



North Downs, Westcott, Friday Street

Distance: 15 km=9½ miles moderate walking with many long easy sections
or **two** walks of 9½ km=6½ miles and 7¾ km=4¾ miles

Region: Surrey

Date written: 10-dec-2011

Author: Schwebefuss

Date revised: 8-jul-2013

Refreshments: Friday Street, Westcott

Last update: 27-mar-2022

Map: 146 (Dorking) *but the maps in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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Hills, villages, woodland, views

In Brief

This walk takes you from a glorious part of the North Downs down into the Greensand and the memorable forests and hamlets to the south, then back up to the Downs for more forest and views. The attractive Friday Street lake and pub will be familiar from other walks in this series but the other routes are quite new and the experience unforgettable.

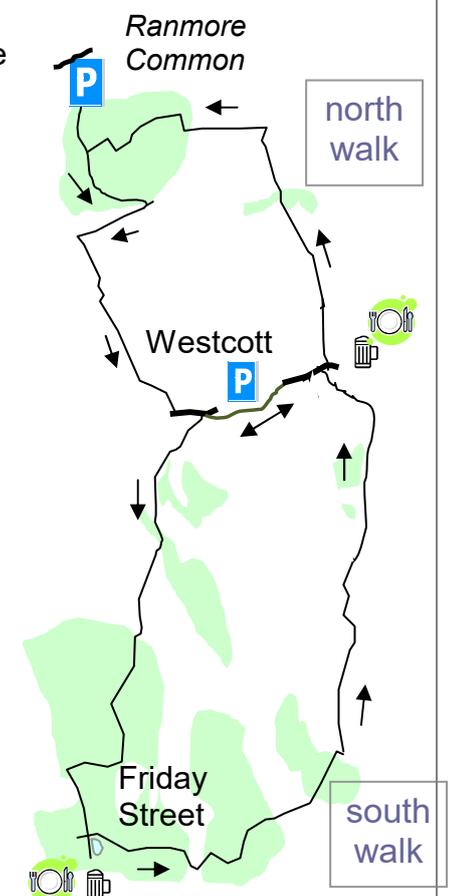


There are some nettles and brambles on this walk during the return to Ranmore Common. Because of the sandy paths, any sensible footwear is fine, except after prolonged rain when boots are essential. Your dog will love this walk too although he may need to be lifted over one or two stiles.

For people who like a shorter walk, there are a **North** option with stunning views, and a **South** option with the woods and lake at Friday Street.

The full walk and north walk begin at the National Trust **Ranmore Common NT** car park, *very approximate* postcode **RH5 6SY**, grid ref TQ127502, just off the Ranmore Common Road near Dorking, Surrey, www.w3w.co/banana.joke.noise. This is **not** the big Denbies car park but the *free* car park, one mile further west (away from Dorking) along the Ranmore Common Road, on your left. The south walk begins in **Westcott**, postcode **RH4 3NH**: park off the triangular green in the centre of the village. You can also begin in **Friday Street**, postcode **RH5 6JR**. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

Overview

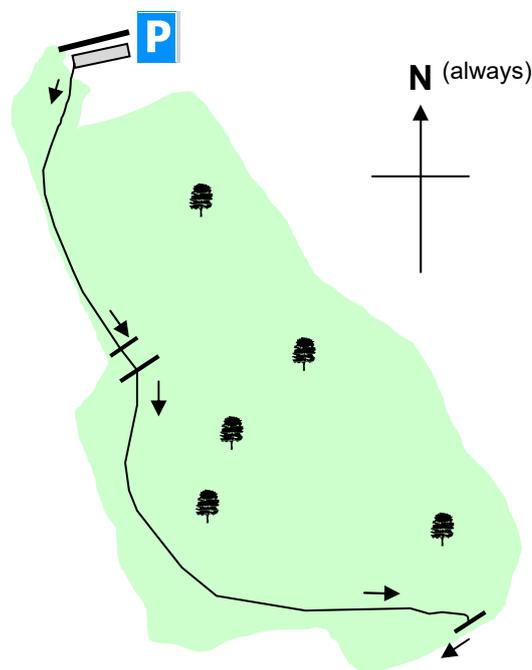


The Walk

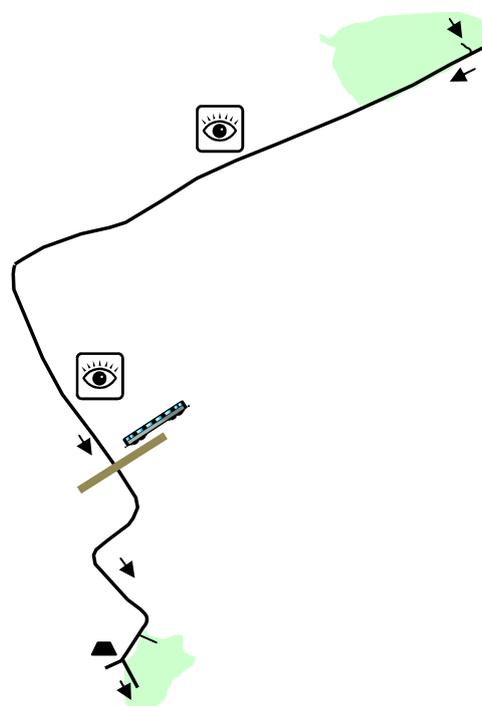
If you are doing the **South** walk, starting in Westcott, begin by doing the **Westcott West** section near the end of this Guide.

Leg 1: Ranmore Common to Westcott 3 km=2 miles

- 1 With your back to the road, starting from the extreme right-hand side of the car park, go ahead beside a metal barrier near a [Apr 2021: fallen] National Trust sign onto a path. Shortly, your route joins a path from the left and zigzags through woodland, on a clear stony path. Your path goes over a crossing path, winds its way onwards, going over another, narrower, crossing path and begins to descend. If you encounter mud here, it is only for a short stretch and not typical of this walk. You soon reach a wide level crossing path. This is the North Downs Way. Cross straight over, on a path which curves left and goes gradually more steeply downhill. At the bottom, you meet a level path at a fingerpost. Turn sharp **right**.



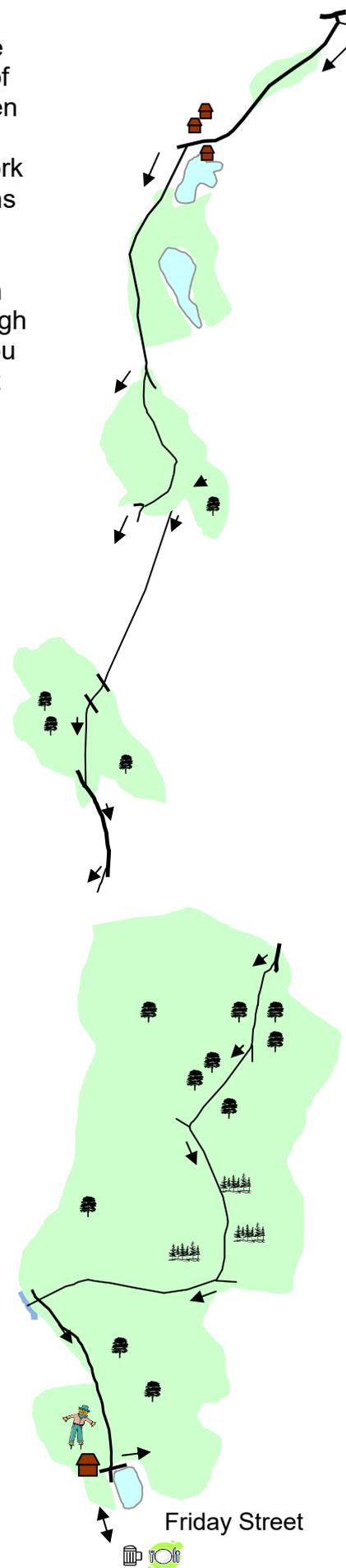
- 2 Your path goes through a small wooden gate beside a large one and passes a National Trust sign for White Down Lease (*"lease" is an old word for "meadow"*). After another 350m, you reach a gate and a fingerpost and another NT sign. Go **left** here onto a bridleway between fields. Your way goes under a railway arch and bends right and left, all the time with good views around, especially back and to the left where St Barnabas Church-on-the-Hill is prominent. You pass a barn of Combe Farm and your path bends right towards more buildings. Here, avoid a footpath on the left and its yellow arrow.



Follow the tarmac lane following the Pipp Brook down on the right in the valley. The lane now reaches a stunning group of cottages (see pictures), beginning with *Rookery Cottage*, then between *Springs* and *Mill House* where the Pipp Brook spills in a cascade from the pond. At the start of a private road, fork **left** on a bridleway* between cypresses. Your path soon runs on a pleasant course between a meadow and a river valley. After 300m, you reach a fork with a yellow arrow on the right indicating the Greensand Way (GW). Fork **right** here, by an unneeded stile. Your path goes fairly steeply upwards through hollies and then levels out and winds under beech trees. You pass another avoidable stile and reach a junction of paths at the corner of a field.

- 2 Go straight ahead, beside two wooden posts to the left of a gate, onto a faint path diagonally across the field. (If you want to avoid the field, such as when the rape is wet or in flower, you can instead turn **right** on the track and **left** just before a lane, keeping a stone cottage on your **right**, forking **left**.) In winter, as you proceed, you will catch sight of Leith Hill Tower in the distance. On the other side, maintain your direction over a stile (or using a hook-and-lever on its left) across a track, a fraction left, over a stile and through a small plantation. Keep downhill on a narrow path through bushes, veering **left** down through laurels, and go quite steeply down to cross a tarmac drive. Continue downhill at another signpost. Shortly, you reach a lane. Turn **left** on this quiet lane, with the Tillingbourne stream babbling down on your right, then on your left. You pass a meadow and a cottage. Shortly after, go through a new wooden swing-gate on the **right** onto a footpath.

- 3 This path at first runs parallel to the lane and then diverges from it. When you arrive at a T-junction with a track, turn **right** onto it. Soon, keep **left** with the path at a metal gate, avoiding some private land of the Wotton Estate. Your path continues through superb pine and beech woodland, beautiful in all seasons. When you reach a 4-way fingerpost at a junction by the corner of a meadow, swing **right** on a wide grassy path, avoiding the narrow path ahead. Your path veers right alongside a fence and then goes steeply downhill. Go through a wooden gate at the bottom to a 4-way junction and turn **left** on a level track. *First though, it is difficult to resist stepping forward to the stone bridge and gazing at the water meadows of the Tillingbourne stream as it runs down over the narrow weir.* The track goes past *Yew Tree Cottage* with its scarecrow family and over a ford using a small



wooden bridge, then past *Pond Cottage* to a lane by the lake of Friday Street.

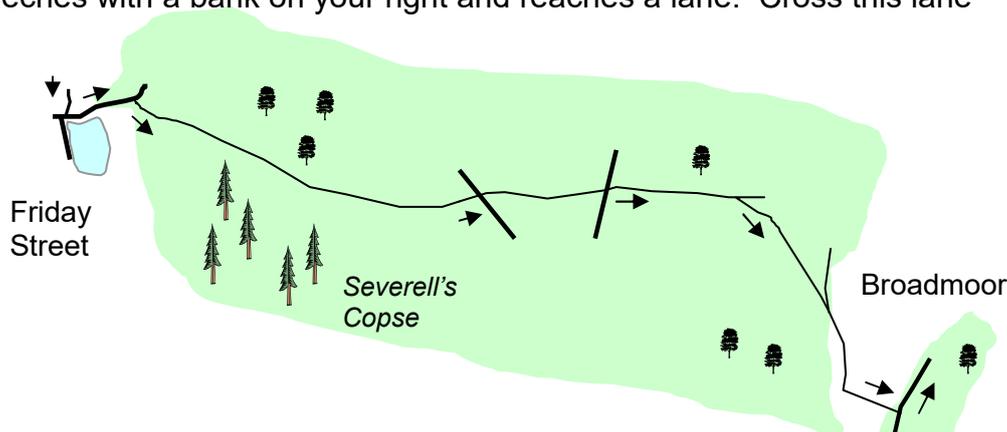
The name "Friday Street" is a little mysterious but the name probably indicates an impoverished out-of-the-way unproductive place, because Friday was a day when not much food was eaten. The lake is in fact a hammer pond, like so many in England, the result of damming the stream to provide water power. "Friday Street" is the name of a track on Surrey native Paul Weller's album "Heavy Soul". Much of this area is preserved by the National Trust.

P Your route is **left** on the lane. (The car park is down the lane on your right.) However, first you will want to take the lane directly opposite, with the lake on your left, to reach the *Stephan Langton* pub / restaurant in 200m. [Apr 2021: closed! hope it will re-open!] For more details of this interesting local, see the "*Stephan Langton pub walk*" in this series. You need to retrace your steps after a refreshment break and turn **right** on the lane by the lakeside.



Leg 3: Friday Street to Westcott 5 km=3½ miles

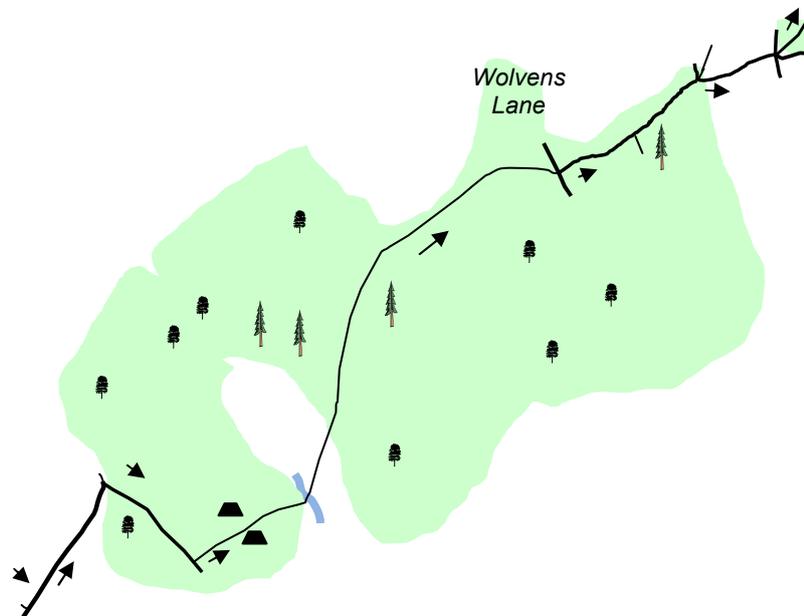
- 1 Just after the lake, before the lane bends left, go **right** between wooden posts onto a signposted footpath. Your path curves left uphill fairly steeply between hollies and beeches and some fine scots pines. On your right soon is the National Trust's Severell's Copse. Your path runs beside a line of beeches with a bank on your right and reaches a lane. Cross this lane



diagonally, a fraction right, shortly reaching another lane. Cross straight over this lane and continue on a signposted footpath opposite. Very soon, just after your path goes downhill, you reach a fork. Take the **right** fork, the more level option, avoiding the left-hand descending path. Your path becomes sunken and joins a path coming from the left just as the hamlet of Broadmoor comes into view. Soon, at a marker post [Jul 2021: missing], turn smartly **left** by a house and follow a narrow slope down to a lane. Turn **left** on the lane into the hamlet.

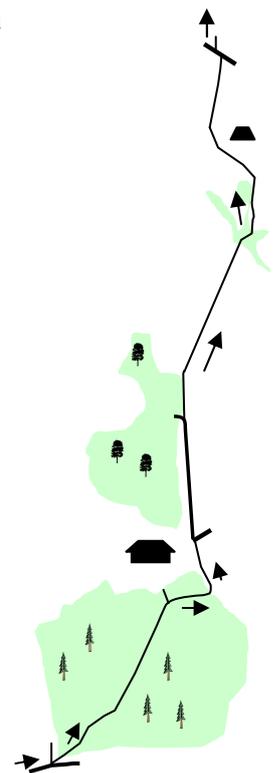
- 2 **See mini-map overleaf.** The lane passes the well-named *Old Cottage*, with its stone devil, and Home Farm, a noted stud and livery. Opposite the farmyard, at a fingerpost [Jul 2021: missing], turn **right** on a bridleyway. In 100m, at a new marker post, turn **left** on another wide path. The path goes uphill between the fences of *Simons Cottage* and *Tillingbourne Cottage*, over a stream, then rather steeply up. Eventually your path levels out (with a fine view of Leith Hill Tower to your right) and runs beneath some more tall pines. At a junction of sandy paths, keep ahead, a fraction right, reaching that perennial wide sandy byway *Wolvens Lane*. Cross straight over *Wolvens Lane*, with a metal barrier each side, onto another sandy bridleyway.





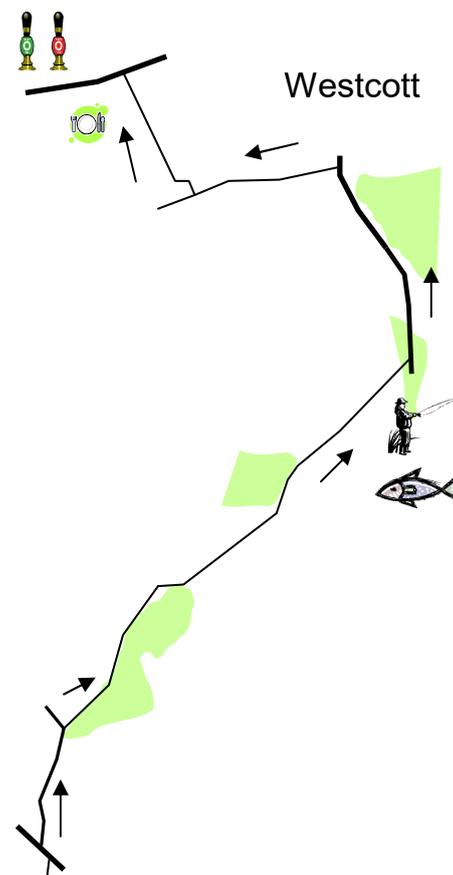
Your path is joined from the right by a broad sandy bridgeway. Where the bridgeway shortly turns to the left, **leave** it by taking the **right** fork, a wide stony downhill path, almost straight ahead. In 80m, you reach a junction of five paths. Take the narrower downhill wooded path straight ahead, a fraction **left**.

- 3 At the bottom, you come to a 3-way junction. Bear **left** passing a fingerpost [2020: grounded and partly hidden] on a straight path through the conifer forest. As you reach the edge of the forest, ignore a modern kissing-gate on your left and instead stay in the woodland by veering **right** on a cinder track. The track bends left and passes the redoubtable Squires Farm on your left, with a view of Ranmore church spire on the horizon. As you reach the entrance to the farm, avoid its driveway on the right and keep straight ahead, still on the cinder path. Where the path bends left into woodland, keep ahead on a narrower grassy path, shortly going through a modern kissing-gate. Cross the centre of a meadow, slightly right, between electric fences, heading towards a new barn and other buildings on the hill ahead. Your path takes you over a stream in the corner and **left** on a wide gravel track, fenced on both sides, which gradually veers left, passing the farm buildings of Westlees Farm on your right. Continue on a fenced path along the right-hand side of the long pasture, with the hillock of Bury Hill in view ahead. At the next corner, go **right**, diagonally across the ragged meadow to the corner of the field, and through a new metal gate to a tarmac lane.



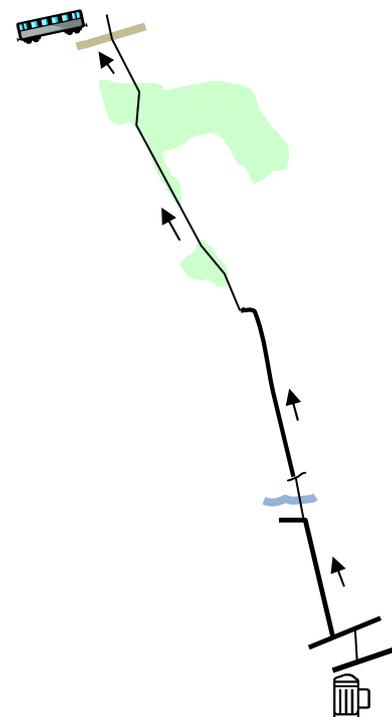
- 4 **See mini-map overleaf.** Go straight over the lane on a track diagonally opposite. In 180m you reach a choice of two paths near Mad Horse Copse. Leave the wide path here, taking the **right** fork just to the right of a sign for *Surrey Hills Yurts*. Follow this long narrow path, with a wooden fence on both sides, passing on the way a series of wooden bridges and a stile. A metal swing-gate leads you onto the right-hand side of an attractive meadow. In 10m, your path forks a fraction **right** across the centre, heading for a metal swing-gate visible on the other side. In the far corner, go through this gate, over a bridge, turning immediately **left** with the path. *On your right are the Bury Hill Fisheries, a large angling centre with four lakes.*

At a bridge with rails and a T-junction, turn **left** on a wider path. An old optional kissing-gate takes you past *Keepers Cottage* onto the tarmac of Milton Street, passing the aptly-named *Hedgerow* and ignoring a bridleway on the right. *The very fetching houses here are tile-hung or timbered, some with access over a bridge across a ditch. Spot the statue at no. 4.* After *Peppermint Cottage* on your right, turn **left** at a fingerpost and a marker badge on a footpath over a narrow bridge, passing a timbered cottage on the right and going uphill on a sheltered path, soon keeping ahead by a fence. Just after a new wooden gate into a garden and before the path rises more steeply, turn **right** on a narrow path between fences. The path zigzags onto a gravel track, going past a school and leading to the main road. Turn **left** here on a raised path parallel to the road. Cross by the lights to the *Prince of Wales* pub on the other side with a traditional menu. **If you started the walk in Westcott, you are back to where the walk began. Otherwise...** Turn **right** immediately **before** the *Prince of Wales* pub.

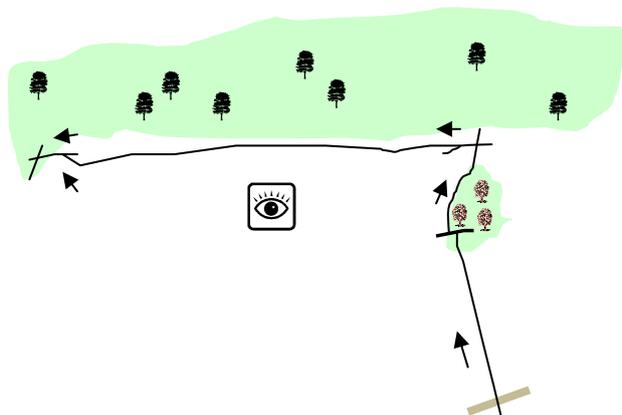


Leg 4: Westcott to Ranmore Common 3½ km=2 miles

- 1 You pass the pub's car park on your right. At a road, turn **left** and immediately **right** on St John's Road. Where the road bends left at the end, leave it to go straight ahead over a bridge. Go through a metal gate, straight on through either of two metal swing-gates and straight over the grass under wires to a wooden gate ahead [2016: *unneded as the adjoining metal gate is lying flat*]. Cross a cinder path and go straight ahead uphill on a tarmac lane, in the direction of a [2016: *de-fingered*] fingerpost. The path bends left in front of *Springfield House* and right by the stables of *Bushy Plat Farm*. It then runs by a fence, later with fields on your left. *In summer this path may be very overgrown.* The North Downs loom ahead and you have one more short climb ahead. The path veers away from the fence and takes you over some stepping stones, with ramsons aplenty in springtime. It then goes by an unneeded stile, through a wooden barrier, across a meadow, then through a metal gate and up steps (in 2021 now restored) to the railway line. Cross the line carefully.



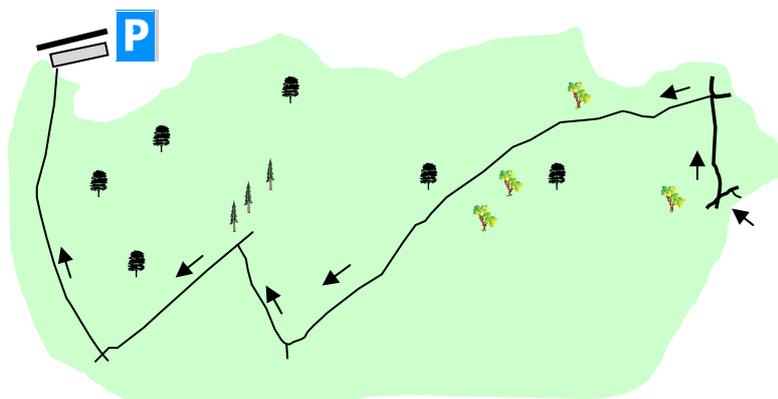
- 2 **See mini-map overleaf.** Your route goes through another metal gate, up the left-hand side of a meadow and through a large wooden gate, where it is worth looking back to admire the view of the area where you were walking. Continue uphill, up some steps under trees and through a wooden gate to a wide track. Turn **left** for just 5m and go **right** up more steps on a path beside a yew wood on the right (beside a tall wood carving on your



left). This is the steepest part of the walk and it is quite a relief to reach a stile on the left. Go over the stile, continue on the other side of the fence and immediately veer **left** up some steps. Just 10m before a wooden swing-gate at the tree line, turn **left** and take the **right** fork, the higher of two narrow paths that run along the contour of the hillside. Pass a gate and seat on the right and continue ahead on the higher path, close to trees on the right. Your path goes very gently uphill, with great views on the left of Dorking, Westcott and Leith Hill Tower. You pass another bench seat. *This is part of the Denbies Hillside Nature Trail, established by the National Trust.* Finally, you reach another bench and go through a wooden swing-gate. Turn **left** on the North Downs Way.



- 3 In 20m, at a fingerpost, turn sharp **right** on a diagonal crossing path. In exactly 100m, you approach a track at a curve. (On your right is a derelict entrance to what was once a scout camp.) Turn immediately **left** here on a narrow path* through woodland. [* Jun 2020: care! - now churned up and widened by brutal forestry work.]



Keep to the main path at all times (now much narrower after the section with forestry work), avoiding lesser paths branching off. In about 500m, take the **first definite right** turn with the path, avoiding a well-used forester's track on your left. 100m further on, turn **left** at a T-junction on a wide straight path running under tall scots pines. In 170m, you reach a crossing path. Turn **right** on the path which quickly takes you back to the car park where the walk began.

Westcott West

Do this section first if you are doing the **South** walk, omitting the North Downs.

With your back to the big triangular green in Westcott, turn **right** (west) on the main road. When you meet a junction with the old *Cricketers* on the left (now an Indian restaurant), fork **left** on Westcott Heath road, heading for Westcott Church visible ahead. *The Church of the Holy Trinity is early Victorian, built to a design by George Gilbert Scott.* Continue past the church, soon meeting the Greensand Way coming in from your left, as indicated by a signpost. In only 10m, ignore a dirt path on the right leading to the church yard but, immediately after, fork **right** on a footpath that takes you across the heath and grass, parallel to the lane you were on, with houses on your left. The path meets the lane again at a point where the lane loops sharp right. Cross over the lane to a wide track by a fingerpost [2018: [leaning against a tree](#)] and continue on a woodland path. This path takes you down through more woodland and, in 250m, reaches Rookery Drive opposite the gate house. Keep **left** between the brick pillars of Rookery Drive.

Now join the main walk from **Leg 2**.

Westcott East

Do this section at the end if you are doing the **North** walk, omitting Friday Street.

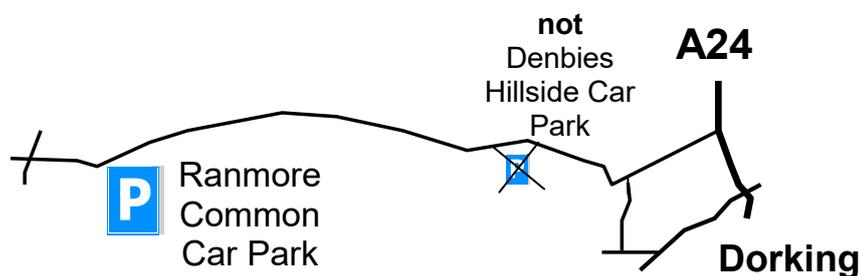
Ignore the brick pillars and Gate House of Rookery Drive and instead turn **left** at a fingerpost on a footpath into the woods, up shallow steps. (In 80m, if you choose the more comfortable right fork, be sure to go **left** up a bank in 30m.) In 250m you come out by a fingerpost [2018: [leaning against a tree](#)] to a tarmac lane. Cross straight over the lane to a path across the heath, parallel to the lane, with houses on your right. In 150m or so, the path meets the tarmac lane. Turn **left** on the lane, passing Westcott Church on your left. *The Church of the Holy Trinity is early Victorian, built to a design by George Gilbert Scott.* Continue till you meet the main road in Westcott with the old *Cricketers* on the right (now an Indian restaurant) and the big triangular green.

If you began in the **Ranmore Common** car park, turn **left** immediately after the *Prince of Wales* pub and resume the walk at **Leg 4**.

Getting there

By car: Ranmore Common Road is reached from **Dorking**. If coming on the A24 from Leatherhead, turn **right** just before Dorking, signposted *Guildford*, onto Ashcombe Road, keep straight ahead at a mini-roundabout and turn **right** at a T-junction signposted *Ranmore*. Follow the road, passing a junction on the right with the Denbies Hillside car park on your left (*not* your starting point!). Continue another mile to find the Ranmore Common car park on your **left**. (If you pass a junction with Hogden Road on your right, you have gone 200 yards too far.)

If coming from the **Guildford** direction on the A25, turn **left** as you enter Dorking, as for *London*, and keep left at a sign for *Ranmore*, continuing as in the paragraph above. (For the more adventurous, turn **left** off the A25 onto narrow White Down Lane just after Abinger Hammer, turn **right** at a crossroads onto Ranmore Common Road; the car park is $\frac{3}{4}$ mile on your right.)



By bus/train: bus 21, 22 or 32 from Dorking to Westcott. Check the timetables.

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