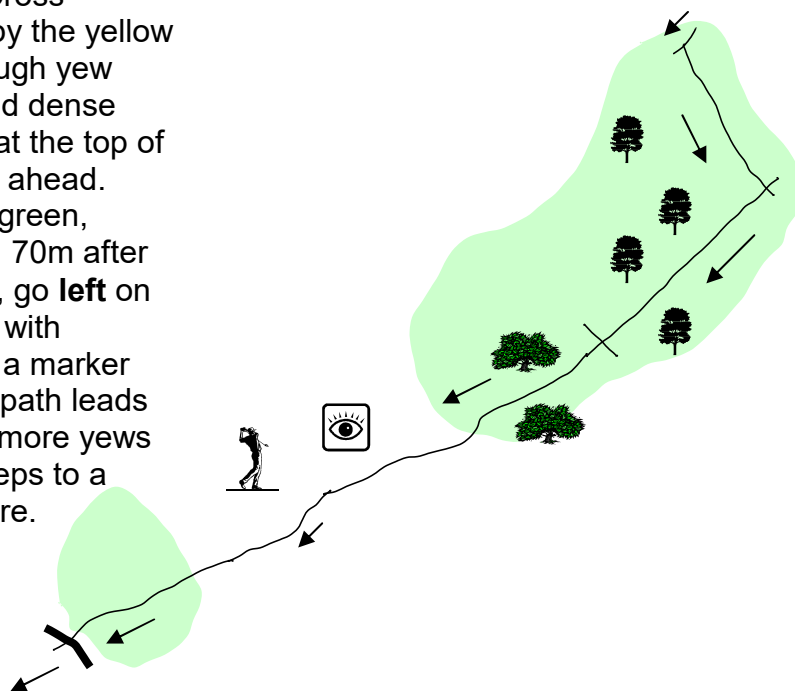
- 4 The path soon reaches a junction of drives. Veer **right** on the main drive. The drive eventually leads down to the main road, the A25, at the point where it divides. Carefully cross straight over both carriageways via a short woodland path and on the other side take an unmapped but well-defined path up through the trees.



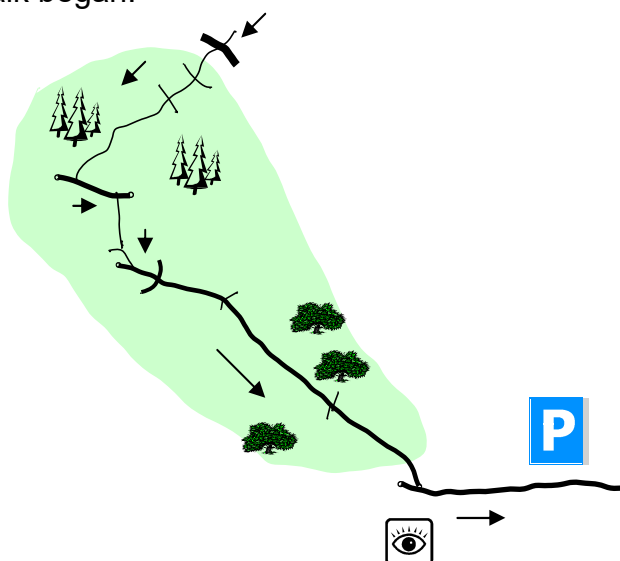
- 5 Follow the path through the forest. (In 2015 this path was widened by forestry work.) The path goes within 25m of a mobile phone mast on the right and veers right round it. It eventually ends at a T-junction with a wider, very straight, path. Turn **left** here. The path meets a minor path from the right at the corner of a field, zigzagging right-left round it. Continue on the main path through an untidy coppice, avoiding any minor paths leading off. In 80m, at a fork in the path, choose the **right** fork. In 130m, at another post with yellow and blue arrows, turn **left** onto a rather rough crossing path in the direction of a blue arrow.



- 6 In 120m, at another crosspaths by a post with blue and yellow arrows, turn **right** in the direction of the yellow arrow. The path soon reaches a sunken path. Cross straight over here as indicated by the yellow arrows. The footpath leads through yew trees [2014: round fallen trees] and dense ferns and up to the golf course at the top of Merrow Downs with more views ahead. Keep left along the edge of the green, going past a triangulation pillar. 70m after the pillar, just before a yew tree, go **left** on a rather hidden path overgrown with bracken. (Until 2015 there was a marker post here, now vanished.) The path leads through bracken and ferns and more yews and out rather abruptly down steps to a road where you need to take care.



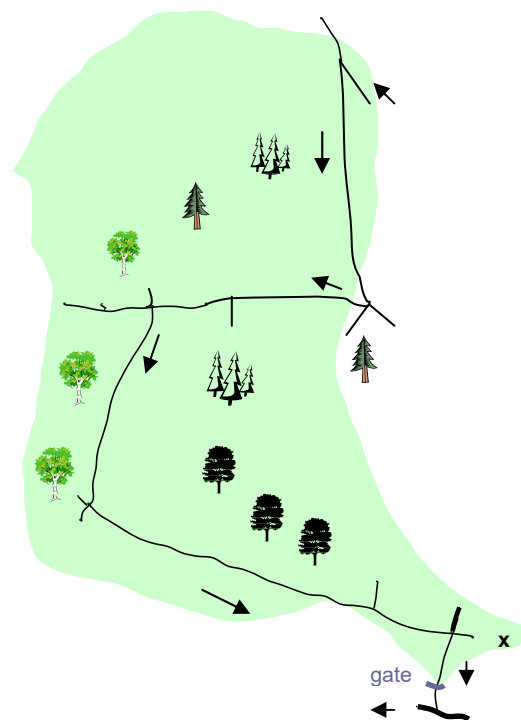
- 7 Cross straight over the road up steps to a path opposite. Keep straight ahead along this narrow path [2014:over a few fallen trees], following the occasional yellow arrow, crossing first a wide bridleway and then a narrower path. Finally, the path descends through a yew glade to a waymarked T-junction. Turn **left** here on a wide track. In 50m, after more yews, turn **right** on a narrow path uphill. On meeting a path coming from the right, veer **left** and, at the top, turn **left** at a T-junction onto a wide track. In a short distance, go straight across at a junction and follow this track through fine woodland for some distance, ignoring all crossing paths and minor branches. Eventually the track reaches the west side of the Newlands Corner car park. Turn **left** here, back to the point where the walk began.



Woodland Loop: Conclusion

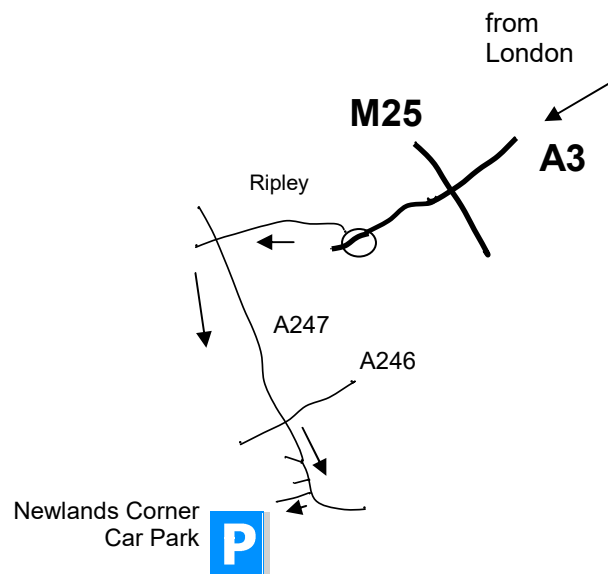
Do this section if you are doing the shorter **Woodland Loop**, returning direct to Newlands Corner.

Turn sharp **left** at the T-junction on a wide forestry path gently uphill. Continue past pine woods for about 300m until you reach an irregular 4-way junction in front of a hillock covered in tall pines. Turn very sharp **right** on a grassy path uphill, soon with woodland on your right and a felled area on your left. After the felled area, ignore a path on the left and continue on the wide path through pinewoods. At the next crossing path, under oaks, turn **left**. After 270m, at a crossing path by the corner of a fenced-off plantation, turn **left**. Follow this fine woodland path for a total of 500m, avoiding two wide paths on the left. After the second of these, continue onwards to where the path does a small S-bend by a 4-way junction. On the left you will recognise the wide path you took at the start of this circuit. Turn **right** on a narrow path. This path leads to a little metal gate. Through the gate, turn **right** on the North Downs Way. Now retrace your steps back to the car park where the walk began.



Getting there

To get to the **Newlands Corner** car park from the London area, take the A3 towards Guildford and turn off after Wisley onto the B2215, signposted *Ripley*, go through that village and, 2 miles=3 km after the village, turn left at a roundabout on the A247 signposted West Clandon. Follow the road through the village, past the entrance to Clandon Park and the church, to major traffic lights on the Leatherhead-Guildford road. Go straight over, uphill. The car park is at the top on the right.



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