



White Down Bluebell Walk

Distance 3 km=2 miles, very easy walking

Region: Surrey

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Map: Explorer 146 (Dorking)

Woodland, bluebells, views



In Brief

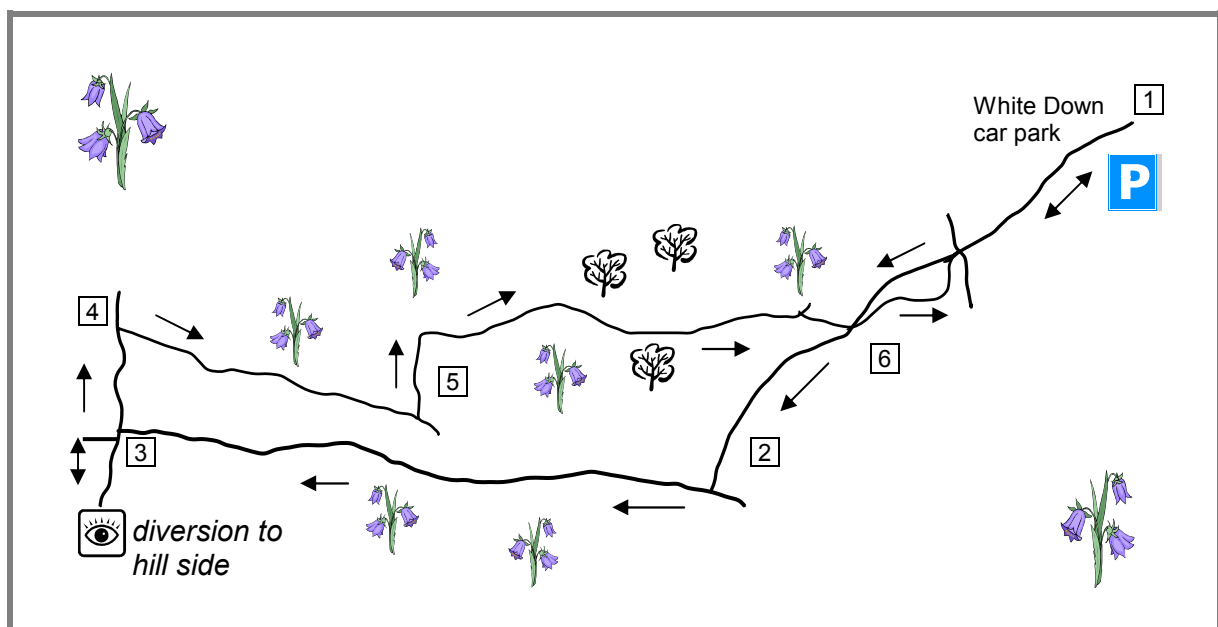


White Down (or White Downs) has one of the best displays of bluebells in Surrey, all concentrated within one area known as *Old Simms Copse*, an easy walk from the car park. The bluebells here come out a little early and the best time is around **1st May**, give or take a week either side. This little circular walk takes a lesser-known route through some of the most glorious glades.

This walk is fine for any type of clothing or footwear and dogs are welcome.


The walk begins at the **White Down car park**, grid ref 115 495, in White-down Lane north of Abinger, Surrey. To get there from the London area you can use the pastoral route at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



- 1 From the back of the car park, follow the main wide path for 250m and go straight over a crossing path. You should now be greeted by the first wide expanse of bluebells which will stay with you for nearly the whole walk. In about 250m, keep to the main track as it curves left. In another 250m, you reach a T-junction by the hillside where a wide level track comes in from the left.



 **2** Veer **right** on this track. Don't worry if you see few bluebells at first. Soon you are rewarded with woodland thick with bluebells. Keep to this wide track, avoiding any temptation to wander away on any of the side paths, for about 600m total, when you reach a T-junction by a finger-post. The route is **right** here on a wide path, ignoring the signed bridleway ahead.

3 *However, it is worth making a very short diversion here by turning **left** and through a gate out onto the open hillside of Blatchford Down where you have a stunning view of the valley below and to the greensand hills beyond.*



Leith Hill is to the left of the dip and the Hurt Wood to the right. The contrast with the secluded woodland is really striking. Now you need to retrace your steps past the fingerpost and keep straight on.

4 In just 100m, look out for a wooden post with a faded blue arrow pointing ahead. Turn **sharp right** here (not in the direction of arrow!) on a clear but narrower path. This path takes you for some distance through the very best of the bluebells. The path is nice and clear but it zig-zags right-left near the start and winds quite a lot. Just keep to the path all the time! After a total of 350m, you come to a 3-way junction with a little grassy triangle on the left. **Don't miss this junction!**



5 Turn **very sharp left** here. Some of the best of the bluebells are still to come. The path is nice and clear but it soon wheels right, winding a lot, and later runs beneath some fine large beeches. Stay on the main path all the time, avoiding vehicle tracks. Eventually, you will see a wide track ahead in the distance. This is the track that you took on the way out. Before you reach the track, ignore a left fork (a vehicle track going slightly downhill) and stay on the narrower path. Your path soon meets the track.



6 There is a nice way now of finishing the walk on a more interesting path close to the bluebells. Instead of going left on the rather rutted track, cross over it and up over a bank to a clear sandy path running parallel to the track, and turn **left** on it. In 80m, the narrow path veers **right**, away from the track, through the bluebells. Be careful where you tread! In another 100m you reach a fallen tree with its roots facing you. Your path bends round **left** here round a small yew tree, easy to miss! The path comes back to the track and you can re-join it, crossing back over the bank. Continue over the wide crossing path and you are soon back at the car park.



Getting there

Take the A3 to the M25 junction and leave the A3 there by the slip road, taking the middle lane. At the roundabout, go **straight ahead**, signposted *Guildford*, as though you had changed your mind and wanted to re-join the A3. In about 100m, leave the slip road by turning **left** onto a narrow road signposted *Effingham* that runs through the forest by a lake on the right. Follow the road all the way to a T-junction. Turn **right and immediately left** over a humpback bridge and past Effingham Junction station. Follow the road all the way to Bookham and Effingham villages, going straight ahead at two mini-roundabouts. Go over traffic lights over the main A246 and follow a rather narrow road that runs past some fine properties, down a valley and up again, and straightens and narrows even more to a crossroads (with Ranmore Common Road and Crocknorth Road) where you must **give way**. Go straight over. The White Down car park is 0.4 mile (600m) on the right.

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