



Outwood and Bransland Wood Oaks, buttercups and windmill

Distance: 9 km=5½ miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

Date written: 23-may-2014

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Refreshments: Outwood

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

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

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Woodland, village, windmill, pubs, flower meadows, oak trees

In Brief

This easy walk in southeast Surrey takes you from a National Trust woodland reserve to a village famous for its windmill (the oldest working mill in England). The walk returns on an unmapped path through the wood, living up to the motto of this website. This walk is ideal in early summer when conditions are drier, right through to autumn. The meadows here are protected by the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and provide a stunning show of buttercups in early summer. All along the way, you will see many great oak trees that give the area an unforgettable atmosphere.

Another virtue of Outwood is that it has *three* pubs and this guide has an option to visit all three in a kind of “mini pubcrawl”. If you would like to enquire at *The Bell*, ring 01342-842989, for the *Castle* 01342-844491, for the *Dog and Duck* it's 01342-844552.

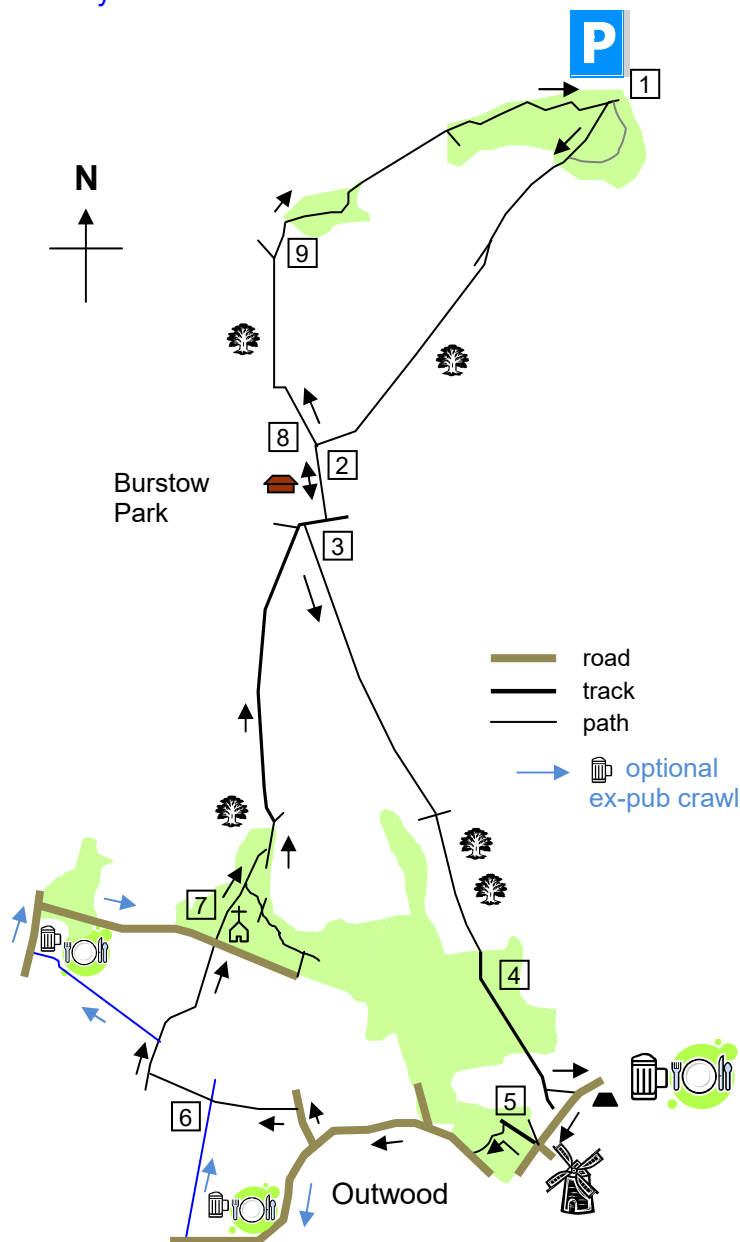


There are no nettles or brambles on this walk. Good sensible walking shoes or trainers are adequate in dry conditions. The stiles generally have a gap for your dog, so he should have no problems.

The walk begins at the **Bransland Wood** NT car park, on Outwood Lane, nearest **postcode RH1 4NJ**. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

Bransland is just one wood of the National Trust's Harewoods Estate. In between are delightful meadows which are ablaze with wild flowers in summer. As you will see, there are hidden paths to explore, some of which are used on this walk. Before you set out, notice the pond and especially the great oak that shades the car park. These venerable trees, some more than 200 years old, will escort you for much of your route.



- 1 Take the wide straight path just to the left of the noticeboard, between posts, ignoring a rougher path on the right (your return route). Redwood trees line your path. At the end, your path comes out, through a metal gate, into a field. Keep to the right-hand side along a pleasant grassy fringe, avoiding a metal gate on your right. After 250m keep a fraction left on a narrower path immediately next to the field, so as to cut the right-hand corner. Keep straight ahead through a band of trees following a blue arrow, through a (bypassable) gate, across a narrow flowery meadow, through a gate in the hedgerow and along a wide track across a crop field. The bridleway goes across another small field surrounded by tall oaks, then across a large field, heading for the redbrick Burstow Park Farm. On reaching the far side, veer **right** along the edge. Before some large metal

gates, turn **left**, passing a fingerpost, through a metal gate, onto a wide grassy strip.

- 2 On your right you pass the farmhouse. *Burstow Park is Grade II listed, mainly late 1500s and mid 1600s but with some medieval foundations. They often have eggs for sale, but loose!* Go through a small metal gate and past a fingerpost to meet a track. Turn **right** on the track and, at the next corner, turn **left** through a large (open) metal gate (or a wooden swing-gate), onto a footpath along the right-hand side of a meadow.

- 3 Your path takes you past a line of oaks, over a stile (or through the adjoining large (open) metal gate) and up the centre of a large field. It goes across the centre of another field, passing under wires. You reach a hedgerow under a tall oak by a 4-way fingerpost, with two "fingers" missing. [The convenient bench here is really the remains of a stile.](#) Keep straight ahead along the left-hand side of the next field, lined with more oaks, passing under more wires. After 500m, the left-hand boundary of the field ends but the line of trees continues straight on. Here, veer slightly **left** alongside those



wonderful trees, between flowery meadows, to reach a new metal kissing-gate. This gate takes you into woodland which forms part of Outwood Common, another of the woods of the NT Harewoods Estate.

- 4 Continue round a muddy section up to a tarmac drive by a house, shortly being joined from the left by a driveway from a farm. Follow the tarmac drive for 300m, passing a motor repair business. Suddenly ahead of you is Outwood Windmill. But first you may like to take refreshment. Opposite *Forge Cottage*, turn **left** across the grass to meet the main road and turn **left** on the road. In 60m you reach *The Bell* and the start of a possible [mini pubcrawl](#).

The Bell (Fullers) is a coaching inn dating from 1635. It serves a seasonal menu with a good choice of fairly standard dishes from 12-3 but all day from 12 on Sunday, so you do not need to time your walk too precisely. The oak-beamed interior, fire, patio and garden add to the charm.



After a break for refreshment, re-trace your route along the road but continue straight on to the windmill.

*Outwood windmill is a lonely postmill. There were once **two** mills here but the smock mill (one with a more conical shape and a horizontal boardwalk) fell down in 1960. The current mill is a post mill, i.e. one built around a vertical post. It was built for a miller Thomas Budgen in 1665 and, since it is still in working order, it counts as the oldest working windmill in England. The sails you see now are more modern than on the original mill, having a "spring" mechanism. Like all windmills, Outwood mill was often in jeopardy, from strong winds, beam cracking and wartime neglect. The mill is normally open in the afternoon on Sundays and bank holidays but, after a storm in 2012, it is still closed. [\[2018: the mill has had its sails put back and there is a sign "viewing by appointment only".\]](#)*

- 5 At a crossroads opposite the windmill, turn **right** on a cinder track, avoiding the track that forks right, going past a NT sign for Outwood Common. Just before a noticeboard, at the start of a small car parking area, turn **left** on a narrow woodland path. (This path may be a little muddy, in which case simply continue beside the road and turn **right**.) Keep **right** at a multiple fork. You pass a pond on your left and go over a 3-plank bridge. Turn **right** on the road, Millers Lane. Avoid Brickfield Road on your right. Just after a picturesque house *Wasp Well*, you reach a junction with Wasp Green Lane.



Mini pubcrawl. If you would like to visit the *Castle*, a friendly pub with a good restaurant, patio and garden, open all day from noon at weekends, stay on Millers Lane, reaching the pub in 450m. After a break, continue on the road and in 30m, after one more house, turn **right** on a narrow footpath. Follow the path, going over two concrete steps. Go through a kissing-gate and turn immediately **left** opposite another gate. Now skip to section 6.

Turn **right** on Wasp Green Lane and, in 100m, after *The Old Farmhouse*¹, turn **left** on a signposted footpath between hawthorn hedges. A 4-plank bridge takes you through a metal kissing-gate straight into a neat meadow. Keep ahead, heading for the middle of three oaks. Go through a rather hidden gate and go straight on over a crossing path.

- 6 Continue along the left-hand side of a meadow. In the far corner, go through a new (avoidable) kissing-gate and turn **right** along the edge of a large meadow. In 100m you reach the corner.



Mini pubcrawl. If you would like to visit the *Dog and Duck*, a pub with Badger ales and Tex-Mex or regular grub, which is open *all day every day* from noon, turn **left** at the corner in the same meadow. At the end, continue on a dirt track but immediately veer **right** around a disused building plot, reaching the main Prince of Wales road. The pub is immediately on your right. After a break, continue along the road for 50m and turn **right** on Brickfield Road. In 500m, after crossing a stream and passing the cricket-themed *Lambert's Place*, you see a fingerpost on both sides of the road. Turn **left** here on a wide path into Outwood Common. Now skip to section 7.

Keep straight on at the corner, staying on the path, passing another field and dipping down through trees. The path becomes nicely surfaced and finally comes out between posts onto Brickfield Road. Cross straight over on a wide path into Outwood Common.



Or, as a quick diversion, by turning **right** along the road for 150m or so, you reach the church of St John the Baptist, built in the medieval style in 1869. The church is open every Saturday but closed on Sunday. You can re-join the route by going out of a small wooden gate at the back of the right-hand cemetery, turning **left** on a path, going over a crossing path in 130m and turning **right** at a T-junction.

- 7 Follow the bridleway through the woods, passing a pond on your left, and after 250m, at a T-junction, veer **left** on a hardcore track as indicated by a blue arrow. At a junction keep **left**, avoiding a swing-gate and footpath on your right. Continue ahead, under a canopy of overhanging oaks. It leads you along the right-hand side of a field, through a gap with views ahead, then down the centre of the next field under wires and, via a concrete bridge, across the centre of another field to a junction under an oak by Burstow Park Farm, ignoring a footpath on your left. Turn **right** here at a fingerpost on a wide track, ignoring a footpath on your right (the path used



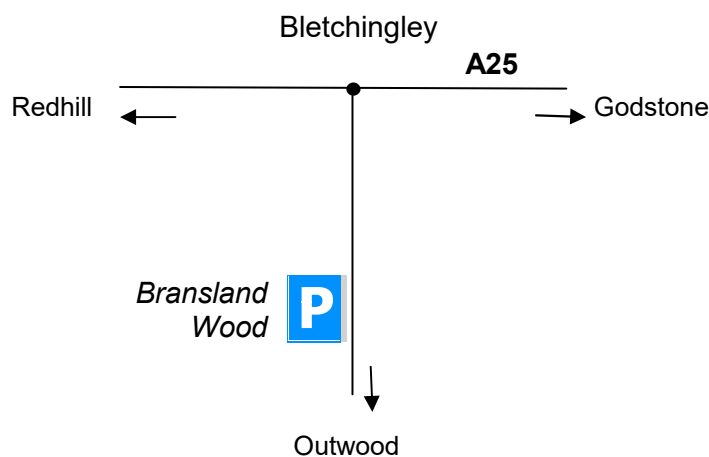
¹ owned by a famous theatrical dame who must remain nameless

on your outward journey). In 50m turn **left** on a grassy path. Go through a small metal gate, along a wide grass strip, passing the historic farm house on your left, and through a large metal gate.

- 8 Your return journey is by a different route from your outward one. Go straight over a track and through a metal kissing-gate. Your path goes ahead, diagonally across the meadow, to the far corner and through another metal kissing-gate into a field ringed by a generous wildlife strip. Bear **left** in the field, going immediately through a gap, and turn **right** along the right-hand side of the next field. A large (open) gate takes you into another field. A (redundant) kissing-gate and a concrete bridge lead into a lovely green meadow, where you may have to move a cattleproof gate. In early summer this meadow is a carpet of buttercups.
- 9 There are two paths ahead: take the **right**-hand path, the one that heads for a stile into woods. Go over the stile on a path through the woods. The woodland path curves left and right and emerges through a metal gate [Apr 2021: broken and grounded] into a large meadow which is ablaze with flowers in late spring. This is a permissive footpath arranged through Defra under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. Keep ahead along the left-hand side of this beautiful meadow under more great oak trees and, at the end, go over a stile into Bransland Wood. Immediately take the **left** fork, a path running just inside the wood. This path will take you all the way to the car park. The path is convoluted but always clear. If you meet a fork, either option will do because they join up again. After some 500m of fine mixed woodland, including tall ash trees, the path finally emerges into the Bransland car park where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: The Bransland Wood NT car park is on Outwood Lane, 1½ miles south of Bletchingley and the A25 road. You can join the A25 either from Redhill or (usually easier) from Godstone. The car park is ¼ mile on the **right** after going over a railway bridge. Note that you *cannot* reach Outwood Lane from the M23.



By bus/train: Cruiser bus 315 runs from Redhill station to Outwood, weekdays only. Check the timetables.

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