



Fernhurst: Great Circuit

Furnace Pond, Linchmere, Cognor Wood, Kingsley Green

Distance: 14½ km=9 miles

moderate walking

Region: West Sussex

Date written: 27-jul-2020

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Last update: 28-jun-2023

Refreshments: Fernhurst

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

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

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Village, woods, historic ponds, long woodland trails

In Brief

This walk is a circuit of the great woods that surround the village of Fernhurst, just south of Haslemere. The quiet village with its church, pub, green and historic houses is a charmer. The vast woodlands make this a perfect walk at any time: summer for shade, autumn for colour, winter for views, spring for bluebells. This walk includes the dramatic one-mile unbroken hike across Cognor Wood.

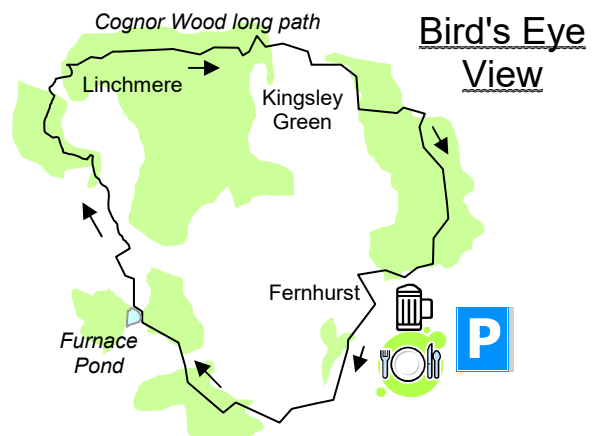


The *Red Lion* is a Fullers pub and is frequented by walkers and by villagers. The tables at the front embellish the Green with their colourful umbrellas and provide a delightful spot from where to watch village life go by. There is a garden at the back with a barbecue area. The pub is open all day every day but - note - food is not served between 3pm and 6pm. For enquiries, ring 01428-643112.



? Most of this walk is nettle-free with very little undergrowth, so long trousers are not essential, except in high summer when the narrow section in Leg 2, section **2** below can be very overgrown. All the paths are well-made and, *except in very wet conditions*, trainers or walking shoes should be fine. Your dog can come with you on this adventure.

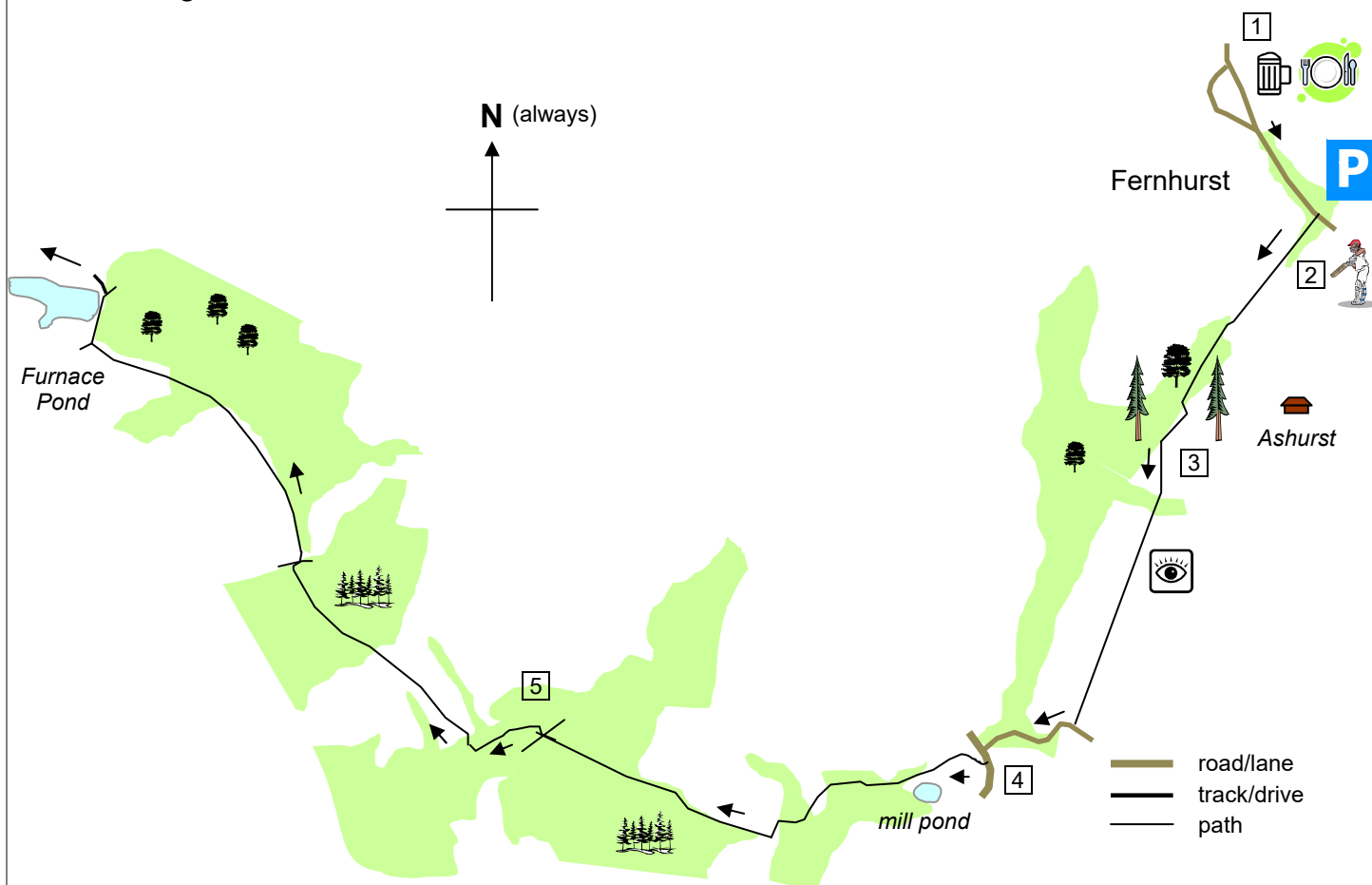
The walk begins at the village car park in Fernhurst, West Sussex, next to the cricket pavilion, postcode GU27 3HY, www.w3w.co/passenger.learns.rotation. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



The Walk

A detailed history of Fernhurst will be found in another walk in this series: "Fernhurst and the Temple of the Winds".

Leg 1: Fernhurst to the Furnace Pond 4¼ km=2¾ miles



- 1 With the pub on your left, walk along the road, passing the car park and the cricket green on your left, signposted to the three "L"s (*Lickfold, Lurgashall, Lodsworth*). Just after the green, it's best *not* to take the narrow tarmac footway on the left because it leads off into the bushes. Just 10m before the corner of a garden on your left with a sign for *The Bottom*, look right for a footpath at a new fingerpost. Turn **right** on this narrow path. It leads you under low trees and shortly you are walking beside a sheep meadow on your right, in a more open landscape between fences.
- 2 Next, one of the most sublime parts of this walk, is the great tree garden of *Ashurst*. Tall oak and ash trees rise skywards whilst on your right is a lake with a willow and more trees of different kinds. The blessing of this path is that it runs through the centre of the garden whilst the owners of *Ashurst* have to cross a small wooden bridge to reach the lake. Your path continues high above the woodland on your right and leads over a stile onto a grassy hillside.
- 3 Take a path that forks **left** away from the edge of the wood, across the centre of the grass. After a stile you come down through hollies to another stile into a wide pasture with views ahead including, to your left, the relay mast at Bexleyhill. Avoid faint paths left and right and go straight down, heading for a 4-way fingerpost. Here, go over a stile and straight ahead on

a path between wire fences. At the end, go past an unneeded stile and turn **right** on a tarmac lane. The lane curls downhill under trees and reaches the main road.

- 4 Carefully cross straight over the main road, about 20m to the left, and go through a large wooden gate by opening the latch. A wide grass path leads to the little millpond, an unknown gem. *This millpond, complete with millrace on your left, was recently cleared. The watermill itself is long vanished, having stood where the trees are now. The mill was served by a stream which was channelled some distance round the hillside ahead to your left.* Continue on a winding course between a sheep field and a stream on your right. You emerge through a large metal gate onto a woodland path. Another metal gate leads into a horse pasture. *The horses are usually in residence and keen to meet you: if you prefer, you can simply ignore them: do not feed them!* The path forks here; ignore the right fork which curves away along the length of the pasture, and follow the **left** fork across the width of the pasture to a metal gate in the corner opposite. At the top of a slope, turn **left** in front of a metal gate and **right** at the corner. On your left is a silver birch wood and, on your right, a large wild meadow. Your path now leads you between plantations of spruce and over a flat bridge to a junction of four paths.

This is the point where the Fernhurst Little Circuit splits off. If you would like a quick return to Fernhurst, remember, you chose the Great Circuit !

- 5 Go straight over the crossing on a winding but level path until, after 150m, you pass a white-on-blue waymarker arrow. Turn **right** here, steeply down, to cross a sturdy bridge across a stream. Your path goes steeply up and runs level, almost roofed over by a frail beech scrub. A ferny section leads you through more pinewoods. Always keep to the main wide path. Your path dips again to cross a bridge-with-rails and rises into a large crop field. Veer **right** in the field and immediately wheel **left** in the corner, staying on the field edge. In the next corner, keep ahead on a woodland path under tall oaks. The path dips over a stream and runs through a cleared area (now exploited by young birch). You arrive at a T-junction with a 3-way fingerpost. Turn **right**, immediately passing the large Furnace Pond.

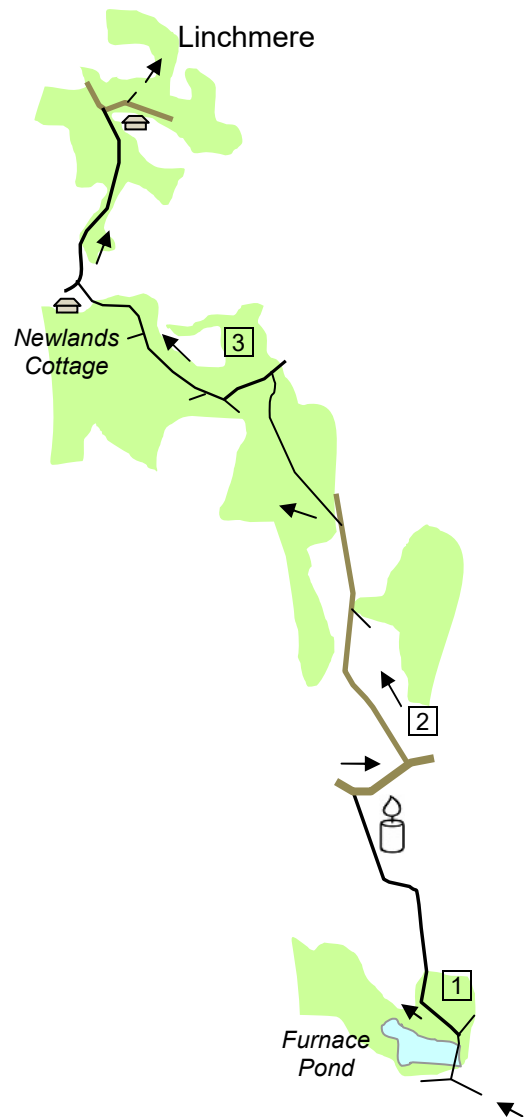
Leg 2: Furnace Pond to Linchmere 3¾ km=2¼ miles

As you walk past the pond, on your right are the remains of Fernhurst Furnace, one of the best preserved in the Sussex Weald. The iron industry flourished here in the 1600s and 1700s using local ore, charcoal and water power, before the use of coal moved the iron industry up North. The furnace site was recorded and excavated by a local unit in 1989, and there is now a plan to renovate this site and rescue it from further erosion. The site holds open days and historical events. The paths beside the pond were re-opened in 2022 after a reconstruction project.

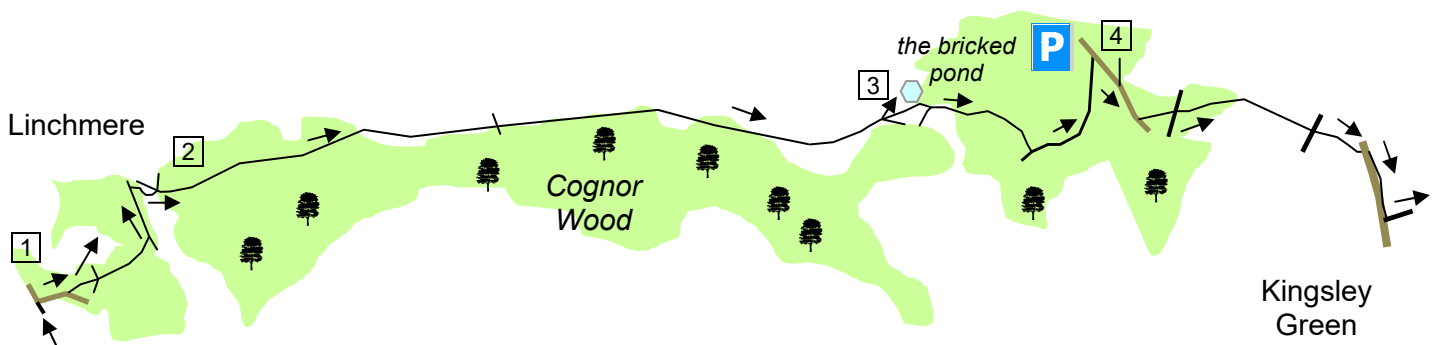
- 1 **See mini-map overleaf.** Just after the pond, you reach a 3-way junction with a fingerpost. Turn **left** here on a wide bridleway. Stay on the bridleway as it curves right and keep straight ahead into a long green meadow. Your path turns **left** before a hedge, then **right**, passing some large buildings. *If you smell a fragrance, this is because a wicked candle factory is housed here.* Continue to a road, turn **right** on it and, in 150m, turn **left** on a quiet lane, signposted *Lynchmere* (yes, there are two spellings).

2 In 450m, at end of the trees on your right, ignore a footpath and continue on the lane for another 200m to the start of some woodland on your left. Fork **left** here at a signpost on a grass path, a highlight of this walk. The next 400m are along a sheltered path through an area rich with wild flowers, ferns, reedy grasses and shrubs of every kind. The path is narrow but not overgrown, possibly spongy in the wetter months. At one point it crosses a small stream using a little bridge which is not usually needed. You come out to a T-junction with a track by a 3-way fingerpost. Turn **left** on the track.

3 The track leads over a stream. In 100m or so, at a T-junction, turn **right** as indicated by a signpost. In 50m, ignore a path that branches off left and keep straight ahead on a wide grass path through pinewoods. In around 300m, after passing a marker post, your path suddenly bends left, heading for a cottage which turns out to be *Newlands Cottage*, a landmark for so many walks in Marley Common. Go through a wooden gate, over a flat bridge known as the Baldwin Bridge, up the grass and through a large wooden gate to meet a shingle drive. Turn **right** on the drive, passing a lily pond on your left. *A view of Marley Heights dominates the scene to your right.* The drive, now rougher, runs through beechwoods, becomes shingle again and finally winds up to a house and a road in Linchmere at a bend.



Leg 3: Linchmere to Kingsley Green 2½ km=1½ miles



1 Turn **right** on the road. In only 60m, at a new fingerpost, turn **left** on a narrow path into trees. (*Don't miss this turn!*) At a junction of drives, keep straight ahead as a sign for *Lynchmere Cottage*. Follow the driveway, passing close to the cottage, and keep **left** on a path which goes up through bracken, passing tightly to the left of a small house, now running between banks. In a further 100m you see, just ahead, a tall earth bank

and here the path splits. Turn **right*** immediately before the bank on an unmarked path. The path twists its way up to meet a crossing path by a 3-way fingerpost. (* Some walkers delay the right turn a little further to take in a view of a stunning “house on the hill”.)

- 2 Turn **right** at the fingerpost on a level path. In prospect now is the longest continuous woodland path in Marley Heights, the Cognor Wood path. You will be walking this path almost level for a total of 1½ km. Later the path is widened by foresters and runs through an old coppice, which is still harvested. You emerge into the open again as the path narrows and a dramatic scene opens up, between wooded heights to your left and a deep abyss. The path is now sandy as it runs through laurels. Finally the Cognor Wood path ends when you come to a small bridge (not needed in summer) and a junction of paths.
- 3 Go **left** at the junction, up a steep bank, to meet a curious landmark: a deep clear pool with a brick holding wall, hemmed in by fallen trees. Beside it is an Irish yew, some oaks and huge beeches, and a second pond beyond. Continue up to a T-junction and veer **left**, as a fingerpost. The path rises gently through hollies and great beeches, then more steeply, arriving at a T-junction with a 3-way fingerpost. Turn **left** here, slightly uphill, on a wide path between banks. The path rises to meet a tarmac road with a small car park on your left (*the starting point of the sister walk, “Marley Common”, in this series*).
- 4 Turn **right** on the road. In 70m, **ignore** the first footpath sharp left and continue another 70m. Turn **left** now on a signed footpath. This path is less well trodden than the previous ones and you simply have to keep ahead for 80m straight through the trees to meet a tarmac drive. Cross the drive onto a path that runs downhill. After a steep descent of 100m or so, you pass under HT lines and walk beside a large lawn on your left, coming down to a sandy driveway by a fingerpost. Cross straight over the driveway to a narrow path. (There is no “finger” on the post corresponding to this path, although it really is a footpath.) The path runs across grass, over a flat bridge, veering a little to the right, through trees, quickly reaching the main road. Cross the main road carefully and turn **right** beside it. After one house there is a tarmac footway. After 100m or so, turn **left** on the first side lane, Hatch Lane.

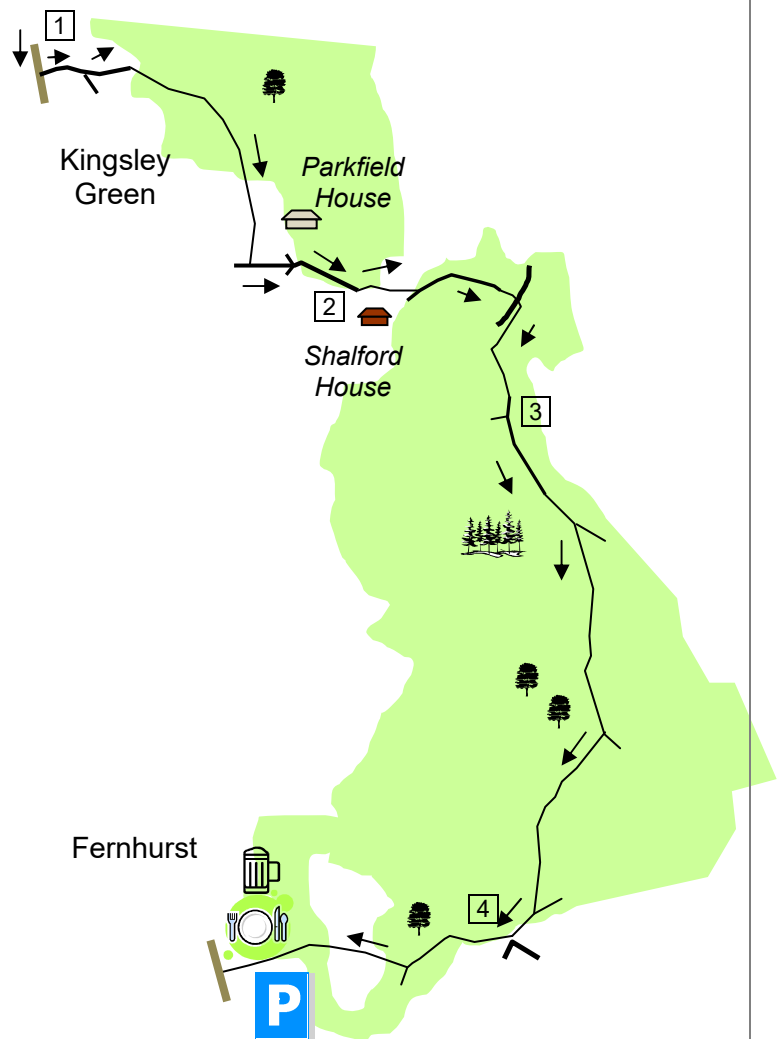
Leg 4: Kingsley Green to Fernhurst 4 km=2½ miles

- 1 **See mini-map overleaf.** You are in the swanky neighbourhood of Kingsley Green, once a rural idyll, now bringing commuter wealth via nearby Haslemere. Follow the tarmac for 100m, passing a few houses. At a branching driveway, abandon the gravel drive ahead to *Little Orchard* and instead fork **left** as for *Hatch Copse* (*don't miss this turn!*). In 100m, just before the double gates of the last house, fork **right** on a bridleway into the woods. The path widens and runs between wooden fences. After 150m, at a 3-way fingerpost, keep straight on, along a fine woodland path under a line of beeches. In a further 450m, you pass more houses and reach a T-junction. Turn **left**, continuing on the bridleway. In 100m you pass a junction on your left leading to the large elegant *Parkfield House*. Turn **right** and immediately **left** on a wide tarmac drive known as Square Drive, passing *Beeches*.

2 In 150m, you are confronted by the wrought-iron gates of an even larger property, *Shalford House*. Walk up to within touching distance of the gates and turn **left** beside the wall on a footpath, soon passing a marker post. [June 2023: Because of building works at Shalford House this footpath is temporarily closed, but there is a diversion clearly signed 'BYWAY' with red arrows. Follow all of these signs around to the left of the property until they finish at a T-junction. Turn **left** here; you are now on the wide woodland path mentioned below.] Continue beside outhouses to join a byway coming from your right. Your route is now a wide woodland path gradually running uphill under tall oaks. In 250m you reach a junction with a tarmac driveway which curls uphill on your left. Cross straight over to a fingerpost and take a bridleway which veers **right** steeply up a slope. At the top of the slope quickly bear **right** on a woodland way. It becomes a wide grassy highway with houses down on your right. You reach a 3-way fingerpost with a rough yard on your right where there are usually one or two parked cars. Ignore the junction and keep straight on.

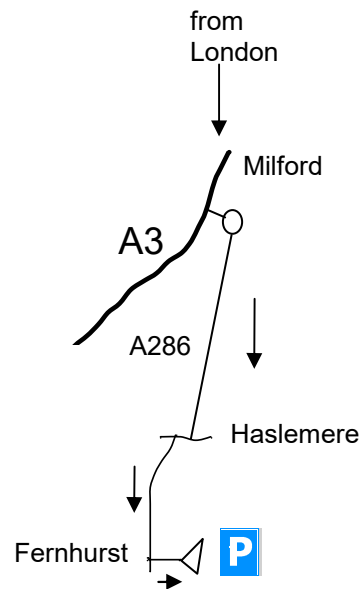
3 Your path takes you deep into woodland, following blue waymarkers. After 250m of level walking you reach a fingerposted fork in the path. Fork **right** here between two wooden posts. This wide, sometimes stony, woodland path brushes past several little streams and coppiced chestnuts. After 500m, at a 3-way junction, turn **right** downhill, staying on the signed footpath. This handsome woodland path gradually gets stonier as it descends. After passing through a small clearing, it widens somewhat. The path is set with cross-planks, possibly to assist horses in past times. You are now descending a track made partly of bricks. Finally you come down to a major T-junction. Turn **right**, shortly reaching a tarmac driveway on a bend with a house and a converted barn.

4 Just before the tarmac, turn **right** on a woodland path. This path follows a deep stream on your right. At a left bend, it crosses the stream. At a fingerpost, keep **right** on a straight path. The path runs over a deep gulch and shortly you pass the sports ground on your left, a sign that you have reached Fernhurst. You emerge through a passageway beside the *Red Lion* and the village green where the walk began.



Getting there

By car: (see drawing), to get to **Fernhurst, West Sussex**, take the A286 road from Haslemere, following signs to Midhurst. On reaching Fernhurst, turn **left** up to the village green. There is a large car park on the other side of the green next to the cricket green, not far from the *Red Lion*.



By bus and train: no. 70 from Haslemere to Fernhurst (**not Sunday**).

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