



Greatham

Distance: 9½ km=6 miles or 6 km=3½ miles

easy walking

Region: Hampshire

Date written: 6-may-2020

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Last update: 27-feb-2021

Refreshments: Greatham

Map: Explorer 133 (Petersfield) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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Woodland, easy field paths, hills, views

In Brief

This is a walk taking you from a village on the edge of the great Woolmer Forest into the high “hangers” or sheer-sided hills which dominate this part of East Hampshire. Much of this walk is through woodland, with some more open sections with views.

This walk can be shortened to 6 km=3½ miles by taking a short cut at Brockbridge Farm, although that would miss one of the special delights on the walk (marked on the mini-map with heart symbols).



The *Greatham Inn* is a “wonderful little country pub”, providing a substantial menu and a selection of ales (ring 01420-538-016 to book or enquire).



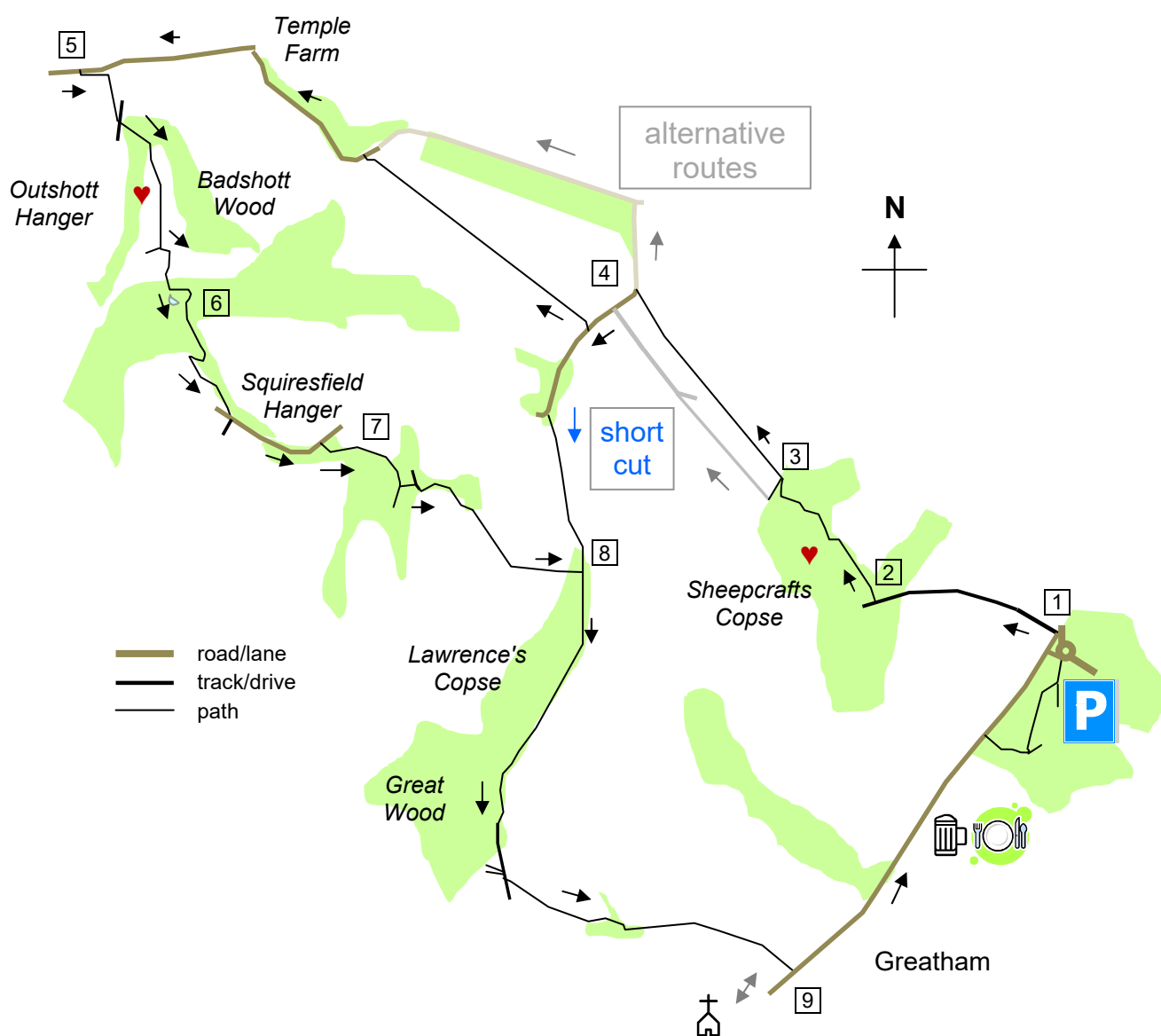
Boots are needed on this walk, even in summer, because of the woodland terrain and field paths. Although the undergrowth is not too high, there are sections where shorts would be uncomfortable. This walk would be fine for your dog if he is not too large.



The walk begins on the outskirts of **Greatham**, Hampshire. Begin at the small car park on the roundabout on the A325 road, nearest postcode **GU33 6AS**, www.w3w.co/ferried.plump.bathtubs, grid ref SU 783 316. The small car park is on your left as you go round the roundabout heading towards the east side of the village. It is popular with dog walkers and very obvious, although it is not signed. There is also space nearby in the village. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

The name "Greatham" comes from "gravel", a low-key name for what was once a manor and a small settlement on the edge of the vast Woolmer Forest, the king's favourite hunting ground from Norman times. Greatham has two churches, the Victorian church of St John the Baptist on the north side and opposite it the Old Church, dating from 1290 and now consisting only of the nave. The interior is dominated by the tomb of Dame Margery Caryll. Each Easter her alabaster effigy is garlanded with spring flowers in memory of her short-lived marriage to Sir Richard in 1610 and her own death from blood poisoning after pricking her finger whilst sewing. At the turn of the 1900s, the village around the new church was often thronged with soldiers on day leave from the Longmoor Camp and Railway (see the "Weavers Down" walk in this series). There is a book "A History of Greatham" written by Peter Gripton. If you would like to visit the Old Church, you can ring Alan Bridgman on 01420-538-029 or the office on 01420-538-436. For more general information, send an email to clerk@greatham-hants.org.uk.



- 1 Go out of the car park back to the roundabout and turn **left**, keeping straight ahead on a short minor road to a T-junction. Turn **right** into a cul-de-sac past cottages and turn **left** at a fingerpost onto a wide track known as *Benhams Lane*. After houses the track becomes shingle and you enter

woodland, passing *Ridges Green Cottage*. Immediately after the cottage, by a rather frayed signpost, turn **right** on a footpath.

2 The path runs across grass and along the generous left-hand side of a field. About 30m before the field corner, your path suddenly turns sharp **left** into the trees and **right** on a beautiful path through Sheepcrafts Copse, a woodland of tall oaks. As the field on your right ends, ignore a path that branches off right and continue through this woodland which, in late spring, has a good show of bluebells. The verdure changes to tall poplars and you come over two small bridges. Finally, a third bridge and a redundant stile lead out into a large field.

3 Your path is straight ahead across the field, on a path which runs about 20-30m from the right-hand edge, going over two large fields and a smaller one, ending at a plank bridge to a tarmac lane.

In June there was no problem but at the time of writing the path was obliterated from end to end by ploughing, but, should this problem recur, a very comfortable alternative is just a stone's throw away. Turn **left** along the edge for 50m and turn **right** on a chalky farm track across the centre of the field. (It seems likely this is what the farmer wants – better than walking through the crops? In the unlikely event that you are challenged, just say give us back our path!) You are joined from the right by an even wider farm track and finally you pass by the buildings of Brockbridge Farm and thence out to a tarmac lane.

Decision point. If you are doing the shorter 6 km=3 mile walk, skip to the section near the end of this guide called **Bradshott Bypass**. Otherwise, continue with the next numbered section.

4 Turn **left*** on the lane for 150m or so until, just before the end of the buildings, you see a large metal gate into the field, before a picture-perfect thatched cottage. Turn **right** through this gate and take a path straight ahead across the centre of the field (very dry at the time of writing, mainly planted with dried-up knee-high oil seed rape). The path follows a straight course, passing a copse on your right after 300m and then heading just to the right of a house in the distance. After another 400m, the path bends left up a bank, through a dense belt of undergrowth and bracken, over a plastic pipe (trip hazard!) and **right** on a track immediately reaching the road. Turn **left** on the road, passing *Smokey House*.

*At the time of writing the gate was padlocked requiring a hop-over. In June the path was walkable by following tractor marks. Should the path once again be ploughed up from end to end, a very easy alternative is to take the quiet lane: Turn **right** instead of left on the lane and follow it as it bends left. At a T-junction, turn **left** in the direction *Temple, Selborne*. The lane later curves left uphill and meets the end of the intended footpath just before *Smokey House*.

On your right you can see one of the golfball-shaped domes belonging to RAF Oakhanger (see the *"Kingsley and the Hangers"* walk in this series). At the top of the rise, you meet Temple Farm (so called because it once belonged to the *Knights Templar*). The road elbows left through this high fruit-growing country. Nearly 500m after the bend, you see a large house ahead. 100m before the house, turn sharp **left** at a signpost onto a narrow footpath going through a tall mesh gate.

5 Turn **left** again along the edge of the orchard and, in 70m, immediately before a tall lime hedge, turn **right** as directed by a yellow arrow on a marker post, so that the hedge is on your left. In 150m you meet a wide track. Cross straight over the track to another tall mesh gate leading on a path steeply down into trees, part of a great loop of woodland between Outshott Hanger and Bradshott Wood. You emerge onto the head of a picturesque valley with scattered large trees arranged as if landscaped for the pleasure of the view. Make your way on a faint path down the middle of the valley floor to meet a truncated 3-way fingerpost and a stile. If the ground is fairly dry, **instead** of going over the stile, it is best to turn **left** just **before** it and go **right** through a wide gap in the fence, now freed from its rusty gates. Follow a path across the grass into woods.



6 Your path zigzags to avoid a marshy bit and reaches a hidden pond which echoes with the plop! of fish and where kingfishers have been seen. The path steers you round to the left and right again for a closer meeting with the pond, then over two bridges and up into woods. [Feb 2021: the bridges here were “closed” because of loose planks (possibly because a well-meaning walker reported them): someone has built an earth/mud walkway which is perfectly safe and it seems walkers generally avoid the bridges this way and ignore the notice.] A flight of steps leads up in an area dense with ramsons in spring. A stile takes you briefly out into a crop field. Bear **right**, walking inside the edge of the wood, uphill, with great views left, leading to a modern kissing-gate. Here your path turns **right** to meet a crop field and doubles back **left**. A squeezable kissing-gate leads out to tarmac Bradshott Lane. Turn **left** on the lane, ignoring the footpath straight ahead. The wildflower verge soon yields to a view of Squiresfield Hanger with its unusual oasts (this was once hop-growing country). Just after the lane curves left, go **right** on a wide signed path, ignoring the steps just to the left.



7 You come out through a large metal gate [care! heavy and liable to fall] onto a high meadow of rough grass. The path runs along the right-hand edge, crossing under wires, with the woodland closing in on both sides. You come through a gap by a redundant stile with yellow arrows. Turn **left** here, going down a flight of shallow steps. At the bottom, on a farm track, turn **right** to a farm gate and immediately **left** on a path by a wire fence running beside the large field on your right. The path zigzags over a bridge with a rail and comes out into a large field. Follow the **right**-hand edge of the field for nearly 200m to where the edge bends sharply away right. At this point, turn **left** across the centre of the field, following a tractor track at first, quickly picking up a grassy track. At the other side, the path leads through a band of trees to meet a crossing path which runs along the band of trees. Turn **right** on this path, going past a redundant stile.

[The shorter 6 km=3 mile walk joins the main walk at this point.](#)

8 Follow this long woodland path through Lawrence’s Copse, a habitat for grass snakes and slowworms. There are a few muddy patches in the Great Wood, fairly easy to bypass. After a bridge with rail the path becomes a tarmac drive. In 100m, ignore two fingerposts on the right but, immediately after them, go **left** over a plank bridge and through a modern kissing-gate. Your path bears right across a meadow of tall grass. At the other side, another modern kissing-gate and a bridge-with-rail lead past a large wooden gate on your left, continuing on a narrow path through woodland. You come out into a large field. Follow the right-hand edge, keeping to the **left** of a line of trees. Finally the path runs beside a low fence and a horse

paddock, coming out to the road in Greatham. Your route is **left** on the road. But to see the old and new churches and other historic buildings in this extremely linear village, you would need to walk first to the right.

9



Having turned **left** on the road, you soon pass the *Greatham Inn*. *The Inn is well regarded by walkers as “very friendly” and having “good pub grub”.* After a temporary pause during the 2020 situation (when it acted as a shop) it is now fully open. You need to switch to the other side to regain the footway. On your left shortly is the antique timbered *Welldiggers Cottage*. Just before a side road (Silver Birch “Mews”), turn **right** on a signed footpath into woods. After ascending a slope, keep **left** at a fork on the more level path. This path runs through pine woods, meets wider paths from the right and arrives back at the car park where the walk began.

On the other side of the roundabout, on the right, not part of this walk, is a path leading into Woolmer Forest. A right turn after 100m will lead you across the peripheral road, through a kissing-gate, into the wide spaces of this vast nature reserve, for additional exploration. (See the walk “Woolmer Forest and Weavers Down” in this series.)

Bradshott Bypass

Take this route if you are doing the shorter 6 km=3 mile walk.

Turn **left** along the lane, passing the large Brockbridge Farm buildings and that quaint thatch which reminds you of how the landscape used to be in centuries past. Just before another house, *Snap House*, on a bend, go **left** at a signpost on a wide path. The path leads over stile either side of a farm track (the first stile being avoidable). Follow this long path through a strip of woodland. In 400m, you meet a path coming from a field on your right. Continue straight on, going over a redundant stile.

Now re-join the main walk at section 8.

Getting there

By car: Greatham is clearly marked from the A3 trunk road. Come off at a sign for *Farnham, Bordon, Greatham*. Follow the A325 for ½ mile to another roundabout. The car park is **first on the left**, directly at the roundabout. If the car park is full, go straight ahead on a minor road and park in the village.

By bus/train: bus 38 from Alton or Petersfield . Check the timetables.

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