



Cranleigh to the Church in the Woods

Distance: 22 km=14 miles

easy but lengthy walking

Region: Surrey, West Sussex

Date written: 15-apr-2010

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Date revised: 11-sep-2011

Refreshments: Rudgwick, Walliswood

Last update: 2-apr-2021

Map: Explorer 134 (Horsham)

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

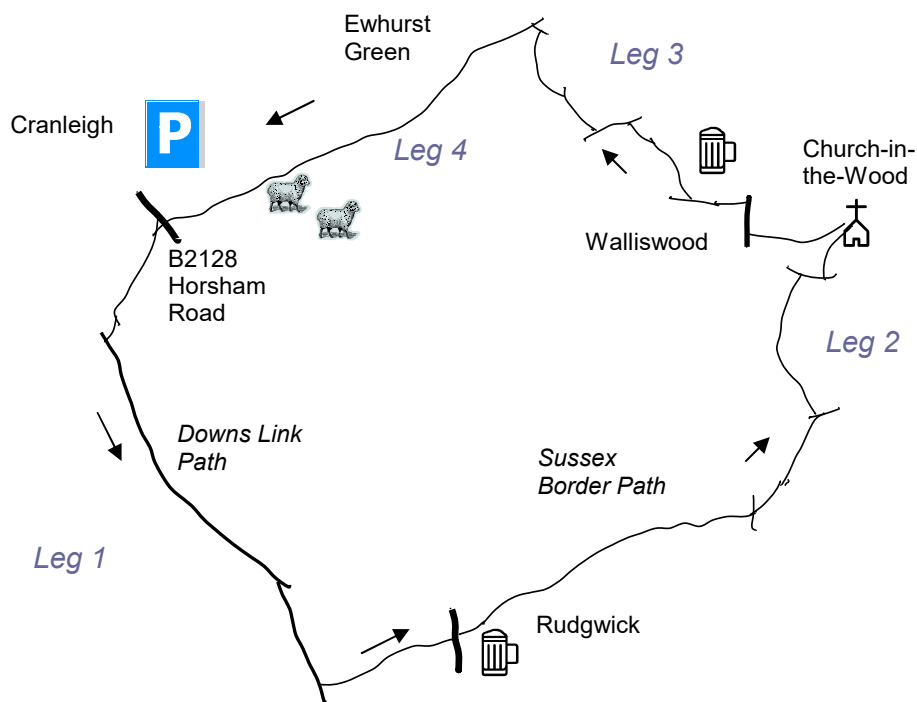
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Green meadows, disused railway, woodland, hidden church

In Brief

This is a bracing circular walk, mainly in Surrey, with long easy stretches and a few shorter intricate sections. As always in this series, there are hardly any ploughed fields, just lovely grassy meadows separated by occasional woodland. At the half-way point, as if on a pilgrimage, you reach the Church-in-the-Woods at Oakwood.

Bird's Eye View





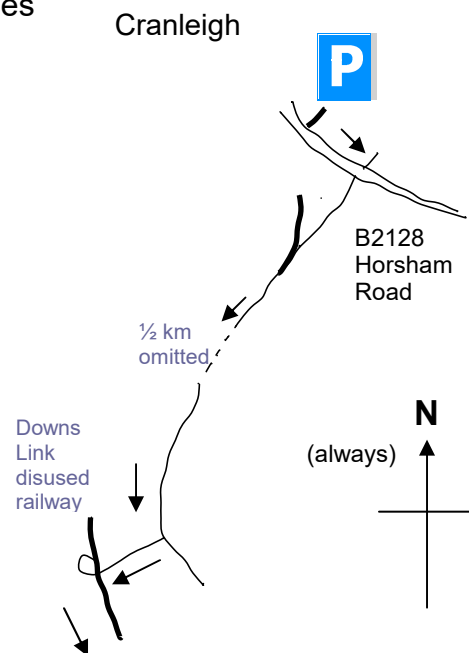
There are one or two patches of nettles on this walk. There are just a few muddy patches, so good boots are advisable. The stile count is low until Oakwood, when it becomes high, and some stiles are broken. This is a good walk for a small dog that can manage the stiles.

The walk begins on the outskirts of **Cranleigh**, Surrey, just off the B2128 Horsham Road. Park considerately in Grove Road, **postcode GU6 7LH**. This is the last road on the left before the open countryside. It is opposite a bus stop and just before the imposing iron gates to the Vachery. Another good starting point is in **Walliswood**, Surrey, **post-code RH5 5RD**, in the car park opposite the *Scarlett Arms*, putting the midday refreshments in Rudgwick at the centre (start at Leg 3). For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

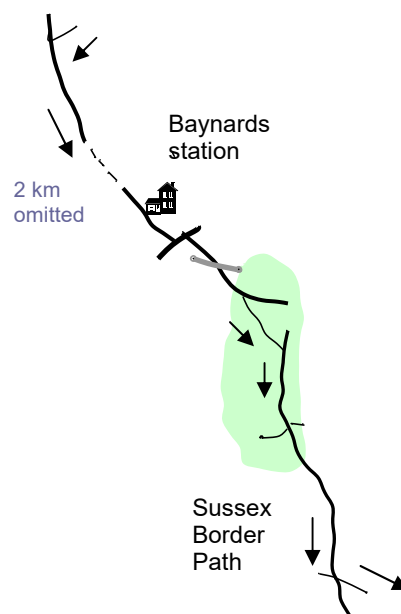
Leg 1: Cranleigh to Rudgwick 6 km=4 miles

- 1 Continue along the Horsham Road out of town, past the iron gates to the Vachery. After 50m, turn **right** on a bridleway. The bridleway crosses a concrete drive and later joins it. After some distance, the drive curves left by a fine row of tall pines. Turn **right** here at a 3-way fingerpost onto a narrow concrete drive. The drive takes you under the arch of the disused railway, now the Downs Link Path. Turn left onto this high path by turning sharp **right** after the arch and **right** again at the top.



- 2 The Downs Link Path crosses the Cobblers Brook by a bridge, later another bridleway between green gates by a pond; later it passes a footpath on the right, then a crossing footpath and then passes houses on the right. Next comes Baynards Station with its station building, old advertising posters and information board.

The Guildford-Horsham railway line was opened in 1865. Originally no station was planned at Baynards but the owner of Baynards Park, a Rev. Thurlow, engaged in some "horse-trading" to persuade the London & Brighton Couth Coast Railway Company to build one. The line was axed in 1965 by the Beeching review. The station is now a private residence.



After Baynards, the route zig-zags **left** on the lane and quickly **right** before the gates of *Thurlow Lodge*. The path then goes under a road bridge and meets a junction with a bridleway left. Keep straight ahead here on a narrower path that crosses an open area, goes up steps and over two small bridges and comes to a T-junction. Turn **right** at the T-junction. *You are now on the Sussex Border Path (SBP), a long-distance path running from Rye in the east to Emsworth in the west.* In late spring, the woods here are thick with bluebells. You reach a seat with a junction on the right bearing the SBP waymarker.



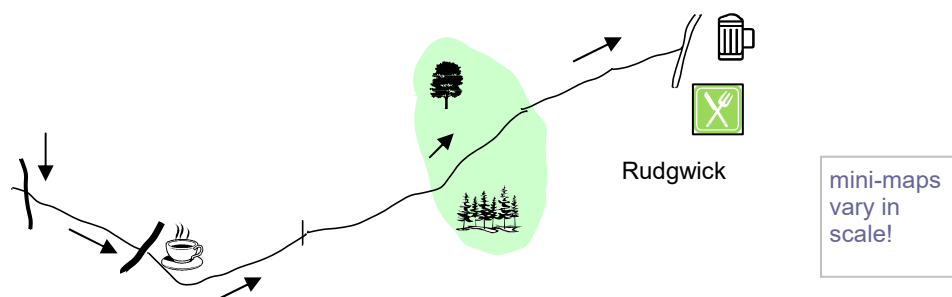
The **Rudgwick Monster** turns **right** on the SBP here, thus leaving this text.

3

Ignore the right branch, thus leaving the SBP. [2020: this path is very narrow; as an alternative, take a newly-cut path, going to its **right**. Follow this path and turn **left** in front of a seat. At a 3-way fingerpost, turn **right** to re-join the intended route, skipping the next sentence.] At the next junction with two unneeded stiles, also keep straight ahead. The path now meets the disused railway again as it emerges on the left from an old tunnel. After 300m you come to a crossing path. Turn **left** here. The path goes across a meadow, slightly right, with a café (see below) visible on the left, to a lane via a farm gate. The Milk Churn serves excellent coffee and snacks; try the Sussex Charmer cheese-on-toast; it also has a loo.] Cross the lane, go over a stile opposite, along the left side of two meadows, through a belt of trees, and along the left side of the next meadow. Exit the meadow in the far left corner. on a renovated path, following a new waymarker, into the wood. Follow the path leftwards through the wood, blue-carpeted in the bluebell season. The path goes over a 2-plank bridge, climbs some steps and ascends by a fence where it has paving stones and comes out into Rudgwick, West Sussex, opposite the *Kings Head* and the Holy Trinity church.



WC



The Kings Head specialises in “Italian and Continental Cuisine” and is a good place for a drink and a very satisfactory meal. But, remember, you have only done one of the four legs so far.

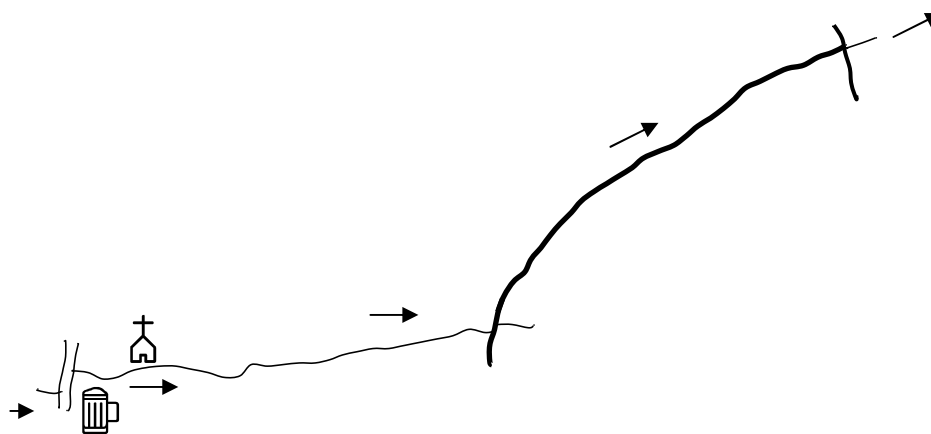
The name “Rudgwick”, originally “Regwick”, means “farm on the ridge”. Rudgwick was a poor Wealden community living off pig droving. The Holy Trinity church was built around 1260. The parish has no less than 90 timber-framed buildings. Millions of years ago this area lay on the shore of a huge lake and the clay that subsequently formed is now excavated by the brickworks. In 1985, they dug up some bones of a unique dinosaur named “Polacanthus Rudgwickensis”.

Leg 2: Rudgwick to Walliswood 8 km=5 miles

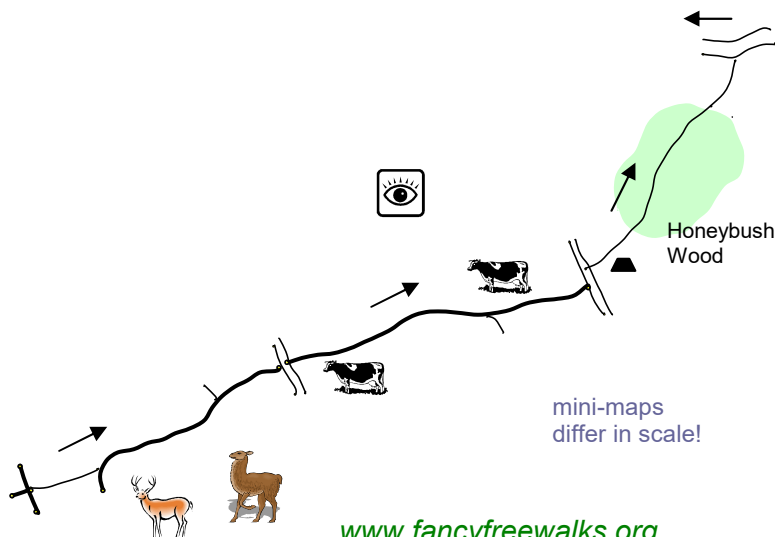


The **Rudgwick Monster** re-joins the walk here.

- 1 With the *Kings Head* on your **left**, take a new tarmacked path with white markings and a *Public Footpath* sign. Go through a gate up to the church and go past it on your left, to a swing gate marked *Sussex Border Path* which you have re-joined. Follow the path through more gates to a narrow lane and turn **left** on it. Continue ahead on a track and go over a stile to a well-surfaced track by a 4-way fingerpost. Turn **left** on the track, thus temporarily leaving the SBP (it goes straight ahead but on a rather roundabout route with little gain.) Follow the track as it curves right and comes to a junction with a 3-way fingerpost. Avoiding the avenue driveway on your right, re-join the SBP by going straight ahead over a stile and along the right-hand side of a large meadow.

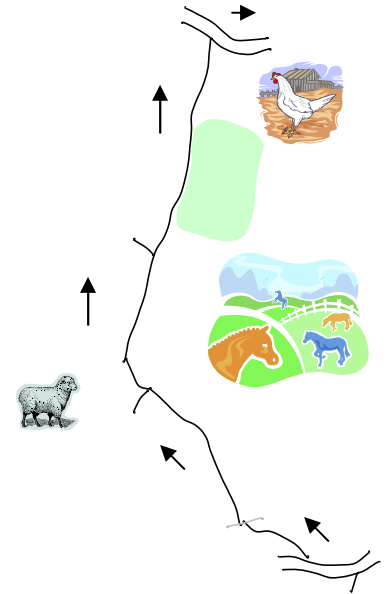


- 2 At the end of the meadow, join a concrete track coming from your right, veering left and right to maintain your direction. Later, in the next meadow, ignore a footpath left. *There are fine views left to the North Downs.* You eventually reach a lane by a large farmhouse. *On the grass opposite is a handy picnic table, apparently available to wayfarers.* Go straight across through a concrete farmyard between farm sheds and continue along a tree-lined concrete drive. After some distance, the drive runs through farm buildings. Ignore a footpath right here and continue along the drive to a road opposite *Honeybush House*, a care home. Go **left** on the road for just 20m and then **right** beside the building, soon passing the arched back entrance. Continue through the fine Honeybush Wood of tall oaks lined with rhododendrons. The woodland walk ends at the *North Lodge* and a road. Turn **left** on the road.

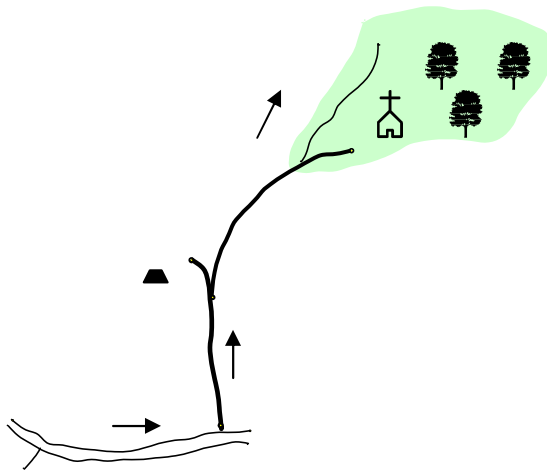


- 3 In 80m, go **right** over a stile next to a fieldgate into a meadow. Follow the path diagonally left across the meadow, over a solid rather awkward stile that crosses a wire fence, and along the right-hand side of the next meadow. [2014: the paddocks seem to have been “re-configured” making the route simpler. The suggested route is: go **right** around the meadow, keeping the paddock fence on your right, and cross a new (very high) stile over the stream. Bear **right** and aim for a stile about half way up the fence on the right. It is the second stile in the fence. Follow this path past a fingerpost. Skip the following grey text.]

The next stile is just to the left of the corner. After this, you cross a stream and the corner of the next meadow. The next stile is rather tall and you cross the right-hand side of the next small meadow to a ribbon fence. You can cross the fence by carefully stepping down on a wide section but make sure it springs up undamaged. The path now runs beside a wood on the right. Ignore a path left at a 3-way fingerpost. Finally, you take a new diversion to the **right** of Rosehill Farm (look for a sign on a black tile), with its many totally free-range hens, and come out to a road. Turn **right** on the road.



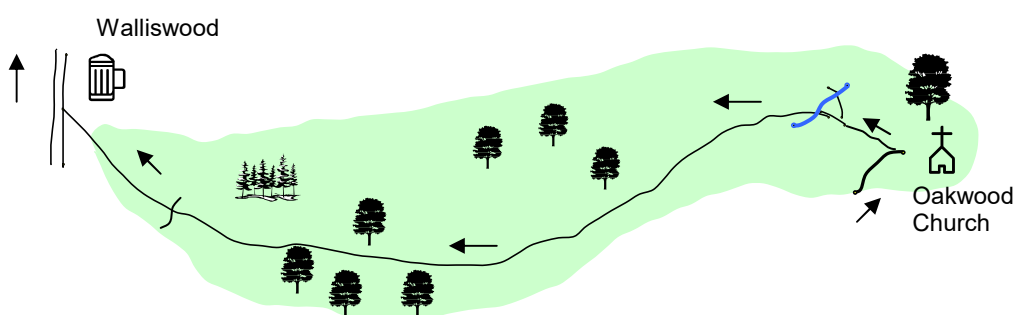
- 4 In about 100m, before a sign announcing Oakwoodhill, turn **left** on a waymarked footpath to the **right** of the drive for Chapel House Farm. Follow the waymarkers. *There are more fine views of the North Downs with Leith Hill Tower visible half-right.* Continue straight ahead at all times, passing a house and barns and, where the fence ends, keep to the **right** of the undergrowth, navigating through shrubs and trees if necessary, and continue ahead on a fainter path. This path leads to Oakwood Church-in-the-Wood.



“A gem in a perfect setting”, but Oakwood church was not always hidden away in a forest of oak, beech and hazel. It was once on a major highway near Stane Street (the old Roman road). It is only in recent years with new main roads taking the traffic away that it has become one of the most isolated churches in the South East. It was built about 1220, reputedly on the site of a Roman villa where earlier a Druidic temple had stood. In 1431 a local man Edward de la Hale endowed the church generously. Legend has it that once, on a boar hunt with his son, the lad fell from his horse and was about to be gored by an enraged boar when, as if from Heaven, an arrow whizzed through the air and slew the animal. In 1547, the church was wrongly classified as a chantry chapel, i.e. one that says occasional masses

for the dead rather than a proper church, and was seized along with the monasteries during the reign of Henry VIII. Restored by petition and decree, it later became a full parish church in 1853. Inside are many items of interest, including the de la Hale Brass showing a man-at-arms with the badge of the House of Lancaster, some wall paintings – survivors from a much larger set – and some ancient glass in the lancet windows.

- 5 Go clockwise all the way round the main west entrance to the church and down a curving tarmac path, through a small wooden gate into a small car park. In only 5m, go **sharp left**, almost doubling back, over two bridges, through a gap in the fence on a narrow path. Now keep generally straight on, avoiding a bridge on the right and veering **left** over a bridge ahead through Kiln Copse, following a path through the dark wood. Your path approaches a meadow ahead and veers right to stay in the wood. Keep ahead soon with houses on your left and keep straight ahead at a 4-way signposted junction. Exit to a road via a wooden gate at Walliswood and turn **right**. The *Scarlett Arms* is immediately on your right.



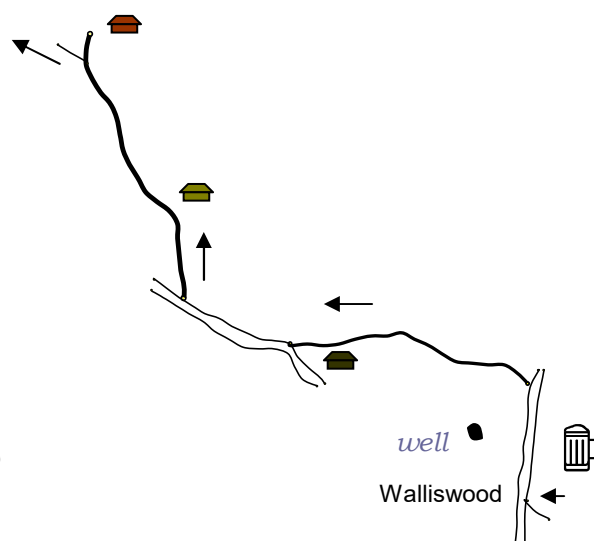
The “Scarlett Arms” (Hall and Woodhouse) is a picturesque secluded pub with three interconnecting small rooms, flagstone floors, oak beams, wooden benches and a large fireplace. It is named after Sir James Scarlett, first Baron of Abinger, and was built as two cottages in 1620, becoming a pub in 1907. Some walkers have issued a warning: if you buy a soft drink, check the price first!



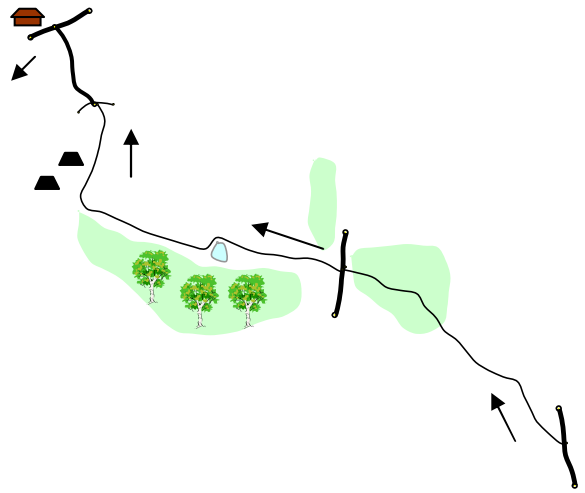
The **Rudgwick Monster** walk begins and ends here.

Leg 3: Walliswood to Ewhurst Green 4 km=2½ miles

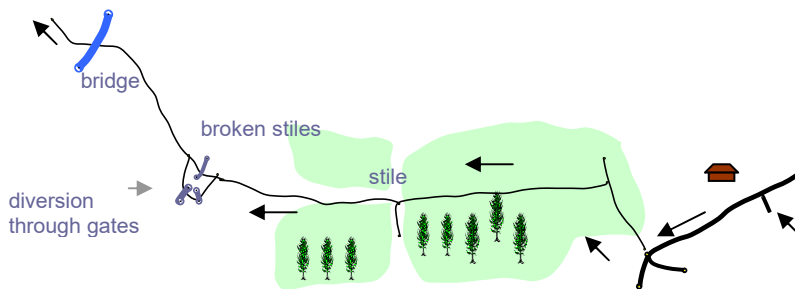
- 1 Cross the road to the old village well, preserved by a protecting roof. Just after the well, turn **left** on a driveway. After passing buildings on the right, the path goes through a swing gate and runs beside a fence. It then runs close by the house to reach a dressage arena. Avoid the kissing gate ahead and instead turn **right** along an excellent path between two sets of fences, around the dressage arena and the courtyard, emerging outside the courtyard gate, beside the lane. Turn **right** on the lane. Ignore a footpath on the left and, just by *Alvaston*, turn **right** on a fingerposted footpath. Go past *Farthings* and up the drive towards *Northlands*, but go **left** over a stile (*don't miss it!*) into an enclosed footpath, just before the gates to the house.



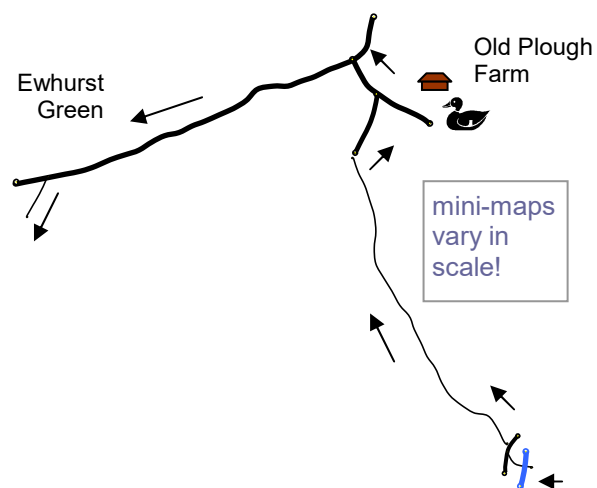
2 The path goes over a stile, half left across a meadow and over another stile into woods. Then, via another stile, it reaches a wide woodland crossing track and a fingerpost. Cross straight over the track and over a 2-plank bridge. The path runs along the left-hand side of the meadow and skirts round a little pond. On nearing the end of the meadow, turn **right** in front of some rather shabby buildings to join a drive [Mar 21: the path is being dug up during building works, watched over by a nice man with a dog: it is in flux, hopefully restored when you do this walk]. On reaching a hut and a fine old house, turn sharp **left**.



3 At the end of the garden on the right, by another quaint little hut and opposite a drive on the left, turn **right** on a narrow footpath that has woods on the left and the garden on the right. Soon, at the next fingerpost, turn **left** as indicated. You now have a coppice on the right and a field of mature trees on the left. At the next field, ignore the path curving left and go over a stile ahead into another field with mature trees. At the next corner, there is a small bridge with a stile at each side of it.



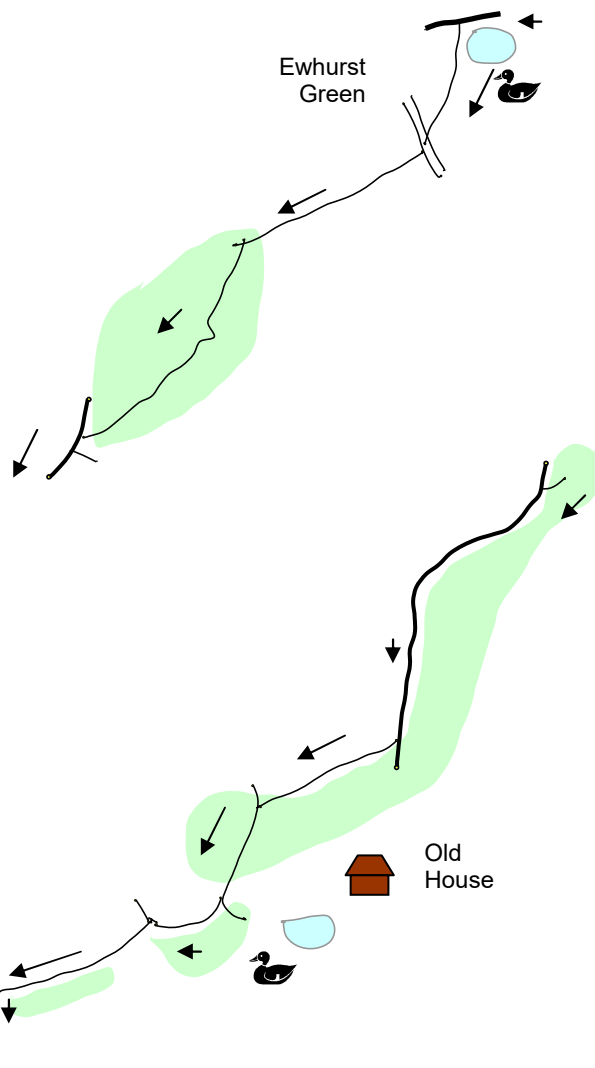
4 Continue along the right-hand side of the meadow. Just before its end, veer **left** to cross Cobblers Brook via a sturdy hand-railed bridge. Cross a track and continue ahead along a cut path near edge of a large sports meadow with the brook just on your right. Exit beside a metal gate in the far corner. The track goes over the brook and out via a driveway to the wonderfully picturesque *Old Plough Farm* with its fine duckpond. Turn **left** on the lane. Shortly, at a T-junction, turn **left** on Plough Lane, crossing the brook again and eventually reaching the start of Ewhurst Green.



Ewhurst Green is the hamlet just south of Ewhurst itself. Another of these walks goes through Ewhurst: see [Greensand Hills from the South](#).

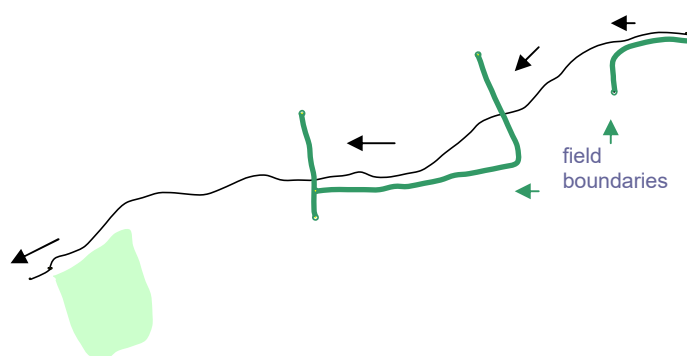
Leg 4: Ewhurst Green to Cranleigh 4 km=2½ miles

- 1 At the start of the Green on your left, just after the pond, take a path diagonally **left** across the Green to the main road ahead. Cross the main road to a fingerpost and go over a stile. The path goes along the left-hand side of a meadow and then over a stile into a holly wood. You need to keep the same direction through this little wood. On the other side, go over a stile onto an imposing drive and keep straight ahead on the drive, ignoring a footpath left.



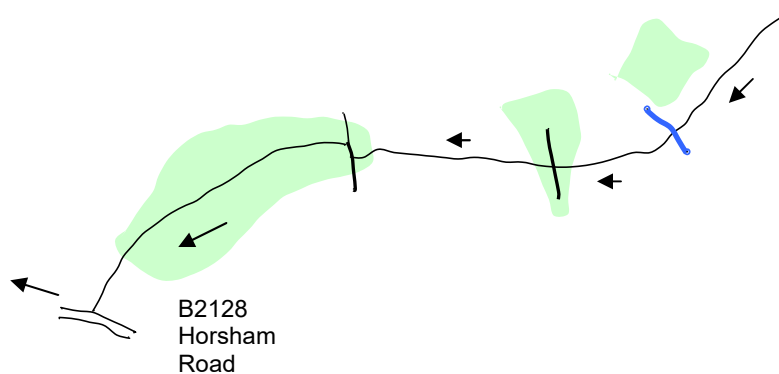
- 2 Just before a cattle grid, turn **right** through a gate, as indicated, and continue along the left-hand side of the parkland. On reaching a fence, go **left** over a stile. The track leads to a duck pond. The house *Old House* is on the left. Turn **right** at a T-junction before the duck pond (now cleared of the weeds that choked it at the time of writing) and exit through a gate into a sheep meadow. Continue straight ahead beside the hedge, ignoring a footpath on the right. Just before the end of the meadow, the signs direct you **left** through a metal gate and **right** through a [Sep 2011: broken] wooden gate into woodland leading into another meadow.

- 3 [2015: this section has changed since it was written, as the field layout has been altered and moveable animal fences installed. Your direction is still broadly in a straight line westwards, as in the mini-map. The kissing gates mentioned below are still there but the stiles are no longer exactly as described.] Keep the same direction along the left-hand side and at the corner continue straight on across the centre of the small meadow. (The stile on the left leads to private property.) Aim for a fingerpost in the hedge ahead. Go over a stile in the hedge followed by a narrow kissing gate. Go diagonally **left** across the next small meadow to the far left-hand corner. Next come two more stiles, although at the time of writing they are badly damaged by munching horses and it may be safer to scramble under the fences. Next comes another narrow kissing gate. Continue straight on aiming for the corner of the wood before going through



a third narrow kissing gate. Stay by the edge of the wood and exit, via a tall metal gate, into a silage field.

- 4 Keep ahead in the field with the fence on your right and go past some more woodland, this time on your right. At the end, go over a wide bridge with a small gate on each side. Go straight across the centre of the field and over a stile into wood-

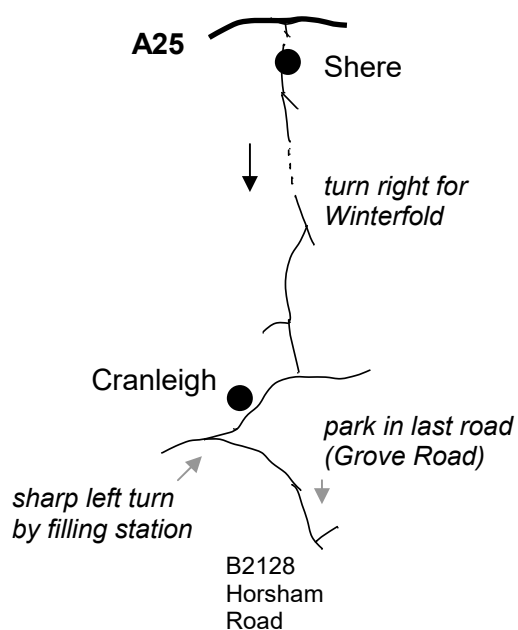


land. The path crosses a bridleway and enters more woodland, then goes over a stile into another field. Cross this silage field, slightly **right**, go over a stile, along a short path and through a swing gate. Next, go over a track coming from the buildings of *New Park* on the right, turn immediately **right** and shortly **left**, before the large shed, ignoring a footpath straight ahead, on a woodland path. Follow this path, avoiding all side turnings, until eventually you reach a garden fence on the right. Continue between fences, eventually coming out to the Horsham Road. **If you did not begin at Cranleigh, turn left on the Horsham Road and resume at Leg 1. Otherwise, turn right to Grove Road where the walk began.**

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Getting there

To get to Grove Road, Cranleigh from the London area, one scenic route is as follows: Take the A25 road and turn onto the B2127 through **Shere** (or bypass it via Albury Heath). At a road junction by a railway bridge, keep straight ahead for Ewhurst, avoiding the left turn to Peaslake. About 2½ miles (4km) further on, after an interesting drive through deep cuttings, turn **right** at a signpost for **Winterfold** (don't miss this turning!). Continue, avoiding all minor roads until you reach a T-junction in Cranleigh. Turn **right** into the town centre. Opposite an Esso station and by a war memorial, turn sharp left on the B2128. After 1.3km (0.8 mile), turn **left** into Grove Road and park here.



By bus and train: bus 24, 25 or several others from Guildford station.