



Dunsfold, Hambledon, Hascombe

Distance: 19 km=12 miles

easy-to-moderate walking

Region: Surrey

Date written: 29-jan-2011

Author: Schwebefuss

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Refreshments: Hambledon, Hascombe

Last update: 5-nov-2020

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere) + small sections from Explorer 134 and 145
but the maps in this guide should be sufficient

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

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Forest trails, villages, streams, hills, open meadows, views, churches

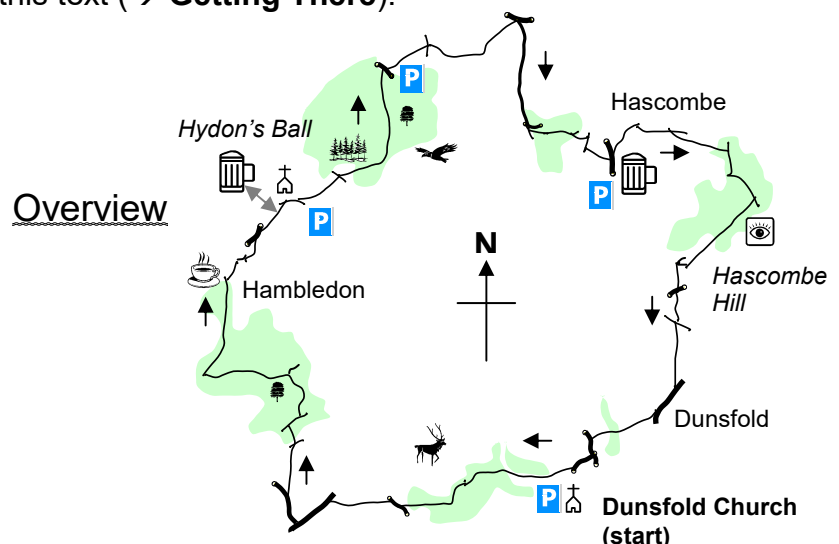
In Brief

This is a deeply satisfying walk through the best of the woodland and hills of southwest Surrey. It shares some short sections with other walks in this series as well as taking you along many new paths.



Good walking shoes are usually fine for this walk, although comfortable boots are recommended because of the distance. There are no stiles except for a flurry of stiles just before Dunsfold. In summer there are nettles on many sections. The walk is fine with a dog, but the stiles at Dunsfold will be a problem for a large one.

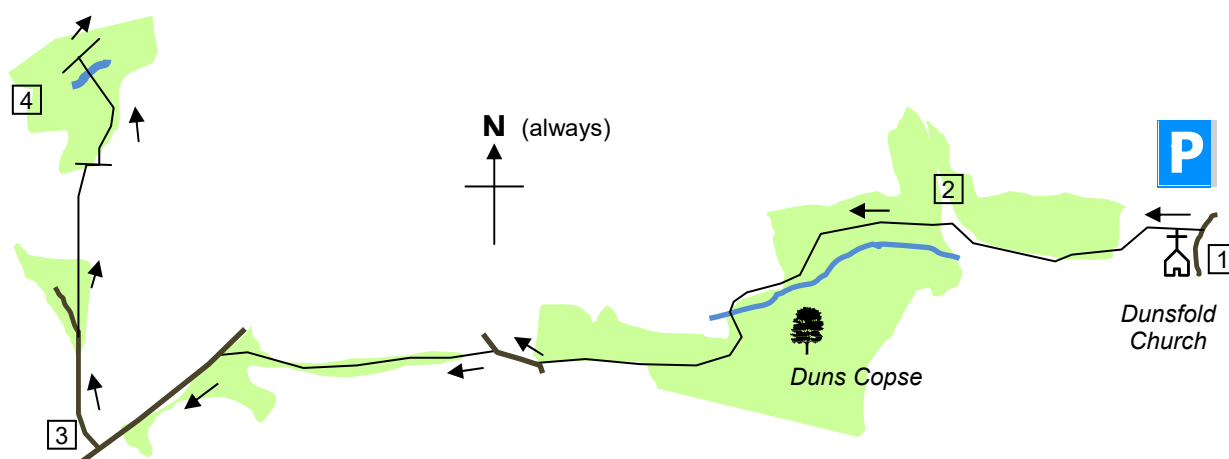
The walk begins by **Dunsfold Church**, gridref 998363, postcode **GU8 4LT**. Another good starting point is outside the *White Horse* at **Hascombe**, post-code **GU8 4JA**; start from Leg 3. But with this option, the pub break is at the end unless you make a small diversion to the *Merry Harriers*. **Hambledon Church** and **Hydon Heath** are two other good starting points. For more details see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



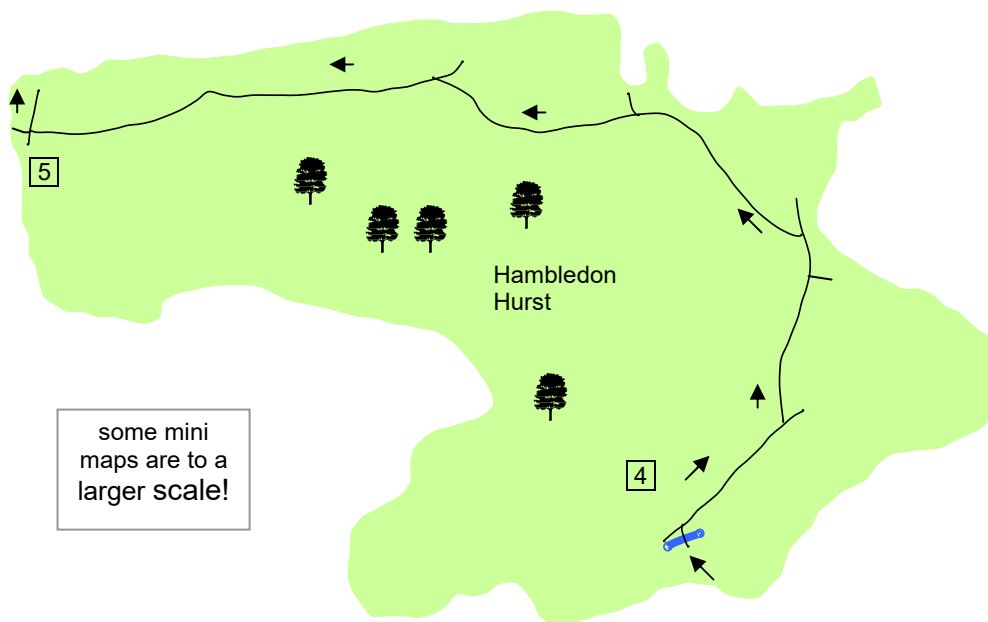
The Walk

Leg 1: Dunsfold Church to Hambledon Church

The delightful 13th-century Dunsfold Church stands on the site of a Saxon burial ground and a Norman chapel. Pilgrims came to Dunsfold to visit the Holy Well (see another walk in this series). Inside, there is a wallpainting and many points of interest, including the oldest pews in the country.



- 1 Take the track on the **right** of the church, marked as a bridleway, with a converted barn on its right, and continue on a grassy path beside the churchyard, avoiding a footpath right after 50m. At the end, go through a metal gate into woodland. The path bends right and runs alongside a large meadow on the left. Where the path ends, go through a small wooden gate and weave left-right into the meadow. Continue along the length of the meadow on the **right**-hand side for about 200m to a narrower part and here switch to the **left**-hand side for another 100m to a large wooden gate on the **left**. Go through the gate and over a sturdy bridge onto a woodland path.
- 2 The path winds through forest, at first near the meandering stream on the left and later touching it again. Finally the path ends at a gate and becomes fenced with a meadow on the right. The path bends left over the stream, up into the woods and then right on a high path, finally running beside a meadow and two houses on the left, the first of which is a converted barn, and out to a lane. Turn **right** on the lane, ignoring a footpath sign directly opposite. In 60m, fork **left** on a bridleway. The path runs for nearly 700m along its own narrow strip of woodland and finally reaches a road. Turn **left** on the road. Follow the road Vann Lane for 400m, as far as some houses and a road junction.
- 3 Turn **right** on Skinners Lane. Ignore a footpath left and stay on the road as it wheels right. In 250m, on a left curve, fork **right** on a bridleway signposted to *Yew Tree Cottage*. The path reaches this charming timbered house and continues through a gate and along the right-hand side of a meadow. At the far end of the meadow, go through a similar gate and turn **right** at the T-junction. In just 5m, at a fingerpost, turn **left** on a bridleway. The path zigzags right-left and goes down into forest. It crosses a large wooden bridge to a T-junction with a wide woodland track.

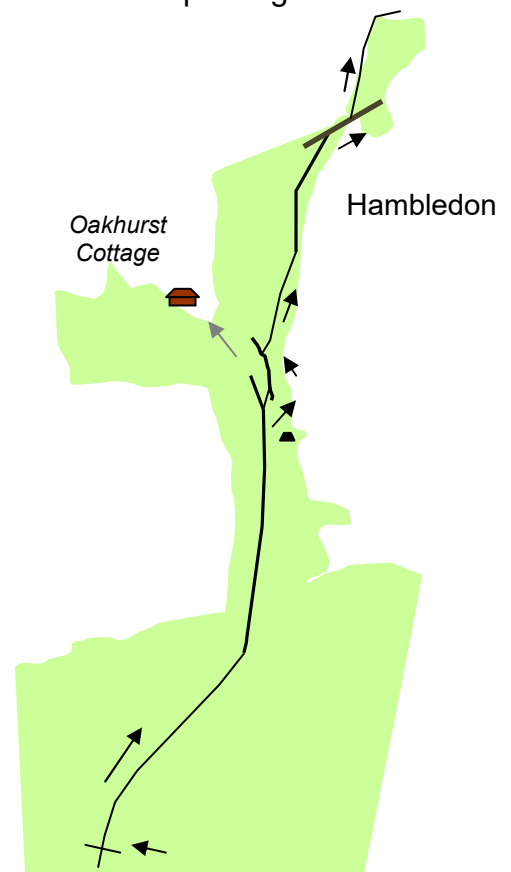


- 4 Turn **right** on the track. In 150m, just after a flat bridge with a blue arrow, turn **left** on a wide path uphill. This path will take you for some distance through the extensive forest of Hambleton Hurst. In 250m it runs near a meadow on the right. At a post here, fork **left** as indicated by the blue arrow. In another 200m or so you encounter, on the right, an irrelevant unmarked path and another meadow. Shortly after, at a fingerpost, keep **left** again, avoiding a bridleway on your right. *You are now in the thickest part of a classic fairy-tale forest and you would hardly be surprised if you came across a gnome's cottage or a gingerbread house.* In 250m, another path joins from the right at a blue-marker post. The path now becomes more twisty and less obvious. After a total of 1.3km since the flat bridge, the path reaches a major crosspaths by a marker post. Visible on the other side is a parking area used by trucks and caravans.

- 5 Turn **right** on a wide path, continuing your long woodland trek, slightly downhill. In about 200m the path crosses a stream twice and later once more. Eventually the forest path approaches the first house in the village of Hambleton and arrives at a fork with tall stumps across the right-hand branch. Your route is **right** between the stumps. **However, by following the path on the left towards the cricket green, you will reach a tiny cream-coloured timbered cottage, known as Oakhurst Cottage. Afterwards you can retrace your steps or turn right on the tarmac lane to re-join the walk. The Village Shop and café is on the other side of the cricket green.**



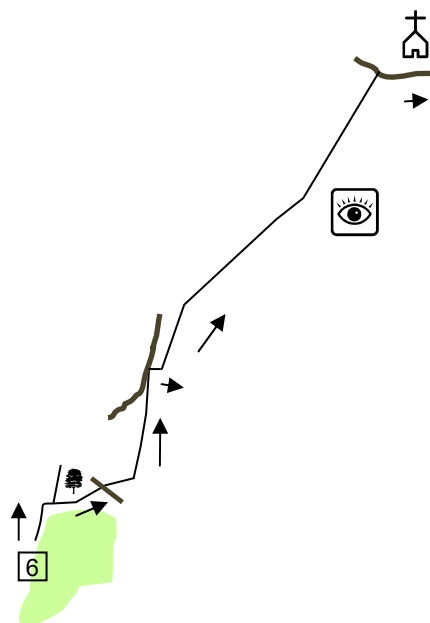
Oakhurst Cottage is a simple labourer's dwelling belonging to the National Trust, now restored and furnished, and containing tools and implements showing its four centuries of continual occupation. It has a delightful little garden. Admission is by appointment and guided tour (ring 01798 342207), but you may be lucky if you arrive on spec when there is a tour about to start.



Your path joins the driveway from the house coming from the right. In 80m, before the drive curves left, leave it by turning **right** on a narrow path marked with a blue arrow (care! this path is narrow and obscure and very easy to miss; if you find yourself heading for the cricket green you have overshot and need to backtrack). The path wheels left, runs straight and joins a gravel drive. It comes out by *Goodbrook House* to a lane. Turn **right** on the lane and almost immediately, fork **left** on a signposted bridleway leading through woodland. At the corner of a garden fence, fork **right**, passing on your left a large green of *Hambledon village* shaded by two large oaks, one an English oak, the other a red oak,

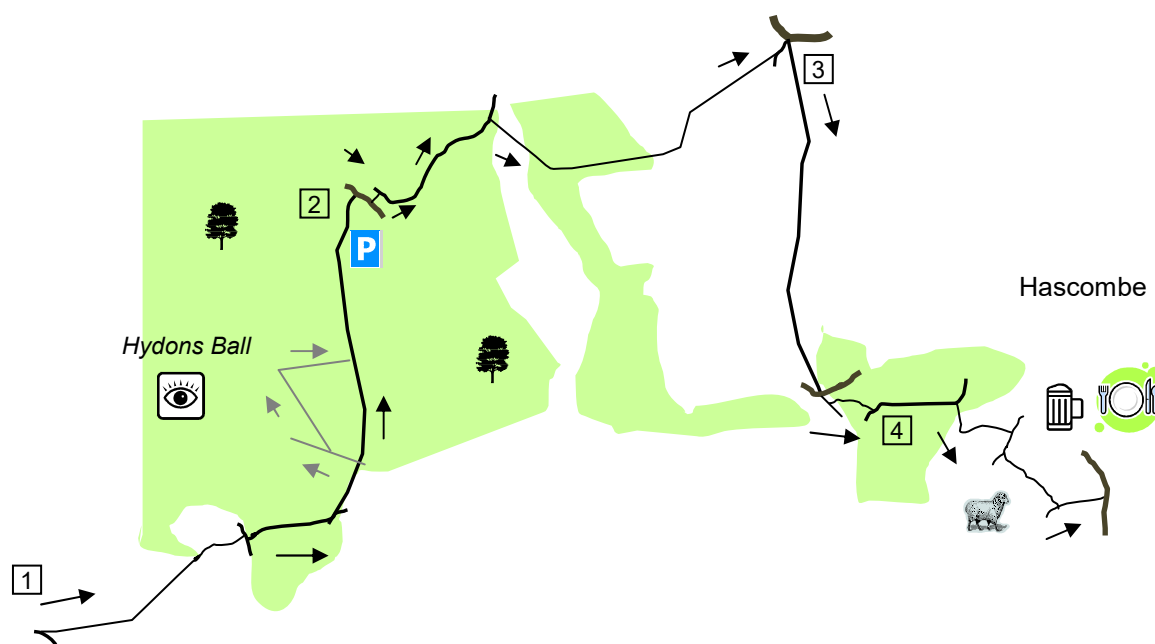
Hambledon is listed in the Domesday Book as Hameledune, quoting assets of 3 hides, 7 ploughs, 1 mill worth 2s 6d, 3 acres of meadow and woodland worth 30 hogs, amounting to £5. Tenants of Hambledon Manor were the chieftain Azor in the time of Edward the Confessor, then, after the conquest, Edward de Sarisber (Salisbury) and, in 1086, Rannulf. Inhabitants lived off the mining of iron ore and brickmaking.

- 6 Veer **right** on a dirt track leading to a road next to a sign for *Beech Hill Cottage*. Cross straight over the road to a track opposite and veer **left** on a hidden sunken bridleway running by a wall next to *White Cottage*. The bridleway leads up to the main road. Turn **right** on the road. In just 15m, turn **right** into the front driveway of *Hemingway House* and turn **left** up steps onto a footpath uphill. Notice that you are now on the *Greensand Way long distance footpath*. After more steps and an unneeded wooden gate, keep right on a wide grassy path. The tip of the little church comes into view. The path crosses the centre of a meadow then, through a swing-gate, another larger meadow. At the far end, go through a swing-gate onto a lane. If you require refreshment now, and cannot wait till the *White Horse*, you can turn **left** on the lane and, in a few metres, **right** on a footpath. The *Merry Harriers* is only 250m or so distant. Turn **right** along the lane to the church.



The Church of St Peter, Hambledon is worth a visit, if it is not locked. It is a small building, almost entirely rebuilt in 1846, consisting of a nave with small north aisle and vestry, a south porch and a chancel. The churchyard contains a large old yew tree and the local legend states that the spirit of an old witch resides in the tree and if you circle the interior three times she is sure to appear. Notice how some of the tombstones are engraved with a secular emblem, such as a snail or a dragonfly.

Leg 2: Hambleton Church to Hascombe



- 1** Continue straight ahead past a small car park, on a wide path beside the wall of the churchyard. *Alternatively, you can make use of a small gate in the far right corner of the churchyard.* On your right is an old lime kiln. Your route is through a metal gate and across a crop field. On the other side, go through a metal swing gate by a solitary oak and diagonally across the next field. In the far corner, the path goes through another metal swing-gate and shortly bends **right** on a path through a chestnut coppice. At a junction of four tracks near a water booster station, go straight over on a wide sandy track, as indicated by a blue arrow. *You are on the main path across Hydon Heath, a National Trust property; the highest point, Hydon's Ball, is up on your left.* In another 350m, ignore paths off to your right and continue to pass a National Trust sign and a junction of paths. *If you wish to go to the top of Hydon's Ball, take an ascending path left and fork right in 50m, following the Octavia Hill Trail (OHT) on a sandy path up to the top. To return, either (a) turn right behind the stone seat downhill and turn left at the crossing track, or (b) follow the OHT all the way to the car park.* Keep straight ahead on the wide level track avoiding all side paths. After a long easy walk through magnificent broadwoods and pines, you reach a metal gate and, on your right, the Hydon Heath car park. Continue to a road.
- 2** Turn **right** along the road for just 40m and go **left** between posts and **right** onto a broad surfaced path. Follow this splendid mossy path down a valley. At the bottom, a steep forested hillside faces you where the track wheels off left. **Leave** the main track here and instead turn sharp **right** on a narrower signed bridleway. The path rises and levels out. *In late spring the path is lined with bluebells.* The path descends into another delightful valley and, after a delightful 1 km ramble, joins a driveway coming from the right by a house *The Old Dairy*, shortly reaching a main road.
- 3** Do not join the main road but turn sharp **right** on a tarmac drive, almost looping back. Ignore all turnings off while this driveway follows a long straight stretch with tall pines, bending a few times. There are fine views right and the good road surface makes the going easy. At a fingerpost,

ignore a junction on the left. The driveway leads past *Hascombe Court* and other expensive dwellings, many fenced off from view. After 1 km, the drive comes down past *Deer's Leap* through a gate to a narrow lane. Cross the lane to another uphill track. Ignore two narrow paths left and, in nearly 100m, turn **left** on a path through woodland which in spring is carpeted by bluebells.

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Follow the path gently uphill through woodland which in spring is carpeted by bluebells. It continues straight ahead through beautiful woodland with occasional tall pines. Where, in another 250m, the broad path turns away left, take a narrow unmarked footpath sharp **right** downhill into trees. *Don't miss this turn!* The path leads through hollies down to a gate or stile into a beautiful sheep pasture. Immediately turn sharp **left** to go through another gate. *In the springtime the lambs here are very tame.* Stay on the right hand side of the meadow and go down some steps to a drive. Turn **right** here. Where the drive curves right towards a house, turn **left** onto a footpath. Ignoring a track on the right soon after, continue for a short while through trees and then between meadows. On reaching a junction with the *White Horse* pub visible, turn **left** on a new very wide sandy path up to a car park, the main road and the pub.

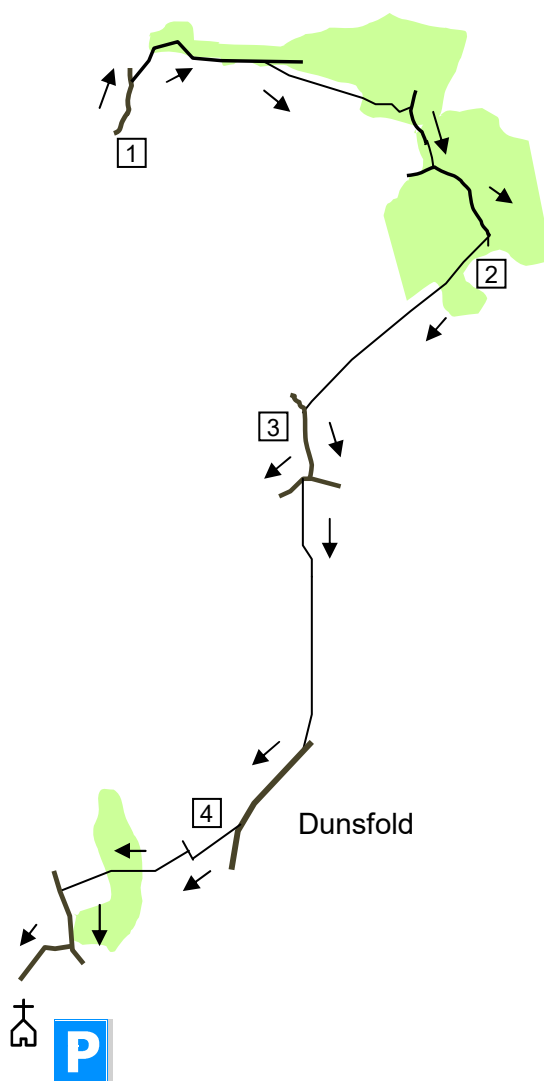
The White Horse serves good food and a selection of real ales and has a garden. Down the lane to its left, the lake at Hascombe with its church and cottages is a sight not to be missed.

Leg 3: Hascombe to Dunsfold Church

Hascombe goes back more than 2000 years and was well established even before the Norman invasion. Its church was completely rebuilt in Victorian times. Hascombe has its own website: www.hascombe.com.

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There are at least three ways to the ridge on the south side of Hascombe Hill. You may prefer a high route, either to the right round the hill and the hill fort (see *Around Hascombe Hill* in this series) or left through the village and along the high bridleway. The route given here is by the "low road" but attractive for all that. Facing the *White Horse* pub, take the narrow lane on its **left** into the village of Hascombe. Follow the lane or the grass round the village pond. Where the lane bends left, keep ahead on a drive and a narrow bridleway beside it. Follow the winding path gradually uphill by a domestic hedge, then into woods. After 400m or so, you meet a post with a yellow arrow. Fork **right** here. The path follows the fringe of the wood and then goes down to a field. Follow a path along the left-hand slope of the valley, short-cutting the grassy left-hand corner, towards another yellow waymarker. *There are fine views across the valley.* The path now runs along the left edge of a field and, at the end, takes you up a bank by a marker post and, by a tortuous course through a chestnut coppice, finally attaining the top of the ridge. Turn **right** on a



waymarked bridleway. It joins a high path that runs along the ridge with fine views south. After 200m, you reach a major junction of paths. Turn **left** here on a wide woodland path which becomes sunken. It gradually descends and, after 350m, reaches the immaculate garden of a house.

2 Immediately turn sharp **right** following a yellow arrow on a footpath which runs past gardens on the left and a tennis court on the right, up six steps, and then into woodland. Follow the clear woodland path for 200m, finally going through a wooden gate into an open grassy meadow. Keep dead straight ahead across the centre, slightly uphill with fine views left, keeping the young birches, then redwoods, on your left. You pass a redundant stile into a second, even larger, sheep pasture. *The long flat profile of Black Down is visible ahead. The stones on the left are the Dragonstones, looking very much like a megalithic stone circle but in reality built in 1995-7 by an order of neo-Druids.* As a farm building comes into view, veer slightly **left** aiming for the far corner and, on reaching it, go through a large wooden gate to a tarmac farm track.

3 Keep ahead on the track downhill. Where it reaches a T-junction, bear **right** but, in just 40m, go **left** over a stile. Go across the centre of a meadow, passing to the right of a large old water feature. (The author passed a herd of cute bullocks and noticed some walkers keeping to the other bank.) It ends with a decorative flint bridge and pine trees. Keep straight ahead to a stile in the hedgerow, almost opposite the flint bridge, and carefully cross the road, Godalming Road, via two stiles. Keep the same direction across the next hayfield passing the corner of a paddock fence and then following a line of young trees. Cross a farm drive via two wooden gates and, keeping the same direction, go **left** through a gate half way along the hedgerow, then over a stile. Turn **right** on the main road into the village of Dunsfold.

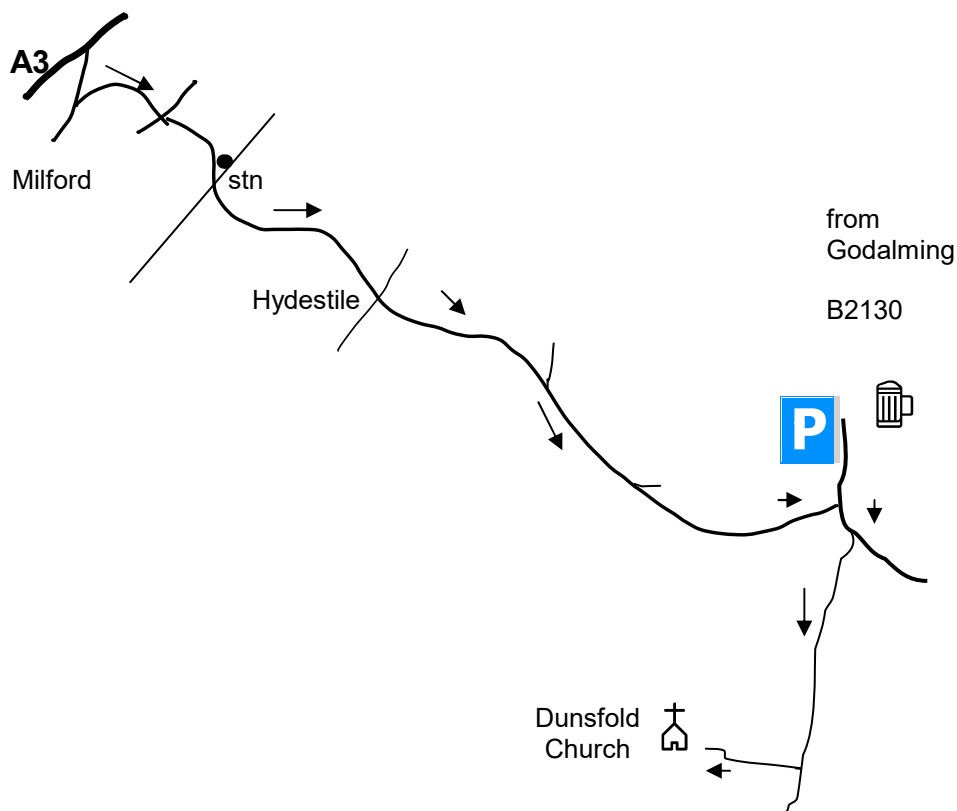
The name Dunsfold comes from the Saxon words "dun" (hill) and "fold" (enclosure). It has been inhabited since the stone age even though, probably due to being swallowed up in the forest, it was not recorded in the Domesday Book. The chief livelihood of the inhabitants was charcoal burning to supply the iron and building industry. The houses here are a mixture of modest cottages and much finer historic houses. It was usual in the late 1600s for wealthy families to move out of London to these parts to escape the plague. Nearby Dunsfold aerodrome was built by Canadians in WW2. After the war it was used to develop the Hawker Hunter jet plane. It holds an annual air show but is now earmarked for development.

4 In about 300m, you reach the village green. Stay next to the houses on the right, following a track, grass and tarmac. Soon you pass a small pond, then a larger duckpond where the drive becomes shingly. Turn **right** after *Eden Cottage* on a marked footpath over a stile. Veer **left** on the bridleway, avoiding a footpath right, and follow a narrow path beside a field on the right [2015: undergoing some building work]. Go through a metal gate into woodland, down, ignoring a footpath right, over a stream, up again, and through another metal gate. Go along the right-hand side of a small meadow. (Or, in case you see some very pretty heifers and don't want to disturb them, go along the left-hand side of the adjoining meadow.) On the other side, go through a metal gate to a lane. Turn **left** on the lane. In 180m, turn **right** on another lane, Church Lane. This lane takes you past several attractive cottages and reaches Dunsfold Church where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: Dunsfold church is signposted off the B2130 Godalming road where you will also find the *White Horse*. One way to get there is as follows:

Take the A3 and turn off for Milford (south of Guildford). At the first traffic lights in Milford, turn sharp left. At the mini-roundabout turn right and then immediately left signposted *Milford Station* and *Hydestile*. Continue on this road for 1½ miles=2½ km. Cross a major road at Hydestile and continue all the way, about 2½ miles=4 km further, avoiding all turnings off, to a T-junction at the main B2130 road. For **Dunsfold Church**, turn **right** for **just 50m** and then **right again** on a lane signposted *Dunsfold Church*; in 1 mile=1.6 km, at a signpost for the Church, turn **right**; park carefully on the roadside or grass verge. For the **White Horse**, turn **left** on the B2130 road.



By bus/train: bus 42 from Guildford station to Dunsfold and Hascombe, *not Sundays*. Check the timetables.

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