



Puttenham and the Welcome Woods

Distance: 15 km=9 miles easy walking
or 2 shorter walks of 5½ km=3 miles and 12½ km=7½ miles

Region: Surrey

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Refreshments: Puttenham or picnic

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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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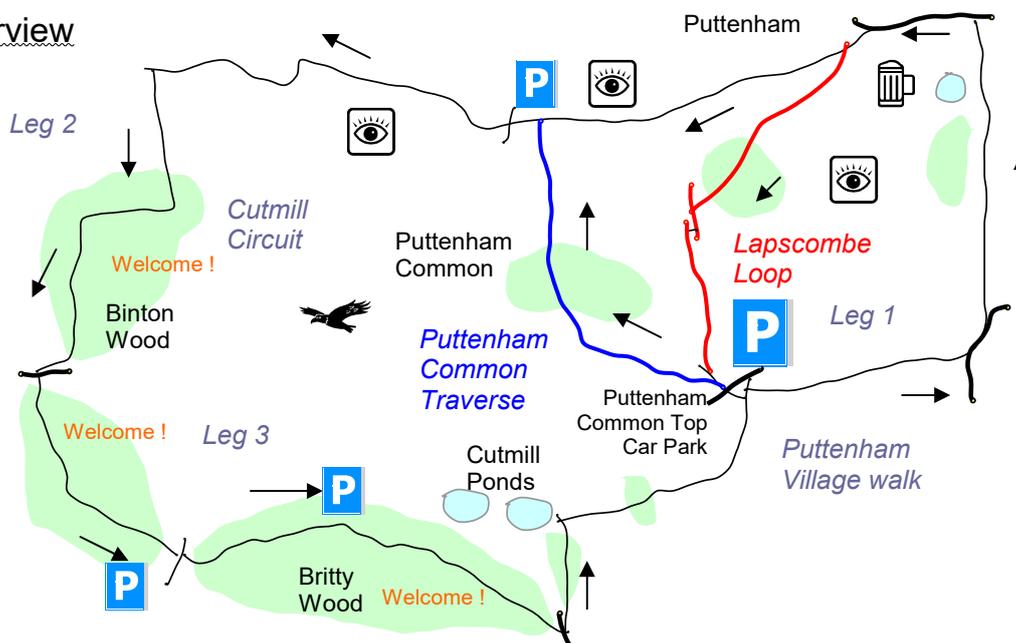
Heath, woodland, village, lake

In Brief

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

The shorter *Puttenham Village walk*, 5½ km=3 miles, takes an interesting route back to the car park after the village. The *Cutmill Circuit*, 12½ km=7½ miles, bypasses the village and concentrates on the “welcome” woods to the west. There is also a *clockwise* version of this walk with the pub coming much nearer the end.

Overview





These are easy walks with few steep ascents, so they seem shorter than they are. There is a little surface water in winter and a few overgrown or dusty patches in summer, so ankle boots are advisable. There are some nettles on the path to Puttenham Lane but the stile count is low. The walks seem fine for a small-to-medium (wormed!) dog, since all the stiles have a dog-sized gap.

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.

Decision Point

If you are doing the *Cutmill Circuit*, you need to begin with a short cut that takes you direct to the North Downs Way. For this, you need to begin with the **Puttenham Common Traverse**. This is described at the end of this text. If you are doing the full walk or just the *Puttenham Village walk*, begin here with Leg 1.

Leg 1: Puttenham Common to Puttenham Village 3 km=2 miles

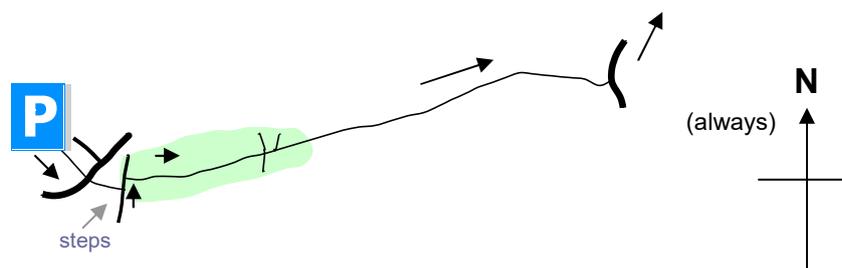
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Go back to the road, using a path across the lovely mossy grassy space on the right of the track. Cross the road and take the footpath opposite alongside a wooden fence past a cottage, keeping left round the corner. The path runs down steps to a bridleway. Turn **left** on the bridleway.

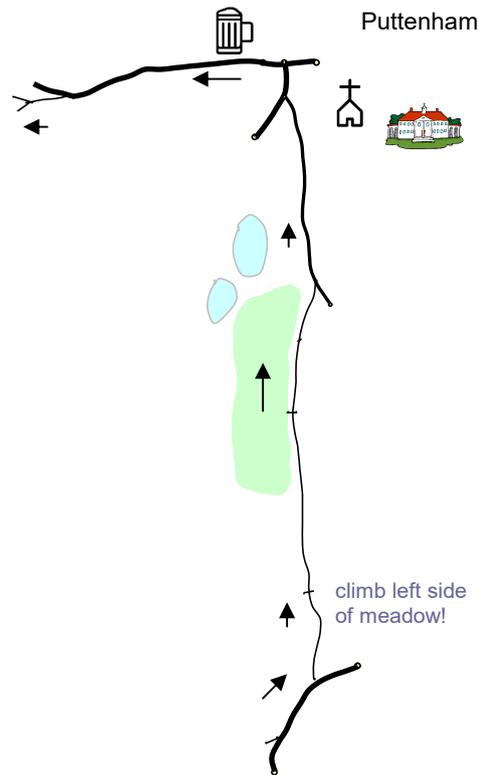


The Haslemere-Guildford Monster “wraps round” to this point.

In just 10m, turn **right** on a footpath marked with a yellow arrow. At a junction, keep straight ahead, always following the yellow arrows. The path goes round a redundant swing gate and runs between fields. The route then goes down an enclosed path where you may encounter a lot of nettles in summer. (If the nettles are bad it is easy to get into the adjoining field, down the bank and walk parallel to the path, rejoining it through a green metal gate at the corner of the field.) Your path now goes past unneeded stiles, over a flat bridge and through a marshy section, to pass between a decrepit old stile and a large metal gate to a road, Puttenham Lane.



2 Turn **left** on the road and, in 100m, at a fingerpost, turn **left** through a kissing gate onto a footpath. *You are on the Fox Way, a 39-mile=63-km path that circles Guildford.* As the meadow opens out, keep **left** and follow the winding path steeply uphill with the aid of a handrail. At the top you reach a meadow. Follow the obvious path between the two wire fences. The path goes through a kissing gate under an oak and then goes across another fine high meadow. At the end of the fenced path go through a kissing gate onto a narrow enclosed path. After 200m in woodland and a redundant stile, a private grassy path joins from the right. There are lakes on the left. On the right, where the fence permits, you can see Puttenham Priory. *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.* Go over a stile onto a private drive, which immediately leads you to a tarmac road (Suffield Lane). Turn **right**, to arrive soon at T-junction in the village. *On the right, the Church of St John the Baptist is definitely worth a visit.*



This part of the **Haslemere-Guildford Monster** ends here, turning **right** on the road at the T-junction.

However, this walk continues **left** at the T-junction.



The "Good Intent" on the other side is an unspoilt hostelry with several real ales and a fine menu. It is open all day at weekends. But, if you are doing the full walk from Puttenham Common, you have only done a fraction of it, so this is too early for a mid-course break.

Continue along the lane through Puttenham 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".

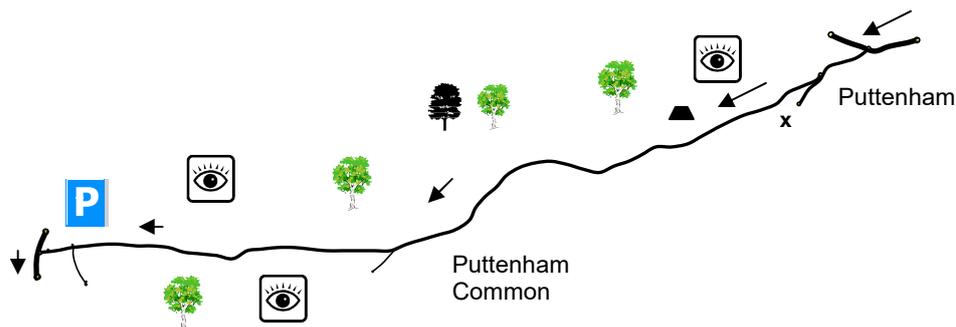
On reaching the end of the village keep straight ahead on Lascombe Lane, avoiding Seale Road that curves off right.

Decision Point

If you are doing the *Puttenham Village walk*, resume from the **Lascombe Loop** near the end of this text. If you are doing the full walk, continue with the next leg.

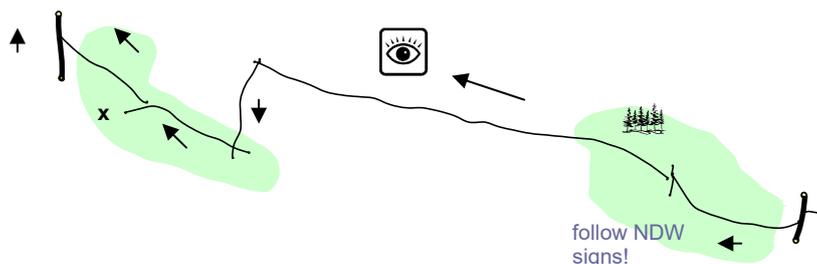
Leg 2: Puttenham Village to Britty Wood 8½ km=5 miles

- 1 Where the lane forks, keep **right**. You are on the North Downs Way (NDW), a long-distance footpath running from nearby Farnham to Dover. On reaching a house at the end, ignore a footpath left and keep straight ahead downhill on a narrower path. The path has heath falling away on the right with a fine view of the Hog's Back. After some distance on this sandy undulating path, the meadow on the left ends and you have fine heathland on both sides. Keep straight ahead avoiding all side paths. After some distance, the wide sandy path descends to a tiny car park by a fence and stream. Keep on between paling fences to a lane. Turn **left** on the lane.



The Puttenham Common Traverse short cut re-joins the walk here.

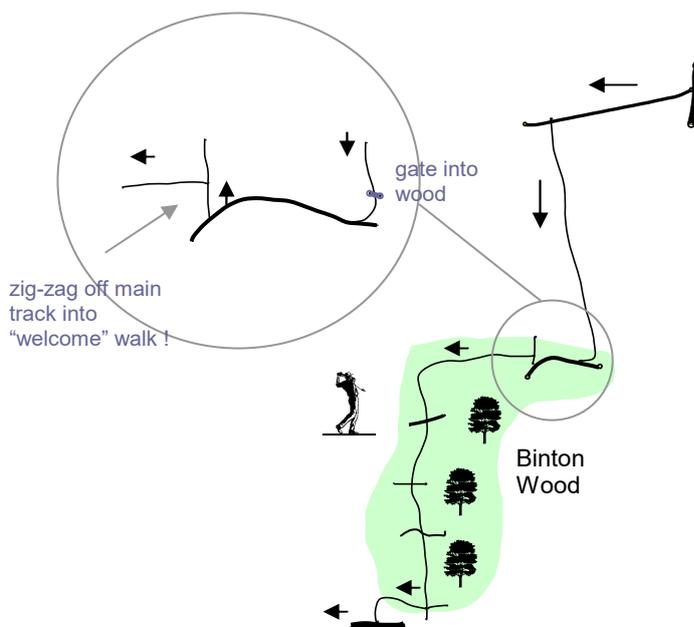
- 2 In 10m, turn **right** at a signpost on a sunken path. The path rises through Totford Wood to meet a junction with fields. Fork **left** here, still on the NDW, as directed by a yellow arrow on a post. You are now on a fine mossy path with occasional pines and a conifer plantation on the right. The path crosses a gravel drive and later passes through a wooden swing gate into a long grassy meadow. In 50m, pass through a new metal kissing gate, giving you more views to the Hog's Back. Just before the end of the meadow, turn **left** through another new metal kissing gate, still on the waymarked NDW. The path runs beside a lawn and a walled garden and comes down to a sunken path at the start of an area called Payn's Firs. Turn **right** here as indicated. After around 150m the path forks slightly right through trees, avoiding some horse jumps on the left. It reaches the Seale Road via a wooden swing gate. Notice the little "fairy house" in the tree. Go **right** on the road. (As a diversion, by continuing straight on for 300m you reach the 12th-century church of St Laurence, Seale, which also has toilet facilities.)



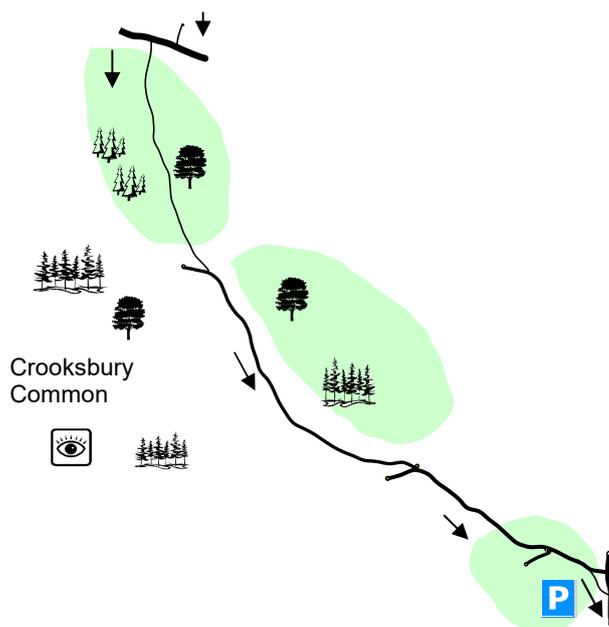
3 In just 20m turn **left** at a fingerpost, through a wooden gate onto a path that runs along the north side of a large field. In about 300m, at the end of the first field, you reach a notice-board. Turn **left** here on a permissive footpath. Keep straight on between hedges and over several field boundaries as far as the trees. (Depending on the crops, you may need to switch to the right side of the hedge.) Go through a gate here, past a circular storage building on your left, into 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.* Follow the marked path which wheels right at a ditch. In nearly 200m, at the next junction, the main track veers off left.



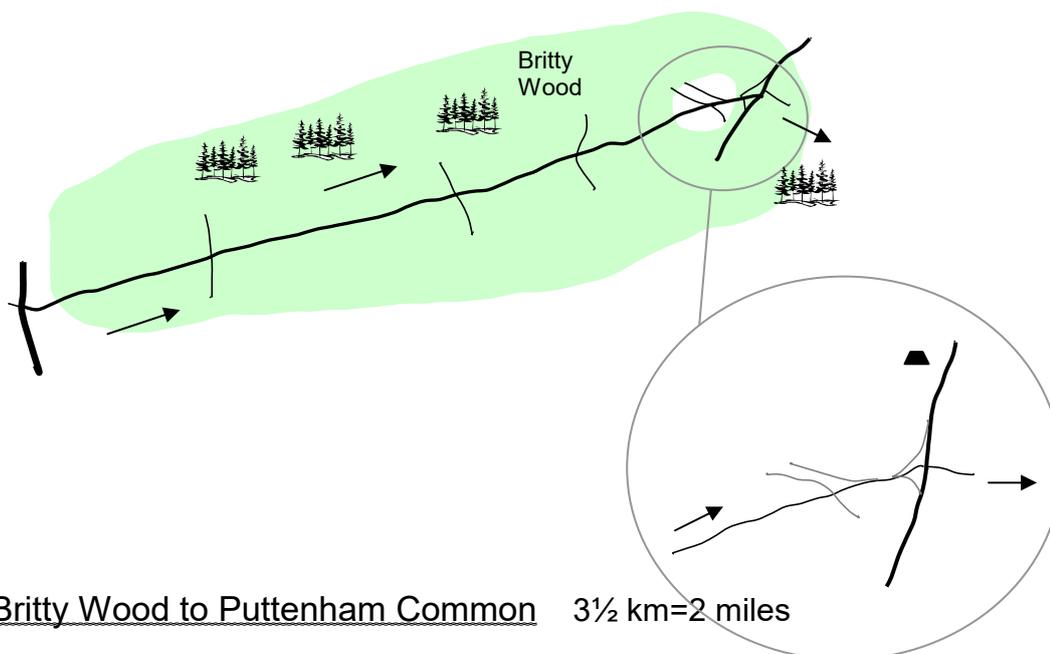
Leave it here by turning **right** for just 10m and then **left** on a path, thereby keeping to your original direction. Stay on this path at all times. It bends left by a field, runs beside a golf course on your right with a green-and-white sign saying *walkers welcome* and re-enters woodland. It then follows an upward course into tall pines, veers right before a bank and veers left again as it crosses a junction of paths and tracks. Keep going ever gently upwards over two straight crossing paths (the first flanked by metre-high poles) after which the path levels out. You reach a **third** crossing path just 50m from a main road. Turn **right** here and, at a junction near a house and tennis court, turn **left** to the road on a path through bracken. Turn **right** on the road.



4 In just 20m, opposite *Gairholm*, turn **left** at a fingerpost on a footpath. The path passes through fine hilly woodland heading for an area known as Culver's Well. Later it joins a wide sandy track coming down from the right. The track runs through more fine open woodland of Crooksbury Common. Crooksbury Hill is over on the right (*see the walk "Tilford and Crooksbury Hill"*). Later you join an even wider track coming down from the right and soon after reach a one-bar gate and a small car park (**alternative start**). Continue straight on through the car park. Before you reach the road, fork **right** on a narrower path to the road. Cross the road to an unmarked horse path directly opposite through a gap in the fence (*which is occasionally obliterated by forestry work*) and take the uphill path ahead.



- 5 This permissive riders' path runs 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. The path runs over **three** crossing paths and you need to avoid all side paths, even if they seem like major ones. The path then narrows a little and goes down a slope. It reaches a flat grassy area and is met by several paths joining from the left. Try to keep to the **same direction** across this confusion of paths. Eventually you reach a small fork just before a wide level sandy path in the valley. Take the **right** fork and cross the sandy path to join a clear rising path directly opposite you. Continue uphill. Welcome to Britty Wood!



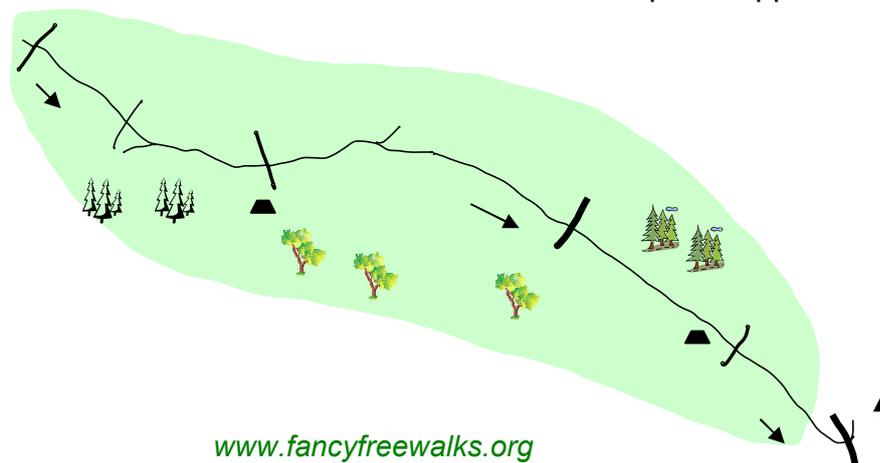
Leg 3: Britty Wood to Puttenham Common 3½ km=2 miles

- 1 The path goes up through pines, beeches and a coppice. When it levels out, it meets a wide crossing path. Go straight over on a narrow path which is soon met by a narrow path coming from the right. Follow this winding path downhill until you come to a marker post on a sandy crossing path running under electricity wires. On your right is a house and its green-roofed huts. Cross straight over onto a path opposite.

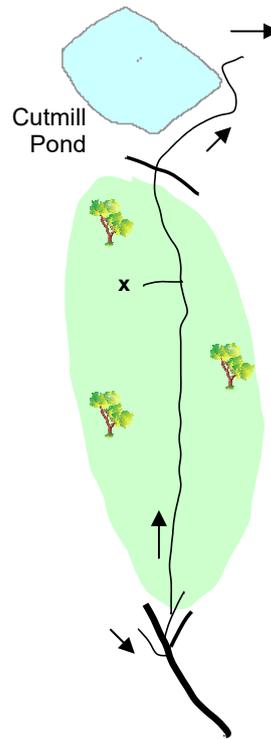


The **Haslemere-Guildford Monster** joins this walk here.

Keep to the main wide sandy path at all times in a beautiful area of silver birches, avoiding side turnings. Your path widens and goes over a road with a one-bar gate on each side, continuing on a similar path opposite. Eventually the path crosses a drive by the gates of *Heath Cottage*. It then goes a short distance further and wheels left to a road. Cross the road to some paths opposite.



- 2 Ignore a track to *Cutmill Cottage* but immediately to its left follow a fingerpost on a footpath into the woods. In just 10m, take the **left** fork on a permissive footpath with the familiar *welcome* sign. The path runs over an area of birch trees and marshy grass that gets waterlogged in patches in the wetter season but presents no problem, except for mosquitoes in summer. Keep straight ahead on a very unstraight path. Where the path finally crosses a track, go straight on over a bridge to the Cutmill Pond where the path turns right over a stream and along the bank.

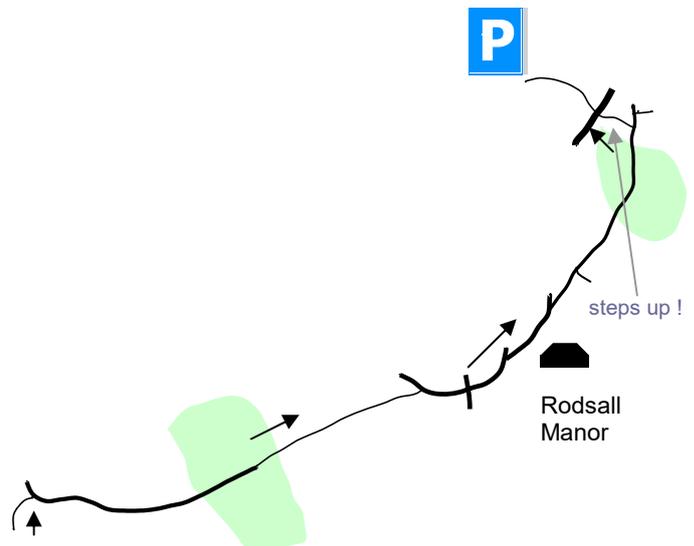


Like so many, Cutmill Pond was created as a hammer pond during the 16th and 17th centuries to serve the iron industry. The mill was mentioned as early as 1307 but the last waterwheel was removed in 1932, a small brick and stone building being all that remains. In 1932 a gruesome double murder occurred 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.

The path curves left around the bank and leaves the pond just before the little lakeside house.

- 3 Turn **right** onto the drive beside the garden walls and, after *Willow Cottage*, continue into the woods. The path becomes sunken and eventually meets a tarmac lane. Keep right on the lane, avoiding the private left fork and ignoring a bridleway on the right. The lane passes Rodsall Manor.

Rodsall Manor, proudly flaunting its stone eagles, is a listed mansion dating from 1680 (from the plaque with initials "F.W.") plus additions from the 1700s and 1900s. It has an array of interesting architectural features both outside and in, too many to list.



Avoid a private road forking left again and continue past *Stable House* and *Rose Cottage* onto a sunken path. Continue straight ahead for around 150m to turn **left** up steps (*). The path takes you across the road and back to the Puttenham Common car park where the walk began.

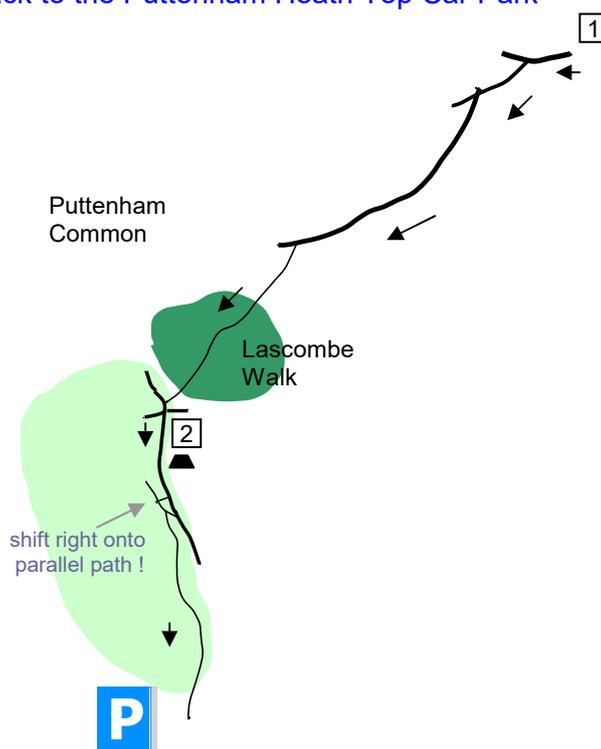


* If you did not start at the Puttenham Common top car park, e.g if you are walking the **Haslemere-Guildford Monster**, ignore the steps and keep straight on, wrapping round to Leg 1, at the Monster symbol.

The Lascombe Loop 2 km=1¼ miles

Follow this section after Leg 1 if you are doing the shorter **Puttenham Village** walk. It takes you on a short cut back to the Puttenham Heath Top Car Park via the Lascombe Walk.

- 1 Where the lane forks, keep **left** onto Highfield Lane. The quiet lane quickly rises up for 250m into an open area with fields. Just after *Lower Lascombe*, ignore a footpath right. After another 350m, at a fingerpost, veer **left** on a footpath diagonally across a crop field. On reaching the edge of the field, go straight ahead past a redundant metal kissing gate, across a small meadow, through another metal kissing gate, over a drive by a house on your left and along an enclosed path next to the house into a Woodland Trust wood, *Lascombe Walk*. Follow the path through the wood, ending at a wooden barrier leading out to Puttenham Common. Turn **left** on the wide track.



- 2 In 15m, ignore a crossing track and keep ahead uphill. Go past a redbrick house *Murtmoor* on the left which sometimes has shetland ponies browsing on the front lawn. Nearly 100m after the house, at a post with blue arrows, turn **right** on a wide path for just 10m and then **left** on a path that runs parallel to the track you were on. (Behind you now, as a guide, is a one-bar gate.) This path, which is more interesting than the track will take you back to the start. Ignoring all branches off, after a short distance, you reach a small dip, after which you come, via a sandy path across the grass, to the car park where the walk began.

The Puttenham Common Traverse 1¾ km=1 mile

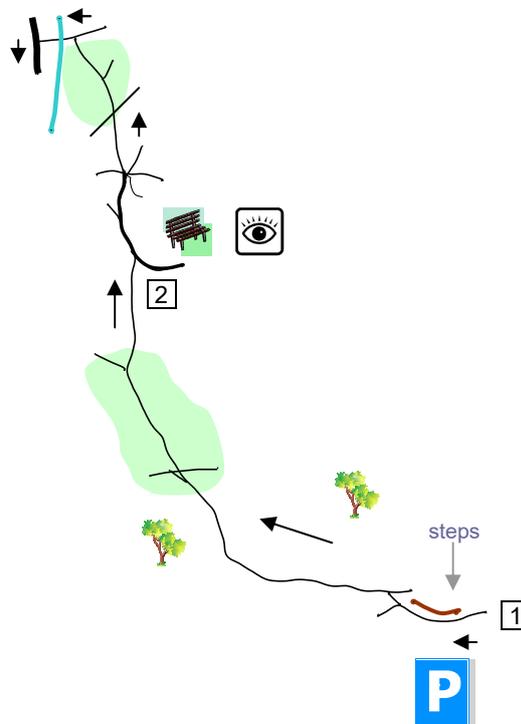
Begin the entire walk with this section if you are doing the **Cutmill Circuit**. This takes you direct to the North Downs Way, although you miss the delights of Puttenham Village. It also gives you an excellent introduction to Puttenham Common.

- 1 Facing the view from the far side of the Puttenham Common Top Car Park, turn **right** down some steps. Immediately after the steps, fork **right**. In 20m, turn **left** on a T-junction. Follow this wide path over an area of scattered oaks and birches. Where, after 150m, the path arrives at the edge of an oak wood, go straight over a crossing path which has a marker post on your left, continuing up a path opposite. The path rises and goes over some high ground with large pines on the left. Avoid all turnings off as the path dips down through the wood, going straight over a crossing path at a post with blue arrows. In 150m, at another post with a blue arrow, you come to a clear fork. Ignoring the blue arrow, take the **right** fork, the steeper of the two paths. This path rises ever more steeply and eventually reaches a high sandy natural platform with a bench and magnificent views all round.



- 2 A wide track comes in from the right at a bend here. After pausing to admire the view, bear **left** on the track which immediately swings right, to regain your previous direction. In 20m, at a post, ignore a narrow left fork. 30m further you reach a post with blue arrows at a 5-point junction. Take the **second** path to the **left**, almost straight on. You have fine view of the Hogs Back ahead. In 100m or so, go over an oblique crossing path, following the purple *self-guided-trail* sign downhill. Soon after meeting a wire fence on the left, ignore a right fork and stay on the *self-guided-trail*. The path leads to a tiny parking area with palings on the left. You have reached the North Downs Way. Turn **left** between the fences, reaching a lane. Turn **left** on the lane.

Your walk now continues from section 2 of Leg 2 above.

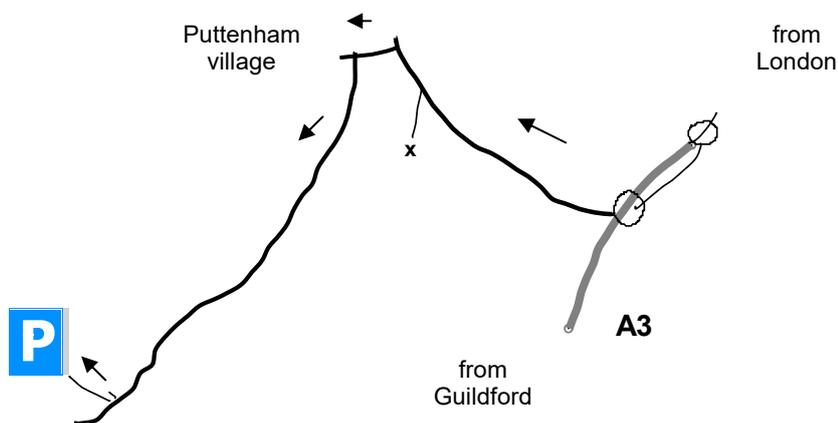


Getting there

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=2 km on the right.

Other possible starts are at **Britty Wood**, 300m from the walk (“getting there” instructions under the *Charleshill* walk) and the **Crooksbury Common** car park, just off the Seale Road, 700 yds south of the crossing with Littleworth Road, *very approximate* postcode GU10 1JL.

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



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