



Winterfold Wood

Distance: 8½ km=5¼ miles

moderate walking with many gradients

Region: Surrey

Date written: 12-nov-2011

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Refreshments:

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Windmill Inn??, Peaslake after the walk

Map: Explorer 145 (Guildford) *but the maps in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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Long woodland paths, hill, views, gentle meadows

In Brief

This perfect little walk is sheer indulgence for a fit walker, with hills, green fields and long woodland trails. At one point you descend the steepest part of Pitch Hill and there are two ascents that might tax you a little. There is no climbing and all the gradients are perfectly manageable but the walk will seem much longer than the given length (which doesn't take account of the gradients). So quiet is this country that you don't pass any villages or main roads, but the starting point is very near Peaslake with the excellent *Hurtwood Inn* and village stores. The *Windmill Inn* is also on the route but in 2022 it was burnt down and we don't know if it will ever re-open (for enquiries, call 01483-548389). Because of the pinewoods and open views, this walk is perfect for all seasons.

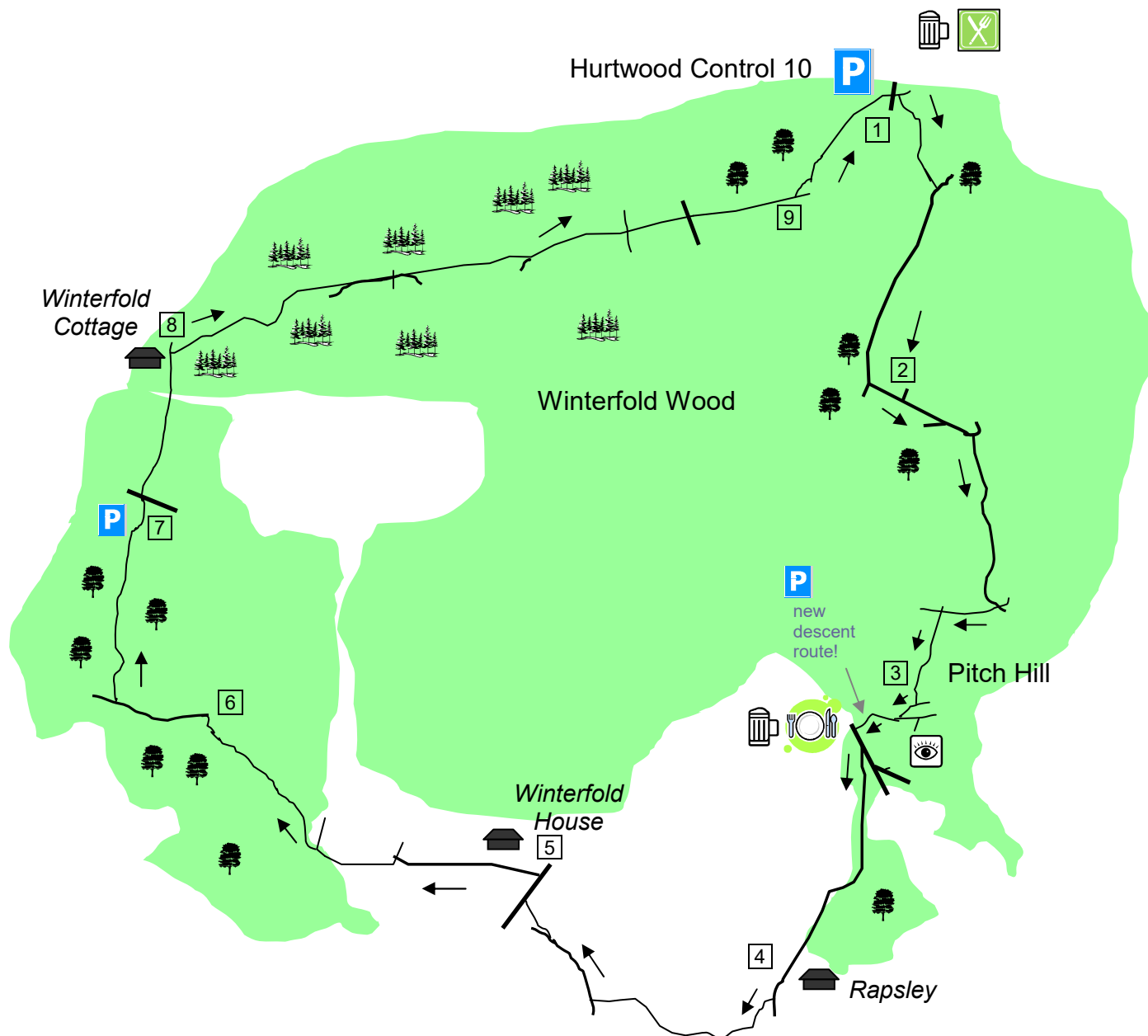


There are some nettles on the narrow paths, so shorts are not advisable. In summer one or two of the paths may be overgrown and you may need to bring a hiking pole to smooth the way and to help with the descent from Pitch Hill. Another possible hazard at weekends is mountain bikers, this being among their favourite playgrounds. Any kind of strong footwear should be fine. Your dog will enjoy this walk too.

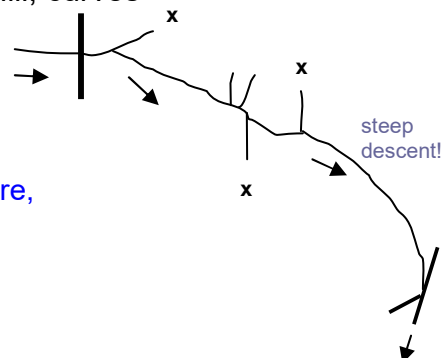
The walk begins at the **Hurtwood Control Car Park 10**, approximate **postcode GU5 9QW**, grid ref TQ 081 439. This is in a lane just south of Peaslake, Surrey, called Ride Way, a continuation of Lawbrook Lane. You can get there from Peaslake by going west (past the *Hurtwood Inn*) along Walking Bottom and keeping straight on south where it meets Lawbrook Lane. The car park is about ½ km=⅓ mile on the right. **Warning! isolated car park: leave car visibly empty - see Guidelines.** For a precise map, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**). Other possible starting points are Hurtwood Control car parks 3 and 5 but the sheer isolation of car park 10 lends the walk a romantic atmosphere.



The Walk



- 1 Go out of the car park to the road, cross it and take a path opposite. (There is a sign welcoming you to the Hurtwood.) In 20m, take the **right** fork. In 40m, you reach a junction of several small paths. Keep generally straight on here, veering **right** a fraction but avoiding a right turn and, 10m later, veering **left** a little but avoiding a left turn and passing a tall dead pine. (See the mini-map.) Your path goes fairly steeply downhill, curves right along the contour for a while and then curves left downhill to meet a wide path running in the valley at a marker post. Avoiding a steep track sharp right, turn **right** on this bridleway.



This part of the **Surrey Greensand Monster** walk ends here, turning **left** instead of right on this bridleway.

- 2 After 500m, very gently uphill, you come to a major fork with a left-hand wide track going uphill and a right-hand track going roughly straight ahead. Take the **left** fork uphill. A track immediately joins you from the left. In 50m, avoid a track on the right. Where the main track wheels left at a hairpin, continue straight ahead on a narrower path. Your path gradually gains height and, after another 400m or so, near the top, takes you into a lighter area of bracken and birch where there is a wide crossing path. Turn **right** here on a path which curves uphill. In 100m, you meet a crossing path (narrower on the right and crossed by a fallen tree). Turn **left** here on a wide straight path through tall pines. In 200m or so, at a T-junction, turn **right** to come almost at once to the top of Pitch Hill. Your route is **straight ahead between two concrete pillars**, but first you will want to turn **left** and **right** to the viewpoint with a seat and a sloping tablet displaying information on Pitch Hill.



Pitch Hill, sometimes called Coneyhurst Hill, is 257m (843 feet) 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. All the above locations are also visited on other walks in this series.



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

- 3 Having crossed over between the two pillars (that is, turning **left**, if coming from the viewpoint), take a narrow knobbly path diagonally **right** downhill into the woods. [Care! be sure to choose the correct path and follow this guide carefully.] Your path descends gradually at a slanting angle, so as to avoid the steep slope. In 10m, you go over a crossing path (watch out for bikes!), then over a fallen birch (2017), then over another steep descending path (bikes again!). After 100m, your path forks, with the left-hand fork snaking left-right downhill. Instead, take the **right**-hand fork, the more level option, really straight ahead. Your path goes over a rough section with a ditch and evidence of a landslip. As always, keep straight ahead, passing a concrete post. [Care! some walkers go wrong by missing a left turn here, not helped by new tracks carved out by mountain bikers.] Your path now curves left over more roots and goes down more steeply. At the bottom of the slope, you meet a footpath coming from the right and immediately you arrive at a fingerpost and a tarmac lane. Your route is **left** on the road but just on your right is the *Windmill Inn*, a pub-restaurant with tables on a terrace with stunning views (but see Page 1). Follow the road, south, using the footway, for 250m and immediately after *Copse Hill*, fork **right** on a tarmac drive, signposted as a footpath. At a fork, take the **left** fork, the higher, more sandy path. The path goes close to some houses on your left and becomes a pleasant wide path running in open country between banks. *On your left, near a curve in the path, is a Roman Villa, dating from 120-330 AD, complete with baths and various outbuildings, currently not open to visitors.* The path eventually reaches a tarmac drive by a large timbered house, *Rapsley*, on whose land the Roman Villa stands. A little further on, as you pass the stone lions on the gate posts of the house, go **right** on a narrow footpath, as indicated by a yellow arrow.



- 4 This path may seem very overgrown near the start, but it is not as troublesome as it seems and the undergrowth quickly clears**; local walkers come through this lovely path with no problem; if you have a stick please add your pennyworth of swishes. [**But Oct 2021 walker reports one section blocked, found easy bypass: ignore the narrow path and stay on the drive, turning **right** in 250m, passing *Wykehurst Farm*,

keeping **right** at every junction, to reach in 500m a metal fence and stile where the intended path emerges, just before the wooden bridge.] The path skirts a meadow on your left and continues straight ahead through a large wooden gate. The path continues straight ahead and then crosses a stream and veers **left** before a large metal gate, between fences, through trees and beside a large meadow on your left. At the end, go through a metal gate and over a stile ahead. Turn **right** at a T-junction onto a wide woodland path. This path will be familiar if you have done the *Greensand Hills From the South* walk in this series as it shares the next kilometer with it. The path soon goes over a wide bridge. There is (sometimes) a parallel path up a bank on your right to escape any mud. 40m after the bridge, you will notice a green metal gate on your right. 25m after the gate, take a small path on the **right**, up a bank, passing a marker post. Turn **left** alongside a fence, keep to the **right** in a small meadow and go through trees to come out to a road. Turn **right** along the road.

- 5 In 70m, turn **left** on a tarmac bridleway, with signs for various houses. The track goes past the magnificent house and garden of *Winterfold House* on the right. In 250m, before *Colman's Farmhouse*, turn **left** with the track as indicated. At a T-junction with a fingerpost, turn **right** with the main track and continue past the entrance to the farm on the right. 30m later, you come to a major fork at a marker post. Take the **left** fork. (The path on the right goes up Jelleys Hollow.) At the top of the slope, you reach an especially beautiful area of forest, with a wide level path. At first, the path runs by a wire fence on your right. Later, stay on the main path where it veers left downhill away from the fence. You come to an open area by conifer plantations with a new wooden seat – a good place for a picnic.



- 6 Veer **left** on the main track. The woods up on your right are known as Alderbrook Copse. Soon the track becomes surfaced in red brick. Here, ignore a private track on your right. As the track bends sharp left, leave it by going **right** at a marker post onto a much narrower path. From here you need to keep following the yellow arrows, on a tortuous route, always uphill. After 200m or so, ducking under branches, going either way round a fallen holly, you reach a marker post. Take the **left** fork, following the yellow arrow, going up into a more open area. In 60m, turn **right** at a T-junction on another narrow path to reach a yellow arrow on a post. Take the waymarked **left** fork uphill. (However, in high summer the bracken on this path may be very thick, although it was thinned in 2016. If this is the case, do as follows. Keep **right**, next to the hollies on your right, watching out for cyclists. The steep rooty path snakes its way up, but then hairpins wildly to the **right**, levelling out a bit before going uphill again. After a few more humps, you finally reach a wide level crossing path at the top. Turn **left** on this path for 200m to reach Hurtwood Control car park 5 and turn **right** through it.) Follow this official footpath straight uphill through the bracken, going over a crossing path after 100m and passing another marker post after 40m. Finally, at the top you reach a wide path and a fine viewpoint. Go straight ahead through Hurtwood Control car park 5.



- 7 Go out of the car park via the main track to a tarmac lane. Cross the lane to a footpath opposite. Follow the yellow arrows at all times as the official footpath turns **right** at a T-junction and then veers **left** past an enclosure on your left with a small pond, part of the garden *Winterfold Cottage*. The wooden fence gives way to a wire fence and hedge as you approach the main part of the house. Go 40m to find a waymarker near a small utility post stuck in the ground. Turn squarely **right** here on a path through a wooden barrier. This

long footpath across the deepest part of Winterfold Wood will take you in a more-or-less straight line all the way back to the car park.

- 8 Cross over a wide green path and continue following the yellow arrows up through a forest of tall pines. The path comes down to a junction of forestry tracks with many arrows on a post and an old concrete water tank. [The Larch Valley has been felled for regeneration and this area is quite bare now \(2015\)](#). Turn **left** in front of the water tank to a post with blue and yellow arrows. Fork **right**, following the yellow arrow, on a wide path which curves right up into woods. The path bends its way uphill and joins a forestry track coming from the right. Go straight ahead at a junction. Where the track bends right, keep straight ahead at the yellow arrow, going downhill and then uphill. This path joins a track coming from the right. At a fork in the tracks, keep straight ahead on a narrow path between the two sides of the fork. The path goes steeply down, crosses a wide track and then goes very steeply up again. Thankfully, the path eventually flattens, narrows and winds through heather. Keep straight on, soon crossing straight over a tarmac drive. Go through a wooden barrier uphill on a rooty path. The trees change to oak as you reach a road. Cross the road onto a wide path opposite.
- 9 Avoid some minor paths left and, about 250m from the road, leave the path by turning **left** on an unsigned path. (This is the second and wider of two left turns after crossing the road; it is opposite a narrow path on the right.) Where a narrow path joins from the right after 100m, bear **left**. Stay on the main path, avoiding all turnings off. In 300m, this path leads to the Hurtwood Control Car Park 10 where the walk began.



This part of the [Surrey Greensand Monster](#) now continues from section [1](#) at the start of this text.

Getting there

By car: see directions at front.

