



Shere Woodlands

Distance: 1½ km=1 mile

easy walking

Region: Surrey

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picnic, or after the walk in Shere or Horsley

Map: Explorer 145 (Guildford) *but the map in this guide is all your need*

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

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Woodland, nature reserve, view

In Brief

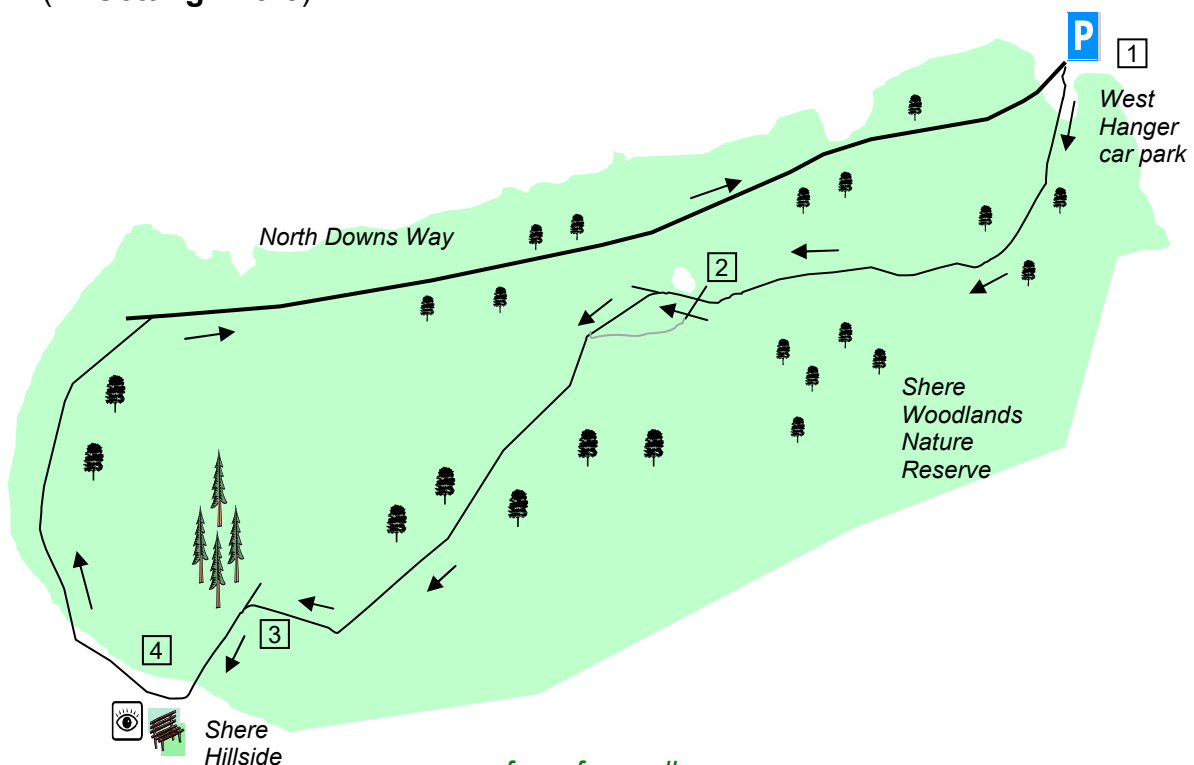
This is a short but most rewarding little stroll that takes you unexpectedly to a fine viewpoint on the North Downs. The paths go mainly through a nature reserve where the paths are not marked on the map, so you may find solitude from other people and have the viewpoint entirely to yourself.



There are no nettles and any kind of clothing and footwear are fine. Your dog is very welcome too.



The walk begins at the **West Hanger** car park, Staple Lane, near Guildford, Surrey, **postcode GU5 9TE**. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



The Walk

- 1 Facing away from the entrance to the car park, **ignore** the metal barrier and the main path for the North Downs Way, and instead take a much smaller path 20m away on your **left**, between two wooden posts. Carefully follow the winding path through the thick thorny woods which characterise the Shere Woodlands Local Nature Reserve nature reserve. Soon you reach the edge of the hillside. Don't try to descend! Instead, keep **right** as your path gradually turns so that you are walking along the edge of the hill. *Always stay on the level – there are no gradients in this walk! You will have the steep edge of the wood down on your left for the first half.* The wood consists mainly of small beeches and soon the occasional yew. Nearly 300m from your starting point, your path comes to a crossing path that slopes down a little on your left.
- 2 Go straight over the crossing path onto a grassy path with birches and an open brambly area on your right. In 60m, you reach a junction with a group of tall beeches ahead and a forest of straight young silver birches ahead to the right. Ignore the first turning sharp left and instead turn **left** at the junction downhill, to the left of the beeches, on a path that soon becomes pleasant and level with mixed woodland. You have the edge of the slope close by on your left. Your path winds its way and reaches a group of dark conifers on a piece of high ground. Keep to the path as it veers **right** a short distance up through the pines. You now have a wide deep pit on your right (probably an old saw pit) and a steep drop on your left.
- 3 Suddenly you have distant views on the left through the trees. Follow the path a little further, going over a narrow crossing path, until you come to a T-junction. Turn **left** towards some wooden gates and go out onto the hillside through the large wooden gate (the small gate is hardly needed now). You reach a seat (Kay Foster's), a perfect place for a picnic or just for quiet contemplation of the view.



This is one of the best views on the North Downs. Below you are the village of Shere, mainly hidden in the trees, and Albury Park, but you have a good view of the mysterious catholic apostolic church. The redbrick church of Albury can be seen just to the right. Gomshall and Abinger Hammer are on the left in the valley. Majestically framing the view are the greensand hills, with Leith Hill on the left, the Hurt Wood straight ahead, Hascombe Hill to the right and, in the distance, the distinctive flat outline of Black Down, the highest hill in Sussex. Far to the right, you can see St Martha's church-on-the-hill. (All these places feature in other walks in this series.)

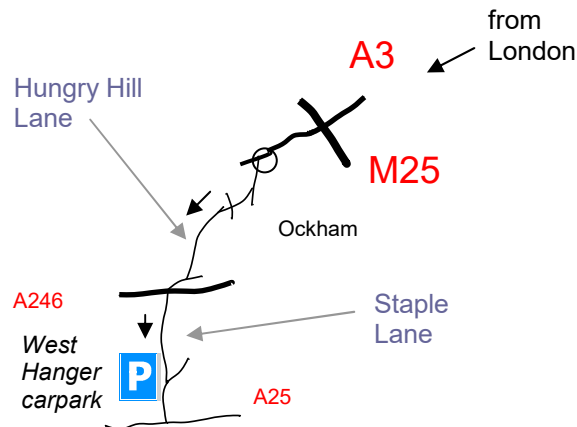
- 4 Continue a little further and turn **right** at a T-junction on a grassy path, enjoying more of the view. Your path bends round to the right into the woods and joins a shingle path, taking you through a large wooden gate (the small gate is hardly ever needed). Follow the flinty, later grassy, path through some magnificent mature woodland. You reach a T-junction by a fingerpost. Turn right on this wide path, which is part of the North Downs Way, a long-distance path that runs from Farnham to Dover. Eventually you arrive back at the West Hanger car park where the walk began.

Getting there

By car:

Staple Lane runs from the A246 at East Clandon to a bend in Combe Lane. Combe Lane is off the A25 near Shere signposted *E. Clandon*.

One possible scenic route to Staple Lane from the London area is as follows. Take the A3 and, after crossing the M25, exit at a sign for Ockham and Ripley. Take the B2039 road **left**, signposted to Ockham. In about 1km (0.6 mile), at a left bend, just after the entrance to the church, turn **right** on Guileshill Lane. This lane becomes very narrow for a short stretch ahead and there are passing spaces in case you meet another car. Follow the lane to a T-junction and go straight on, slightly right, on Hungry Hill Lane. Follow this lane all the way to East Clandon village where you turn **right**. On reaching the main A246 Leatherhead-to-Guildford road, cross straight over carefully and continue up Staple Lane. This lane goes over the Downs and the West Hanger car park is on your right just before it a junction with Combe Lane.



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