



Hankley Common: *Duke of Cambridge* pub walk

Distance: 6 km=3¾ miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

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Refreshments: *Duke of Cambridge*

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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Heath, pine forests, sandy paths, views

In Brief

The *Duke of Cambridge* “country pub” near Tilford underwent a complete refurbishment a few years ago and has gained a reputation for food with a slight “gastro” tendency, ideally eaten *al fresco*, all at a reasonable price. The garden and patio with a rustic lean-to make it a popular place in summer and at weekends and you may need to book (01252-792-236).

This walk starts in a lonely remote spot in the wild landscape of Hankley Common. Because of the sandy terrain and the pine trees, this is an all-weather walk, fine in any season.

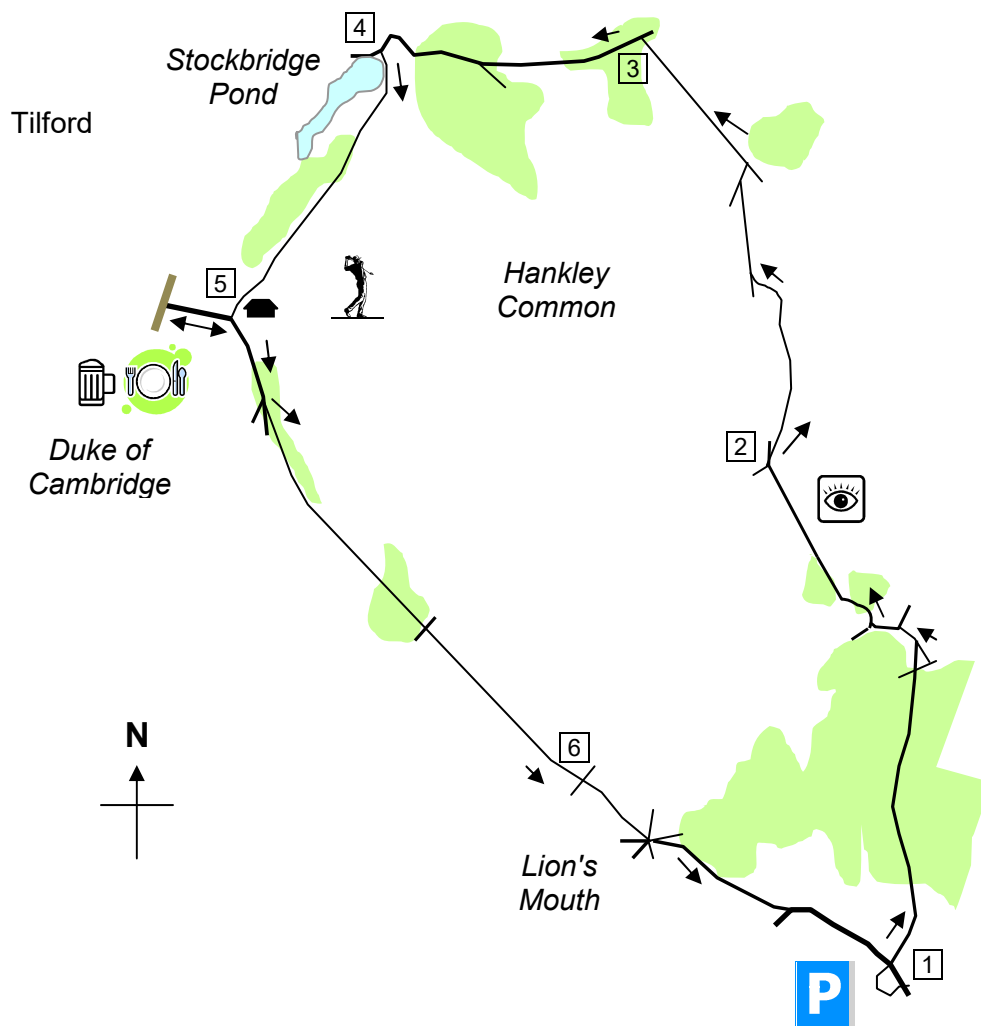
July 2022: major fire on Hankley Common.



There are no nettles or undergrowth and the terrain is almost entirely sandy, making any kind of sensible attire and footwear fine. With no stiles and no roads to cross, this is a perfect walk with your dog.

The walk begins at the car park in the centre of **Hankley Common**, near Elstead Surrey, nearest postcode **GU8 6LW**. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



- 1** Go out of the car park back to the tarmac drive and turn **left**, passing a heavy metal barrier. In only 50m, just before the drive starts to descend, turn **right** on a very wide sandy path. Keep straight on at all times, staying on level ground, avoiding any turn-offs. In 200m your path enters pine woods. Soon it descends a little and you can see open terrain ahead as you meet a crossing path with blue arrows. Keep straight ahead out into the open and veer **left** on a sandy bridleway, heading for a small pine-topped hill. In 50m you meet a wide fork at the foot of the hill. Keep **left** here, following the blue arrow, leading up to a T-junction in 70m. Turn **right** here on a curving path of yellow sand, still following the blue arrow. Your path passes under wires and starts to descend gently into a expansive open area, with great views ahead. (The distant transmitter is on Crooksbury Hill and you will be heading in that direction for over a km.)
- 2** In 400m, at a 4-way crossing, fork **right**, following the blue arrow. (The path straight ahead leads over Yagden Hill, another popular route, albeit more energy-sapping.) In 350m, next to a grove of pines on your left, by a blue arrow, fork **left** on a path that snakes its way **left** and **right** to join a wide sandy path coming from your left. In 80m keep straight on, ignoring the waymarked path that curves away left. Your path elbows right, meeting the bridleway coming from the left and, in another 50m, meets a grassy crossing path running under wires.

- 3 Turn **left** on the crossing path, following the overhead wires. When you reach the second pylon, there is only a steep drop ahead. Turn **left** here on a wide sandy bridleway leading through a pine wood. Down on your right across the steep slope, the River Wey can be seen snaking through the meadows. In 300m or so, at a marker post, a path joins you from the left. Keep straight on between banks, veering **right** at the bottom. After a stream and a metal barrier, the Stockbridge Pond comes into view, a popular anglers' site.
- 4 Turn **left** immediately before the pond on a signed bridleway. The path runs along the head of the pond and reaches a golf course. Turn **right** along the edge of the links, soon passing a green and a bench seat on your right, heading for the clubhouse. Go past the clubhouse and its car park as far as the entrance to Tilford Woods (a log cabin holiday retreat). Turn **right** here on a tarmac drive to reach the pub in 100m which you can enter via the garden at the back. (Or, if you don't want to visit the pub, turn **left** and skip the next sentence.)
- 5 After your break for refreshments, return the way you came and keep straight on, passing the clubhouse on your left, on a wide track signposted *Practice Tee*. After 150m, you arrive at a fork where the main track runs straight ahead uphill. At this point, **leave** the track and take a very narrow parallel path on the left, indicated by a blue arrow. The path runs through trees and soon gets wider. After 400m, the path crosses the centre of a fairway and enters a pinewood. You come out to a crossing path known as the Atlantic Wall, named after the WW2 defence line in Normandy and the Allied exercises in preparation for D-Day. Go straight over, reaching a junction of paths and a bench seat in 400m.
- 6 Keep straight on, gently uphill. (Looking to your right you can see the practice wall.) In 200m, you reach a multiple junction of paths with a high ridge on the left and right. This spot, often visited by other walks on this site, is known as the Lion's Mouth. Cross straight over but avoid a narrow left-forking bridleway. Instead, take a wide sandy bridleway straight ahead, marked with **101** on a post with a white-on-black arrow. The track curves a fraction right and, in 350m, meets a tarmac drive at a bend. Keep straight ahead on the tarmac, going uphill. After you pass under wires, at the top of the slope, turn **right** on a sandy horse path and **left** between stumps into the car park where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: Hankley Common is easy to reach from the village of Elstead, approached e.g. from the A3. From the triangular green in the centre of the village, take the Thursley Road (that's to the **left** of the green, just after the *Woolpack* pub, if coming from the Milford direction). After 2 miles, there's a double right-left "kink" in the road. Where the road bends left, leave it by turning **right** on an unmarked tarmac drive, passing October Farm. After an exhilarating ½ mile across the heath, you see a heavy metal barrier. Turn **left** just before the barrier into the large car park.

You can also come from the A3 through Thursley. Turn **right** at a T-junction on the Thursley Road for ½ mile and turn **left** on a tarmac drive just before a "kink" opposite a sign for *Hankley Trg Area*.

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