



Ewhurst

Distance: 5 km=3 miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

Date written: 8-nov-2020

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Last update: 23-nov-2020

Refreshments: Ewhurst (?), or picnic, or later in local inns

Map: Explorer 145 (Guildford) and 134 (Horsham)

but the map in this guide should be sufficient

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

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Church, green meadows, woodland trails

In Brief

This is a charming country walk through green meadow and woods in southern Surrey. There are no ploughed fields and no livestock. You will meet few people and have the place to yourself until you reach the bridleway outside Cranleigh which is a popular draw for families and horse riders. The walk passes next to the Sayers Croft Rural Centre which in normal times (this was 2020) would be teeming with youngsters on a rural adventure.

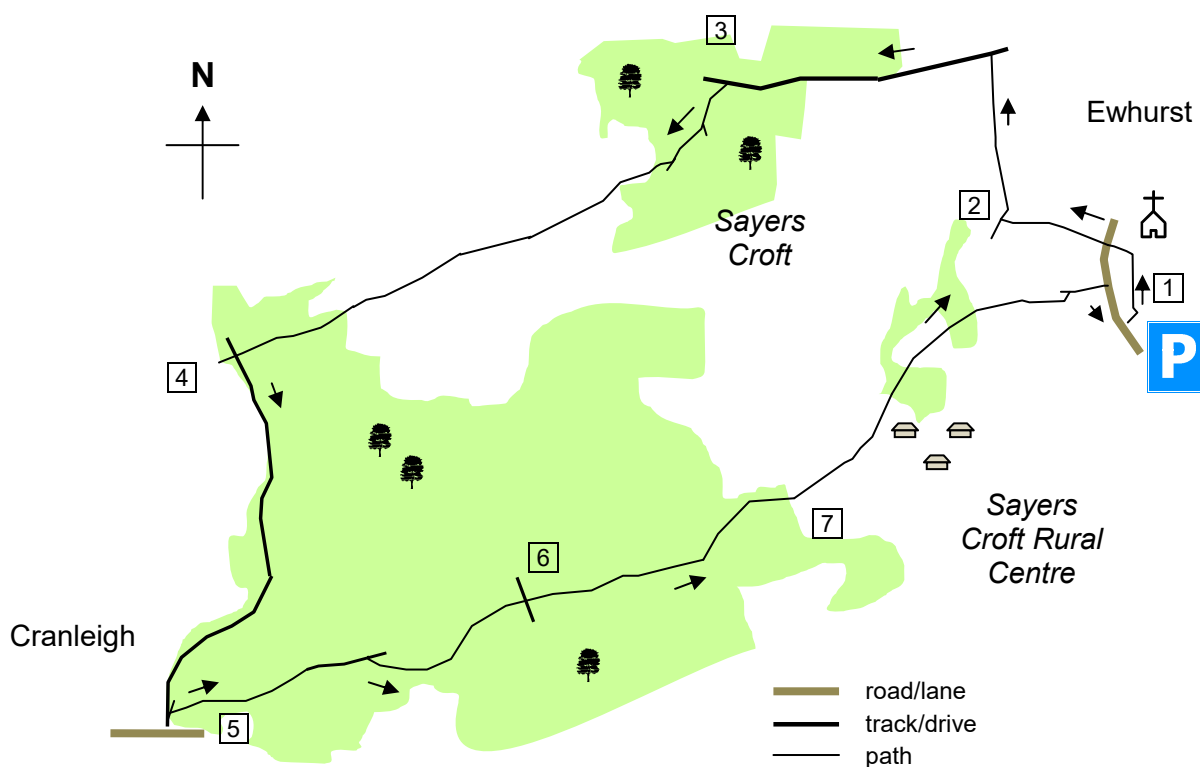
The redoubtable *Bulls Head* Inn, just north of this walk, has been the centre of life in Ewhurst but in 2020 it was "For Sale or To Let" with no sign of activity (although this was during the "lockdown"). Apparently the pub is to be "revamped" with part of its large garden given over to new housing.



The terrain along this walk consists of woodland and well-made paths, with very few restrictions on clothing. Boots are definitely preferable in winter, or after rain, because of the undrained woodland. The stiles all seem to have a "dog flap" so your dog should be happy to join you.

The walk begins at the **main car park** in Ewhurst, Surrey, nearest postcode GU6 7PX, www.w3w.co/screen.printing.toned. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



- 1 Staying in the main car park, walk with the road on your left to the far end of the car park and turn **right** up a tarmac path. At the top, keep **left** into the cemetery, coming out next to the church.

When Henry VIII broke with Rome, he ordered a "Valor Ecclesiasticus" to tot up the wealth of churches. Poverty-stricken Ewhurst Church of St Peter and St Paul was valued at only £12.7s.3½d, since it had no silver plate and its cross and candlesticks were made of the cheapest brass. It was a time of bad weather and poor harvests leading to widespread famine and, in 1557/8, a major 'flu epidemic. Ewhurst was exempted from the 1554 clerical "tax" on grounds of "exilitatis et pauperitatis" (paucity and poverty). A century later, in the Civil War, Ewhurst was inclined towards the Royalists and, for decades afterwards, fought an annual punch-up with nearby Rudgwick who supported the Roundheads. The rector, William Fuller, a staunch Royalist, was denounced by the victorious Roundheads as a "delinquent" and the rectory was handed over to a puritan minister, John Wing. Some of the local worthies refused to pay their "tithes" (contributions to church funds) and in retaliation the Rev Wing refused to hold weddings, baptisms and burials, placing the villagers in an awful fix.

After possibly visiting the church, turn **left** down to the road. Cross the road to a tarmac drive directly opposite, next to a school, marked with a signpost as a public footpath. Keep straight on past an allotment on your left and continue on a grass path. A large swing-gate leads into a green meadow.

- 2 Immediately go **right** over a stile and along the left-hand side of a small meadow, continuing after a redundant stile into another meadow similarly. Go over a stile and along a shingle, then tarmac, drive. At the end, turn **left** on a private tarmac drive, which is also a public footpath. Continue past houses heading for woodland where you meet a 3-way fingerpost. Ignore the path on the right here and stay on the tarmac, entering the wood. After

only 150m in the wood, look for a small fingerpost on your left. Now **leave** the drive (which continues to High Wykehurst) and turn **left** on a path into the wood.

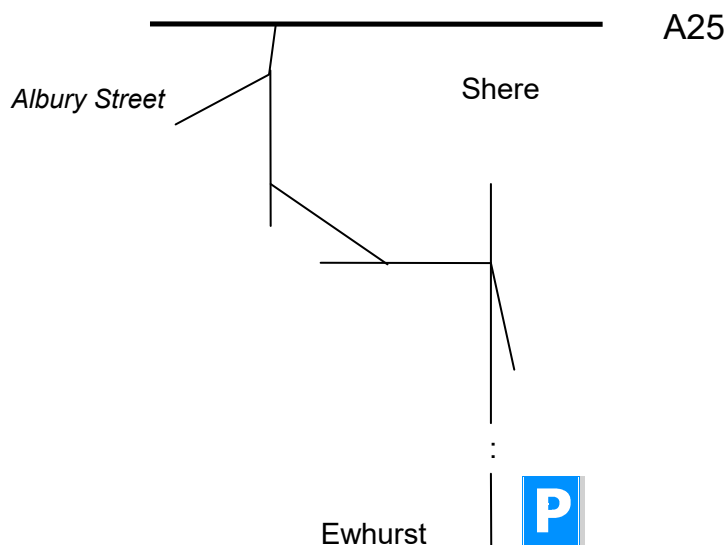
- 3 You are in part of *Sayers Croft*, a well-tended local Nature Reserve, and this walk will pay it another visit near the end. Follow the obvious wide path through hollies to reach an info board after only 70m. Avoid a path on your left and keep straight on, always on the widest path between the trees. You come down shortly to a long bridge across the Coneyhurst Gill and your path forks. Take the **right** fork, leading up to a stile taking you into a large meadow. Your path goes round a group of oaks and then heads straight across the grass. At the far side, a stile takes you on a narrow path between open fencing. Another stile leads into a horse pasture. You encounter two more stiles by the entrance to Penquite Farm. A long narrow path now leads onwards between open fencing. A stile is followed by a rocky section, a stile and across a herringbone drive. A section through dense woodland leads in 200m to a major crossing.
- 4 Turn **left** on a crossing bridleway, a popular route where you may meet families and horse riders. You will usually meet some mud here but it lasts only a short time. This long woodland walk runs for 800m between a green meadow on your right and dense forest. Eventually you pass a gas relay station and find yourself approaching the main road just outside Cranleigh. Pause just short of a gap in the fence that leads out to the road and instead go sharp **left** and **left** again on a drive leading away from a heavy metal barrier, thus doubling back.
- 5 In only 10m, turn **right** at a marker post on a narrow (briefly muddy) path into the woods. Follow the wide path up through an oakwood. In 300m you reach a marker post on a wide forestry track. Cross straight over the track onto a wide grassy path opposite. In only 100m, **leave** the wide path by keeping **right** between posts, as indicated by a yellow arrow. Follow the wire fence on your left, soon passing the back garden of a house on your right. Your route crosses a tarmac drive to *Upper Canfold Cottage*, still following the wire fencing. The path ascends to take you over a stile into an open area of forest where there are signs of ruthless forestry operations some years past. Keep ahead on a wide grassy path.
- 6 After nearly 500m on this path you cross a muddy forestry track. Keep ahead on a wide path, rutted in places, avoiding all branching paths. Suddenly the vehicle tracks give way to a narrow path which passes a yellow arrow and leads over a 2-plank bridge and a long bridge over the Coneyhurst Gill. You are back in *Sayers Croft*, with its nature walks, worth exploring if you have time. Avoid paths left and right and keep straight on, following yellow-topped posts, between guide fences. You come up to a tall private gate. Turn **right**, following the paling fence on your left. Keep straight ahead to come out to an open space, part of the Rural Centre. On your right is a circle of benches, used for camp fire singing.

Sayers Croft is a rarity: a camp school built for inner-city children. In fact Sayers Croft existed in the 1500s but the idea of a school goes back to the bombing of the Basque town of Guernica in 1937 (famously depicted by Picasso). The UK Parliament realised that dense housing was at risk in war and an Act was passed to provide camps for adventure and fresh outdoor living. Sayers Croft hosts 12,000 visitors annually (although at the time of writing the 2020 situation had reduced it to unusual silence).

- 7 You come out to another open space. Keep to the left-hand side, following the yellow-topped posts, resuming in a similar open area. At the far side, a yellow arrow directs you into a small wood where you pass on your right a huge aerial obstacle course. Keep **left** at a sign, going over a stile into a meadow. Keep to the right-hand side, heading for woodland, with a close view of the huge converted *Thornhurst Brook Farm* on your right. Follow a wide, unsigned, woodland path leading up into a sloping meadow. Go over a stile ahead and up the left-hand side of a meadow. Ignore a footpath at a junction on your left and continue to the top, going over a stile into a more level meadow. In 20m, at a marker post, veer **left** between hedges, passing a house gate to your left. Continue ahead to an avoidable wooden gate and steps which lead down to the road in Ewhurst. (*Care! sudden traffic.*) Turn **right** on the footway opposite, quickly leading back to the car park where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: the most attractive (and easy) route to Ewhurst, if you live in the London or M25 area, is via Shere. Avoid the quiet village by taking the Albury Street / New Road / Park Road "bypass" and then simply follow the Hound House Road over the Greensand, straight to the village. The car park is on the left, just after the church.



By bus/train: bus 53 runs from Guildford (not far from the railway station) to Ewhurst daily, including weekends. Check the timetables.

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