



Puttenham & the Welcome Woods (clockwise)

Distance: 15 km=9 miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

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Refreshments: Puttenham

Last update: 17-jan-2017

Map: Explorer 145 (Guildford) *but the maps in this guide should be sufficient*

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

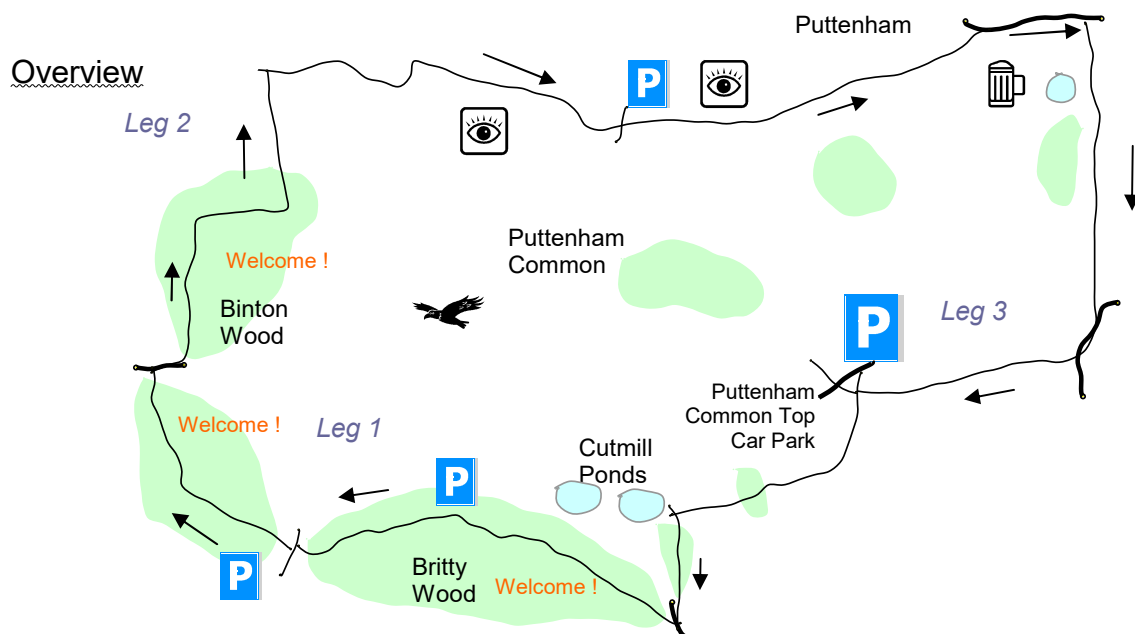
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Lake, woodland, heath, village

In Brief

This circular walk begins at the dramatic landscape of Puttenham Common, near Guildford in Surrey. It follows some unusual woodland walks, many uncharted, some with the friendly message *you are welcome to walk in these woods* and then sweeps round through picturesque Puttenham village. Because of the pines, this walk is perfect in *any* season.

This clockwise version has a refreshment stop near the end of the walk. The same walk in the reverse direction is also available and it includes shorter options of 5½ km=3 miles and 12½ km=7½ miles (see *Puttenham and the Welcome Woods*).





This is an easy walk with few steep ascents, so it seems shorter than it is. There is a little surface water in winter, so ankle boots are advisable. There are some nettles on the path from Puttenham Lane but the stile count is low (four near the end). The walks seem fine for a small-to-medium (wormed!) dog, since all the stiles have a dog-sized gap and the pub is dog-friendly.

The walk begins at the **Puttenham Common Top Car Park**, nearest **postcode GU3 1BG**. There are alternative starting points along the way (see the Overview map). For more details see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



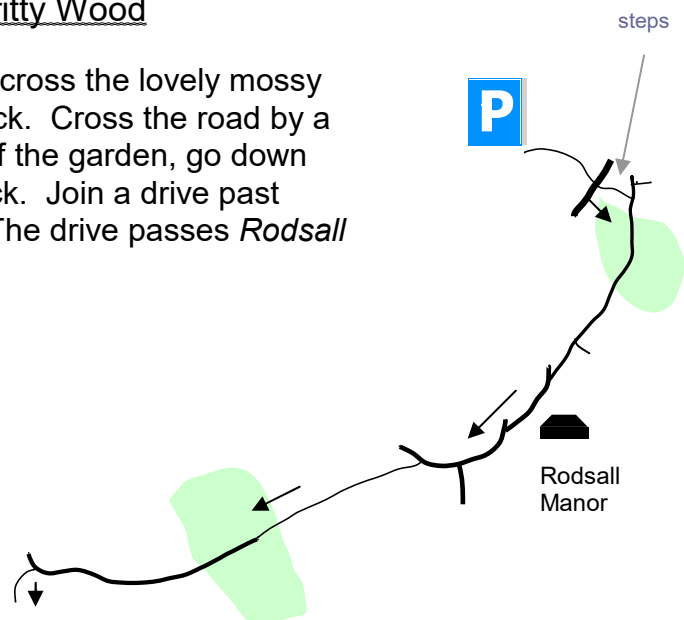
As soon as you arrive at the car park you are suddenly gripped by the all-round view, especially southwards to the hills of the Sussex border and closer to Crooksbury Hill.

Leg 1: Puttenham Common to Britty Wood

1

Go back to the road, using a path across the lovely mossy grassy space on the right of the track. Cross the road by a house, keep left round the corner of the garden, go down some steps and turn **right** on a track. Join a drive past *Rose Cottage* and *Stable House*. The drive passes *Rodsall Manor*.

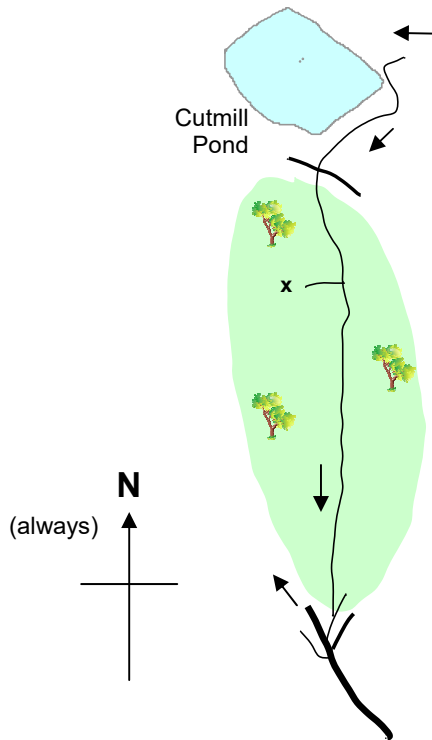
Rodsall Manor, proudly flaunting its stone eagles, is a listed mansion dating from 1680 plus additions from the 18th and the 20th centuries. It has an array of interesting architectural features both outside and in, too many to list.



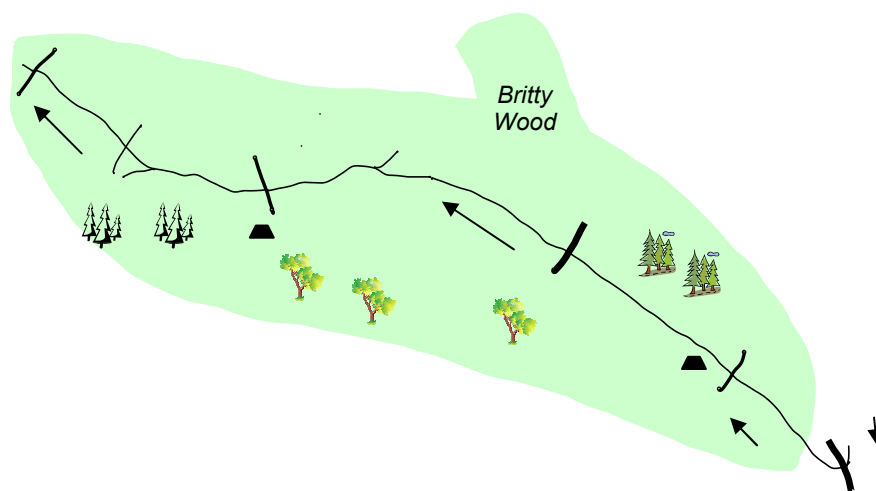
Continue ahead on the tarmac drive, ignoring a bridleway on the left. About 100m from the Manor, where the drive bends right again, fork **left** on a narrow bridleway. Your path soon sinks, runs through woods and continues along a drive beside garden walls and some cottages. The drive bends left and, where it bends right again, keep ahead up a cinder track to the Cutmill Pond. On the right is a little lakeside house. Turn **left** along the bank.

*Like so many, Cutmill Pond was created as a hammer pond during the 16th and 17th centuries to serve the iron industry. The mill was mentioned as early as 1307 but the last waterwheel was removed in 1932, a small brick and stone building being all that remains. In 1932 a gruesome double murder occurred here and in 2002 the case was reopened by Anthony Scrivener QC. A riveting detailed account will be found in *The Guardian Law Reports* at: www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/nov/26/law.stuartjeffries.*

2 The path curves right around the bank near a house. Finally it bears left over a stream through trees and meets a wide track at a curve. Cross straight over the track and keep ahead on a beautiful narrow meandering path over an area of birch trees and marshy grass. The path gets water-logged in patches in the wetter season but presents no problem, except possibly from mosquitoes in summer. The path is finally joined by another from the left. Note the Forestry Commission "Welcome" sign indicating that you were walking on a permissive footpath. In 10m you come to a road next to a track to *Cutmill Cottage*.

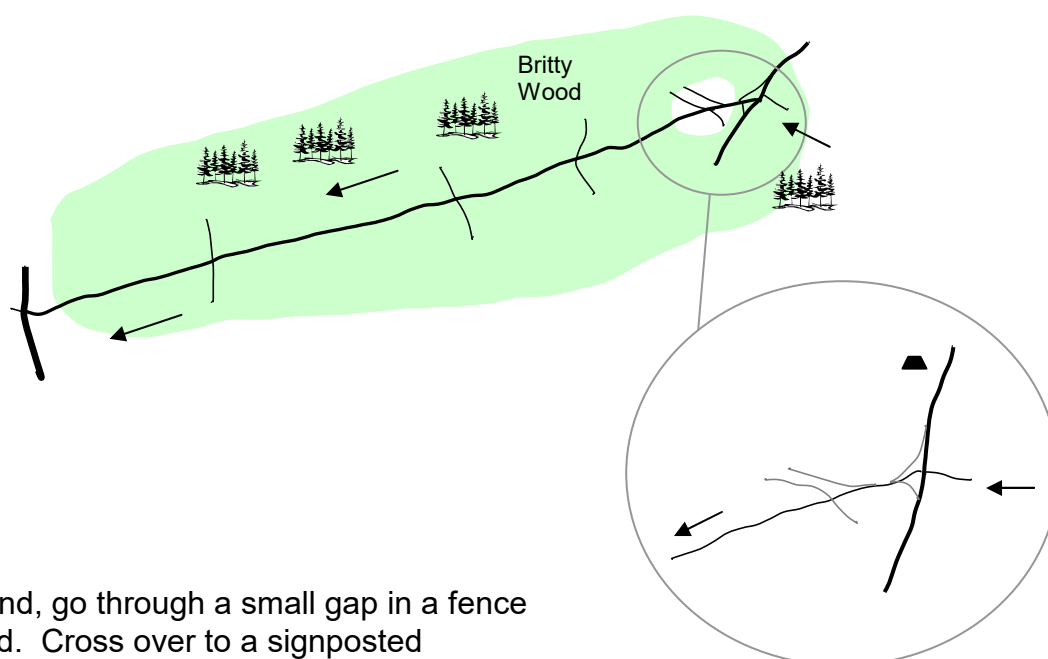


3 Cross the road to a path opposite. Stay on the path as it wheels **right**, ignoring a path and gate on the left. In a short distance, the path crosses a drive by the gates of *Heath Cottage*. Eventually the route, part of a *self-guided trail*, goes over a road with a one-bar gate on each side and continues on a sandy path opposite. Keep to the main sandy path at all times avoiding side turnings, across a beautiful area of silver birches. The path narrows and eventually you reach a junction and a wooden post with a sandy crossing path running under electricity wires. On your left is a house and its green-roofed huts. Go straight over on a path uphill. Welcome to Britty Wood! When you reach the top, just as the path levels out, fork **right** on a path that runs through the debris of some wooden hurdles. Immediately, at a wide crossing path, go straight over and descend a wide winding track through tall beeches.



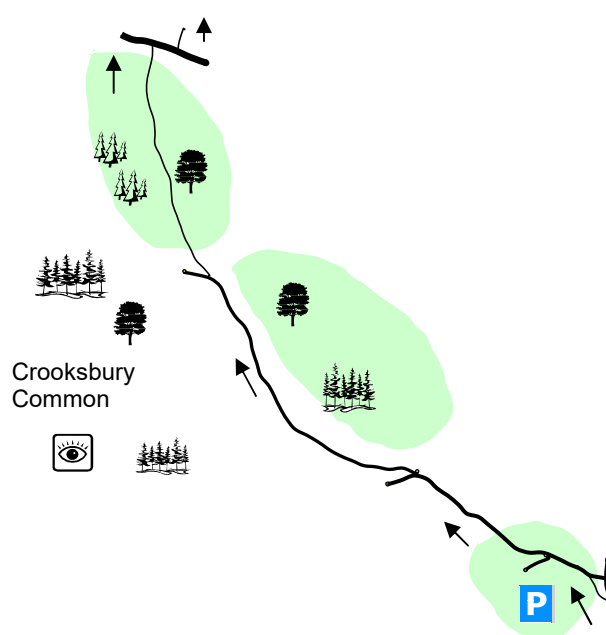
Leg 2: Britty Wood to Puttenham Village

- 1 The path comes down to a straight level path running along the bottom of the valley by a yellow arrow. There is a large bungalow over on the right and ahead a rather confusing junction of minor paths. Cross straight over and always keep to the **left**, avoiding two paths that lead off right. Your path leads towards a more open area and goes up a slope ahead where it is joined on both sides by tracks. The route now follows a straight course on a permissive riders' path through a fine mature pine plantation. **Note that if timber work is in progress one year, some paths may be barred for safety and you will need to use the map or a compass or GPS to make a diversion.** Avoid all paths branching off as your path runs over two more crossing paths.

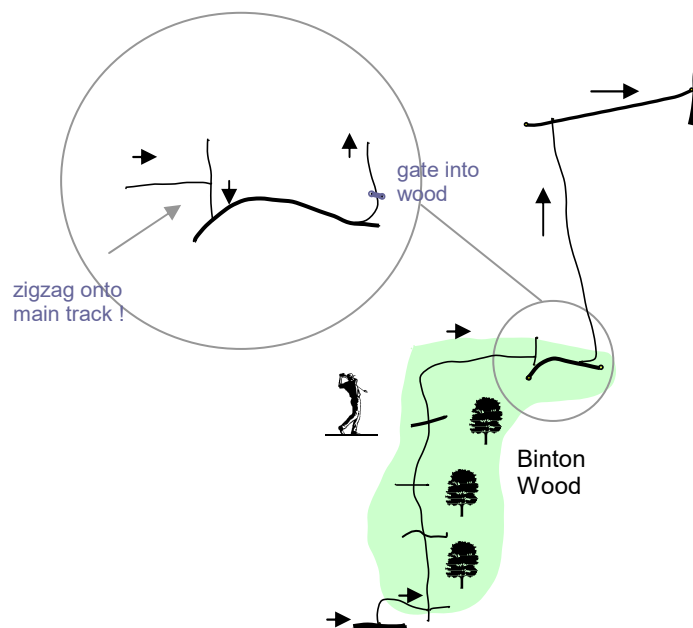


- 2 At the end, go through a small gap in a fence to a road. Cross over to a signposted bridgeway directly opposite. The path joins a track and leads to a small car park (**alternative start**). Continue straight on to go by a one-bar gate on a wide track, avoiding a track forking off left uphill. The stony track runs through the fine open woodland of Crooksbury Common. Crooksbury Hill is over on the left. (See the walk "Tilford and Crooksbury Hill" in this series.) In 250m, ignore a wide sandy track leading off left and continue ahead through rhododendrons (now partially cleared). In 450m, ignore another wide sandy track leading uphill to the left and stay on the narrower woodland path ahead following a yellow arrow. The path passes through beech and oak and runs close to an area known as Culver's Well. Finally you reach a fence and a road opposite *Gairholm*. Turn **right** on the road.

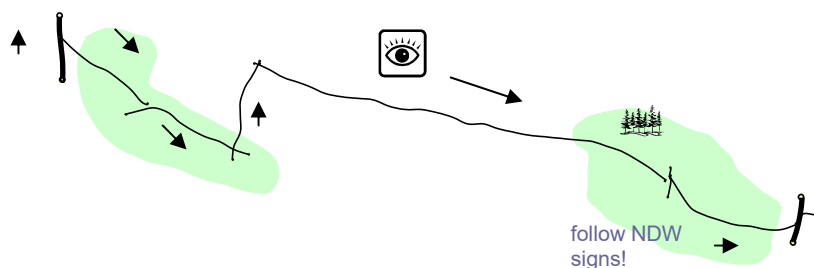
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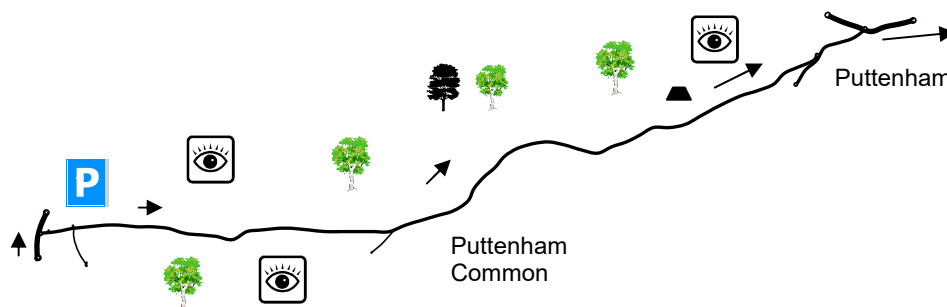
3 In only 20m, just past the house, turn **left** on an unmarked path into a pine wood. At a forked T-junction opposite a tennis court, turn **right**. In 150m you reach a wide crossing path. Turn **left** here by a *Welcome!* sign. Keep going, at first slightly uphill, then downhill, going over two straight crossing paths and curving right downhill. Then, at the end of the descent, the path meets a junction of paths and tracks with golf links visible ahead. Ignore a path on the right and a crossing path, and keep straight on onto a narrow path which veers away to the right. After a twisty 80m, the path comes into the open, runs beside a golf course on your left, followed by a field, and later turns **right** beside the edge of the field by a *Welcome!* sign. Welcome to Binton Wood! *Binton Wood is part of the Hampton Estate whose forestry team coppices chestnut there for various traditional end-uses. In spring the wood is carpeted with bluebells.* In 200m or so, the path comes to a T-junction. Turn **right** for just 10m and then **left** on a wide path. In nearly 200m, you reach a ditch. Here the path bends left and reaches a gate near a circular shed. Go through the gate, leaving the woodland into fields. Keep straight on over several field boundaries and between hedges, with a view of the Hog's Back ahead. (You can switch to the other side of the hedge if the ground is ploughed up.) Finally, you reach a T-junction with a footpath by a welcoming noticeboard. Turn **right** on the footpath along the north side of a large field. *You are on the North Downs Way (NDW), a long-distance footpath running from nearby Farnham to Dover.* In about 300m you reach the Seale Road via two gates. Go **right** on the road. (But by turning left for 300m you reach the 12th-century church of St Laurence, Seale, which also has toilet facilities.)



4 In 20m, turn **left** at a signpost via a wooden swing gate on a footpath. Notice the little "fairy house" in the tree. The path runs through trees for some distance with yellow arrows to indicate that you are on the NDW. Soon the path becomes sunken and meets a crosspaths in an area called Payn's Firs. Turn **left** here as indicated by the yellow arrow. The path now runs beside a lawn and walled garden and goes through a wooden swing gate. Turn **right** on the open hillside and follow this long grassy meadow with views left to the Hog's Back. The path passes through a wooden swing gate into woodland and crosses a gravel drive. Keep following the signs for the North Downs Way along a fine mossy path with occasional pines and a conifer plantation on your left. The sunken path descends through Totford Wood and comes to a tarmac drive. Turn **left** along the drive.



- 5 In 10m, turn **right** on a track. The track runs between paling fences, over a stream, to a tiny car park. (Turning right here will lead you back to the main car park, aided by your map or your navigation aid.) Keep ahead uphill on a wide path. You will be following this sandy undulating path for just over 1 km, always straight ahead, avoiding all side paths. After a while, the heathland on the right changes to meadows, whilst on the left there is the heath falling away with a fine view of the Hog's Back again, as you pass a red-tiled house up on your right. Soon after, the path rises and goes past a house on the left. It then graduates to a tarmac lane. Follow the lane, which is joined by another from the right, and reaches Seale Road in Puttenham near an art gallery. Keep ahead along a narrow lane through the village.



Puttenham appears in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Reddesolham, its assets being owned by the Bishop of Bayeux, amounting to £2. Nearly all the houses line "The Street". The village, much transformed, appears in Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World".

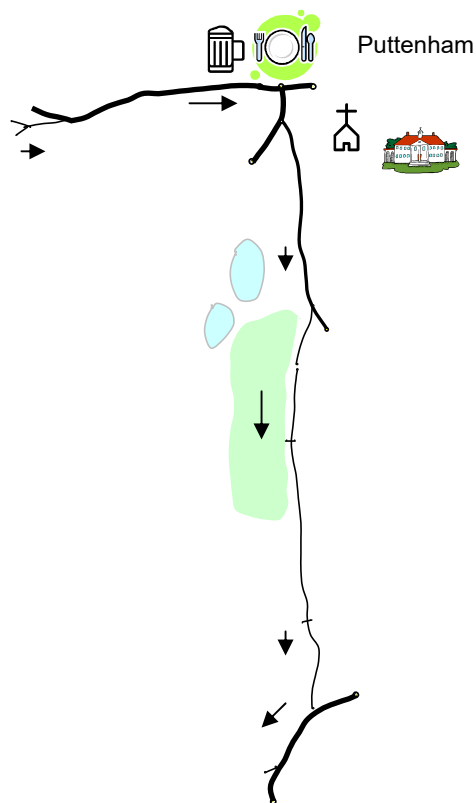
After a stroll through this charming village, you will find a pub on the left.



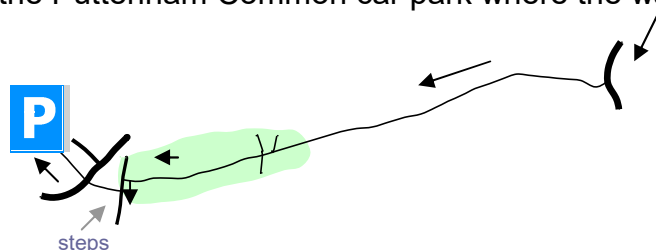
The Good Intent is an unspoilt hostelry with several real ales and a bistro with a fine menu. It is open all day at weekends. With only 20% of the walk remaining before the Puttenham Common car park, this is a good place for a refreshment break. If the pub is closed, there is also the Jolly Farmer, a Harvester, right and right again at the main road. Puttenham Golf Club, on the other side of the main road, also welcomes visitors in their club house.

Leg 3: Puttenham Village to Puttenham Common

- 1 Ahead on the right, the Church of St John the Baptist is definitely worth a visit. The walk continues by turning **right** just after the pub onto a side road, Suffield Lane, signposted *Elstead, Cutmill*. In 50m, leave the road by going straight ahead over a stile onto a marked footpath. Where the fence permits, you can see a stately house up on the left. *Puttenham Priory is a Georgian Palladian-style mansion set in 48 acres (20 ha) of parkland, although there was a manor house there from 1246.* Soon there are lakes on the right and the footpath goes over a stile near a gate on your left, into a narrow enclosed path in woodland. You are on the Fox Way, a 39-mile = 63-km path which encircles Guildford. At the end, go through a new kissing gate and cross a fine high meadow, following a shallow ridge that separates the two meadows. The path goes through another kissing gate under an oak and across another fine high meadow, dropping a fraction towards the woods on your right. On the other side, take a steeply descending path with a wooden rail. Keep to the right-hand side of the small meadow to arrive at the bottom, via a kissing gate, on a road, Puttenham Lane. Turn **right** on the road.



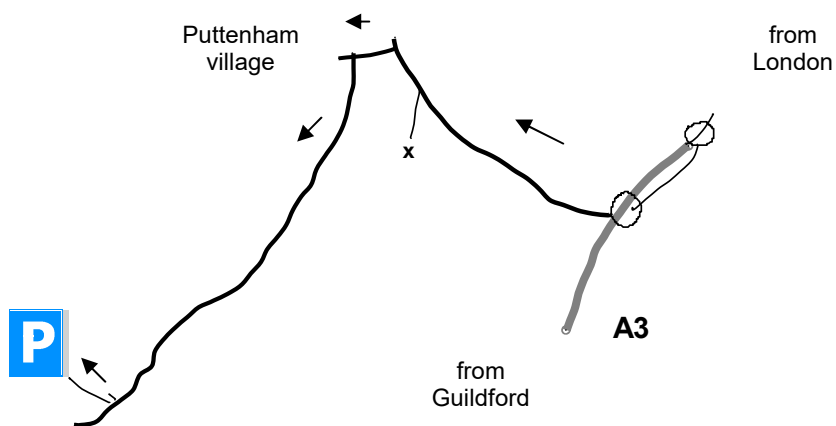
- 2 In 100m, at a fingerpost, turn **right** over an avoidable stile (or through a large metal gate) onto a footpath. The route goes across a marshy area, over a flat bridge and, via avoidable stiles, along an enclosed path. The path runs between fields and, after about 600m, goes through a swing gate into woodland. At a junction, keep straight ahead, always following the yellow arrows. Finally the path reaches a T-junction with a bridleway. Turn **left** on the bridleway and, in just 10m, turn **right** up steps on a footpath which takes you alongside the fence of a cottage garden, across the road and back to the Puttenham Common car park where the walk began.



Getting there

By car: To get to the Puttenham Common Top Car Park, take the A3 to the B3000 Compton Puttenham turn-off (just south of Guildford) and turn **right** at the **second** roundabout, still on the B3000, following signs to Puttenham or Farnham. Avoid the sharp left turn for Norney and continue a little further, turning **left** into Puttenham village. Pass the church on the left and, just before the pub on the right, turn **left** on a road signposted *Elstead, Cutmill*. The car park is about 1.3 miles (2km) on the right.

By bus: no. X65 (**not Sunday**) from Guildford. Begin the walk at Puttenham Village.



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