



Chiddingfold and Ramsnest Common

Distance: 11 km=7 miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

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Refreshments: Chiddingfold, Ramsnest Common

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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Village, woodland, views, bluebells, stream valley

In Brief

Here is a peaceful rural ramble through the meadows and woodlands of southwest Surrey. It starts in Chiddingfold, one of Surrey's most picturesque villages which offers good chances for a rest and refreshment. Near the end, it takes you through some spectacular wooded terrain. At the time this walk was done, there were no ploughed fields along the way and only a few sheep for companionship.

The best time to do this walk is late spring, when many of the paths are fringed with bluebells. In the centre of the walk there is a chance to visit one of Surrey's best secrets: a garden famous for its blazing spring blooms (modest entry fee). Nearby, there is also an excellent pub/restaurant (to enquire at *The Mulberry*, ring 01428-644460).



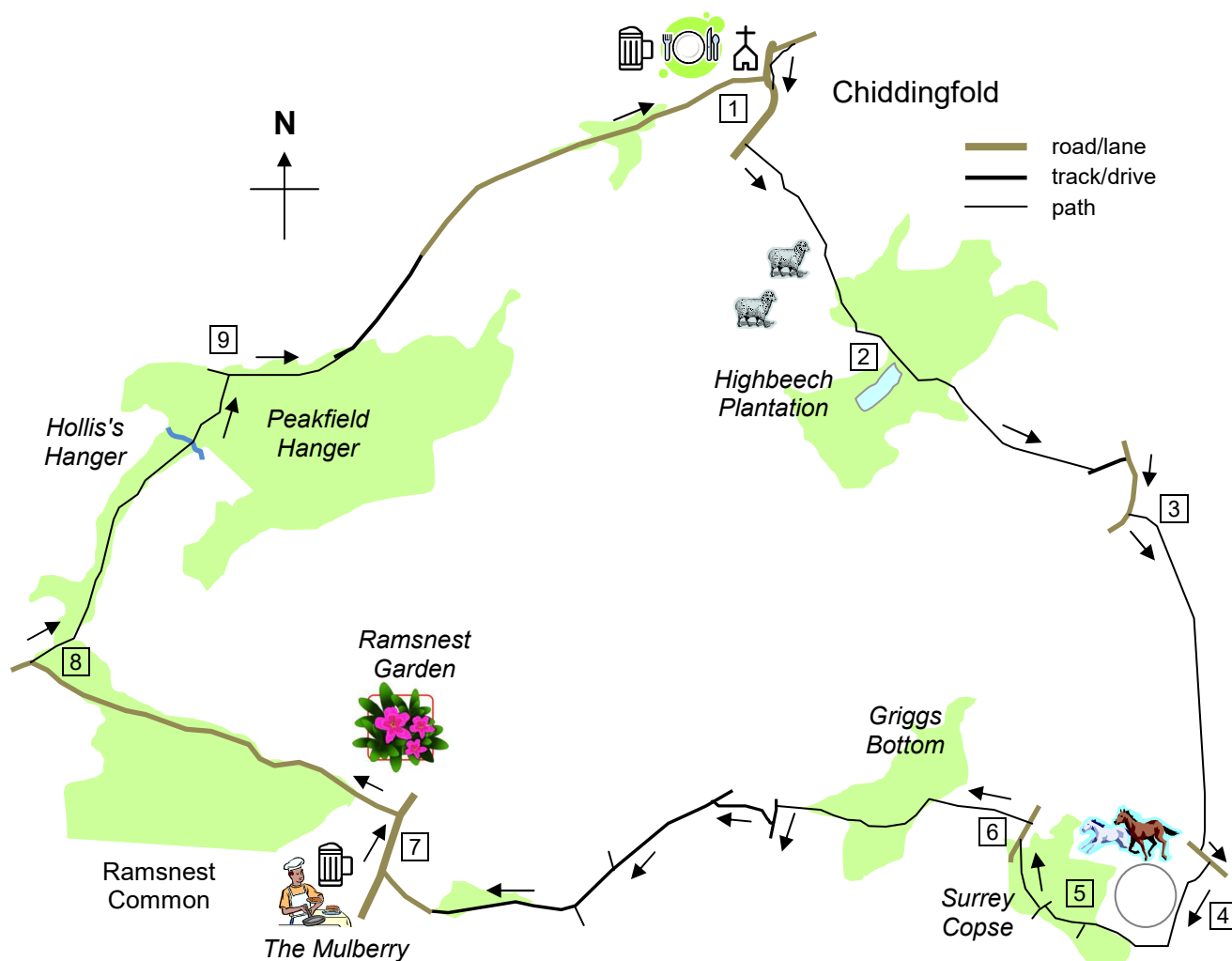
? The paths on this walk are usually clear but in high summer you will encounter one or two patches of nettles and other undergrowth when shorts are definitely not recommended. Much of the walk is along good farm tracks or quiet lanes. However, since this is a Wealden walk, inevitably you will encounter some muddy sections, making boots necessary, except possibly in dry summer weather. Your dog can come too, with a lead of course.

The walk begins at **Chiddingfold**, Surrey, postcode **GU8 4TX**. Park alongside the Green. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



There is a shop at Chiddingfold and the Crown Inn (founded 1250) and the Swan Inn serve good food. There is also the "Treacles Tea Shop". You will find a hilarious and informative account of the village in another walk in this series: "Witley, Hambledon, Chiddingfold".

The Walk



- 1** Go along the side of the Green towards the church and the *Crown Inn*. Just before the inn, go **left** through a passage, re-joining the road by a butcher's shop and continuing past the *Swan Inn*, crossing a bridge over the Anstead Brook and ignoring a side road. At a fingerpost after the last house, turn **left** on a signed footpath (often overgrown and easy to miss!). This narrow path runs between fences, by a field, through a kissing-gate and along the right-hand side of a meadow. At a post with a yellow marker go **right** up some steps and **left** beside a wire fence. This leads you through a kissing-gate, uphill through a bluebell wood and over a stile into a sheep meadow. Turn **left** along the edge of the meadow.
- 2** Go over a stile in the corner onto a woodland path in the Highbeech Plantation. Go carefully down the slope ahead, aided by steps, and past a pond on your right. The path takes you over a stream, up and along a grassy path by a fence and a large pasture. The path elbows left by a gate and finally bends **right** to go over a stile. Turn **left** on the grass beside the driveway coming from *Old Pickhurst* and, at a T-junction, turn **right** on a road, immediately avoiding a road junction on your left.
- 3** After 150m, go **left** over a stile into a small green meadow. Go forward with the meadow boundary on your left and, in less than 100m, head to the **right** over a small bridge and stile (*careful! rickety*) into a sheep pasture. Cross the pasture aiming for the right-hand edge of a line of trees on the other side.

Once there, go through a metal gate and continue uphill next to a fence on your right. In the far corner, crossing some planks over a swampy patch, go through a metal kissing-gate and cross the centre of the next rough meadow, aiming to the right of a large cream-and-red house visible ahead, adjoining some long buildings (actually racing stables). Cross a ditch by a flat bridge, go over a stile next to a large metal gate to a road and turn **left** on it.

4 After only 40m, go **right** through a small black wooden gate on a signed narrow footpath. (There's a red notice *Beware of Adders* but they don't amount to much.) This short rather overgrown path comes out into the racing compound. Turn **right** in front of the first enclosure to come out via a small wooden gate into the yard. Turn **right** and immediately **left**, following a tarmac track, keeping watch for horses and riders. The track crosses a white-fenced "gallop" and becomes gravel. Follow the track as it curves first right* then left to go through a wide gap in the far hedge. Do *not* go through the gap but **leave** the track here by turning **right** along the edge of the grass. (*The statutory route is more elaborate. If you want to walk strictly by-the-rules, do as follows. Just before the track curves right, fork **left** across the grass, heading for a wide gap to the left of two massive oaks. As you go through the gap (careful - ditch!), you meet a two-way fingerpost. Turn **right** on the edge of a hayfield, beside the hedge on your right. Where you are joined by a cinder track, go **right** through a wide gap and immediately turn **left** along the edge of the grass.) In 15m, ignore the first yellow arrow on your left and continue to the far corner.



5 In the corner, go up over a 3-plank bridge and take a path straight ahead, gently uphill through a bluebell wood, Surrey Copse (now colonised by foxgloves after forestry work). Soon your path crosses an open strip under wires. At the top, veer **left** at a yellow arrow immediately reaching a fingerpost (hidden in trees on your left). Turn sharp **right** on a clear path into the woods. *The floor here is thick with bluebells in late spring.* The path finally leads out into a small meadow. Veer **left** to a gap beside a metal gate and turn **right** on a tarmac lane. In 70m, go **left** through a modern kissing-gate into a sloping meadow (which also serves as a regular cattle pasture).

6 Go straight across the meadow, keeping slightly to the right of an oak tree in the middle of the field. Ignore a metal gate over to the right and aim instead for the metal gate straight ahead. Go through the gate into the woods of Griggs Bottom and immediately turn **left** at a fingerpost. In 60m, at another fingerpost, your path veers right up deeper into the wood. In about 150m, the path emerges into a large sloping green field. Keep ahead along the right-hand side of the field. At the corner, go through a small wooden gate and turn **left** on a wide farm track. In 30m, follow a hairpin round to the **right**. In 200m, at a fingerpost, veer **left** towards the farm buildings. *Note: if you have a dog, he must be on a lead anywhere near the buildings!* You pass a reedy pond and, on your right, *Redlands Farmhouse*, then *Honeypt Cottage* and the buildings of Gostrode Farm. Stay on the tarmac, ignoring a footpath on your right and a bridleway on your left at a bend. Finally you pass some houses, go over a grid (or through a small wooden gate), pass a footpath on your left, and progress onwards till you reach the main A283 Petworth Road by a Shell filling station (which serves snacks and drinks) in the hamlet of Ramsnest Common.



You will be continuing by crossing the road and turning right. But first, less than 100m along the verge on your left is one of the best pub/restaurants in the neighbourhood. The Mulberry is nice-sized and welcoming with a little garden

on the side. As much a restaurant as a pub, it offers an inventive menu, including such things as crabmeat profiteroles, herb-stuffed chicken in serrano and a daily special. The opening hours are generous too.

7 Having crossed the road and turned **right** (or going straight on if returning from *The Mulberry*), go 150m along the footway and turn **left** on a side road, Killinghurst Lane. However, by continuing another 100m or so along the main road, you could make an excursion to Ramster Garden (previously known as "Ramsnest Garden") (pay on entry), famous for its glorious spring colours. Follow quiet Killinghurst Lane, catching a glimpse of the Garden on your right as you go. The lane dips to go over a stream, passing farm buildings and winds its way uphill. The lane zigzags through a broken wall and descends. You pass a meadow on your left with a beautiful cedar, belonging to historic *Killinghurst House*. Finally, the lane takes a left bend.

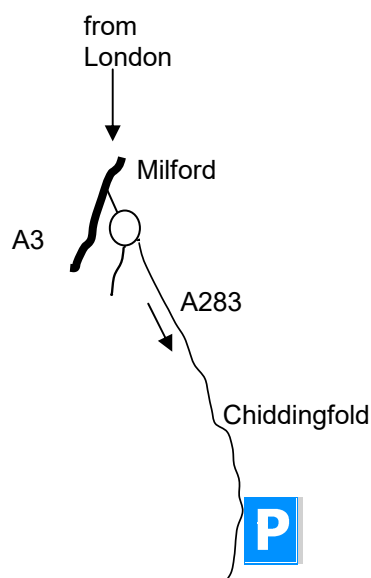
8 **Leave** the lane here by turning **right** at a fingerpost on a narrow path. The path runs along the right-hand side of a field and, in 40m, forks right into woods. You are in a long strip of woodland known as Hollis's Hanger. It runs beside a stream gully down on your left. This primeval and exciting landscape will be yours to enjoy for 1 km – and probably alone because few people come here. *In late spring, this is a notable place for bluebells too.* Eventually the path descends to the level of the stream and crosses it by a bridge. 2018: the bridge was recently repaired but it is marked "unsuitable for horses": hopefully you left yours at home! After the bridge, keep left, following a thin stream on your left. You may need to hop around the mud in this section. Your path crosses the stream using a 3-plank bridge. At the top, you come to a T-junction with a much wider path. Turn **right** on this path.



9 The path runs past some corrugated farm sheds and onwards through woodland (testing your mud-hopping skills again). It eventually joins a tarmac driveway coming in on the left from *Hollyhurst*. This lane soon passes houses on both sides in the hamlet of Upper Sydenhurst. Keep straight on along this very quiet cul-de-sac lane passing several footpaths on the left. In one more km, the lane reaches the main road in Chiddingfold. Turn **left** and cross the road to the *Crown Inn* and the Green where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: Chiddingfold is on the A283 Milford-Petworth road. If coming from the London area, turn off after Guildford through Milford and take the A283 south.



By bus/train: there are several bus routes to Chiddingfold from Haslemere station but they run on odd days. The best idea is to check the web for the latest options.