



Newdigate and Glover's Wood

Distance: 9 km=5½ miles easy walking
or, with an optional extension to Charlwood, 11½ km=7 miles

Region: Surrey

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Refreshments: Newdigate

Map: Explorer 146 (Dorking) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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Village, easy tracks, woodland, bluebells, green meadows

In Brief

This walk begins in a lonely village, passes a historic manor and then leads you on a tour of one of the great woods in Surrey, using some unmapped paths. The return to the village is along an unspoilt green stretch of consummate beauty. This walk is perfect in late spring for the extensive bluebells, or at any time through to late autumn.



There are no nettles or irritating undergrowth on this walk, so any sensible clothing should be fine. Paths are generally clear, varying from wide surfaced tracks, woodland paths strewn with some dead wood, and grassy meadows. So boots are not necessary in drier seasons. But in winter or after prolonged rain, good ankle boots are required as a minimum. Your dog will enjoy this walk too and will make new friends, especially in Burntoak Lane, with only a small chance of livestock in one of the fields.



This walk can be extended to make a satisfying village-to-village walk of 7 miles (11½ km), with a pub at each end, by following part of the *Charlwood Bluebell Walk*. You need to print or download that walk (1 May 2019 update) as well as this one. Follow the instructions in colour at the end of section [4](#).

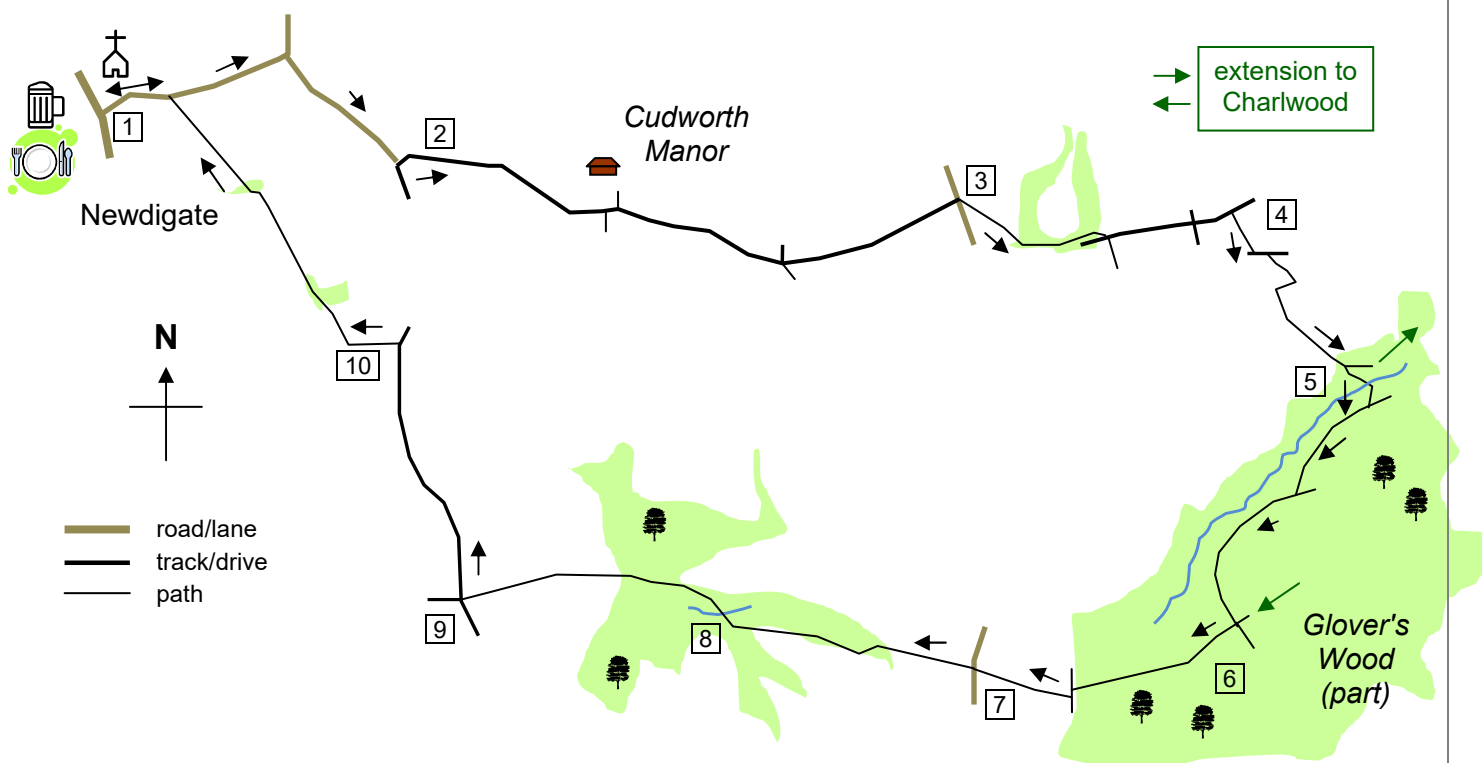
The walk begins in the village of **Newdigate**, Surrey, postcode **RH5 5DH**. There's plenty of space in the main road (simply called "Village Street") or in the side lane ("Church Lane"), beside the church. Note that this church is well attended on Sundays, but you can always find spaces further down the lane – and that is where the walk begins. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

Welcome to the “loneliest place in Surrey”! Or so it was described in the 1700s. Its name seems to come from another place which is now a mere hamlet: “On Ewood Gate” (“gate” = “way” from Norse). (See the “Parkgate” walk in this series.) Notice there's no village green, no centre really – it's such a dispersed village, although the pub and the church draw the focus. Judging from the fine timbered houses, the village was prosperous centuries ago (as now). Much of the wealth came from bricks, as with so many places lying on the Wealden clay when after the Great Fire of London in 1666 bricks were at a premium.

The village has seen more recent drama. In 1959, a Viscount airliner crashed in Jordan's Wood just south of the parish. The Turkish premier was on his way to Gatwick and London for talks on a settlement for Cyprus. He survived, found staggering through the woods you walk today, but twenty-four died.

Newdigate church of St Peter dates from the 1100s and is so rare that it's a favourite subject for watercolourists. The entire western section and tower are timber, added around the year 1400. The “Six Bells” pub is named after the ones in the church tower. The pub, by the way, is H&W with a garden and some excellent grub, open daily, food all day at weekends. The Tanhouse Farm Shop is also nearby, along the Rusper Road, a favourite for drinks and yummy food.



- 1 Walk along Church Lane, ignoring a footpath on the right just after a small business unit, passing a thin pond on your right, and continue to a junction with Hogspudding Lane at the end. Ignore a track straight ahead and instead turn **right** on Cudworth Lane. You pass several interesting houses and cottages and reach a fork. Ignore the right fork to Green Lane Farm and keep **left** on a rough driveway.
- 2 You pass some large houses, with the grinning Chinese lions atop the gate of Cudworth House. Keep straight on at all times. After a straight section between meadows, the drive winds its way past scattered large houses, over a wide stream. (It won't be surprising if the driveway becomes tarmac in the future, although residents probably don't want to encourage through traffic.)

On your left you can see the weir and old stone bridge over the moat which serves as entrance to Cudworth Manor.

The manor goes back at least to the end of the 1200s. It was owned by Walter de la Poyle, subject of many misspellings, a royal retainer who owned much of Surrey (after whom Pewley Downs are named – see the “Guildford” walk in this series). It passed to Chertsey Abbey who owned even more of Surrey (until the Dissolution, that is).

Keep straight on past various junctions, ignoring footpaths right and left, passing a reedy pond on your left. *Note the amusing sign at the entrance to Burnt Oak Cottage.* The drive is now Burntoak Lane and it passes on your left Cudworth Park, a new bungalow village. (Ignore an overgrown footpath here on your right.) Stay on the drive all the way to a T-junction with Partridge Lane.

- 3 Cross straight over, via a stile, on a marked footpath. It takes you diagonally across a meadow of buttercups into the corner where there is a large open metal gate (in place of the useless stile). Your path now runs along the right-hand side of a meadow and, at the other side, over an unneeded stile* into a woodland grove. (* Some walkers simply slip down onto the track despite the notice.) After a 2-plank bridge, the path curves right to meet a wide track. Ignore the bridge and stile on the other side and instead turn **left** on the track, known as Beggarhouse Lane. In 200m, continue straight on between the many metal gates of Greenings Farm with the farm buildings on your right. Proceed onwards for another 60m and turn **right** over a 2-plank bridge and stile onto a footpath.

- 4 The path crosses a farm track between posts and leads straight across the pasture, following a line of big trees, and over a stile onto a driveway. Turn **left** on the driveway for only 40m and go **right** through a modern kissing-gate, immediately after the entrance to a semi-detached pair of brick cottages. The path goes left-right-right-left round a fenced enclosure with a pond. At a 3-way fingerpost, ignore a bridge and stile on your right and stay next to the hedgerow all the way down, to go through a metal kissing-gate into the great woodland of Glover’s Wood Nature Reserve.

Glover’s wood is one of the largest areas of woodland in the Surrey Weald a SSSI (site of special scientific interest). The top earth layer is Paludina limestone, formed in Mesozoic times from billions of snails. This might explain why the beeches here are scrawny, unlike in the Chilterns with their deeper richer soil. The second layer is Wealden clay of course. Glover’s Wood covers 96 hectares, of which 28 were acquired by the Woodland Trust in 1983.

The sudden change of atmosphere is awesome and in late spring you now meet a sea of bluebells. Follow the path for only 20m to meet a fork.



If you would like to extend this walk to the neighbouring village of Charlwood, for a break in the *Half Moon*, take the **left** fork, switch to the *Charlwood Bluebell Walk* and do section 6 there. After a refreshment break in the village and a look at the church, do sections 1 to 3 in that text, turn **left** on the public footpath and skip forward in this text to section 6.

5



Take the **right** fork, slightly downhill, thus departing from the official (albeit unsigned) footpath. Shortly, your path goes steeply down over a (dry) stream bed and snakes its way for 50m or so [Jul 2024: over/round a fallen tree]. Look to your right now for a small wooden bridge across the Welland Gill. Go **right** over the bridge (easiest if you go a further 5m and turn *sharp*

right). [Apr 2020: This bridge is straddled by two thick branches of a fallen tree: please be very careful and cross one at a time.] There are ramsons aplenty as well as bluebells here. Your path goes steeply uphill to a T-junction. Turn **right** here on a beautiful level woodland path which runs over a debris of fallen branches with the deep stream bed on your right. After about 300m, you reach a T-junction. Turn sharp **right** on a similar log-strewn path, through a forest of beech, still with the stream bed on your right, sometimes approaching quite close. After 450m you reach a major crossing path, near a *Woodland Trust* post. You have reached an official footpath. Turn **right** on the footpath.

6 The footpath soon leads you down steps, over a 2-plank bridge and over some round flagstones to a wide bridge over the gill. After the bridge, your path goes left and up more steps. At the top, avoid a diagonal crossing path 20m later, and keep straight on. In nearly 200m, continue over another diagonal crossing path. You reach a wide path on the edge of the wood. Veer **left** on it and, in only 5m, fork **right** over a 2-plank bridge and past an unneeded stile. Now follow a narrow path in a pleasant woodland strip between pastures. You emerge via a stile to a road.

7 Cross over the road, a fraction right, to a narrow path running beside a garden fence. A stile [Jul 2024: care! not secure] leads you onto a path running in the open between meadows beside a wire fence on your right.



You have a good view of the Greensand Hills ahead to your right. At the end of the wire fence, continue a little further on this rather faint path to meet a faded farm track coming from your right. Continue straight ahead, shortly going through a gap in the trees and out into another meadow. Keep to the **right**-hand edge, with the deep woods on your right. In the corner, your path goes down into the woods and crosses a gill (the same stream as you crossed in Glover's Wood) via a sturdy bridge.

8 You come up, past a redundant stile, into a meadow. Keep to the **left**-hand side and go over a (nearly redundant) stile (or under a wooden bar), down into woods. After a bridge, keep ahead on a curvy path leading to a long footbridge, out into the open. Keep straight ahead between meadows beside a wire fence. Go on through a gap into the next meadow, onwards along a farm track heading for Home Farm. *Home Farm was previously Newdigate Place, one of the village's historic outlying mansions of which very little remains. It was owned at one time by the Marquis of Abergavenny (see the "Groombridge" walk in this series).*

9 At the other side, as you approach two large barns, your paths veers right to skirt them. You reach a gate and a wire fence. Keep **left** to reach a wide track known as Dukes Drive at a 4-way junction. Turn immediately **right** here through a small metal rider's gate. Follow this beautiful wide path as it curves to meet another small metal gate. (There is an alternative route now giving you a view of the lakes with a bench seat: fork **right** before the gate, over two stiles and diagonally across a pasture; veer **left** over a bridge between the lakes; at the top, turn **left** and go past some farm material to re-join the track; your route is straight over. Otherwise...) Go through this second metal gate, along an avenue, passing a corner of a lake. Just before some farm buildings, at a 4-way fingerpost, go **left** over a stile.

10 This exquisite final section could be called the "green kilometer", although a look at Google Earth suggests part of it might have been ploughed in the past. Go straight across the meadow, passing under wires, and through a gap in the hedge. In the next meadow, veer **right** across the centre, aiming for a long

bridge (now beautifully restored) with step-over bars over a stream. Continue up the right-hand side of the next meadow and through a gap into the next meadow. Veer **left** across the centre, passing to the right of an electricity pole. At the other side, a narrow path curves left to take you over a stile into the next meadow. Go diagonally across it to the distant corner (*occasionally passing some very cute heifers*). Go over a stile here and **left** on the road, leading back to the centre of the village where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: Newdigate is easily reached from the A24 (Dorking-Horsham) road. Come off just before the first large roundabout after the Holmwoods, and follow signs for *Newdigate*. Park near the church.

By bus/train: Bus 22 or Metrobus 21 from Dorking stations. Check the timetables.

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