



Frensham Great Pond and Dockenfield

Distance: 10½ km=6½ miles easy walking
or 12 km=7½ miles if you start at the Great Pond car park

Region: Surrey, Hampshire

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Refreshments: Dockenfield, Frensham Great Pond

Map: Explorer 145 (Guildford) and 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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Lake, quiet lanes, woodland paths, water, river, views

In Brief

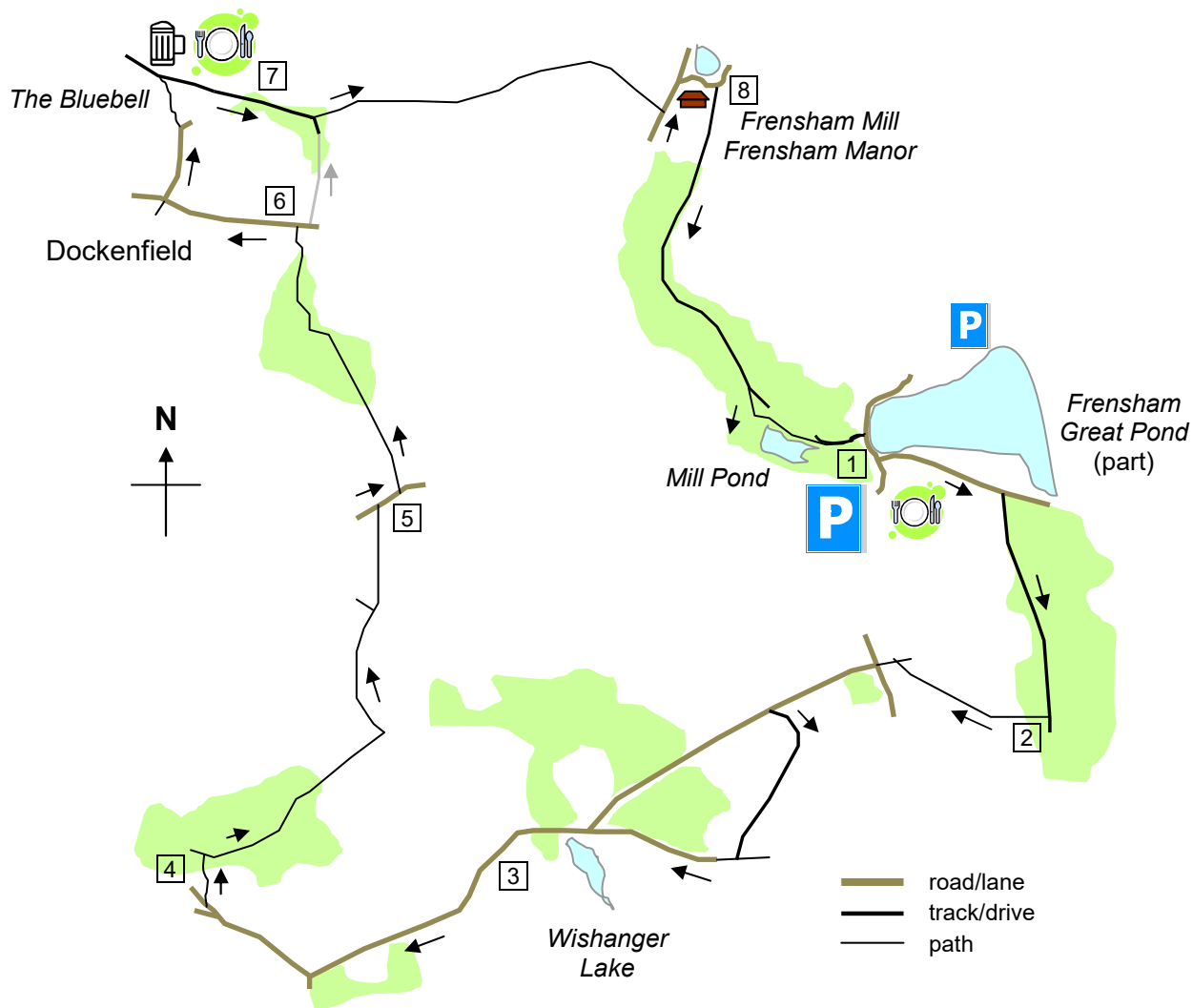
This walk takes you from one of Surrey's largest and most popular lakes to a valley of the River Wey and back via a picturesque Mill and Manor. At the half-way point is one of the iconic pubs of the region. (To enquire at the *Bluebell* in Dockenfield, ring 01252-792801).



There are no nettles and very little undergrowth on this walk. This walk is ideal in dry summery conditions. The beginning of the walk is on wide tracks and quiet country lanes. When this walk was researched in winter, there were a pair of clammy fields. Some of the stiles are in poor condition. For these reasons, boots are recommended. This walk should also be fine with your dog.

The walk begins by **Frensham Great Pond**, in the car park opposite the side of the Frensham Pond Hotel, in Bacon Lane, postcode **GU10 2QD** with a modest daily charge. There are also parking spaces a little further along the road by the pondside on a dirt strip (2020: but these have been shielded off with wooden posts). There is also a dirt strip further down Pond Lane (2020: similar?). Your best option now would be to park in the Frensham Great Pond car park (payment required), with a pleasant extension to the walk in each direction along the pondside (simply walk with the pond on your left until the path meets the road and the hotel). Some walkers began at the *Bluebell* pub. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



- 1 From the car park beside the Frensham Pond Hotel, take the side road that goes past the front of the hotel (Pond Lane) with the pond on your left. You pass a little bridge (mainly used by the ducks and coots), the yacht club and a hotel extension of chalets with a sculpture of working horses. In 350m, just after a bend, turn **right** on a track marked as a bridleway, ignoring the footpath that branches left. Your track passes a smart converted house, an area of pine and birch and another large house. The track runs under wires, passes another house, and immediately comes to an end. Ignoring the tempting path ahead into the forest, turn **right** on a signed footpath.
- 2 The path runs between wire fences and between banks and crosses two bridges over water channels coming from the pond on your left, taking you into Hampshire. Wooden railings guide you through a wooden swing-gate into a grassy meadow. Keep to the right-hand edge and, on the other side, go through a wooden swing-gate down to a tarmac drive. Turn **left** and go out via the entrance to *Field House* to a junction of lanes. Go straight over along Frensham Lane. In 100m, you pass the swanky entrance to *Kingsmead*. 200m further on, at the entrance to *Wishanger Place*, take the path to the **right** of the entrance at the fingerpost. Follow this path round the field, turning **right** at the end of the field. Soon you pass several small houses, including on your left the world's smallest duckpond and on your right a field of (at the time of writing and still in 2019) beautiful Balwen

Welsh mountain sheep. Continue to a tarmac lane and turn **right** on it, ignoring the bridleway straight ahead. In 400m, at a road junction, keep straight ahead, back on Frensham Lane. *On your left, just visible over the wall, is Wishanger Lake, an anglers' paradise.*

- 3 The country opens out as you pass ponds and springs and converted oasts on your left with a large sheep meadow on your right. At a junction, keep **right**, soon passing *Moor House Barn* and, on your left (maintaining the connection with the oasts) *The Hoppery*. At the next junction, leave Frensham Lane by turning **right** in the direction *Dockenfield, Alton*. On your right is the valley of the River Wey and the remnant of canal barges may be seen (although the river is not navigable at this point). On your left is the historic *Huntingford Cottage* with its ancient barn and Grade II-listed Forge, still with its furnace and some original tools. Immediately after, turn **right** on Heath Hill, crossing a bridge over the Wey. 25m after the bridge, go **right** through the smaller of two metal gates on a footpath.
- 4 Your path crosses the short end of a meadow, goes through a small metal gate and up steps. At the top, turn **right** at a T-junction on a path that runs through the bluebell birchwood, with the Wey valley down on your right, the start of the most natural and peaceful part of this walk. On meeting a stile in a fence ahead, go over it and keep straight ahead along a clear path through the wood. Soon, at a high point, you gain the best views over the terrain you traversed earlier. The path ends at an unneeded kissing-gate with the River Wey below. Turn **left** into a pasture which may be squidgy if the weather has been damp. *There were no cattle here at the time of writing but some have been seen. If you find a lazy bullock or two blocking your way, the fields (there are two) are large enough to circumvent them.* Continue along the right-hand side, over a stile beside a large metal gate and into the next field. You are now back in Surrey. At the far side, a stile (possibly squeezable) takes you into a much drier grassy meadow. Half way along the right-hand edge you come to a 3-way fingerpost. Follow the finger pointing diagonally across the sheep meadow, on a rather unclear path, heading for a group of three tall narrow poplars visible in the distance. Go through a wooden gate in the hedge, cross the bridge and go straight across a small meadow. A wooden swing-gate leads you onto a tarmac lane.
- 5 Turn **right** on the lane and, in 70m, go **left** through a swing-gate beside a tarmac drive for Abbots Farm into a pasture. *Sometimes there may be cattle in this field but they can be given a wide berth if you feel it necessary.* Walk not far from the left-hand edge and, as you pass the corner of a wood on your left, 100m before the far corner, go **left** through a new circular metal gate into the wood. Follow this clear woodland path through Flat Copse, soon going over a 2-plank bridge. As you approach a large meadow under wires, veer **left**, following the wires. In 50m, your path veers **right** into the meadow, as directed by a yellow arrow, and into a wood. *[2018: some marker posts were missing.]* At a marker post, veer **right** as you join another woodland path. The path ends at a small sports field and a road in the village of Dockenfield. *(If you do not wish to visit an excellent pub, you can cross straight over the road and follow a tarmac lane, turning sharp right on a track at the top, re-joining the walk further down where shown *.)*

- 6 Turn **left** on the road, passing the church (built in 1910). On your right is *Ivy House* and the old well. After a dip in the road, go **right** on Lake Lane, marked as a cul-de-sac. Ignore a footpath on your left but, a little further, at a bend, turn **left** at a fingerpost and continue on a narrow path which bends right through woodland. At the top, veer **left** on a clinker track, immediately reaching, on your right, the welcome sight of *The Bluebell*.



It's the remoteness of "The Bluebell" that makes it such a draw, its peaceful location only disturbed by the merry sound of families (it is child-friendly), some popping over from the nearby Alice Holt adventure centre (see that walk in the Hampshire section of this series). The stone floor rooms link a small bar with several dining areas, spilling out in summer to a garden terrace and lawn. Ales are Hogs Back TEA, Triple fff Moondance and guests such as Frensham (see the "Frensham and Bourne Wood" walk in this series). Food comes from a sensibly short menu, with a Sunday roast and summer barbecue. The Bluebell is open all day Saturday and till 8pm Sunday (as 2016). For booking and enquiries, ring 01252-792801.

- 7 After your break, turn **left** out of the pub, back the way you came, but continue straight on along the track. Shortly, before private gates, your path forks **right** to pursue the left-hand side of a meadow. Here there is a long bench seat with a view of the village. Follow a stony path which quickly becomes muddy, so that local people always use a green parallel path which re-joins the track, now a tarmac lane, by a house, *Bealeswood Cottage*. As the lane bends right, leave it by continuing straight ahead on a track. (* [The short cut re-joins the walk here.](#)) The track becomes a narrow path beside a meadow on your left. Ignore a stile on your left and keep straight ahead on a freshly-laid stony path. After nearly 1 km total, the path ends at a road. Turn **left** on the road and, in 100m, fork **right** on Mill Lane, signposted *Frensham Church*. This road immediately takes you over the outflow pond of Frensham Mill from where you can hear the mill race and the modern water screw in action in the grounds to your right.

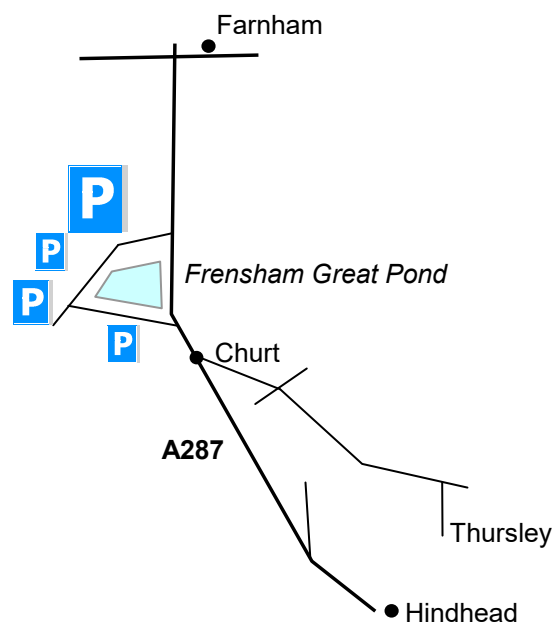
Frensham Mill first appears on John Roque's map of 1768 but this ancient mill dates back at least to 1217 when the Bishop of Winchester, who built Farnham Castle as his residence and owned most of the land in these parts, had the mill listed for rent collection. A toll was probably paid to the owner of the river which supplied the mill and in 1706 the manors of Dockenfield and Frensham Beale went to court in disputed ownership. The mill had two mill ponds as insurance against running dry, one from the main river and the other on a tributary of the River Wey which you will shortly see as you pass.

- 8 Turn **right** through the entrance to the Mill House, along its shingle drive which soon becomes a shingle path through the wood known as The Hanger. Up on your left are *Frensham Manor* with its extensive grounds and farm. Down on your right is a tributary of the River Wey carrying runoff from the Great Pond. In 300m or so, ignore a long footbridge over the river and keep straight on. Your path now runs quite close to the river's edge in many places. Another 400m from the footbridge, you will see a yellow marker arrow. Fork **right** here on a narrower footpath ([but see below](#)). This path runs through shrubbery, close to the track at first, then veering away to reach the huge mill pond, a swollen section of the river. On your right is a footbridge. Ignore the footbridge and keep straight on [[Feb 2019: care! you may need to crawl under two fallen trees and other debris; some walkers even preferred to stay on the main track](#)], passing a stepped waterfall. This path leads up a bank to re-join the original track. The track eventually takes you up to the road with an excellent view of the Great Pond straight ahead.

Turn **right** on the road, leading you quickly back to the car park opposite the hotel where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: Frensham Great Pond is off the A287 road, just north of Churt, Surrey. It can be reached via Farnham to the north, or via the A3 and Hindhead to the south. A pleasant "scenic" route is via the A3 and Thursley. Go through the village and turn **left** at a T-junction on the Thursley Road. At a junction with the Tilford Road opposite the *Bel and Dragon*, go straight over. This road leads, in 1½ miles, to the A287. Turn **right**. Look for a brown tourist sign for *Frensham Pond Hotel* and turn **left**. There is parking shortly on your right and, if not requisitioned by the hotel, at the end. The car park is just on the left. More road-side parking is on the right. The big Great Pond car park is much further along on the right.



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