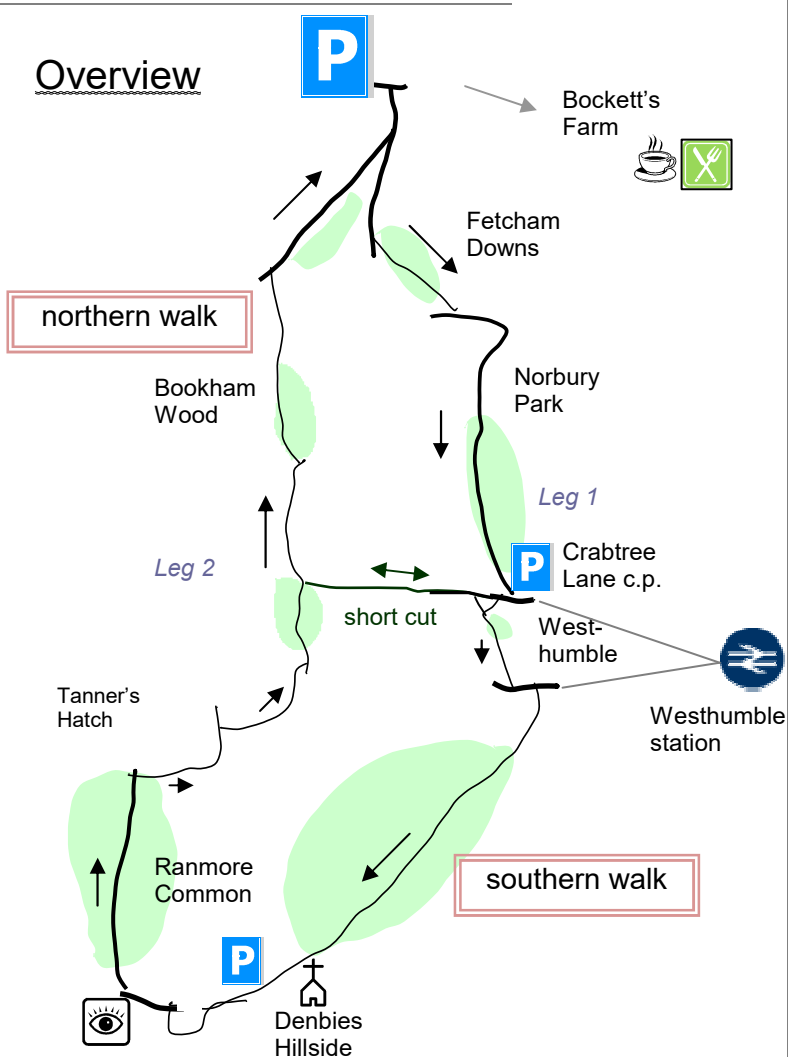
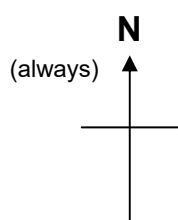




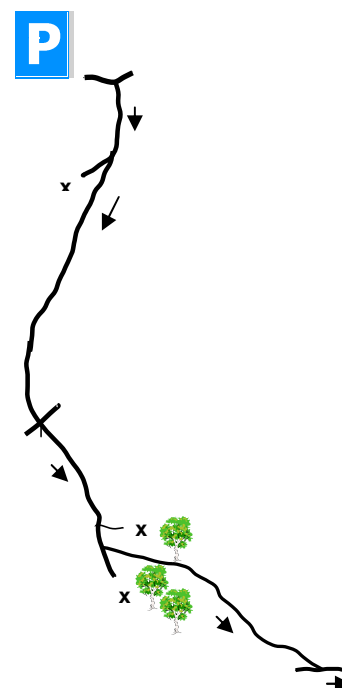
## The Walk

**Decision point.** If you are doing the longer **southern walk**, starting in Denbies Hillside, go through a swing-gate onto the famous hillside. Then skip forward in this text and begin the walk at **Leg 2**.



### Leg 1: Fetcham to Denbies Hillside 6½ km=4 miles

- 1 Exit the car park at the far end and turn **right** on a fine broad track which is surfaced at the start. In about 100m, ignore a wide path forking right. Soon the trees on the right give way to a small meadow and you have the pleasing sight on the right of *Roaringhouse Farm* (so named because it lies in a windy gap) with its fine old granary. Soon you come to a wide crossing track with a 4-way signpost. Here keep straight ahead on the broad track. Stay on the track, soon avoiding a signposted footpath on your left, by a wooden railing. 50m after this, at a crossing path with a many-arrowed marker post, take a signposted bridleway pointing diagonally **left** uphill. After an ascent, the path runs level, with gates on the left leading to Fetcham Downs and *Walnut Tree Clump* and a view down to the valley on the right (an alternative route most people use). Keep ahead at all times. At a point where a path crosses the main track go straight on. Continue to a three-way crossing where a broad path joins obliquely from behind, by a fingerpost pointing the way you have just been. Bear **left** here.





In 150m, this track leads through a metal barrier to a wide triangular space with a 3-way junction and a *Wild!* pop-up coffee and snacks bar.

**Decision point.** The next section is affected by a path closure due to “ash dieback”. There is an excellent alternative on approved paths, and also a bypass. In either case, you should ignore at least the beginning of the next section and turn to the section **Mole Valley Loop** near the end of this text.

- 2 Take the **right** fork, going past the gates of the Sawmill (where coffee is on sale Thur-Sun 9am-3pm), and continue past a wooden barrier on a wide track between fences, the left-hand fence being the boundary of the grounds of Norbury Park House. (For notes on this, see the other walk in this series *Norbury Park and the Mole Valley*.) Where the fence ends, as a short diversion, there is a viewpoint on the left with a seat and a picnic table with views over the Mole Valley. Continue on the wide track, ignoring a fingerposted turning to right through woods, until eventually the track becomes tarmac. As the path goes downhill bending to the left, you reach Y-junction with a fingerpost [Jan 2021: broken]. Take the **right-hand** rising track. The track leads to the small Crabtree Lane car park (alternative starting point). Turn **right** on Crabtree Lane.

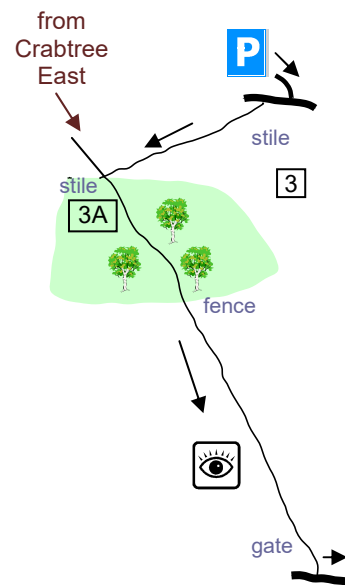
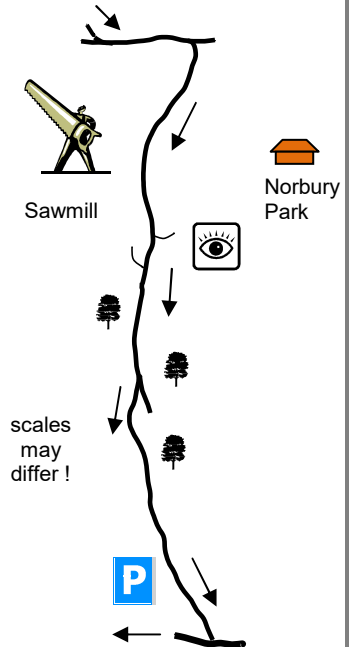


**Decision point.** If you are doing the shorter **northern walk**, omitting Ranmore Common, skip to near the end of this text and do the **Crabtree West** section. Otherwise, continue as below.

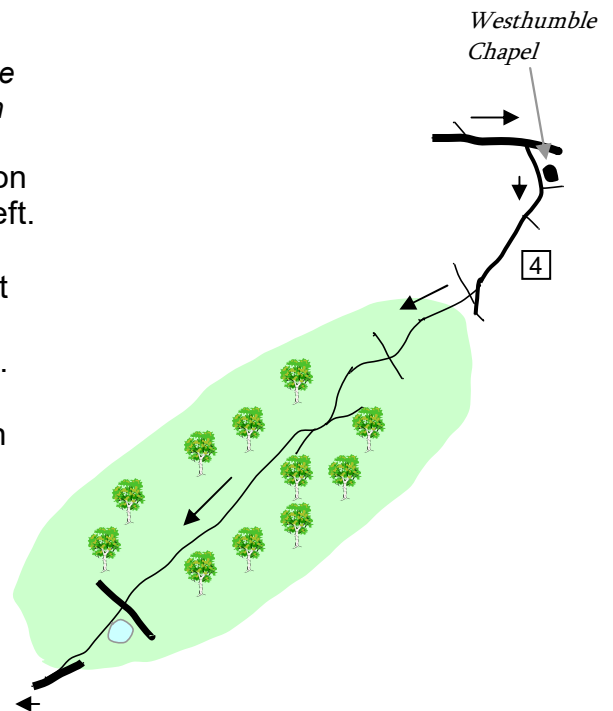
- 3 In just 15m, at a fingerpost, go **left** through a metal kissing-gate into a meadow and take a faint unmapped diagonal path across the centre. The path reaches a (bypassable) stile in the centre of a hedge at the bottom.

The **Crabtree East** section re-joins the walk here.

- 3A Cross the stile and descend through trees, through a wooden swing-gate and down the left-hand side of a large pasture with fine views west. Sometimes there may be cattle in the pasture; you can avoid them if you wish by making a wide detour. At the bottom, go through a wooden gate into Chapel Lane and turn **left**.



- 4 In 100m turn **right** on a lane that goes past the ruins of a chapel on the left. *The flint remains of the shortlived Westhumble Chapel date from the late 12th century and are now a scheduled Ancient Monument.* Continue up the lane going past a footpath junction on the left. After some distance the lane bends left. Leave it here to continue in the same direction, a fraction right, on a footpath and shortly go straight ahead at a crosspaths. Follow this path straight uphill through dense woodland for some distance. At a wide crossing track continue straight on with alas no respite from the gradient. Finally the path reaches a junction at the top with another path coming from the left. Veer right here and in only 20m, just after a partially hidden fingerpost, fork **right** by an electricity pole. Eventually the path crosses a lane, goes past a pond on the left and continues to a road. Turn **right** on the road.



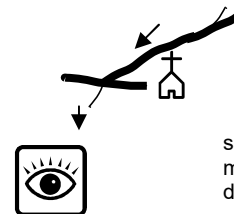
- 5 Continue along Ranmore Common Road, past St Barnabas Old School and St Barnabas Church which is definitely worth visiting.



*St. Barnabas, the Church on the North Downs Way, was built and paid for in 1859 by George Cubitt, MP, later First Baron Ashcombe to serve his family's recently acquired nearby estate of Denbies. It was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott (who also designed the Albert Memorial and St. Pancras Station). The slender spire stands over 700 feet above sea-level, visible all around. The tower contains a ring of eight bells the tenor weighing just under 1 ton. The extensive original interior marble still survives. In 1920 the South Transept was converted into a chapel by the Second Baron Ashcombe in memory of his three sons killed in the Great War of 1914-18. The church serves teas in summer on Sundays 2-5pm, when the church is also open.*



Continue to a road junction and cross straight over through a swing-gate onto Denbies Hillside with fine extensive views to the Greensand Hills in the south. *A mobile snack bar is open on popular days. Westcott nestles in the valley below with Dorking to its left.*



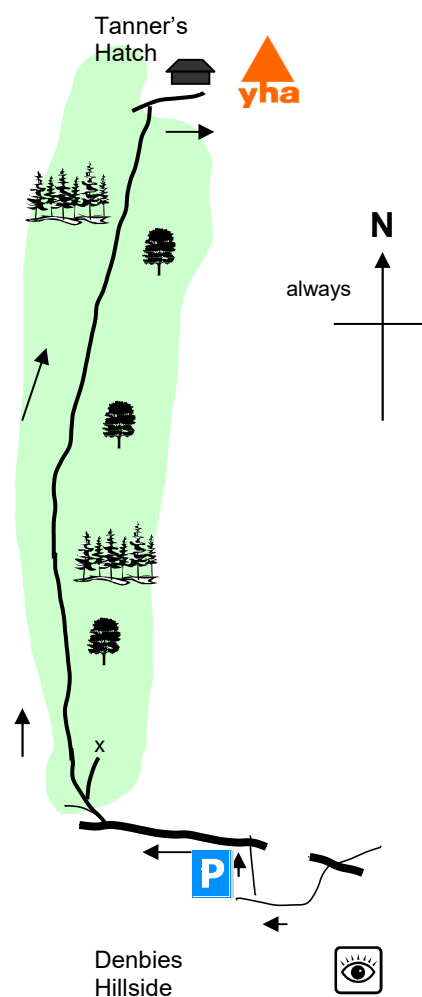
scale may be different !

## Leg 2: Denbies Hillside to Fetcham 7 km=4 miles

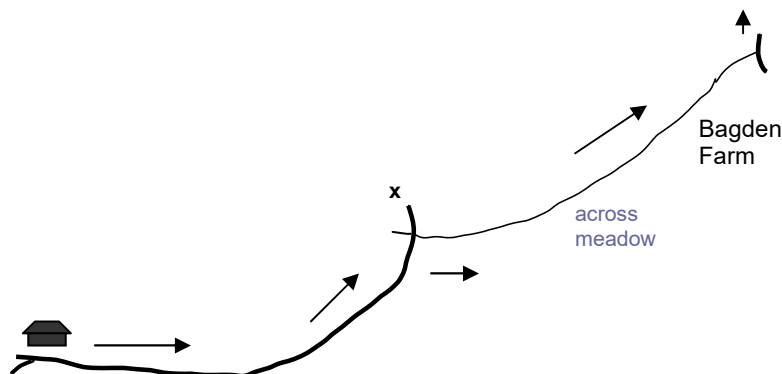
- 1 At a fingerpost for the North Downs Way, turn **right** and **right** again by a fence, going back to the road via another swing gate into the car park. Turn **left** through the car park and along the road. Cross the road, soon passing two small houses followed by a larger red brick house with tall chimneys, 4 *Fox Cottages*. Turn **right** after this last house on a wide track at a sign for the Youth Hostel. Immediately ignore a footpath on your left, go straight ahead past a new metal barrier, and take the track forking **left**. After a long woodland trek, gently descending, you reach a junction and go past, on the left, *Tanners Hatch*.

*Tanners Hatch was built in 1642 as two cottages and restored by YHA members after the war. It still retains its original features, such as gas lighting, open fires and triple bunks. There are outside loos here which could be used, maybe for a small donation to the YHA.*

WC



- 2 Continue past the Youth Hostel on a good gently descending stony track which curves left. At the bottom, at a waymarker, turn **right** through a wooden gate beside a larger gate. Cross the meadow, with a wire fence on your left. When you reach Bagden Farm, turn **left** as directed by a fingerpost and then immediately **right** to go through a small wooden gate, numbered "13". At the end of the path, turn **left** onto a stony drive, passing the farm buildings on your left.



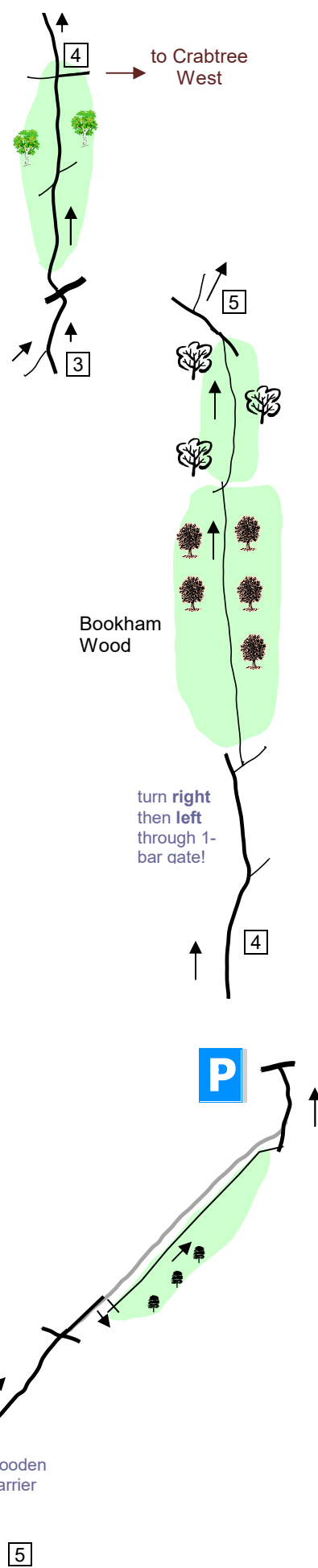
- 3 On reaching a lane, cross straight over, slightly left, to a bridgeway by a National Trust sign for *Chapel Farm Fields*. Go through a small gate, across a small meadow, to another small gate leading into woods. The path goes uphill for some distance. At a T-junction turn **right** and immediately **left**, thus maintaining your course uphill. In nearly 150m you come to a 4-way junction with a fingerpost under a yew glade.

**Decision point.** If you are doing the longer **southern walk**, omitting Fetcham Downs, skip to near the end of this text and do the **Crabtree East** section. Otherwise, **ignore** both side paths and keep straight ahead.

The **Crabtree West** section re-joins the walk here.

- 4 Follow the path for some distance now between fields. In nearly 400m, the path goes past a mobile phone tower. Continue ahead, ignoring an unmarked right turn. In a further 75m, upon reaching a very definite fork in the path, swing **right** by some wooden railings towards a field. But in only 20m, just before you enter the field, turn **left** past the remnants of a one-bar wooden gate and onto a long wide grassy path that runs through a long clearing in the middle of Bookham Wood. (In the summer season, this path can be very overgrown. If you prefer, you can go back to the railings and take the left fork on a narrow path through the wood.) At the end, at a T-junction, turn **right** on a path through woods and keep ahead at all times in the same direction through the wood until the path finally emerges. Here it meets another path coming from the right. Turn **left** and in just a few paces, turn **right**, opposite a large Norbury Park Information board. Go through the wooden barrier onto a footpath.

- 5 At the end of this little wood, the path meets a wide track. Turn **right** here. This track later crosses another wide track with modern houses in view on your left. In just over 100m, turn **right** on a narrow but clear path into the trees. In 20m, at a junction of paths, turn left. This path runs beside a tree plantation on your right, parallel to the track you were on (but avoiding any mud). In the far corner, the path zigzags left-right and, after more side paths, finally comes out to a very wide track. Turn **left** here, in a short distance reaching the car park where the walk began.

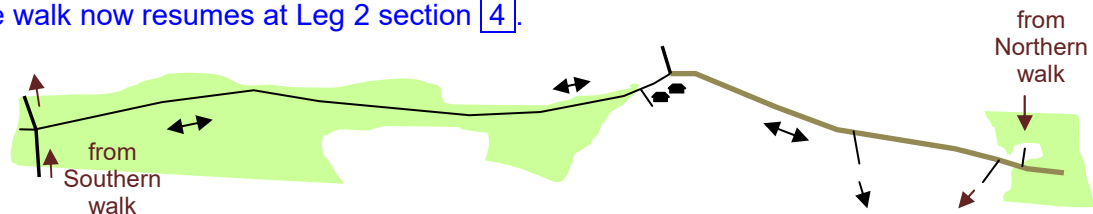


## Crabtree West 1 km= $\frac{2}{3}$ mile

Do this section if you are doing the shorter **northern walk**.

Continue along tarmac Crabtree Lane ignoring a stile on your left. *The spire of St Barnabus church is visible on your left.* Ignore a footpath, bench and swing-gate on your left. You reach the isolated *Crabtree Cottages* and a junction of paths. Keep straight on, just to the right of the second cottage, ignoring a bridleway on your right. After the cottage, ignore a footpath on your left. The path rises gently under ash trees beside a pasture on your right. At a fork, by the remains of a wooden barrier, bear **left** and follow the \*path beside a meadow on your left with Chapel Wood on your right, then deep woodland on your left. [\* If the path is waterlogged, you can take a winding parallel path to the right, all the way to where it re-joins the main path at the end of the meadow.] Your path goes through another wooden barrier and you arrive at a 4-way fingerpost with open pasture ahead. Turn **right** at this crosspaths.

The walk now resumes at Leg 2 section [4](#).



## Crabtree East 1 km= $\frac{2}{3}$ mile

Do this section if you are doing the shorter **southern walk**.

Turn **right** at the crosspaths, on a path through a wooden barrier into woodland. There is dense woodland on your right, then Chapel Wood on your left and a meadow on your right. (If the path is very muddy, you can take a winding parallel woodland path on your left.) After another wooden barrier, ignore a footpath on your right as you pass to the left of one of the *Crabtree Cottages*. Just beside the second cottage, ignore a bridleway on your left and keep straight ahead on tarmac Crabtree Lane. In nearly 200m, turn **right** through a swing-gate by a bench on a footpath. Follow a path diagonally across a meadow to reach a stile in the centre of a hedge at the bottom.

The walk now resumes at Leg 1 section [3A](#).

## Mole Valley Loop

This section was devised to avoid the areas subject to a “closure” due to “ash dieback”. Note that it adds about 1 mile to the original length. There is a way to bypass the closed entrance near the sawmill, described in the Sawmill Bypass below.

At the wide triangular junction, turn **left** instead of right (to avoid the bridleway closed in 2024 for ash dieback). After 100m on this wide track you pass an entrance to Norbury Park on your right. In a further 180m, you meet a path on your right just before a small bench seat. Turn **right** on this woodland bridleway. It curves round the border fence of the Norbury Park estate and in 200m reaches a junction with a driveway coming up from your left leading to a main entrance to the house. Cross straight over, avoiding the driveway, on a

woodland path. In 60m, at a 3-way junction, leave the border fence by forking **left** on a track. This track runs for 100m in the woods, then out in the open, downhill, for 130m to meet a driveway which joins from the left. In only 5m you meet a 4-way fingerpost.

Turn **right** at the fingerpost on a wide woodland path. This is the Mole Valley path. It runs entirely in woodland but with views to your left to meadows that align the valley of the River Mole. In 500m, there is a gate with a picnic area on your left. After a total of 1½ km on this path you meet a narrow path coming down from your right: this is the Druids Grove path. In a further 50m your path forks. Take the **right** fork, uphill. In 300m your path meets a track on the right and immediately reaches a tarmac lane. This is Crabtree Lane. Turn **right** on the lane. In 250m you pass on your right the Crabtree Lane car park, the intended arrival point (which was closed during the ash dieback episode).

The walk now resumes at the **Decision Point** before Leg 1 Section 3 of the main walk.

### Sawmill Bypass

This unofficial bypass gets round the closed metal gates near the sawmill. Its only purpose is as an emergency route (also in reverse direction) to rescue walkers who are trapped by the gates after innocently wandering onto the bridleway. Many walkers have taken note of the phrase “at your own risk” on the path closure notices and still use the bridleway and paths, but of course this site must discourage that.

If you arrived through the metal barrier to the triangular junction (where there is usually a mobile coffee bar), go back through the metal barrier and immediately fork **left** on a narrow obscure path into the thick woods (i.e. turn sharp **right** just before the barrier if you didn't reach the junction). The path winds its way over a few bumps and gets wider and clearer. You can see one corner of the sawmill on your left. (This bypass goes around the sawmill enclosure, though not very close to it.) The path soon becomes a straighter and more respectable woodland path. But you have a vital left turn ahead shortly. This turn is 120m from the start of this path. It is a squarely **left** turn through trees. At the time of writing it is next to some narrow tree trunks that are fallen across the path: it's not certain whether they will always be there. The path is very unclear at first but quickly becomes a definite well-trodden path. It winds a lot and you need to look down to stay on the path. It passes quite close to another corner of the sawmill in a lighter area before continuing left through trees. It finally comes out through bracken to the bridleway. On your left is a notice saying *closed for your safety ... please turn back* (so trapping young walkers by closing off their only escape from a huge dark forest is for their safety?), but your route is **right** (passing another notice) on the bridleway. You should memorise the route for use in reverse direction.

Note: there is another emergency entrance to the bridleway, by the “side gate” 300m southwest of the sawmill, as described in the *Norbury* walk in this series. It requires an easy climb through a wooden gate.

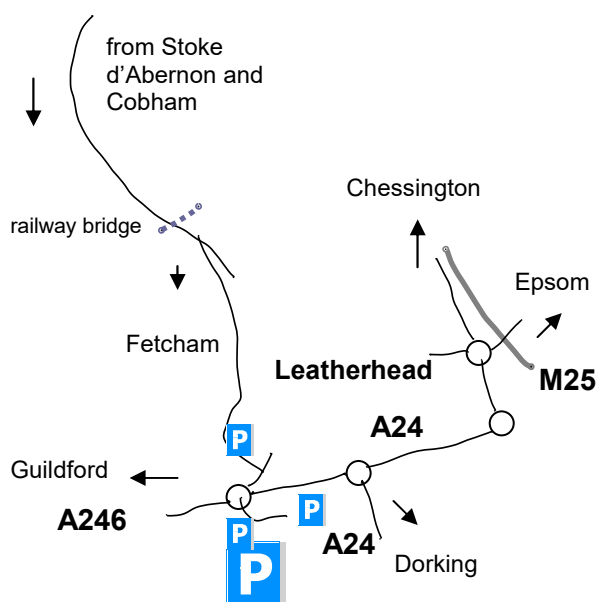
*fancy more free walks?* [www.fancyfreewalks.org](http://www.fancyfreewalks.org)



## Getting there

By car: The **Fetcham car park** is in Fetcham, just off the roundabout on the A246 by the road leading to Bocketts Farm. If coming from the London area, take the A24 or A243 to Leatherhead. Follow the A24 as it goes around Leatherhead but, where the A24 turns left for Dorking, go straight ahead on the A246, signposted for Guildford. Bockett's farm is **left** at the next roundabout, signposted with a tourist sign. The Fetcham car park is immediately on the right. Bockett's Farm has a large car park, handy if you want to visit the farm as well (small parking charge, phone or card). If coming from Guildford, turn right on the roundabout a mile or so before Leatherhead. Another route is through Cobham, Stoke d'Abernon and Fetcham (after going under the railway bridge in Fetcham, fork right into The Street). (See map below.)

Now that this car park is chargeable, many walker park **free** on the road side. The best of these is at the end of Downs Way postcode **KT23 4BL**, [www.w3w.co/envy.sudden.robots](http://www.w3w.co/envy.sudden.robots) (go ahead on a track and take the **second** major path **left** to join the walk at the 4-way crossing). There is also Crabtree Lane (in Bookham, not the one near Westhumble!), similarly, postcode **KT23 4PN**.



The **Denbies Hillside car park** is near Dorking on the Ranmore Road. Follow signs out of town on a minor road signposted *Ranmore*. The car park is 1½ miles on the left.

There is also **free** parking on the road side near the church, either in the little parking strip or on a dirt strip under the trees (parking on the grass may be discouraged).

The **Crabtree Lane car park** is near Westhumble. Come off the A24 just south of the big Box Hill roundabout. Fork **right** immediately after a bridge over the railway and follow this cul-de-sac lane for ⅔ mile. The car park is on the right.

By train: Chapel Farm (Leg 1 4) is only ½ mile from Westhumble Station. Go west along Chapel Lane.