



Shere Village and Shere Woodlands

Distance: 5 km=3 miles
or 3 km=2 miles

moderate walking with steep sections

Region: Surrey

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Refreshments: Shere

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

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

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Woodland, views, village, pubs

In Brief

The village of Shere is such a delightful attraction because of its cottages, its little shops, the Tillingbourne stream, the church, the village square. This walk adds some extra excitement with a bracing descent from the North Downs, giving you wide views across the valley as you go. The flip side is that you have to climb the Downs again after your visit – so over indulging in one of the pubs or tearooms is not a good idea ! However, the route chosen here is relatively easy and varied with ample opportunities to pause to catch breath whilst you admire the views of the countryside.

There are several places to take refreshment in the village, including two pubs, both serving food, one a gastropub (to enquire at the *William Bray*, ring 01483 202044).



There are no nettles on this walk and only a little mud in winter at the start of the path out of Shere. Your dog will enjoy this walk 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**).

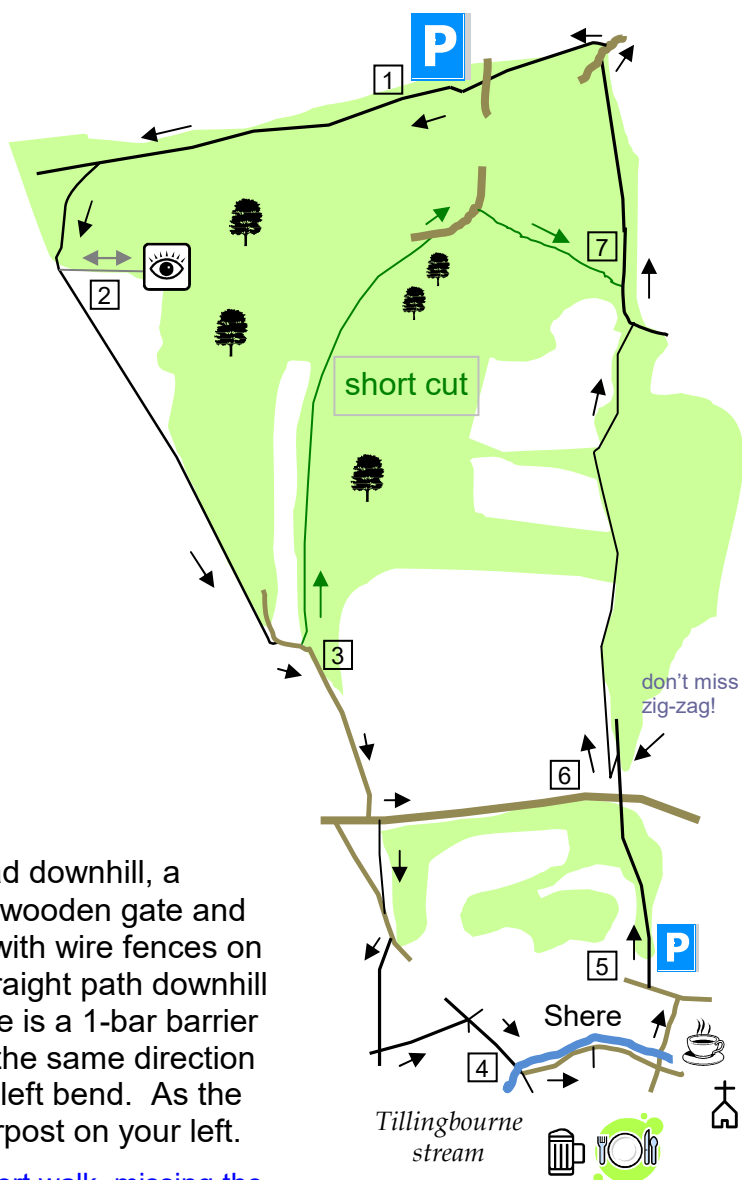
The Walk

- 1 Starting in the West Hanger car park, go past a low metal barrier onto a wide path, part of the North Downs Way (NDW). You need to go nearly 600m along this well-known woodland path until the green meadow on your right ends and gives way to trees. Just after this, on your right, you will see a 3-way fingerpost. Leave the NDW here by turning **left** on a narrow bridleway leading through quite dense and attractive woodland. In 150m or so it leads you through a gate onto an open hillside with sudden great views down into the Tillingbourne valley. *You can see Albury Park and the catholic apostolic church, Albury's redbrick church and, beyond, the Greensand Hills featured in many walks in this series.* As a small diversion, if you take the level path on your left, you will reach a bench in 100m where you can sit and enjoy the view. You need to retrace your steps afterwards.

- 2 Take the wide chalky path leading ahead downhill, a fraction left. Soon you come through a wooden gate and you are walking under small yew trees with wire fences on both sides. Keep following this quite straight path downhill for a total of 650m where suddenly there is a 1-bar barrier and a road, Combe Lane. Continue in the same direction down the road, immediately rounding a left bend. As the road bends right again, you see a fingerpost on your left.

Decision point. If you are doing the short walk, missing the village, skip to the end of this text and do the section labelled **Coombe Bottom Return**.

- 3 Stay on the road for another 300m, passing farmhouses on your left, to meet the main A25 road at the bottom. Cross the road carefully and turn **left** on the road for only 5m. Turn **right** here on a narrow unmarked path through trees, to a road. Cross the road and turn **left** on a tarmac path running beside it. As the road curves left, take a narrow lane, Chantry Lane, on your **right**, going past the entrance to *Albury Estate Fisheries*. In 150m, turn **left** on a crossing footpath beside a wall. At the end, turn **right** downhill on a tarmac lane.
- 4 Go over a bridge across the Tillingbourne beside a ford and veer **left** passing allotments (note the scarecrows), with some attractive cottages on your right. You reach a grassy bank popular with families feeding the ducks, followed by the village centre. Your route is **left** down the main shopping street, Middle Street. First however you will want to cross over to the village square and the church. *For a brief history of this pretty village, see the other walk in this series [Gunpowder and Deep Silence](#).* On your right are two pubs: the *White Horse* and the *William Bray*.





The “William Bray” is an Edwardian pub which has recently been renovated to provide a smart dining experience with an impressive-looking menu, boasting Jenson Button and Lewis Hamilton amongst its clientele. The “White Horse” is a much cosier affair, offering some standard brews and more predictable nosh.

- 5 After a possible tour and refreshment, and having turned left on Middle Street, proceed to a T-junction at the end, turn **left** and in 30m **right** at a sign for the car park. Keep straight ahead to the left of the car park, past a metal barrier, on a byway through trees. In about 200m, as an archway comes into view ahead, avoid a left fork and continue ahead, through the archway, which goes under the A25 road. *If this section is rather muddy, don't worry as it is just about to improve.* Just 30m after the underpass, turn **very sharp left** up a bank, almost reversing your direction, and hairpin sharp **right** passing a notice for the *Netley Plantation*. *Don't miss this vital zig-zag!*
- 6 Your path goes gently uphill under yews and beeches beside a meadow on your left, with gradually widening views westwards. Another meadow follows, gradually steepening, with an abrupt rooty section and more yews and beeches. As you approach another open meadow, stay on the right-hand side, on the main chalky path. Another meadowside is followed by an undulating section under yews, a more level path under oaks, a large meadow on your left and finally a gate and a wall leading to a T-junction at the top. Turn **left** at the T-junction on a wide driveway, thus re-joining the North Downs Way (NDW). The driveway immediately bends right. Shortly after, ignore a wide track that forks off left downhill.

The **Coombe Bottom Return** re-joins the main walk here.

- 7 Where the main driveway bends left in another 150m or so, keep ahead on a wide dirt track, still on the NDW. You come out to a road. Turn **right** on the road and, in just 20m, turn **sharp left** at a fingerpost onto a woodland path, still on the NDW. The path takes you by a meadow on your right, across a road and into the West Hanger car park where the walk began.

Coombe Bottom Return

Take this alternative route if you are shortening the walk, omitting the village.

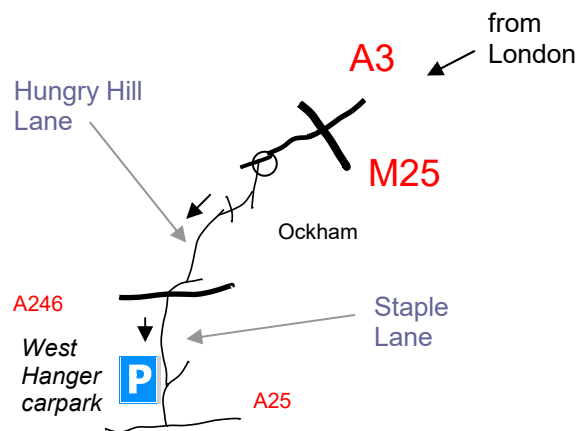
Turn **left** at the fingerpost and keep left on a path between banks of yews, soon with a pleasant horse pasture on your left. Soon you pass a sign indicating that you in a valley known as Coombe Bottom. Continue along a narrow path. Your path curves right and enters young woodland. Finally it emerges via a 1-bar wooden barrier onto a road. Veer **right** along the road. In only 30m the road bends sharp left. Leave the road here by turning **right** up a wide track marked *Hollisters Farm* [2013: going under a fallen tree] passing a pillbox. At the top, turn sharp **left** on a wide track.

Now re-join the main walk at section **7**.

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 Guilehill 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 and 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.



By bus/train: bus 25 or 32 to Shere from Chilworth or Gomshall stations, Guildford or Dorking, not Sunday. Check the timetables.

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