Fancy Free Walks

point your feet on a new path

Newdigate and Capel

Distance: 8 km=5 miles — easy walking

Region: Surrey — Date written: 5-may-2019

Author: Zweigknospe — Date Revised: 23-apr-2020

Refreshments: Capel, Newdigate — Last update: 24-may-2026

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

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Villages, secret woodland paths, bluebells, green meadows

In Brief

The author planned this walk on the first Sunday of May, whilst the bluebells were still on show in the woods, and enjoyed it enough to decide to write it up and illustrate it *on the same day as the walk*, ready for the Monday Bank Holiday. It is a real delight, whatever the season, with an alternating sequence of woodland paths and lush green meadows. The walk completely avoids the busy roads by finding unexpected paths, some unmapped. For the weeks of late spring, there is a slightly longer "bluebell" route, open during that season, which takes you through some local glades well known by local people but unused by outsiders.

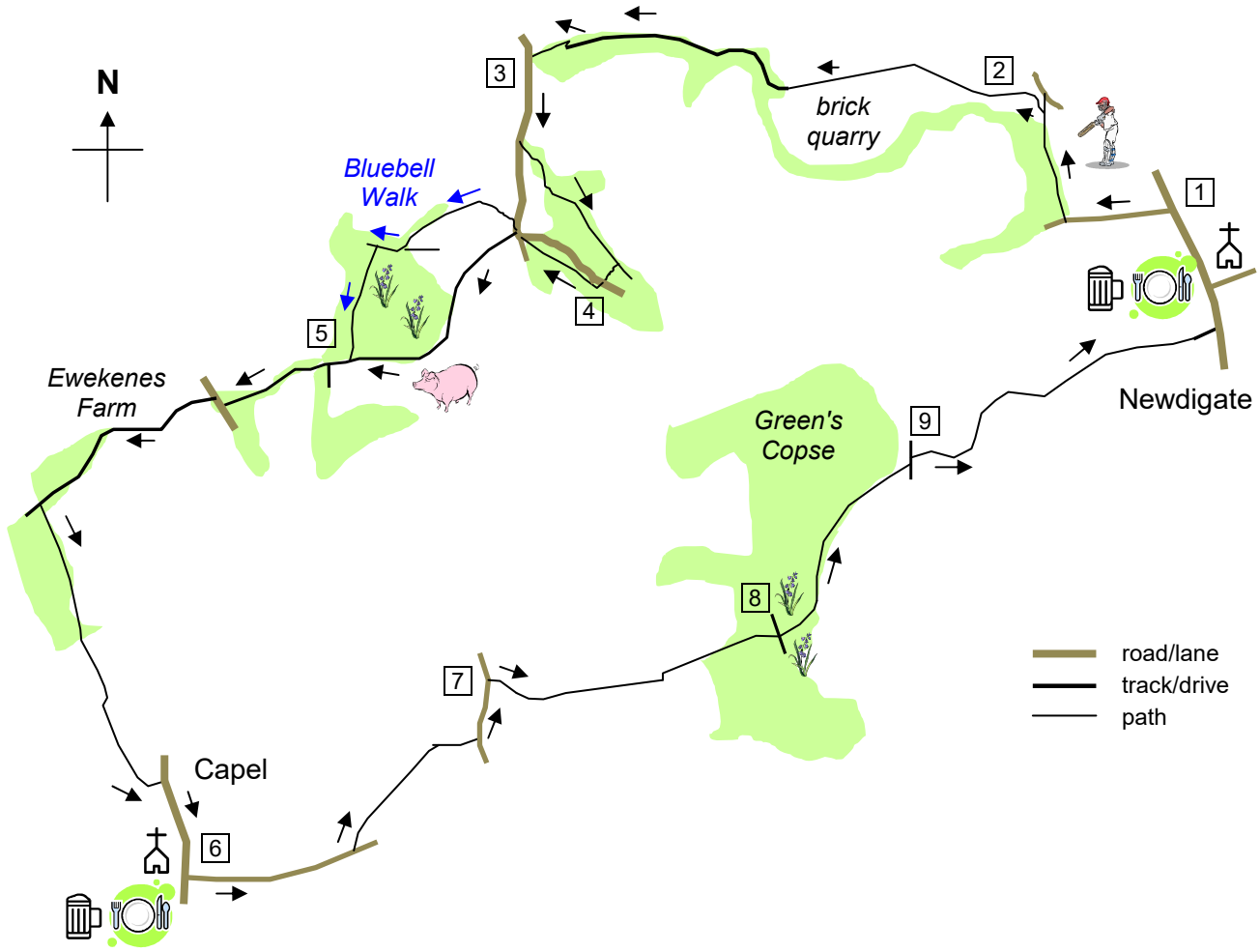
Each village has an ancient church and an iconic country pub. (To enquire at the *Six Bells*, ring 01306 631276; for the *Crown*, ring 01306-713250.) (May 2026: the *Six Bells* has recently changed hands and they do not offer food at present.)

There are very few nettles to worry bare legs although they might increase in high summer. Paths are generally wide and were quite dry at the time of writing; but there was quite a bit of dried mud on the bridleway, indicating that boots would be preferred in less clement weather. With only a short stretch along a main road (using a footway) and one field of (distant) live-stock, this walk will suit your dog too, and he is welcome in the pubs.

The start of the walk has been placed in **Newdigate**, Surrey, postcode **RH5 5DH**, w3w:moral.impose.mercy. But you could equally well begin in **Capel**, Surrey, postcode **RH5 5JY**, w3w:serves.issues.only, as the route is fairly symmetrical in terms of distance and interest. (The author found parking quite easy in Newdigate, either in the Village Street or in Church Road.) For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

Some interesting historical information about Newdigate, its church and pub, can be found in the sister walk "Newdigate and Glover's Wood".



1 Walk along the main road in Newdigate with the *Six Bells* on your left and the church on your right, until you reach a side junction signposted *Capel, Beare Green*. Turn **left** on this road (Kingsland) and follow it for over 200m, passing the sports club and one more house on your right. Turn **right** now at a fingerpost to go through a wooden kissing-gate and onto a public footpath. The path goes close to the Bowls Club pavilion on your right and then runs along the left-hand side of the cricket pitch (which may be for a different sport in winter). At a marker post, ignore a path that forks right and stay on the edge of the green. When you reach the new cricket pavilion at the far end, keep **right**, curving past the front of the building and immediately go **left** round the corner of the pavilion. Keep straight ahead on a flagstone path past wooden outbuildings on your left and keep ahead on a woodland path. Keep **left** shortly to avoid a tarmac road on your right.

2 Avoid a small metal gate on your right and follow the brambly hedge, going through a gap at the end, by a redundant stile, into another larger meadow, still with a hedge on your right. At the far end, an unneeded stile leads into a crop field, where a path leads across the centre. (If the path has been obliterated, just walk parallel to the left-hand edge, heading to the left of a large tree.) At the other side, go over a stile and through a large wooden

gate* *(note the antique penalty notice on the other side)* and turn **right** on a wide track. (*Strictly, the footpath wheels **right** before the gate and goes **left** over a stile, but the nice new gate is so convenient.) You pass a small reedy pond on your right with resident ducks as your wide track curves left. *On your left, completely unseen, is a large quarry where the brickworks still operate; a source of the village's wealth in the past where the Wealden clay yielded materials to rebuild London after the 1666 Great Fire.* After about 500m on this track, you will see a large metal gate on your right coming from a track in a field. (This is just as the track ahead begins to curve left.) Go sharp **right** here, almost doubling back a little, and over a stile and 2-plank bridge into what appears to be the delightful back garden of a house. *Don't miss this turn which is easy to overlook!* Your path turns immediately **left**, takes you through a small wooden gate and follows a charming narrow course, over a 3-plank bridge, reaching a main road.

3 Turn **left** on the main road, using the footway. After less than 200m, the footway peters out. Fork **left** now at a fingerpost, up steps onto a footpath. The path winds its way through woodland, giving you a glimpse of the works down below. As you pass a wire fence on your left with warning notices, ignore a path that branches off right and keep straight ahead through dense pines. You come down steps and over several two-plank bridges, and enter a forest of tall dusky pines. About 350m from the start of this footpath, you see just ahead a two-plank bridge followed by **two steps** leading out of the pines into a lighter area. Do not proceed further but, 5m **before** this landmark, turn **right** on an unmarked narrow path. *Do not miss this vital turn: it is has obviously been walked by local people but it is rather obscure.* The path snakes its way to the main road.

4 Carefully cross the road and take a signposted footpath opposite. The path wheels right and runs parallel to the main road on your right. In 150m, at a minor fork, keep **right** to go over a 3-plank bridge and shortly a low stile [2019: avoidable due to a broken fence], taking you to a road junction. Cross straight over Misbrooks Green Road and go ahead beside the Newdigate Road for only 5m where a signpost points left to a bridleway.

In bluebell time (roughly early-to-mid April for four weeks), there is now a stunning option to take in a local **Bluebell Walk**, with a minimal increase in distance. The path is always open, so this walk is in fact fine in any month. [→ → June 2023: walkers reported a *private no entry* notice.]

Bluebell Walk. Ignore the bridleway on your left, go another 20m and turn **left** at a yellow arrow through a modern kissing-gate. Follow the path round the right-hand perimeter of this large meadow and, in the distant corner, go through a kissing-gate. Continue to a fingerpost and bear **right** on a beautiful wide woodland path. In only 50m, look left for a junction with a prominent but unsigned path. Turn **left** here. This path leads through an area of extensive bluebells and finally zigzags to lead you through a small wooden gate. (The "Private" notice on the final gate correctly indicates that this is not a public footpath; it seems use is tacitly permitted to walkers during the bluebell season.) Turn **right** now on a wide bridleway. Skip to the next numbered section. Otherwise …

Turn **left** on the bridleway, lined with rhododendrons. You pass between meadows and through metal gates either side of a private track. On your left soon is a piggery. On your right, in late spring, the woods are blanketed with bluebells. After 500m on this wide path, you pass a small wooden gate on your right. (This is where the Bluebell Walk re-joins the main walk.)

5 Immediately after a redundant metal gate, keep straight ahead and shortly ignore a bridleway on your left at a 3-way fingerpost. This pleasant woodland highway finally leads out to a road. Turn **right** on the road and immediately go **left** on a semi-tarmac driveway signed to Ewekenes Farm and marked as a footpath. Soon you reach this ancient farm (whose name seems to date it as pre-Saxon) and the old sign here leads to speculation that this might be the course of a dismantled railway. Continue past the historic barns. About 200m after you leave the farm behind you, you will notice the start of a large wood on your left. Immediately before the wood, go **left** through a large metal gate and follow a lush green path running beside the wood on your right. You pass a rustic bench seat, ideal for a breather and to admire the landscape. You come through another bluebell dell, over a plank bridge. After a section along the right-hand side of a small meadow, your path leads you **right** over stile and a 3-plank bridge into a large pasture. Turn **left** along the edge, heading for the spire of Capel church in the distance, soon passing the first houses of Capel on your left. There may be some cattle in this field but they are very docile and well used to people: simply keep to the left-hand edge. Just as the edge curves right, after a house with black shiplap timbers, turn **left** at a post with a yellow arrow [Dec 24: grounded] over a 3-plank bridge and through a modern kissing-gate, along a path to the road in Capel. Turn **right** to reach the medieval church and the historic Crown Inn.

Capel used to be called "Ewekerne" after the farm you passed. Its present name simply indicates "chapel" i.e. a chapel of ease, connected to Dorking, before it became a parish. The old church of St John The Baptist, with its wooden tower (compare Newdigate's) is delightfully well-tended with flowers by the villagers. A historic centre for Quakers has existed in Capel since the movement began, with an important Friends Meeting House in the village. The Quakers also organise outdoor meets in the village with other local "green" groups to demonstrate "sustainable living", planting a community orchard.

6 Opposite the church of St John The Baptist, take the side road signposted *Charlwood, Newdigate*. Ignore a footpath on the right and continue for over 300m total to where the road goes over a stream bridge. Immediately after the stream, turn **left** on a signed footpath beside the stream. Shortly, ignore a bridge on your left leading to playing fields. Your path runs beside a paddock and another pasture. After a wooden barrier, turn **right** on a tarmac drive. At the end, go over a stile or through the large metal gate, out to a road. Turn **left** on the road.

7 Shortly, you reach the ancient Mizbrook Farm. Turn **right** here on a sign-posted footpath, a wide grassy track between hedges. Keep **right** at a false fork (avoiding a field gate) and go over a stile, or through a loose metal gate, into a meadow. Keep to the left-hand edge. After nearly 200m, you reach a large metal gate on your left where you can see the start of a new meadow. Go **left** through the gate or over the adjacent stile and then immediately **right** so you are walking in the same direction but on the other side of the hedge. In the corner, go over a (rather high) stile into woods, over a 2-plank bridge, through shrubbery and over a private crossing track at a 2-arm fingerpost. In late springtime, this open area is a sea of bluebells.

8 Your path goes through a mature beechwood, over a 2-plank bridge and curves right, taking you through a metal kissing-gate and out into a large meadow at a 3-way fingerpost. Turn immediately **left** along the edge soon going over a ditch. As you follow the long sweep of this meadow edge, you may

see an occasional deer as they escape through a gap from the big wood on your left. At the top, go through a modern kissing-gate onto a track.

9 Turn **left** on the track and immediately **right** at a 3-way fingerpost. Go over a 2-plank bridge and through a metal kissing-gate. Your path soon leads along the right-hand side of a meadow. In the corner, go through another kissing-gate and over a 2-plank bridge into a crop field (rape at the time of writing). Turn **left** at a 3-way fingerpost and proceed along the edge. Ignore a bridge and footpath on the left and stay beside the field. In the corner, go over a 3-plank bridge next to a 2-arm fingerpost and along the left-hand side of the next field. At the far side, go through a modern kissing-gate and straight ahead on a farm track *(note the tree house)* and bear **left** through a kissing-gate to the road in Newdigate. Turn **left** to the church and the *Six Bells* where the walk began.

After the walk, if you are in Capel, Dorking Brewery is situated in Aldhurst Farm, very near on Temple Lane. They open the tap room to visitors on Saturdays. The farm has a tea room and you can picnic and park there.

Getting there

By car: both Newdigate and Capel are easily reached from the A24 (Dorking-Horsham) road. For **Newdigate**, come off just before the first large roundabout after the Holmwoods, and follow the signs. For **Capel**, the turning is a little further, on the roundabout itself. Park near the church in either case.

By bus/train: Bus 22 or Metrobus 21 from Dorking stations. Check the timetables.

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