



Peaslake and the Hurtwood

Distance: 9½ km=6 miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

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Refreshments: Peaslake

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Map: Explorer 145 (Guildford) *but the map in this guide is all you need*

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

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Woodland, hills, village, views

In Brief

The Hurtwood is a vast area of magnificent forest, already seen on several other of our routes. This walk comes out of the woodland to give you views of the North Downs, visits a star village for refreshments (ring 01306 730851 to enquire at the *Hurtwood Inn*) and returns to the deep woods with high views to the south.



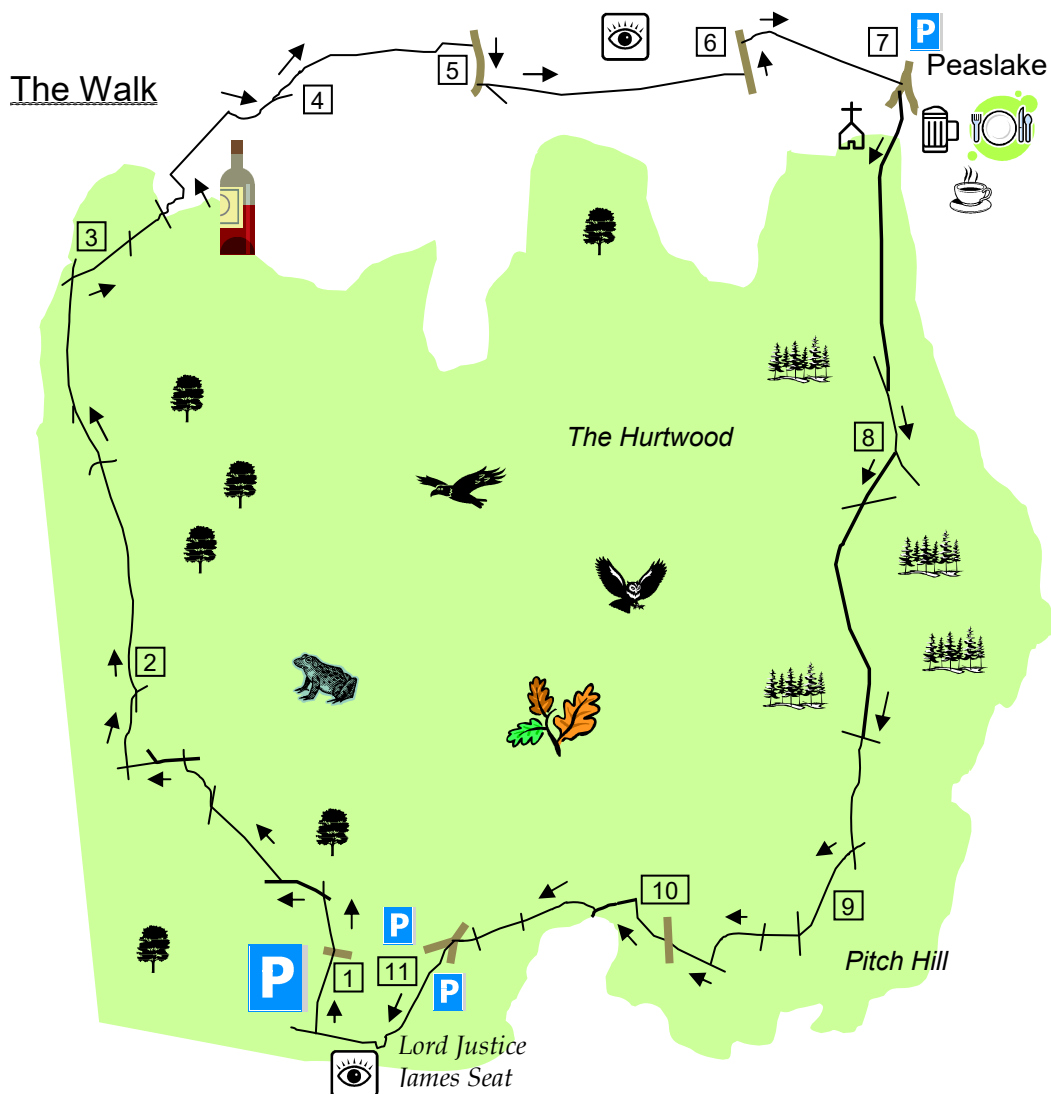
There are one or two patches of nettles and brambles on this walk in summer when wearing shorts might be unwise. A number of mountain bikers use the bridle paths and churn up the ground in a few places after rain when you may be glad of boots. Apart from that, any kind of attire and sensible footwear should be fine. There is one short steep section where you may wish for a walking pole. This walk is perfect for your dog.

The walk begins at the **Hurtwood Control car park 12** (Reynards Hill), grid ref TQ 072425, www.w3w.co/denote.lazy.adjusting. There are no nearby dwellings but the **postcode** for Ewhurst Windmill is **GU6 7NL** and for Cranleigh it is **GU6 7NJ**. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

- See map overleaf.** From the Hurtwood Control car park 12, go out to the road, cross it and take a narrow path opposite, next to a small wooden post, into the woods. In 150m, you meet a wide crossing path: turn **left** on it. In just over 100m, you come to a major fork in the path: take the **right** fork, veering from your original direction, across an open area of fir saplings and bracken where the young birch have been stripped away. In 250m, at the other side of the open area, you meet a pine wood and a wide path coming from the left. Veer **right** on this path but immediately fork **left** into the wood. Your path curves left, leads gently downhill and veers right to meet a major crossing path: turn **left** on this path. In 70m, avoid a forestry track that curves away to your right and stay on the straight path leading more steeply downhill. In

another 70m, at the bottom, you come to a crossing of paths by some new fencing. Turn **right** here on a narrow path that runs along the valley bottom. In 200m you arrive at a marker post and a multiple junction of paths, one of the several wells and springs that are found in the Hurtwood. Veer **right** towards a small fenced enclosure that surrounds an old water tank but immediately turn **left** to another marker post bearing blue and yellow arrows.



- [2] Choose the **left** fork, the bridleway, following the **blue** arrow. Your path runs gently down the bottom of the so-called Larch Valley, felled in 2015 and now (2024) regenerated with maturing trees which hem walkers in quite densely. After 600m, your path crosses a tarmac drive at a bend: keep straight ahead still following the blue arrow, passing several small ponds at a place called Lamb's Well. A narrow footpath coming down from the left joins your path at a 3-way fingerpost. There is a ditch on your left and, further up the slope, evidence of gardens (note the eerie, abandoned, old swimming pool). You pass the remains of a small fenced area on your left and immediately meet a waymarked crossing path. (Care! easily missed; as a guide, look for a small pond on your left.)
- [3] Turn **right** on the crossing path uphill, following the yellow arrow. Your path runs over a low hill to meet a tarmac track: cross straight over the track on a rather untidy path. Almost immediately turn **left** as directed by a yellow arrow on a marker post. Keep straight ahead, going steeply down.

In Jan 2023 the “wide sunken path” you have to cross in the text below was a “*substantial and fast-flowing stream*”, impossible to cross without wellies. So in winter, it’s best to use this alternative - also useful *in any season* to avoid a steep section: keep **right** at the yellow arrow, following a more comfortable gradient for 150m to reach the sunken path; now:

(a) if the sunken path is *walkable*, turn sharp **left** on it for **120m** (NB!) to meet the crossing path (*don’t miss! there is a sign with yellow arrow but it may be lying on its side*) and turn **right** on it; or

(b) if the sunken path is *not* walkable, scramble up the opposite bank and traverse **left** along a narrow path between the bank and a wire fence - watching for overgrown hollies and a couple of places where the ground has slipped - to find your way back to the path.

In either case (a) or (b) continue from the point marked [*] below.

Your path becomes **very steep** as you descend carefully to a wide sunken path at the bottom, crossing straight over. [*] Go up over a bank, avoiding a wooden gate to the right, and up beside a holly hedge. Your path leads you **left** over a stile and into a sloping meadow. Continue along the top edge of the meadow and, in 70m, go **right** over a stile or through a wooden gate, if open. Your path leads along the edge of a vineyard, one of several in this area. At the other side, go through a small walker’s gate and turn **right** in the direction of the yellow arrow. Follow the path down to go over a stile, or through a large wooden gate, into woodland. You are joined by a rider’s path from the left and arrive at a fork with yellow and blue arrows.

- 4 Choose the **left** fork, the yellow arrow, next to a wire fence on your right. After a patch of hollies, your path emerges to run beside a large grassy meadow with good views of the North Downs. At a large wooden gate, ignore a footpath on the left and keep straight on along a path darkened by hollies and a canopy of oaks. Your path continues along an avenue of cherries which make a fine display in springtime. Knowle Farm and its house are on your right before your path zigzags left-right onto the concrete drive by *Hound House* with its long converted barn, reaching a road by the hound-pillared entrance gate.
- 5 Turn **right** on the road. (Because of the curve, it may be best to defy convention and walk on the left.) In 100m, go **left** through a metal gate into a meadow, now with houses of Peaslake visible ahead. Avoid the wide track across the centre and instead take a grassy path to its **left** running beside a wire fence. After a small metal gate, your path runs beside a crop field. *The large house about a mile away on your left is Burrows Lea, home to the Harry Edwards Healing Sanctuary and a prime location for weddings.* Another small metal gate is followed by another field, after which you emerge beside a metal gate to a lane.
- 6 Turn **left** on the lane and, in 80m, go **right** on a driveway for *Quakers Orchard* (named after a notable “*Friend*”). Immediately zigzag **left-right** onto a sandy path, keeping the beech hedge on your right. Where the fence bends left, keep straight ahead close to the hedge and garden on your right. Finally a narrow path between hedges and gardens leads you down to Peaslake village, with the *Hurtwood Inn* on your left and the Village Stores beyond (they also sell hot drinks and snacks including excellent sausage rolls).



Peaslake is an isolated village so thankfully it has its own shop, school (re-opened by the villagers themselves in 1997), dramatic society, beauty room, badminton club and WI. In recent years it has been colonised big-time by a

surge of interest in mountain biking. The mountain bike orienteering Trailquest takes place every October (see www.peaslakemtbo.com) and is a huge affair. The Pedal & Spoke bike shop is independently run and you can hire a bike there. One house, Furzefield in Hoe Lane just north of here, was once a base for the Suffragette movement. The Hurtwood Inn (01306-730851) was built in 1920 on the site of two cottages; it is also a hotel.



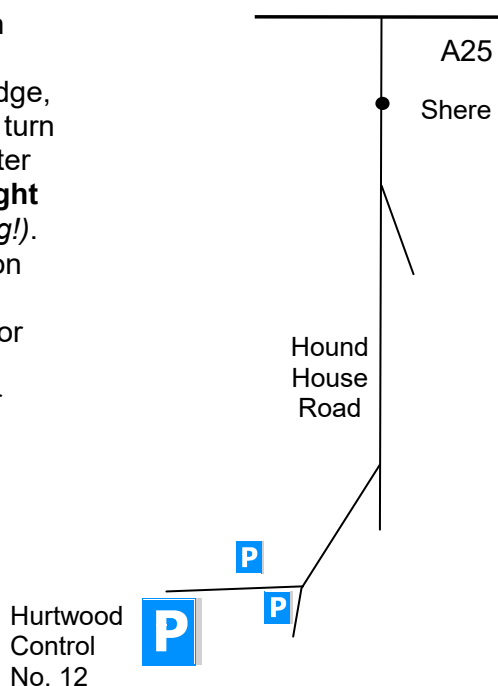
- 7 After a break for refreshment, take a tarmac track almost opposite the *Hurtmore Inn*, marked as a bridleway, beside the church noticeboard. You pass the church of St Mark which is well worth a visit. Ignore two paths on the left by the corner of the church and stay on the tarmac, passing a bench seat. The track becomes earthy just before the gates to the cemetery. Keep left round the side passing a wooden barrier. (You can also go through the cemetery and out via a small gate on the other side.) Your wide path goes gently uphill and, after around 300m, is joined from the right by another path. In a further 170m, you reach a major fork.
- 8 Take the **right** fork. 150m later another path crosses yours obliquely. The next junction is not for 600m, a wide straight crossing track: continue straight ahead into a pinewood. Your path is now a little narrower, boskier, bendier and grittier. Ignore a minor crossing path and continue for 500m. You come to a junction with a diagonal crossing path. (As a check, it is narrow and sunken on your left but wider on your right.) Fork **right** onto this crossing path.
- 9 Your path comes down to a four-way junction under an oak: go straight over, slightly uphill. (If you would like to visit Pitch Hill, you can turn **left** at this junction and, after viewing, turn **right** along the main ridge path. Pitch Hill is visited by two other walks in this series: *Holmbury and Pitch Hills* and *Winterfold Wood*.) In 100m, your path goes over another crossing: keep to the main path under birch trees, ignoring a path on your right shortly after. Soon you see the edge of a disused quarry ahead with a warning notice. 30m before the quarry, your path bends left and, in 100m, comes to a junction. Turn **right**, soon arriving at a T-junction with a wide path. Turn **right** on this path, part of the Greensand Way (GW). Your path leads down to Hurtwood Control car park No. 3. Veer **left** beside the car park and cross the main road.
- 10 Take a domestic driveway opposite and, just before the wooden gate of the house, go over a stile situated in a gap in the fence and follow a stony path uphill and up steps. At the top, keep ahead on a tarmac drive, forking **left** to pass Ewhurst Windmill (now a private dwelling) and another house on your left. Where the drive curves left, keep straight ahead at a marker post on a path into woods. Your path crosses a gravel driveway and reaches a road junction with Windmill Plain and Winterfold Heath Road.
- 11 Cross straight over and veer left into Hurtwood Control car park 4. Keep ahead on the main path past a noticeboard, a large metal gate and a memorial to secret agents who served in WW2. Continue uphill, still on the GW. In around 225m there is a small diversion on your left to *Lord Justice James' seat* (newly sculpted) from which there are great views over the Weald, now threatened by the growing birch saplings. After re-joining the main path, **ignore** the first post with a yellow arrow. A full 150m after you re-joined the main path, you come to a *second* post with a yellow arrow and a **GW** sign. Turn **right** on a small branching path into the woods and immediately take the **left** fork. Follow this winding path, going over a crossing path, reaching in 170m Hurtwood Control car park 12 where the walk began.



Getting there

By car: To get to Hurtwood Control car park No. 12 from the London area, take the A25 road and turn onto the B2127 through Shere (or bypass it via Albury Heath). At a road junction by a railway bridge, keep straight ahead for Ewhurst, avoiding the left turn to Peaslake. About 2½ miles=4 km further on, after an interesting drive through deep cuttings, turn **right** at a signpost for Winterfold (*don't miss this turning!*). About ½ mile=600m further, turn **right** at a junction onto Winterfold Heath Road, ignoring a car park (Hurtwood Control No. 4) on your left. Continue for 300m, ignoring a car park on your right in 100m (Hurtwood Control No. 13). Hurtwood Control car park No. 12 is on your **left**.

By bus/train: bus 23, 25 from Guildford station to Peaslake, not Sunday. Check the timetables.



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