



Hascombe and the Hurtwood

Distance: 4¼ km=2¾ miles

easy-to-moderate walking with one short steep section

Region: Surrey

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Refreshments: Hascombe

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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High paths, views, woodland, hills, pub, village, bluebells in season

In Brief

This is a little walk of nostalgia, since the area around Hambledon has yielded special pleasure for this author since decades back. But if you think you know the Hurtwood, maybe from other walks on this site, you are in for a huge revelation. This walk explores the southern parts, setting out and using a path which is almost unknown outside the locality, with only the very last section irresistibly re-walking that beautiful section that plops you down into the sheep meadow, ready for refreshment at the ever-reliable *White Horse Inn*.



There are no nettles to worry wearers of shorts. There are a couple of muddy patches in the area around the pub, but otherwise this is a dry walk on grassy or gravelly forest paths. Boots are needed only in winter. Your dog is welcome.

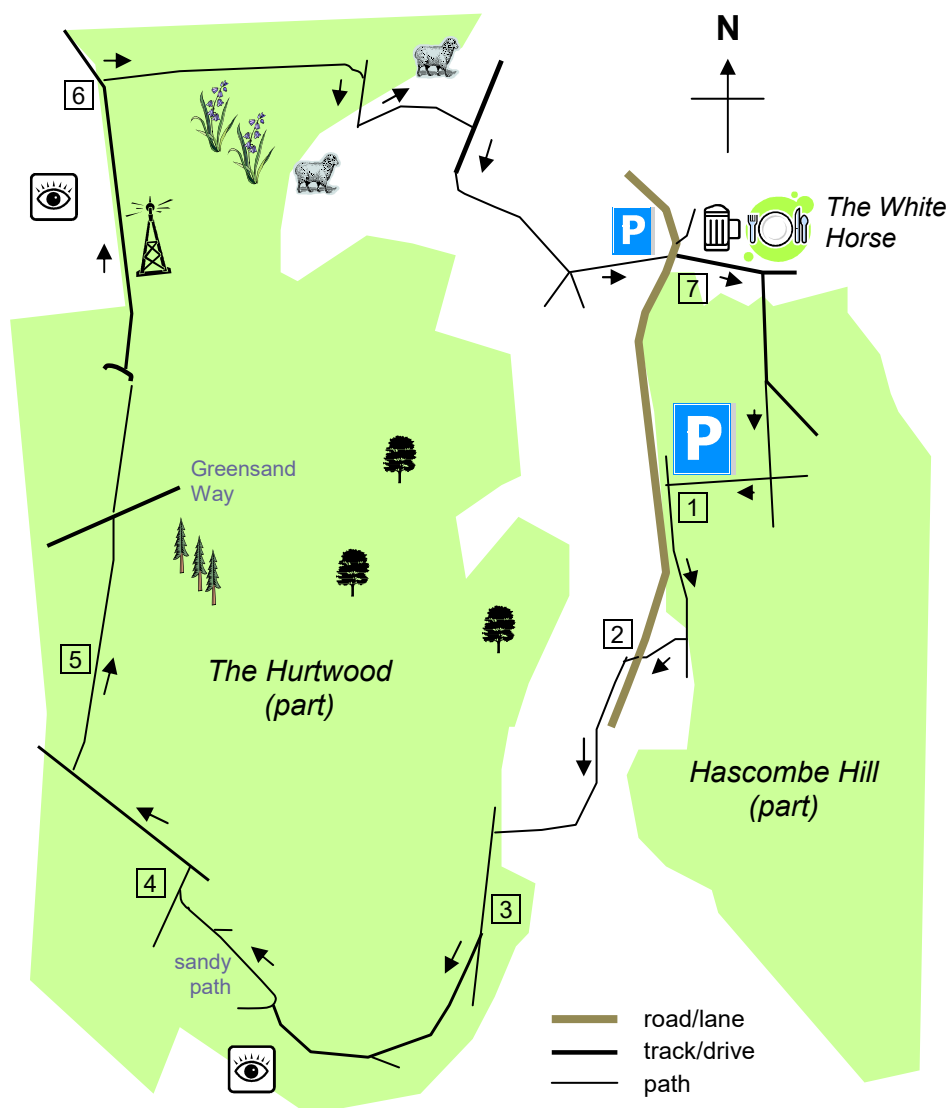
The walk begins in the **Old Rectory car park** in Hascombe, Surrey, nearest postcode **GU8 4JB**, www.w3w.co/timidly.husbands.promising. This is not the car park opposite the *White Horse* pub, but the isolated car park a little further south along the Godalming Road, opposite *The Old Rectory* and *Old Rectory Cottage*. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

If you have not already visited the village and pond of Hascombe, it is essential to drop by; otherwise you would miss one of Surrey's most charming and tranquil spots, ideal for a quiet sit-down by the pondside.

This short walk can be combined with another short walk *round Hascombe Hill*: see the guide in the current series on this website.

The Walk

Hascombe goes back more than 2000 years and was well established even before the Norman invasion. William Cobbett of "Rural Rides" wrote in 1823 "everything that meets the eye is beautiful; trees, coppices, cornfields, meadows; and then the distant views in every direction". The church was completely rebuilt in Victorian times. Hascombe has its own website: www.hascombe.com with a photo gallery.



- 1 Starting at the Old Rectory car park, walk to the end of the car park and continue, parallel to the main road on your right, on a narrow grassy woodland path. As you progress, you will notice straight ahead an enclosure surrounded by a tall dense dark green hedge. After walking 200m, and about 50m before the hedged enclosure, look to your right for a wide grass path that leads across an area of rough vegetation. Turn **right** on this path. It winds diagonally across to the opposite corner near the main road where there is a gap in the low fence, ending on the concrete approach to the big gates of *Long Vere Barns*. Turn briefly **left** on the main road.
- 2 In only 15m go over a stile on the **right**. (*Don't miss this stile: it is on the side of a driveway and quite surprising and well hidden.*) The footpath runs between

wooden fences, high above the road on your left. In 150m, ignore a stile on your right leading into a meadow. Shortly after this, at a waymarker arrow, keep straight on, ignoring a very steep path down on your left. (The bluebells here, in late spring, are best admired from a distance.) Your path curves right and leads over a stile into a fine sloping meadow. Go along the right-hand side beside a fence and, at the top, go over another stile, up a short path to a T-junction with a wider path that runs just inside the forest.

3



Turn **left** on this forest path, very shortly reaching a major fork. Take the **right** fork, a wide forestry track which winds its way uphill through an old coppice. **In late spring you will see bluebells on show aplenty.** Your track descends a little, whilst curving right. It meets a minor path coming from the left and rises gently again. **If the trees are still leafless, you have views to your left towards Dunsfold.** Your track descends again to meet a tight



bend in a sandy path. Keep **right**, thus joining the ascending arm of the path. **Near the top, where the trees are thinner, you have great views left across to Black Down.** You come up to another junction. Ignoring a narrow grassy path sharp right, keep **left** on a path which leads roughly in the same direction as before.

4

Your path curves right to join a straight path coming up from your left. This path immediately goes steeply up to meet a T-junction with a major path. *This part of the Hurtwood is called Breakneck Hill, at 189m in height, although there is no record of anyone taking a tumble.* Turn **left**. You are on a level woodland path and you may see other walkers for the first time today. After a pleasant 200m, you come from under dark pines to a more open area with a major side path on your right. Straight ahead is a green path beside a plantation of slender trees. But your course is **right** here on the side path, equally green and pleasant.

5



Keep straight on at all times on this wide path which changes frequently as it passes several junctions with wild wood and various plantations on both sides. In 350m you go over a diagonal crossing of the Greensand Way, a wide track used by other walks on this site. In a further 250m your path ends at a junction with a stony track. Go over a short section of the track and keep straight ahead on a wide woodland track. **Your best views are here on your left, across a wide expanse of green pastures, with Hambleton and Witley Common in the distance.** You pass a 'phone tower and 25m later a large metal gate. 70m after the gate, look right for a gap in the sandy bank. *(Don't miss this turn!)*

6



Turn **right** through the gap, between wooden posts, passing a yellow arrow. **In late spring, this area is made spectacular by a dense show of bluebells.** The occasional tall pines give this wide level path a magical atmosphere. At the end you reach a T-junction on the edge of the hill. Turn **right** downhill, following a yellow arrow on a markerpost. A large wooden gate (close carefully!) or a stile take you into a sloping pasture which in past years has always been home to a flock of sheep. In 10m double back **left** into another meadow. Keep to the **right**-hand edge, going through a small wooden gate, down steps, and **right** on a semi-tarmac drive. Where the drive bends right to a house, keep straight on on a path beside a fence on your left. At a waymarked crossing path, turn **left**, quickly reaching the road and the *White Horse* inn.

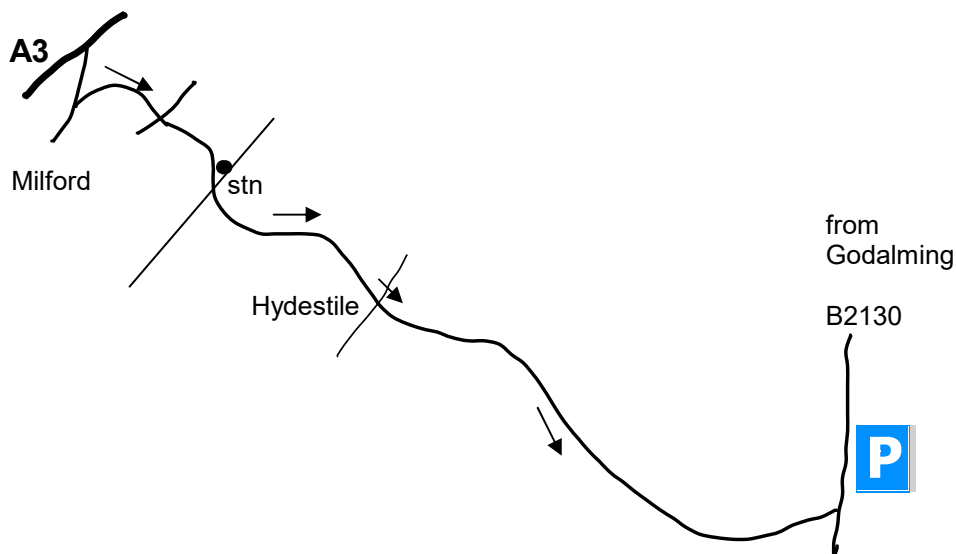


Quite apart from its ideal location for us walkers, the *White Horse* has developed as a gastropub in past years, for instance offering a 7-course taster menu on select days. If you just want a quencher, it is also the perfect local with a selection of real ales; and it has a garden.

- 7 After possible refreshment, take a driveway on the **right** of the pub (that is, on the **left** if you are coming out of the pub). In 100m turn **right** on a driveway dominated by a large garage, following a waymarker arrow. Squeeze past the garage and step over a shallow stile on to a wide dirt track. If this section is muddy, and if you are fit, you can avoid the mud entirely by climbing a very steep bank immediately after the fence on your right and taking a dry parallel path on the other side of the bank. In 150m, where the main footpath veers left, keep straight on on a narrower path. In a further 120m you reach a crosspaths. Turn **right** here, quickly reaching the road and the Old Rectory car park where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: The Old Rectory car park is off the Godalming Road just south of the *White Horse* pub in Hascombe, Surrey. To get there: take the A3 through Guildford and later turn off for Milford. At the first traffic lights in Milford, turn sharp left. Along this road on your left is Secretts, a huge farm shop which sells an astonishing range of delicacies as well as organic produce. At the mini-roundabout turn right and then immediately left signposted *Milford Station* and *Hydestile*. Continue on this road for 1½ miles ignoring all turnings off. Cross a major road at Hydestile and continue for just over a mile. Ignore a turning left for Godalming and then pass some fine woods. After ½ mile, where the main road curves right, there is a house on the left called Mare Pond House. Stay on the main road ignoring a narrow left fork. You eventually come to a T-junction at a main road: turn **left** here. The Old Rectory car park is 1km=0.6 mile on the right, 0.2 miles *before* the village centre and the *White Horse*.



By bus: Arriva bus 42 or 44 from Guildford or Godalming. Check the timetable.

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