Fancy Free Walks *point your feet on a new path*

Wooburn Common and Farm Wood

Distance: 7½ km=4¾ miles — easy walking

Region: Chilterns — Date written: 26-may-2019

Author: Phegophilos — Last update: 3-mar-2021

Refreshments: Littleworth Common, Wooburn Common

Map: Explorer 172 (Chiltern Hills East) *hopefully not needed*

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

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Villages, woodland trails, bluebells, chalet village, pubs

In Brief

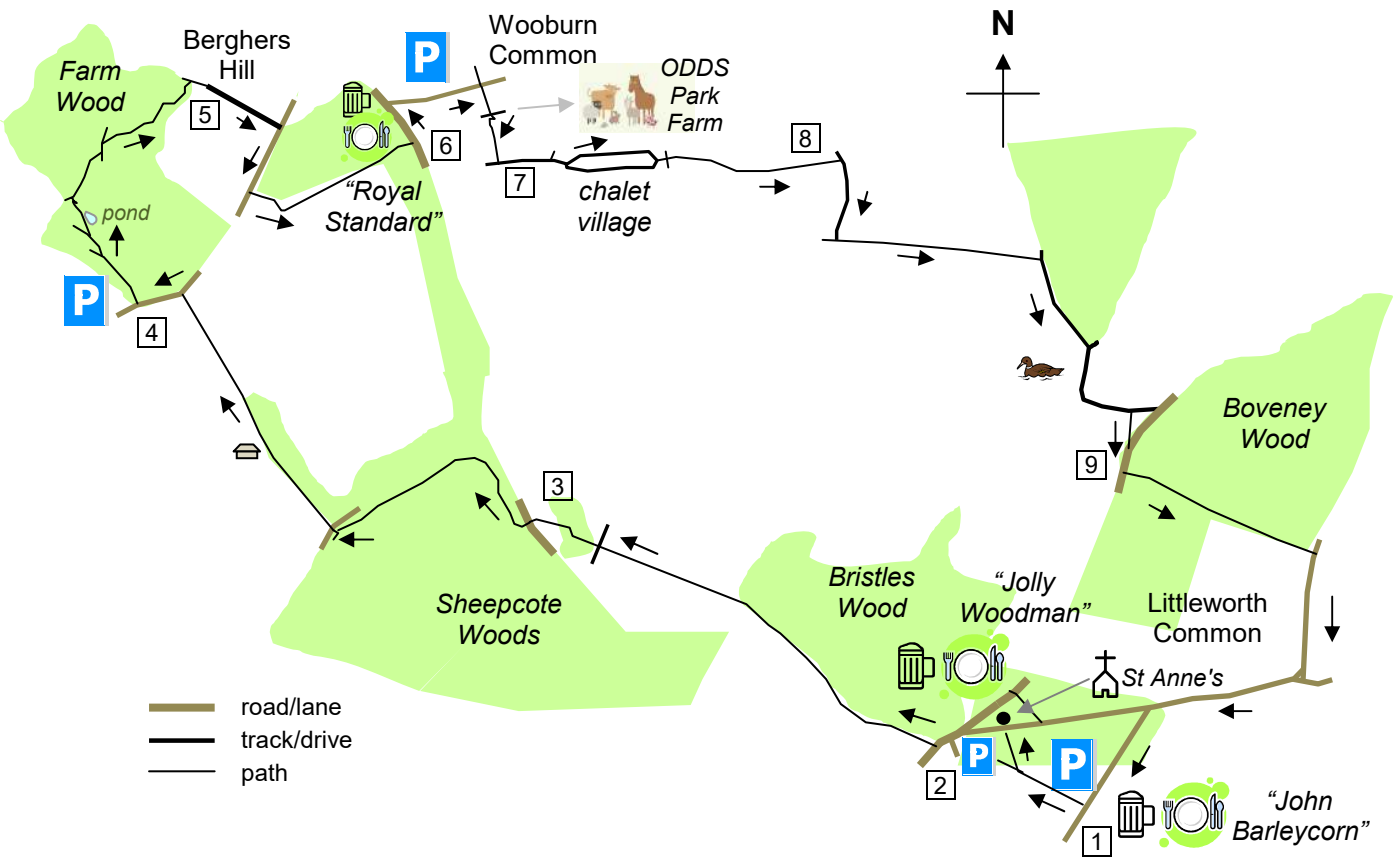
This is a most unusual and varied walk in the area of South Bucks near Burnham Beeches. It executes a series of twists and turns to take you through a number of smaller beautiful woods which are relatively unknown outside the area.

This walk includes three country inns of rare character, all serving good food (except for the *Royal Standard* on Sunday). (To enquire at the *Royal Standard*, ring 01628-521121; for the *Jolly Woodman*, 01753-644350; for the *Blackwood Arms*, 01753-645672.)

There are no nettles on this walk and no scratchy undergrowth. At the time this walk was researched, all the paths were perfectly dry; but in a wet winter, there will be some soggy sections making boots necessary. With only 150m on a main road, this walk is perfect for your dog.

The walk begins at the car park opposite the *Blackwood Arms*, **Littleworth Common**, not far from **Burnham Beeches**, Bucks, postcode **SL1 8PP**, w3w:fresh.onion.vanish. This fair sized car park does not belong to the pub but it gets crowded at opening times. Alternative starts are: (b) **Boveney Wood Lane**, also in Littleworth Common, near the *Jolly Woodman*, postcode **SL1 8PF**: there is a small car park opposite the little St Anne's church, Dropmore, w3w:stands.grape.posts, although you might need to allow for churchgoers on a Sunday; there are dirt strips in other spots along the lane; (c) the **Farm Wood** car park, Broad Lane, Wooburn Common, nearest postcode **HP10 0JW**, athough use of its limited size may be resented by the daily dog walkers; (d) a roadside strip near the *Royal Standard* pub, a little way down Green Common Lane, *approximate* postcode **HP10 0LD**. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



1 Starting in the car park opposite the *Blackwood Arms*, take a path leading from the back of the car park, passing to the left of a big *South Bucks* notice. Keep straight ahead on the main path through woodland, passing a bridleway sign, then on a wide green path across the gorsey heath. On the far side, just past a large oak and immediately before the path enters denser woodland, turn diagonally **right** through trees. This path leads to a small parking area off Boveney Wood Lane, opposite St Anne's church, Dropmore.

2 Turn **left** on the lane with the church on your right to the main road. Cross the road, turn **left** for 50m and turn **right** at a small signpost through a wooden swing-gate onto a footpath. On your right are the hollies and beeches of Bristles Wood, with pastures on your left. After the woodland, the path runs on a straight course between wire fences and pastures. At the end, go over a farm track into woods and over an avoidable stile. You come out, via a superfluous stile, to a main road.

3 Cross straight over the road to a plank bridge and a marker post opposite. Turn **right** on a path which at first runs parallel to the main road on your right and then veers away deeper into the rhododendron wood [Nov 2020: climbing over a fallen tree]. The path wheels gradually left. Eventually, after more than 500m through this wood, you reach a junction. Avoid the plank bridge ahead and turn **right** with the main path to meet a road. Take a signposted footpath opposite, a semi-tarmac or gravel drive. You pass a charming cottage, hardly bigger than its garage, continuing on a woodland path. [Feb 2020: the path was flooded: walkers made a detour by crossing a drain, clambering through trees along a bank and through tight wire fencing.]

Your path finally comes out to a road. Turn **left**, quickly reaching the small car park of Farm Wood on the other side.

4 There are several possible routes through this charming wood: the one given here gives you a good sample of the delights. Avoid the wide horse track on the right and go straight ahead on a narrow gravel path. In 50m, take the **right** fork, passing a transmitter tower on your left. 70m after the transmitter, look to your right for some shallow steps. Fork **right** down the steps down to a small pond. Follow the path over a bridge to meet a crossing path. Turn **right** here, fairly steeply uphill. At the top, you are joined by a path coming from the right, opposite a bench seat. Immediately fork **right** on a level path. In 100m, your path is joined by a path coming from the right. You emerge onto a grassy picnic area. Keep to the **right** and follow the path through shrubs to a T-junction before a house. Turn **right** through a wooden swing-gate onto a tarmac lane in the pretty hamlet of Berghers Hill.

5 Go ahead on a straight lane running under willows, birch, maple and oak, to reach a main road. Turn **right** on the road and, in 150m, immediately before the gates to *Rose Cottage Farm*, go sharp **left** on a footpath into woods. *Don't miss this hidden turn!* The path leads past an archery trail (the reason why the path skirts the edge of the wood!) and finally comes out to a road. Turn **left**, quickly reaching the *Royal Standard* pub. *The "Royal Standard", not to be confused with the pub with a similar name (see the "Penn Woodlands" walk in this series), is a real "locals'" pub, offering a range of real ales and, according to the clientele, some really good food (but not on Sundays).*

6 Continue past the pub. *(The house next door used to be another pub – the "Compasses".)* Turn sharp **right** on quiet Green Common Lane. On your right is a long dirt strip which serves as an alternative parking area. Immediately after a pond on your left, go **right** at a signpost, through an old metal kissing-gate, on a grass path. You pass a large car park on your right and reach a T-junction. On your left (*not* on your route) the path leads to an entrance to a petting farm, which explains the car park and the many families with children you may have seen. *Odds Farm Park combines a world of adventures with some unbelievably cute animals.* Be careful here: the route is not obvious! Cross **straight over** the T-junction, turn **right** by a wall and **left** by a black shed, to join a gravel drive.

7 In 80m, at a T-junction turn **left** on a residential lane. Soon you pass on your left another entrance to the Farm Park: keep straight on to reach a chalet village. Take the **left** fork through the precinct.

> *This immaculate "village" might be an unexpected landmark on a country walk but it has real charm. It is delightful to stroll through, admiring the various sculptures and ornaments on the lawns and hanging on the walls. To become a resident, one requirement is to be over 50 and **not to own a dog** (cats are acceptable and your dog on a lead is permitted). Another requirement is to get on well with (and sometimes care for) your neighbours. Residency is permanent: these are <u>not</u> holiday homes.*

At the end of the "village", as the lane bends right towards an especially elaborately adorned chalet, go **left** at a sign, through a wooden swing-gate. A second swing-gate leads straight on to a path through a generous fringe of tall grass, beside a crop meadow on your right. At the other side, go through a wooden swing-gate to a large crop field.

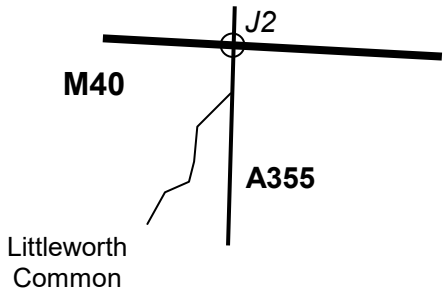
8 Turn **right** along the edge of the field for 150m or so, to a junction of fields next to a large metal gate on your right. Turn **left** here on a wide path

between fields. Continue all the way to the trees at the far end and turn **right** on a wide track. *On your left soon you may spot a pond and a large number of free-range ducklings: they belong to Hicknaham Farm where you can see the duck housings on your right.* Keep **right** on the driveway, soon passing the main buildings of the farm. *It is also a location for unusual weddings, complete with teepees where the braves and squaws may hold a pow-wow and finally get hitched.* The drive bends left to lead you through one of two metal gates, approaching a road. Immediately after the gates, turn **right** on an unmarked improvised path under the trees and across grass beside the road. In only 50m, as the grass verge begins to thin out, cross the road to a gap in the hedge where there is a stile and yellow arrow. *Don't miss this hidden turning!*

9 Go over the stile into Beverney Wood, a delightful and unexpected section with some of the best light woodland you will see on this walk. In late spring, the bluebells here are so thick that it is almost impossible to avoid treading on them. In autumn and winter, the silver birches, heather and ferns, and later tall pines, make a light palette of colour. Finally your path drops down to a quiet tarmac lane (Abbey Park Lane). Turn **right**, passing Abbey Park Farm. At a road junction, turn **right** on Boveney Wood Lane. In 300m you pass *Boveney Wood Farm*. If you did *not* begin the walk opposite the *Blackwood Arms*, you can simply stay on the lane to the church and the main road; any one of the small paths on your right before the church will lead to the *Jolly Woodman;* otherwise … Turn **left** on Common Lane, quickly arriving at the *Blackwood Arms* where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: the simplest way to the start of this walk is via the **M40** motorway. Exit at junction 2 south, signed A355 *Slough*. Turn right after 500 yds as for *Littleworth Common*. Follow the bendy main road for 2 miles to reach the *Jolly Woodman*. For the *Blackwood Arms*, turn sharp left on Boveney Wood Lane and sharp right on Common Lane. Or, for Wooburn Common and the *Royal Standard*, turn right shortly on Wooburn Common Road.



By bus/train: bus 35, 36A, 37 run from High Wycombe or Bourne End to Wooburn Green. Check the timetables.

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