



Holmbury and Pitch Hills

Distance: 10½ km=6½ miles

easy-to-moderate walking

Region: Surrey

Date written: 21-feb-2009

Author: Schwebefuss

Date revised: 2-oct-2014

Refreshments: Peaslake

Last update: 1-aug-2024

Maps: Explorer 145 (Guildford) and 146 (Dorking)
but the maps in this guide should be sufficient

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

Public rights are restricted to printing, copying or distributing this document exactly as seen here, complete and without any cutting or editing. See *Principles* on main webpage.

Woodland, hills, extensive views

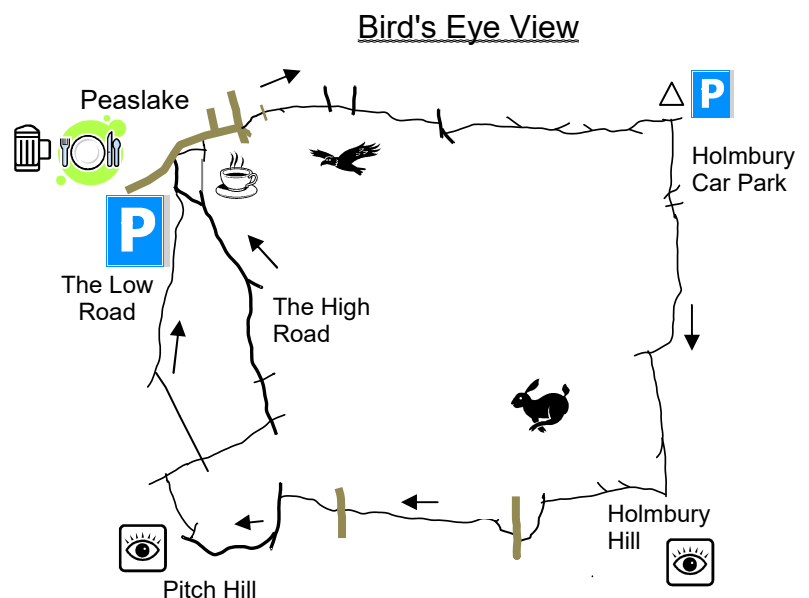
In Brief

Two hills for the price of one! This walk shows off some of the best views in Surrey from two of its best hilltops overlooking the Weald of Sussex. It seems longer than it really is because of the enjoyable ups and downs.

The walk starts at Peaslake's free **Hurtwood car park 2** (Walking Bottom), nearest postcode **GU5 9RR**, grid ref TQ 083 446, just outside the village. Another public car park is behind the *Hurtwood Inn*. You can also begin the walk at the car park near **Holmbury Youth Hostel, postcode RH5 6NW** (*not* the car park *in* the Youth Hostel !), in which case begin the walk at **Leg 2**. Another possible start is Hurtwood Control Car Park No. 1 (by Holmbury Hill). For full details of how to get to the start of the walk, see **Getting There** → at the end of this text.



Underfoot is sandy or grassy all the way, so it's fine any time of the year. There are no nettles and it is fine for dogs too.



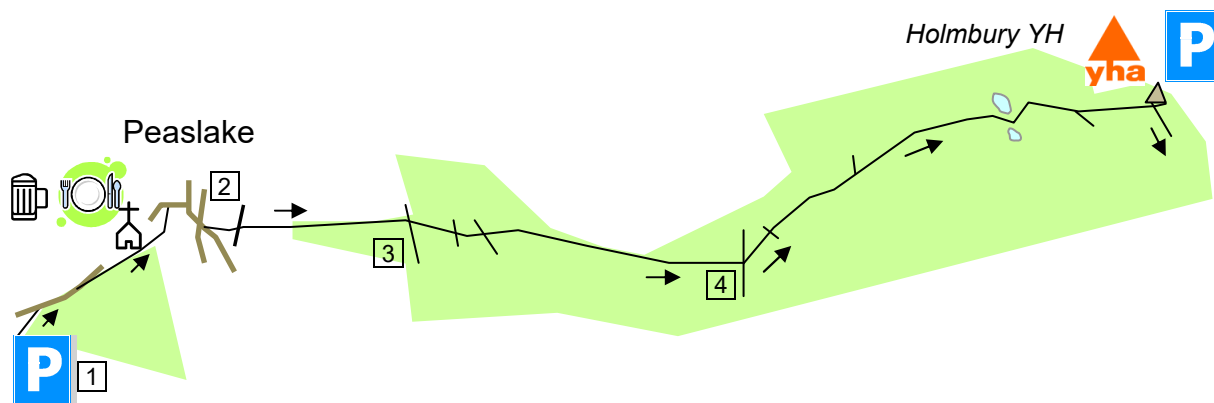
The Walk

Decision Point. If you parked at the **Holmbury YH** car park, skip forward text to **Leg 2** and begin the walk there, looping back to finish with **Leg 1**.



A part of the **Surrey Greensand Monster** walk (Trek 4) resumes here.

Leg 1: Peaslake to Holmbury YH 2½ km=1½ miles



- 1 From the Peaslake car park, go out to the road, Walking Bottom, and turn **right**. Immediately take a footpath **right** running parallel to the road and then rising. At the top you have a good view over the whole village of Peaslake. Turn **left** onto a metalled track that goes past the church on your left, leading down to the road in the centre of the village.



Peaslake is one of Surrey's quietest villages, apart from at weekends when mountain bikers swarm. The village is highly spread out, with only a handful of buildings in the centre. The name comes from the source nearby, originally called "Pise Lacu". The Hurtwood Inn serves food, including afternoon tea, as well as some real ales. The local Peaslake Village Stores also serves tea and coffee, pizzas etc. and has an excellent delicatessen counter.

- 2 At the road, turn **right** and cross the village centre to the shop. Turn **right** facing the shop and fork **left** on Radnor Road. In a few metres, after a driveway, take a marked footpath **left** steeply up a grassy bank, through a wooden barrier. At the top, by a bench, go through posts and straight over a lane to a lane facing you. You pass some fine properties and, where the roadway turns right into the last house, continue along a narrow enclosed path, through a wooden swing gate.
- 3 The following notes will take you more or less straight on for over 2 km to the **Holmbury YH car park**. Where the path emerges through a wooden barrier into fine open woodland, continue straight on. It immediately crosses a path, descends and crosses three more paths in the valley (two narrow, one wide). At a post indicating *Shere Parish Millennium Trail (SPMT)*, take a narrow rising path straight ahead. (The new long green metal fence on the left allows a view of one fine large property.) After 100m, this path gets quite stony, narrow and sunken. **You can instead take a parallel path through pleasant woodland by going right up a bank; the path re-joins the main path after 120m.** As you emerge into the open forest, you pass a post with a yellow arrow and a SPMT disk. In another 60m, you reach a T-junction at another post with an assortment of blue and yellow arrows.

- 4 Keep essentially **straight on** in the direction of the yellow arrow. In 50m, at another post, go straight over a crossing path. The path descends, is joined by other paths, runs between banks for a while and widens to a very broad sandy track. Ignore a blue arrow and a bridleway on your left and keep straight ahead, following the yellow arrow. The path soon runs between two (possibly dry) ponds and winds upwards left and right. 100m from the ponds, at a junction of wide paths, continue straight on, a fraction left. Soon you reach the Holmbury car park. Continue straight on, with the car park on your left, to the far corner.



This part of the **Surrey Greensand Monster** walk ends here.

Leg 2: Holmbury YH to Holmbury Hill 2¼ km=1½ miles



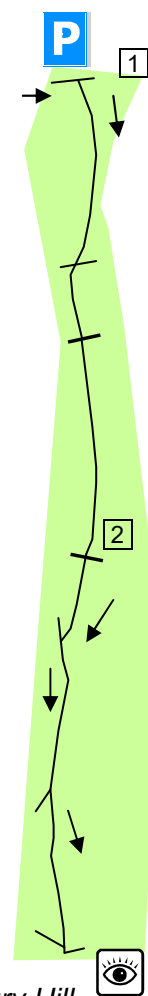
The nearby Youth Hostel has an evening restaurant and occasionally serves teas and snacks in the daytime when there are school parties etc.

- 1 Leading away from the back of the car park, take a narrow path in the direction of a blue arrow and an electricity pole. Continue on this sunken sandy path parallel to a line of electricity poles. **The following notes take you for nearly 2 km straight to Holmbury Hill.** The path passes through some fine pinewoods and in 500m crosses a path diagonally. In a further 150m, at a marker post with a blue arrow, it crosses a wide sandy track and runs for 500m through deciduous woodland, now partially felled leaving a delicious veldt of young birch and heather, with a scattering of new pines, after which you pass a junction of several minor paths.

- 2 In 150m, your path veers right before a large conifer and in 30m meets a crossing track. Turn **left** here on a wide grassy path, soon regaining your original southerly direction. In 150m, the path crosses another major path diagonally. In 100m, at a fork, choose the **left-hand**, more sandy, path. This path curves left and right and rises to the top of Holmbury Hill with its circular seat and, down to the right, a triangulation point. The view from here over the Weald is magnificent. “Weald” is a Saxon word meaning simply “forest” (cf German “Wald”).



Holmbury Hill is the site of an iron-age fort, which stood for about 150 years until the Romans arrived. Excavations in 1930 and 1974 revealed various implements and weapons. The hill is 261m high and from here you can see [Chanctonbury Ring](#), [Bignor Hill](#) and [Black Down](#) (all West Sussex walks from this site) and back to the London City and Canary Wharf landmarks.

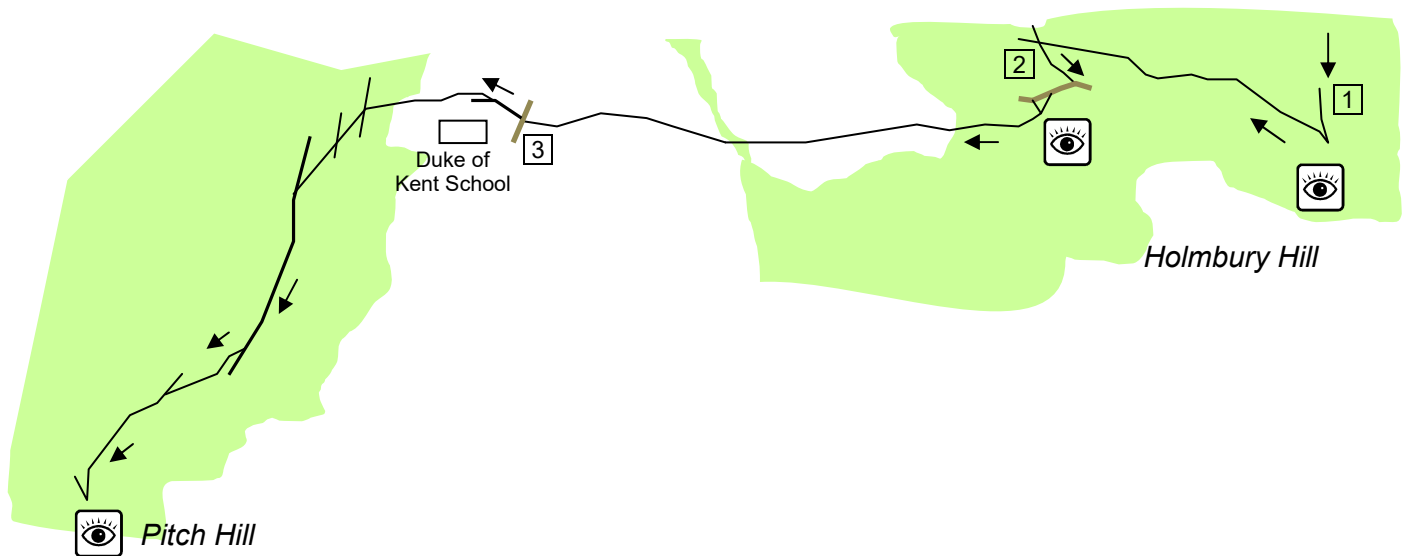


Holmbury Hill



A part of the **Surrey Greensand Monster** walk resumes here.

Leg 3: Holmbury Hill to Pitch Hill 3 km=2 miles



- 1** After admiring the view, walk back from the main stone seat/compass point overlooking the Weald and approach the smaller concrete pillar (a donation box) set back from the edge of the hill. Take the sunken sandy path immediately to the **left** of the pillar. Keep to the wide path with the edge of the hill on your left, avoiding paths that fork off to the right. You pass a seat and at junctions, always keep to the **left** path, staying on the edge of the hill. All this time, you are following the Greensand Way, as indicated by an occasional GW sign. Stay on the main sandy path, taking the **left** option at a fork. You are now on a beautiful path along the edge of the hillside, with fine views left across the Weald. Your path goes across a wheelchair circular route with a circle of benches and down a steep slope to a sunken path. Turn **left** on this sunken path (unless you are parked at Hurtwood Control Car Park 1 which is straight on up a steep bank).
- 2** Follow this recently widened sandy bridleway down to a lane and turn **right**. In 30m, just past a house, turn **left** on a signed footpath. Shortly you reach a bench on the left with a captivating view of the pine-topped hillock, the Weald and the South Downs. Continue to a T-junction with a path at a bend and go **left** past a large metal gate, back on the GW. Fork **left** before a farm gate onto a narrow path running between fields across a lovely valley, passing through the wooden "McKinney Gate". *To the right is Coverwood, a farm-hamlet and riding centre with famous gardens and lakes.* Cross a second valley, then an enclosed footpath and a stile and reach a road.
- 3** Cross the road and continue on the driveway of the Duke of Kent School. As the driveway curves left, take a tarmac parallel path on the **right** leading gradually upwards on steps and into woodland. Go straight on up between wooden fences amidst the rhododendrons. Turn **left** through the remains of a wooden swing-gate. Continue ahead up steps in the same direction, cross a level path and continue up more steps the other side, still on the GW. At the top, turn **left** on a very broad path. Immediately after a house on the right and some tarmac, turn **right** at a post on a path which goes uphill and along a ridge. At a T-junction at the top turn **left** on a wide path



with a seat and fine views to your left. At a fork, keep **left** by a *footpath only* sign through a barrier on a narrow path, keeping to the side of the hill. Shortly you go past a similar sign to the open area of Pitch Hill. Turn **left** to reach the seat, information board and viewpoint.

Pitch Hill, which is sometimes called "Coneyhurst Hill", is 257m high. From here you can see Holmbury Hill on the left and Hascombe Hill, Gibbet Hill and the long sharp outline of Blackdown on the right. In the valley below are the villages of Ewhurst (left) and Cranleigh. Pitch Hill and its neighbours are checkpoints on several annual 50-mile "challenge" walks.



This part of the **Surrey Greensand Monster** walk ends here.

Leg 4: Pitch Hill to Peaslake 2½ km=1½ miles

- 1 Return from the viewpoint to the open area and keep **left** up to the trig point where there are two concrete pillars. Turn **right** opposite the pillars into the woods on a bridleway marked with a (very faded) blue arrow. In 40m, fork **left** on a clear path. In 180m, turn **right** on a wide crossing path. In 100m you come to another wide crossing path.

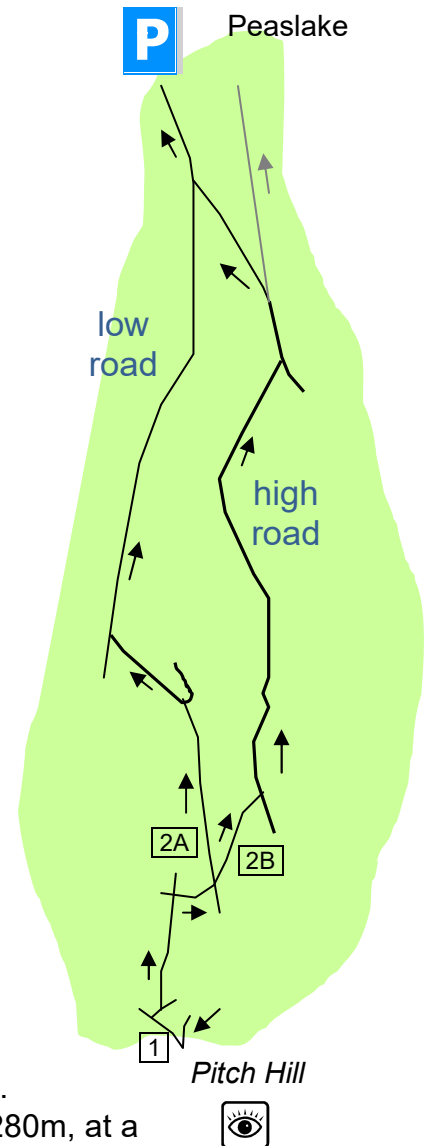
Decision Point. Here you have a choice of routes back to Peaslake. The Low Road is through deciduous woods but may be a little more muddy in some seasons. The High Road is on wide forestry tracks and has a short cut in case you began the walk at the Holmbury YH Car Park.

The Low Road

- 2A Turn **left** on the wide crossing path. Follow this valley path for 400m until you are joined by an even wider forestry track at a hairpin. Keep **left** downhill on this track. Follow this track, avoiding all side paths, left and right, until the track ends at a T-junction at the bottom in the woodland. Turn **right** here. This path takes you, after a long woodland walk of nearly 1½ km, to the Peaslake car park where the walk began.

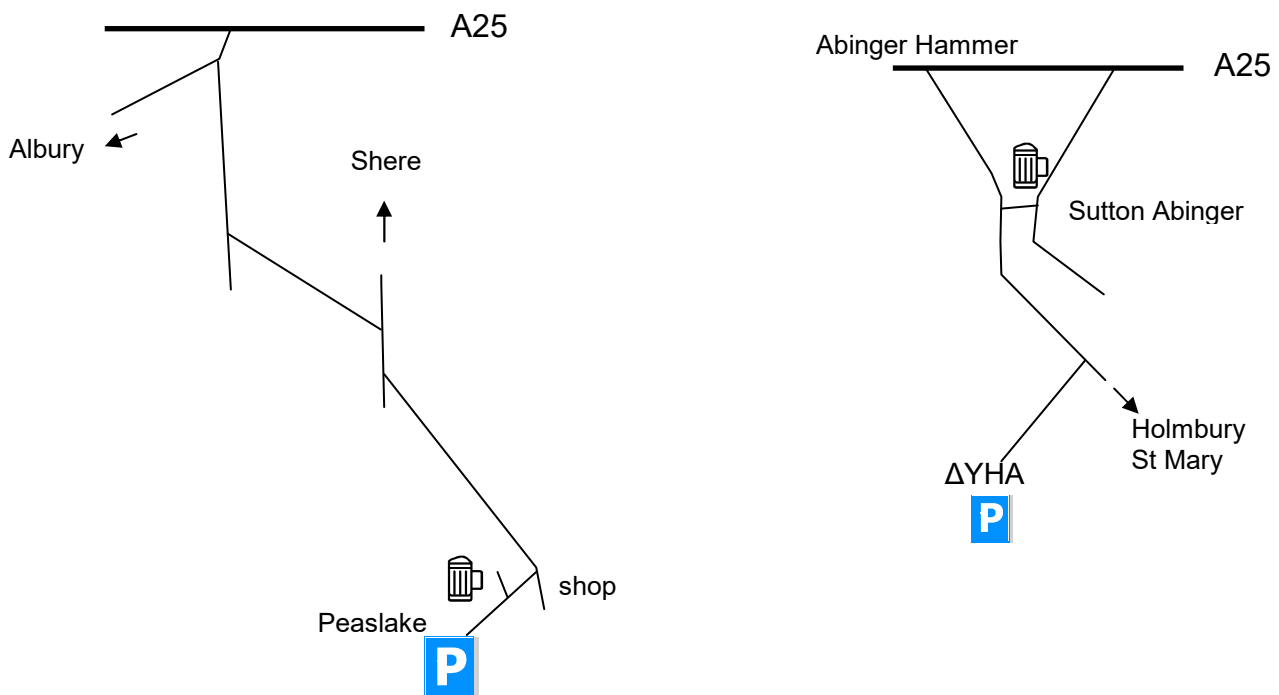
The High Road

- 2B Continue straight over the wide crossing path on a rising path. In 200m or so turn **left** on a wide diagonal crossing path. In 280m, at a junction of forestry tracks, keep straight on on a very wide sandy track. After nearly 1 km and some more crossing paths, a very wide track joins from the right. *Note the unusual stone cairn – maybe a roundabout for bikers.* After another 100m there is a fork in the track. *If you did not begin the walk at the Peaslake Car Park, fork right, later passing the cemetery on the left and continuing past the church at Peaslake, resuming the walk at Leg 1 section 2.* Otherwise, fork **left** downhill and, at the bottom, turn **right** to reach the Peaslake car park where the walk began.



fancy more free walks? www.fancyfreewalks.org

Getting there



By car: for the **Peaslake Walking Bottom Car Park**, go to the A25 near Clandon and turn south on the A248 signposted *Godalming, Albury*. At a right bend, turn **left** for *Albury Heath, Farley Green, Peaslake*. In 1 km, turn **left** as for *Peaslake, Ewhurst*. In 1½ km, at a T-junction turn **right** over a railway bridge and immediately **left**, signposted *Peaslake*. In 3 km, you reach the centre of Peaslake by the Village Stores. Turn sharp **right** here and follow the main road for 300m until a sandy track on the left marks the entrance to Hurtwood Walking Bottom Car Park 2.

For the **Holmbury YH Car Park**, go to the A25 near Abinger Hammer and go south on any one of two roads leading to Sutton Abinger. Continue on the road for another 1 km until, on your **right** you see a signpost on a triangle of grass, pointing to the YHA (Youth Hostel). Take this narrow road, going straight on along an even narrower road (with occasional passing places) and at the end reach the car park. Start the walk from **Leg 2**.

fancy more free walks? www.fancyfreewalks.org