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## Norbury Park and the Mole Valley Druids Grove, Westhumble, Mickleham

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Distance: 11 km=6½ miles or 8 km=5 miles or 5 km=3 miles  
easy-to-moderate walking

Region: Surrey date written: 4-dec-2009

Author: Schwebefuss date revised: 11-oct-2015

Refreshments: Westhumble, Mickleham last update: 3-jun-2024

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

*Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: [feedback@fancyfreewalks.org](mailto:feedback@fancyfreewalks.org)*

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*Views, river, woodland, fine houses, villages*

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### In Brief

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This is a classic walk but with several twists (literally). It is wonderful at any time, but in the winter the views over the Mole Valley are especially clear. The much shorter *Norbury Park Loop* stays in the hilly woodland area around Norbury Park. The medium-length *Mole Valley Loop* takes in the *Druids Grove* but omits the villages. The full walk crosses the A24 road twice (no problem because of the dual carriageway) giving you an inspiring stroll through Mickleham village.



Good shoes are needed because of the slippery chalk in some of the paths, especially during or after a wet winter. There are few nettles. The *Norbury Park Loop* is ideal for your dog too.

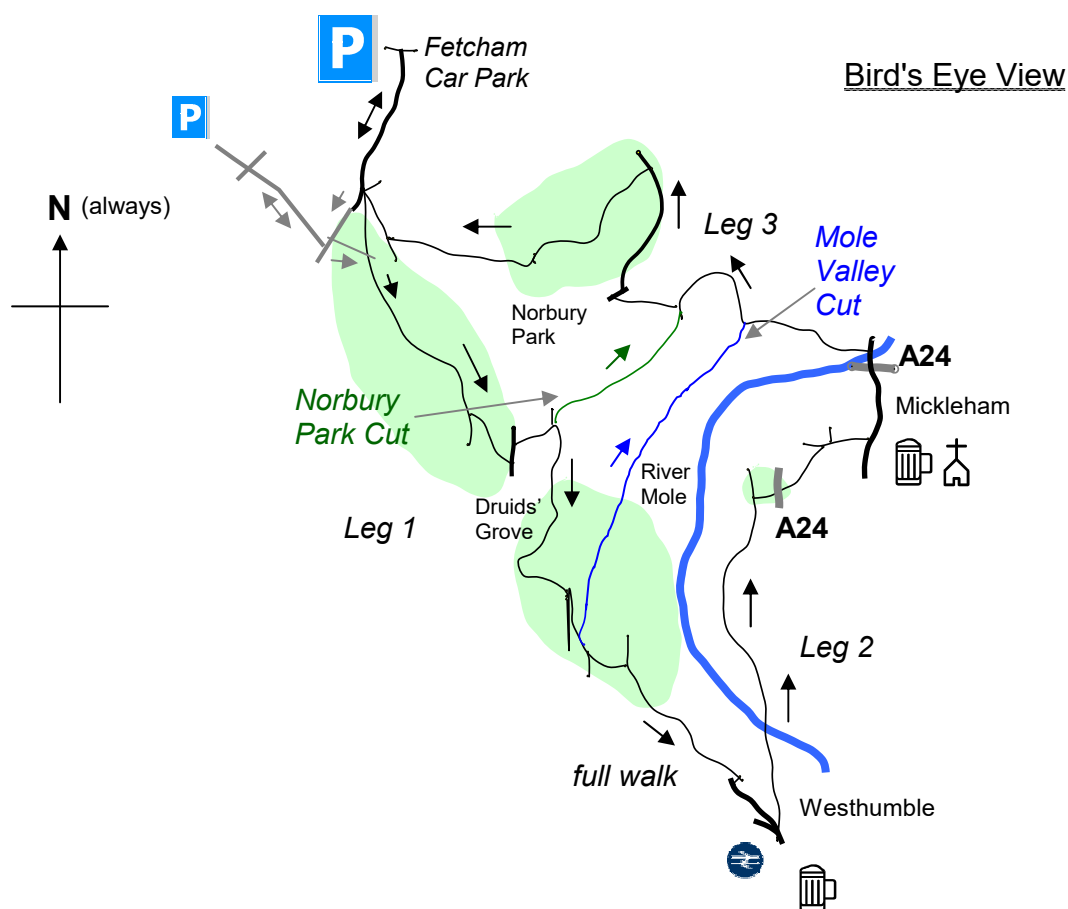
This walk is currently (Dec 2023) affected by a “temporary” path closure in Section [2](#) for “ash dieback”, although it is still “open” with reservations. It avoids the affected areas. Walkers in doubt should re-visit this walk at a later date when the paths are fully open. Those who walk it do so, as the notices say, “at their own risk”. See notes at the affected points and special section near the end.

The walk begins at the **Fetcham** car park, close to the roundabout on the A246, at the start of the drive leading to Bocketts Farm, nearest postcode **KT22 9BW**, grid ref TQ 150 549, [www.w3w.co/punt.shark.shock](http://www.w3w.co/punt.shark.shock). This car park no longer makes a charge but can be crowded. There are a few free spaces on the other side of the main road by the little green. Best of all, park *free* at the end of **Downs Way** postcode **KT23 4BL**, [www.w3w.co/shows.orange.label](http://www.w3w.co/shows.orange.label) (see [blue start](#) below). For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



Another good start is **West Humble station** (start at Leg 2).

# The Walk

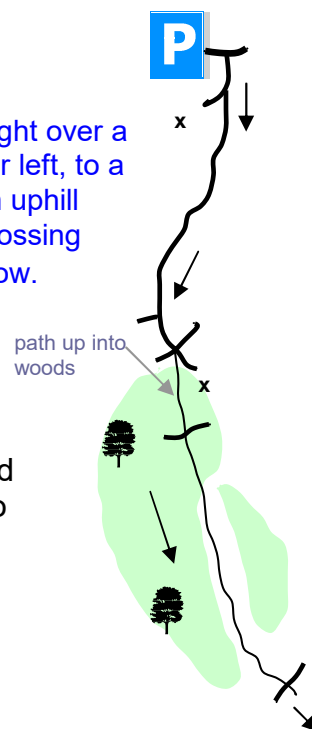


Norbury Park is a working landscape with three tenanted farms and a sawmill. The park lies within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and covers 520 hectares. Many wood products and the hand-made Norbury Blue Cheese are produced here. Norbury was one of three manors owned by King Edward the Confessor until 1066. Norbury Park and its manor are mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 as belonging to the parishes of "Leret (Leatherhead) and Fececha (Fetcham)".

## Leg 1: Fetcham to Westhumble 4½ km=2½ miles

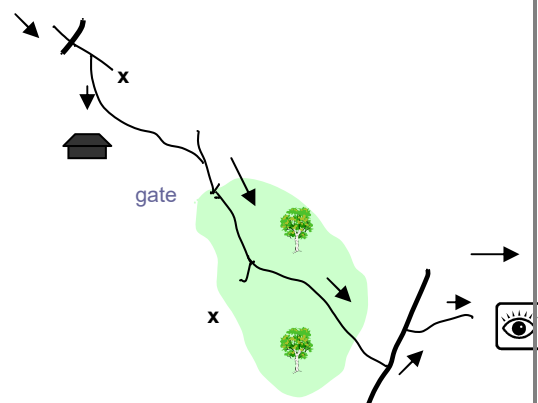
If you parked in Downs Way: Go ahead on a track. In 100m, go straight over a crossing track. Follow the track, passing Roaring House Farm on your left, to a T-junction. Turn **left** and, in only 30m, fork **right** on a narrow footpath uphill through trees. In 130m, at a 4-way junction, turn **right** on a narrow crossing path going through a wooden barrier. Now join the walk at point \* below.

- 1 Exit the car park at the far end and turn **right**, at a *Norbury Park* Information board, on a fine broad track which is surfaced at the start. In about 100m, ignore a wide path that forks right. After a good stretch, the trees on the right give way to a small meadow and you have the pleasing sight on the right of *Roaring House Farm* (so named because it lies in a windy gap) with its fine old granary. *Allegedly, Roaring House Farm has extensive cellars that were used by smugglers. Contraband would be brought up from the South Coast and*



stored there whilst a buyer was found in London. Immediately you come to a wide crossing track. Here leave the track you are on and avoid the track on the right but take the path **between** them, uphill through trees, between posts, by a bench seat. The path soon levels out, runs through two barriers either side of a crossing track\* and continues along a very wide grassy route, soon running under wires. After more than 400m, it descends to a 1-bar barrier and a crossing track in an open area.

- 2 Cross the track to a grassy path opposite that goes up across the grass (*not* the track to the house). In just 30m, take a grassy path forking **right**. The house should be about 20m over on your right. Near the far side of the grassy area, the path is joined by another from the left just before woodland. You now enter the wood through a one-bar wooden gate. [2024: There is a path closure notice here, but walkers found it easy to climb through the gate: see Note near end of this text.] Soon there is a field visible on the right, then another field by a one-bar wooden barrier. Wheel **left** here, avoiding the barrier, on the official path, staying in the woodland. In 250m, the path comes to a T-junction with a well-surfaced track. Turn **left** on the track and in 50m turn **right** at a fingerpost marked *Viewpoint*. The path passes some picnic tables and reaches a very sturdy bench (*Jackie Smithers*) where you have a fine view over the Mole valley.

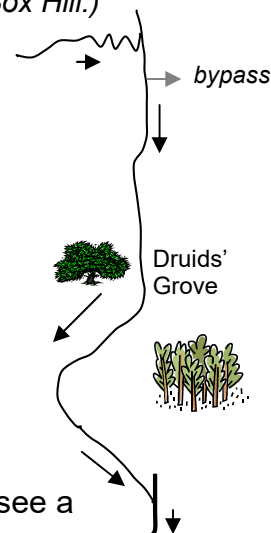


Far up on the left is Cherkley Court, the distinctive profile of Mickleham church is on view in the centre and on the right is Juniper Hall with Juniper Top behind it and Box Hill to its right. (There are three other walks in this series around Box Hill.)

- 3 In the trees at the bottom of the slope, 20m to the right of the sturdy bench, go through a gap in the wattle fence and pick up a very narrow chalky path. Follow this path down a series of zigzags with shallow steps. **Because of the chalk, it may be slippery (from here to Westhumble in fact).** Pause just after the **last step** where there is one path bearing right (the full walk) and another very sharp left (the *Norbury Park Cut*).

**Decision point.** If you are doing the shorter *Norbury Park Loop*, skip ahead to near the end of this text and do the **Norbury Park Cut**. Otherwise ...

Bear **right** after the last step on a narrow path. In only 50m you will see a narrow unmarked path leading off on your left.



**Decision point.** The Druids Grove was difficult to walk during 2023 onwards because of fallen beech trees. You may decide to avoid the Druids Grove by taking the **Druid Bypass** down to the Mole Valley Path, as described near the end of this text. [2024: you must also take this bypass during the ash dieback "closure".] Otherwise ...

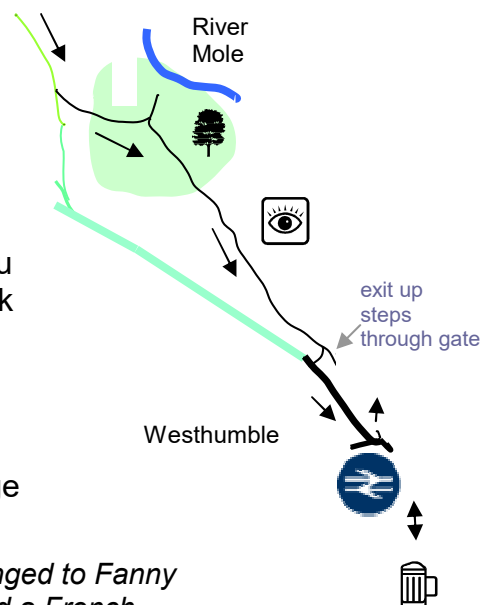
This path takes you through the famed Druids Grove by a long stimulating route with the valley falling away on the left. It passes under the large yews that give Druids Grove its fanciful name, curves round the hill and descends through a coppice. [Nov 2023: at least 3 trees have fallen: use your ducking and clambering skills!] After a scenic 650m, ignore a flight of steps

on your right. In a further 350m, you reach a T-junction with a much wider path.

**Decision point.** If you are doing the medium-length *Mole Valley Loop*, missing both villages, skip ahead to near the end of this text and do the **Mole Valley Cut** (by turning left). Otherwise ...

Turn **right** at the T-junction.

- 4 In about 70m, you reach a fork in the path. Take the **left** fork, a downward path, following the fingerpost. The path descends to a junction with a steep slope ahead giving a view of the River Mole. Veer **right** here. This path descends, steeply at first, through woodland. It then goes through a swing gate into a large meadow. Keep straight ahead on the right-hand side of the meadow, with Norbury Park now clearly visible behind on your left. Eventually you pass a seat on the right (*Margaret Roper*). Soon after, look for a small metal gate and steps on the right. Turn **right** here up the steps, through a swing gate and **left** on the lane, Crabtree Lane. (If you don't want to visit Westhumble, you could stay in the field and curve sharp left around it at the end.) This lane shortly leads into the village of Westhumble with a gateway on your right.



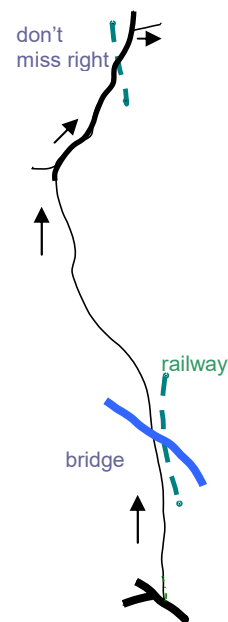
*The plaque here marks the site of Camilla Cottage that belonged to Fanny Burney, the novelist who influenced Jane Austen and married a French aristocrat and refugee from the Revolution.*

*Westhumble is a cosy village in the commuter belt best known as the stepping off point for Box Hill. It has some fine Victorian relics, especially the railway station, and some excellent new developments. The station café serves drinks, snacks and ice creams. The Stepping Stones pub and restaurant is over the bridge and at the end of the road. It has a wide-ranging menu but a small range of beers.*

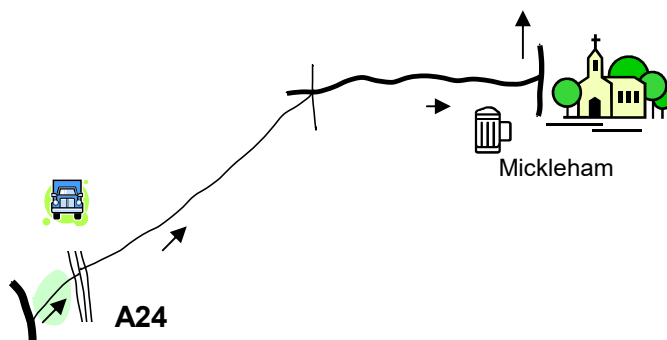


Leg 2: Westhumble to Mickleham 2½ km=1½ miles

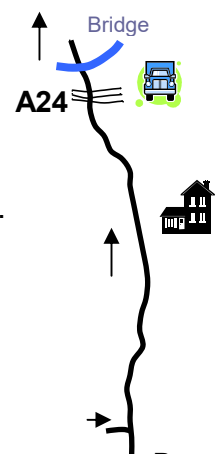
- 1 Immediately before the road crosses the railway, turn sharp **left** on an enclosed footpath. (Or fork **right** after the railway bridge if coming from the village.) *Note the polished metal graffito sunk in the path saying “(drink?)” pointing in the direction of the Stepping Stones pub.* The path goes through a swing gate into the meadow. Keep to the right-hand side of the meadow. *On the right is a fine view of the Box Hill slopes.* The path goes through a small wooden gate to reach the River Mole and a bridge across it which runs next to the railway. *Note another polished metal graffito in the path saying “follow the trains”.* Cross the bridge, shortly ignoring a path under the railway on your right and going through a swing gate. Veer **left** in 50m away from the fence to walk between fields for 250m. At the other side, go through a swing gate and continue on a farm drive. When you reach a farm, ignore a marked bridleway on your left and keep **right** by the farm buildings. The drive runs past the River Mole down on the left, goes under the railway and curves left again. About 70m from the railway bridge, look out for a marker post (*don't miss!*). Turn **right** on a narrow path here through woodland.



- 2 The path leads up to A24 road. Cross the two carriageways carefully to a fingerpost [Mar 2021: leaning] and swing gate [Mar 2021: broken] on the other side, a fraction left. The path leads through an old kissing gate into a meadow and goes along the right-hand side, ending via a swing gate at a junction of wide tracks. Continue **straight ahead** on a semi-tarmac lane, Swanworth Lane although unnamed at this point, leading to Mickleham village. The lane emerges next to the *Running Horses*, a Brakspear pub and restaurant. On the other side of the road is Mickleham church. For a longer description of these two, see the walk *Headley Heath, Mickleham, Box Hill* in this series.



- 3 Turn **left** along the interesting Old London Road. The building on the left has dragon finials and crisscrossing and waves in a symphony of red brick. On the left, set off from the road, is the fine late Victorian building of Box Hill School. On the right shortly after is a magnificent 1636 building aptly named *Old House*. The road reaches the A24. Cross the A24 carefully to a lane opposite and cross the River Mole via a picturesque bridge.

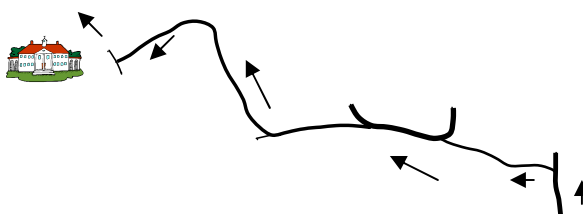


Leg 3: Mickleham to Fetcham 4 km=2½ miles

- 1 In only 50m, leave the lane by turning **left** on a signposted grassy bridgeway uphill. In 150m, fork **right** uphill to avoid a path that goes ahead through a wooden barrier into trees. In 100m, the bridgeway reaches a tarmac lane. Turn **left** and continue along the lane until it bends right. Leave the lane here by continuing straight ahead on a track by a 1-bar wooden gate. In 100m or so, the track reaches a junction with a 4-way fingerpost. In 10m, ignore the track straight ahead and veer **right** on a fine surfaced path.

At this point, the **Mole Valley Cut** rejoins the walk.

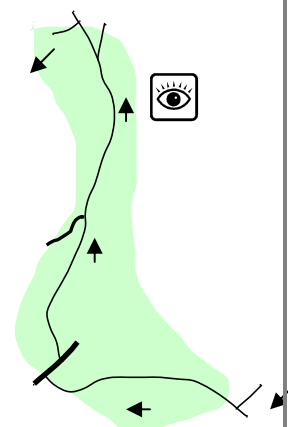
- 2 This path winds gently uphill, passing a bench seat on your right with a view across the valley to Givons Grove. Soon you have a view of the gates to the Norbury Park estate ahead. Eventually you reach the gates and a fence. Turn **right** here on a bridgeway around the edge of the estate. Norbury Park House is easier to see from the adjoining hills.



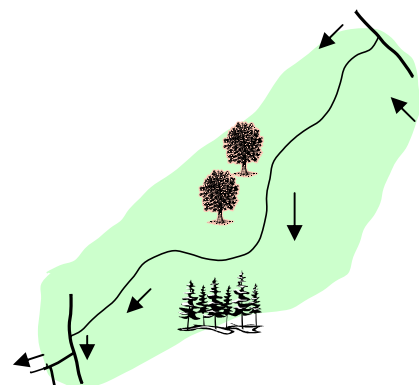
*The House was built in 1774 by William Locke who purchased the estate and commissioned Thomas Sandby to design and build it. Marie Stopes, pioneer of birth control and author of Married Love published in 1918, lived at Norbury Park from 1938 until her death in 1958. It is still privately owned.*

At this point, the **Norbury Park Cut** rejoins the walk.

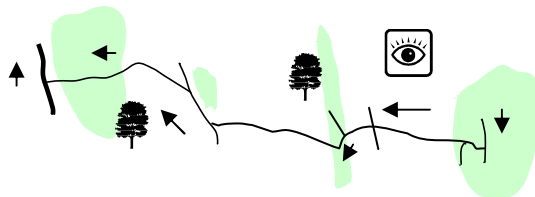
- 3 The bridgeway soon comes out to a tarmac drive. Turn **right** on the drive for just 5m and then **left** on a path. The path goes steeply up and levels out. At a junction in 250m, it joins a wide level path coming from the left. Continue on this path with fine views right across the Mole Valley (foliage permitting) while the path rises very gently on an easy gravel surface. 130m from the previous junction you pass a waymarked junction: ignore a path here which forks off right. 170m after that last junction, look out for a very narrow, almost hidden, path branching off to your left. This path is immediately before a bramble bush. It is not waymarked or signed but it fairly obvious - once you see it. (If you find yourself in a lighter area with a grass verge on the left, you have overshot and you need to backtrack just a few paces.) Turn **left** here. *Do not miss this crucial turning!* This path is one of the wonderful secrets of the Fetcham Downs.



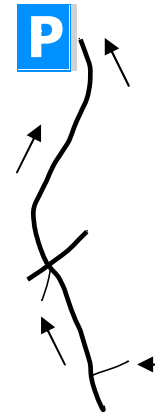
- 4 Your path goes gently uphill at first and runs between bracken and brambles and in 200m develops into a fine winding woodland path. After a further 150m, it wheels right in front of a large collapsed conifer. In another 150m, it runs through a coppice for 120m to a wooden barrier at an oblique T-junction. Turn **left** here on a wide path. In only 30m, turn **right** on a cinder path. Where this path bends left, go straight ahead on a narrow path, going through a 'just-squeezable' fence gap and follow a clear path across the centre of a wild shrubby space.



- 5 The path goes over a grassy crossing path and leads down through a gap into a belt of trees. Once in the trees, take a **left** fork. This leads out onto a grassy plateau. Keep ahead, gently uphill, past a slender birch, with a bench, visible over to your right, and an exhilarating view to the right over the valley to London (see the "City Skyscrapers" walk in this series). Continue on the same grassy path for 50m where you meet the edge of the wood on your right with several T-junctions. Make a net **right** turn here so that you stay **close to the wood on your right**. In 30m, just after a small oak, the path forks. Take the **left** fork, leading away from the trees. Your path soon curves left downhill and descends through a wood of young oaks. At a wooden barrier and T-junction at the bottom, turn **right** on a wide bridleway.



- 6 The bridleway shortly takes you to the 4-way junction and the view of Roaringhouse Farm on the left. **If you parked in Downs Way, turn left and in 230m, turn right at the corner of Roaring House Farm; otherwise ...** Keep straight ahead, curving round the valley and back to the car park where the walk began.

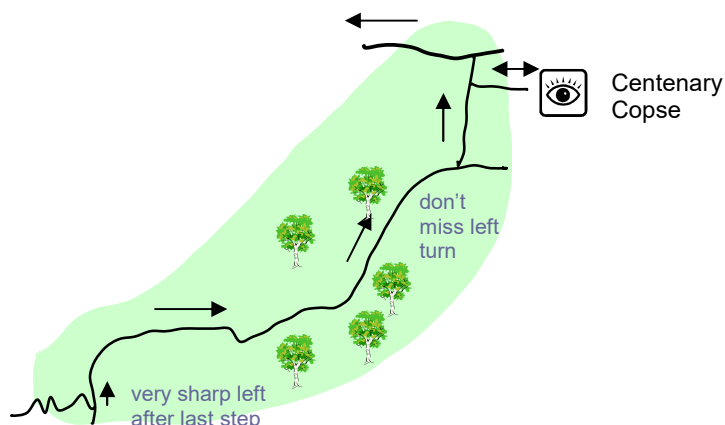


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## Norbury Park Cut 1 km=0.7 miles

Take this short cut if you want to do the shorter *Norbury Park Loop*, leaving the villages and the Mole Valley to another day.

After the **last** step take the narrow path **very sharp left**. This paragraph will guide you along a single, narrow and tortuous path round the fence of Norbury Park all the way to the entrance gate. As a simple rule, remember you are circling left around the fenced enclosure, keeping alert to stay on the decent path. In nearly 100m, the path comes to the fence and bends right around it, becoming very narrow. It shortly curves away from the fence and, within 100m, it meets a woodland of saplings and veers right. In another 50m, you reach a bank of box trees (evergreen shrubs) and your path veers right again, descending more steeply. In 40m, at the end of the box trees, your path veers left. You are still descending and the fence is visible again, 30m to your left. Your path shortly curves right past a large beech tree. It bends left and reaches a junction just before another large beech by some fallen tree trunks. Ignoring the minor path ahead, turn smartly **left** on the path uphill. After 200m, the path curves left uphill (*don't miss this unexpected turn!*), winds a lot, approaches the fence and enters more of those dense box shrubs. The path runs level through these shrubs for 30m. 20m later, turn **left** through a break in the bushes on a well-defined narrow path going steeply up towards the fence. At the top, turn **right** beside the fence. Follow the fence round several bends to come to a T-junction. Your path is **left** at the T-junction, still following the fence. However, by turning **right** and forking **left** after 20m, you come through a little wooden gate leading to another wooden gate into the Centenary Copse where you have a seat and a fine view of the upper Mole Valley. You have to retrace your steps afterwards. In another 20m, you come to a junction beside the closed gates of Norbury Park. Continue on the bridleway by the fence.



Now re-join the main walk now at Leg 3 Section [3](#) above.

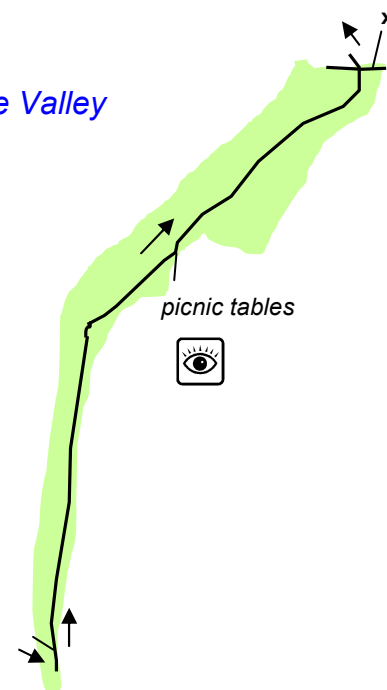


## Mole Valley Cut 1½ km=1 mile

Take this short cut if you want to do the medium-length *Mole Valley Loop*, leaving the villages to another day.

Turn **left** at the T-junction. You are on a beautiful wide path through woodland. In 300m the path curves round a grove. 50m later, ignore a wooden barrier and a path on your right. In another 600m, there is a gate and a footpath sharp right: this is *not* on your route but it leads to a pleasant picnic area in case you would like a break. Continue on the woodland path and, in 100m, avoid a path that forks right through a barrier. Your path rises with fathomless woodland down on your right, with the River Mole hidden in the depths. Finally, after a total of 1½ km on this woodland trek, you come into the open by a 4-way fingerpost. Turn **left** here and, in only 10m, **right** on a good surfaced path.

Now re-join the main walk at Leg 3, section [2](#).



## Druid Bypass

Take this short cut if you want to avoid potential hazards on the *Druid's Grove* path. [2024: you must use it if the ash dieback notices are posted up.]

Turn **left** on the narrow unmarked path, thus leaving the *Druid's Grove* path. This path winds its way through the dense forest floor and in 70m comes out to an open area. It then runs for 50m through dense shrubbery again before ending at a T-junction with the *Mole Valley Path*. You now have a choice: if you intended to do the medium-length *Mole Valley Loop*, omitting the villages, turn **left** on the path - this makes for a much shorter version of this option. If you intended to do the full walk (via *Westhumble*), turn **right** on the path. In 700m you meet the *Druid's Grove* path where it comes down from your right. Now continue from Section [4](#) on the main walk.

## Note on Ash Dieback

Ash dieback is a sad affliction of so many beautiful ash trees. Some recover and may form the basis for a resurgence of resistant trees in the future. You are less likely to be injured by a diseased ash than by a more weighty oak or beech branch on a windy day. Because ash dieback is a published hazard the estate owners have to cover themselves against claims for injury. The notices explain that you walk "at your own risk".

As always, this guide is only a record of one walker's excursion, after observing many other walkers. It is not a recommendation or a "safety certificate" for this walk. But the route does not pass through any of the areas worst affected by ash dieback, provided that you take the "Druid Bypass" short cut from the *Druid's Grove* down to the *Mole Valley Path* (see the text).

## Getting there

*By car:* the walk begins at the Fetcham car park by the road leading to Bockett's Farm, just by the roundabout on the A246. To get there from the London area, take the A24 or A243 to Leatherhead. Follow the A24 as it goes around Leatherhead but, where the A24 turns left for Dorking, go straight ahead on the A246, signposted for Guildford. Bockett's farm is **left** at the next roundabout, signposted with a tourist sign. The Fetcham car park is immediately on the right. Bockett's Farm has a large car park, handy if you want to visit the farm as well.

If coming from Guildford, turn right on the roundabout a mile or so before Leatherhead. Another route is through Cobham, Stoke d'Abernon and Fetcham (after going under the railway bridge in Fetcham, fork right into The Street).

The small car park is sometimes full because it serves the many local dog walkers as well as ramblers. There are several spaces beside the road before the car park. You can park free at the end of Downs Way postcode **KT23 4BL**, [www.w3w.co/envy.sudden.robots](http://www.w3w.co/envy.sudden.robots).

*By train* (full walk only): get out at **Box Hill and West Humble station** and begin the walk from *Leg 2*.

