



Hawkley and the Hangers Way

Distance: 8 km=5 miles

easy walking

Region: Hampshire

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Author: Botafuego

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Refreshments: Hawkley

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, meadows, views, wooded hills

In Brief

This is a heavenly woodland walk under the wooded hills (or “hangers”) of this secluded part of East Hampshire. It begins in Hawkley village, calling in at the charming *Hawkley Inn* near the end. (For reservations, ring 01730 827205.) In between you will see only a few green meadows and woods where in late spring ramsons (wild garlic) grow in profusion, wafting their scent. The only other people you meet are likely to be walking part of the Hangers Way, a long-distance footpath.



?? There are some nettles and brambles on this walk in summer. Boots are *a/ways* advisable, especially in the wetter seasons, because of muddy patches, although most of the walk was firm underfoot at the time of writing. Your dog can come on this walk if he is not too big because almost all the stiles have a gap or a dog gate.



This route can be walked as a central link of the *Hampshire Hangers Chain*, giving you a long walk through Steep or Froxfield or Selborne.

The walk begins in the village of **Hawkley, Hampshire, postcode GU33 6NF**, grid ref 745292. Park by the Upper Green near the church or, if spaces are in short supply, try a little further along the road. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

You won't find Hawkley in the Norman Domesday Book because it was part of the parish of Newton Valence (see the “Selborne” walk in this series). Two things dominate this quiet village: Hawkley Hanger and the other hills that draw ramblers to the village. William Cobbett (of “Rural Rides”) wrote around 1830 “Never in all my life was I so surprised and so delighted. I pulled up my horse and sat and looked, and it was like looking from the top of a castle down into the sea, except that the valley was land and not water.” Gilbert White of Selborne surveyed Hawkley Hanger as part of his “Natural History”. The other point of focus is the Church of St. Peter & St. Paul, designed in Rhenish style in about 1865 by Samuel Sanders Teulon.

- 1 Walking beside the green away from the church, follow the main road, signposted *Oakshott, Priors Dean, Wheatham*. Only 50m after the green, turn **right** on a concrete drive signposted as the *Hangers Way* and a bridleway. The drive runs behind gardens and becomes a path along the right-hand side of a field with Hawkley Hanger visible ahead. *This path may be rather muddy in some seasons; however, the mud will never be as bad as this for the rest of the walk.* Your path enters woodland and reaches a 3-way fingerpost. Turn **right**, still following the Hangers Way (HW).



The Link from the *High Hampshire Hangers* walk joins here.

- 2 You are on a wide woodland path beneath the high hanger and soon the village of Hawkley can be seen again through a gap in the trees on your right. *You may encounter people out shooting in season, here or later in the walk, so make your presence known: it's only polite!* After taking you under yews, maples and pines, your path gradually descends and then rises again with a steep drop on your right, veering left, then right again. After nearly 1 km in the wood, you come to a marker post and a junction of paths on your right. Turn **right** here, still on the HW.
- 3 Your path immediately bends left parallel to your original direction. Here, ignore a signposted footpath on your right and stay on the path just inside the wood, now under some tall beeches. The path leaves the woods, runs beside a meadow and reaches a wooded stream valley. At a 3-way fingerpost, keep straight ahead. Your path takes you down steps (careful!), over a bridge and

up again, then through a wooden gate and along the left-hand side of a meadow. In the far corner, at a fingerpost, turn **right** in the meadow (some walkers cut the corner). At a 3-step stile (unnecessary if the gate is open), continue along the left-hand side of the next pasture. In the next corner, go **left** through a wooden gate and **left** on a tarmac lane, passing a pond and weeping willows of Vann Farm.

- 4 After 200m, just after a rise, turn **right** onto a signposted footpath, still on the HW. Immediately pass through a new metal kissing gate and along the left-hand side of a meadow. Go through another new metal kissing gate next to a large metal gate. Continue straight ahead between string fences and pastures with Noar Hill Hanger, spectacular in autumn, looming up on your left. At the other side, go through yet another new metal kissing gate to a lane. Turn **right** on the lane immediately crossing a footbridge beside a ford [[wet winter 2014: here and later, the fords may be fast flowing!](#)].



Decision point. If you want to take the next **Link** in the **Hampshire Hangers Chain**, turn immediately **left** through a metal kissing-gate on a footpath marked as the HW. Keep right to another kissing-gate and go up the centre of the pasture in the direction of the signpost to go through a kissing-gate visible on the edge of the woods ahead. Go up steeply through beeches and yews. At the top, by a fingerpost, turn **left** on a wide path, ignore a second fingerpost and go straight on to the right of a marker post with a yellow arrow. Now pick up the *Selborne Common and Noar Hill* walk at section [5](#). Otherwise ...

Ignore a footpath on your left, thus leaving the HW.



The Link from the *Selborne Common and Noar Hill* walk joins here.

- 5 The lane passes Alderney Stud and Riding Centre. Just before a thatched cottage, turn **right** on a wide path signposted as a byway by a sign for *Rother House*. This shady earthy track leads down in about 500m to another lane. Turn **right** on the lane. In 60m turn sharp **left** at a fingerpost (*easily missed*). This footpath goes over a bridge across a stream, the infant River Rother. Cross a stile and turn **left** to go over another stile, or through a metal gate, and along the right-hand side of a sloping pasture. Go over a stile close to the boundary fence and continue in the next pasture with the steep woods of Lane Copse on your right. *You may meet some horned sheep here.* After another open gate (making the stile and small wooden gate unnecessary), your path enters a rougher meadow, still with the steep woods on your right. You now enter a wood of poplars and beeches. Another stile takes you into a more open area and to a small wooden swing-gate with a large open meadow beyond.
- 6 Go through the gate, over a stile, avoid the path straight ahead and instead turn immediately **right** along the edge of the meadow. At the top, go through a large metal gate (lifting a chain) onto a wide path uphill through trees. Your path becomes sunken, then levels out a bit as you pass a wooden gate on your left. Finally, you pass brick sheds and come to a house, *Mabbotts Farm* (which offers B&B). Turn very sharp **left** here on a downhill path, almost doubling back, going past a metal gate.
- 7 Near the bottom, avoid a path that forks right and keep left on a narrower path. Your path crosses a stream and goes through a wooden swing-gate. Keep ahead now up the centre of a sloping bracken-filled meadow. At the far side, your path enters woods via another wooden swing-gate. Now keep straight on beside a wide fence on your right. Your path curves right past the remains of a bench. You need to follow this narrow but fairly straight and

thrilling path through the wood for some distance, with the steep Adams Wood on your right. On part of the way, there is a wire fence on your left. The fallen trees, a legacy from the storms of a few years back, have all been nicely cleared for you. You pass a small noticeboard showing a permissive path on your left: ignore it. Your path curves right at a wooden swing-gate and out into a meadow. As you go over the brow of the hill, you have terrific views ahead to the left of the South Downs.



- 8 Keep to the right-hand side of this heavenly green grassland and, at the far side go through two wooden gates. Stay on the right to go via a large metal gate into more woods. Your uphill path may seem like a stiff climb here at the end of the walk. At the top, you have a stile or a metal gate which takes you into another pasture. Turn **left** along the edge, and stay on the edge, soon passing through two more metal gates. (These gates may be a little stiff but you must be sure to close them because of the livestock.) [May-Aug 2022: some walkers could not unbolt one gate and had to climb over: further feedback please!] Follow the path through a new stile, then round the left edge of the final pasture, to go over another stile beside a large wooden gate. Turn **right** on a tarmac lane.
- 9 In 50m, turn **left** onto a narrow footpath beside a metal gate, soon running by a sheep pasture (nicely cleared of undergrowth since this guide was first drafted). At the other side, you come out to a road. Cross straight over to a lane opposite, Pococks Lane, signposted *Village centre, Upper Green*. This lane quickly takes you to the *Hawkley Inn*, a worthy final watering hole and worth the trip (taken by many, even from a distance away).



*The Hawkley Inn is a great pull and you may find it crowded, as witness all the family cars and 4x4s parked lazily along the road. It announces itself as a "Free Hoose" and promises "a touch of theatre". The longest resident is the moose whose head has peered down from above the fireplace for nearly 30 years. Most remarkable is the number of beer and cider dispensers, twelve in all, so there is no point in listing the brews which vary according to the whim of the moose. Food is a matter of pride and the chefs will even come out to talk to you or prepare a special dish if you request it. An important matter: if you are a large group, they ask you to order **and pay** as a group if possible. Booking is advisable: ring 01730 827205.*

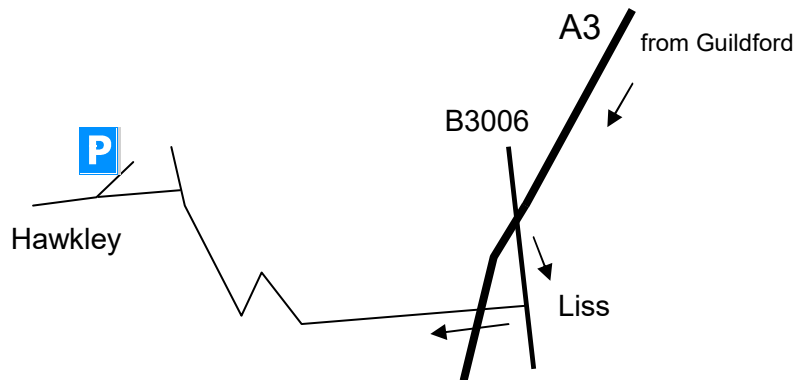
After possible refreshment, continue along Pococks Lane soon reaching the Upper Green where the walk began.



Decision point. If you want to take the next **Link** in the **Hampshire Hangers Chain**, turn **left** at the first corner of the green on a tarmac drive for Cheescombe Farm, marked as a cul-de-sac, and start the *High Hampshire Hangers* walk.

Getting there

By car: Hawkley is easy to reach from the A3 road. To get there from the direction of London or Guildford, follow the A3 about 5 miles=8 km beyond Liphook, as far as the big roundabout at a diagonal intersection with the B3006 road. Fork **left** at the roundabout signposted *Liss*. In 1 km=.6 mile, immediately after the *Spread Eagle* pub, turn **right** at a brown tourist sign and an old signpost for *Hawkley*. In 3 km=2 miles, at a 3-way signpost, turn **left** in the direction of *Village Centre, Upper Green*. At the green turn **right** and park near the church.



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