Fancy Free Walks

*point your feet on a new path*

# Tilford and Crooksbury Hill

Distance: 10 km=6 miles — easy-to-moderate walking

Region: Surrey — Date written: 9-sep-2013

Author: Schwebefuss — Last update: 25-aug-2025

Refreshments: Tilford

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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*Hill, views, pines, village, pubs, woodland, heath*

## In Brief

This is a classic walk through heaths, birchwoods and pinewoods of the sandy parts of Surrey near the River Wey, with an easy climb to the summit of a well-known hill from which you have some of the best views in the county.

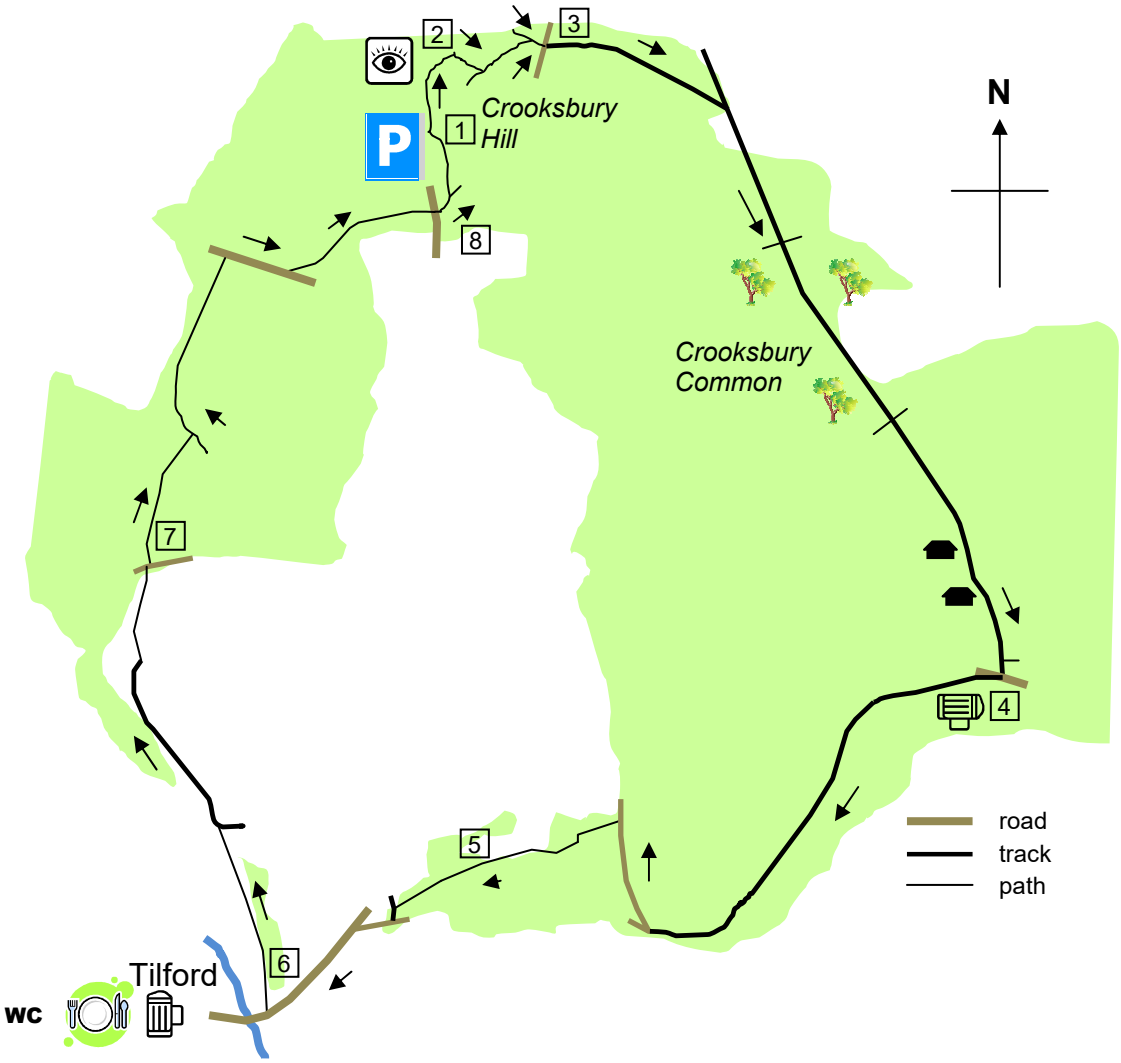
There is a patch of nettles on this walk in summer so shorts may be unwise but otherwise any kind of attire should be fine. There are a few muddy patches on the path from Tilford, so you may prefer to wear waterproof footwear in a very wet season. There are no stiles and only a small stretch of road with no footway, so this walk would be fine for your dog.

The walk begins at the Crooksbury Hill car park off Crooksbury Road, The Sands, near Farnham, Surrey, *approximate* **postcode GU10 1RF**, grid ref. SU877458. The car park is, down a short track diagonally off the road on the north side, under a bar. It now (2015) has a new sign *Crooksbury Hill*. You could also park in Tilford, although it gets crowded on a popular day. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

## The Walk

1 **See map overleaf.** The walk starts with a climb of the hill – the only serious gradient on this walk. The official footpath takes you rather steeply up steps which are badly eroded. This walk finds a better alternative. From the back of the car park, go past a noticeboard and benches and take the **left** fork. After a short uphill stretch, follow a (hidden?) green arrow marked *self guided trail*. Soon the path becomes steep but stays smooth. In 150m, at the top, you emerge at the summit where there is a pillar and some benches from which you can take in the magnificent view south and west.

*This was once a bare hill with views all around, a hill fort on the north side, a kind of guard post for the surrounding country. The toposcope on top of the pillar shows that landmarks on the other side were visible, now completely hidden by the trees that have grown up around. On this visible side are several places featured in other walks of this series: Gibbet Hill, the Devil's Jumps, Butser Hill (with the aerial), Selborne Common and King John's Hill.*




2 Continue in the direction you arrived, going ahead past a pillar and behind a wooden bench, back into trees. Keep to the main path which goes steeply down at first on a rooty path through tall scots pines. You meet a T-junction just before a fence: turn **left** here, passing several gates into private gardens. At the bottom, keep right through a wooden barrier and turn **right** at a T-junction on a bridleway. In 20m you reach a tarmac lane.

3 Cross straight over the lane to a signposted bridleway, a wide drive called Crooksbury Lane. Keep to the main drive, passing several large properties. The drive degrades into a dusty horse track and ends, after about 600m in total, at an old wooden gate and a T-junction. Turn **right** here on a wide residential drive. Your route becomes a forest track and soon you pass a wooden 1-bar gate on a nice wide horse track straight across Crooksbury Common, a large lustrous sandy heath. At the other side go past a wooden barrier and straight ahead on a residential drive. You pass some well-established interesting stone houses. Finally you pass a fingerpost on your left and reach a main road. Cross the road and take a sliproad **right** directly opposite. This sliproad leads to a small house which used to be the *Donkey* pub.

4 Continue past the ex-pub on the tarmac drive. Avoid private drives on the left and at a 3-way fingerpost [Jan 2020: with one "finger" missing], keep ahead ignoring two tracks on the right, passing *Ravenswing*. Soon the tarmac ends. [Apr 2024: there's a large tree down across the path: you need to scramble over somehow if it's still there.] *Far down on your left, but invisible through the dense holly, oaks and rhododendrons, is the River Wey, which*

*you will meet in Tilford.* After more than 1 km you reach a lane by *Whitmead*. Turn **right** taking the **right**-hand, upper lane. The lane passes the entrances to *Openwood* and *Pinewood* and reaches the entrance to *Highmead*. Turn **left** here by a rather hidden signpost on a footpath next to *Pooh Corner*. The path zigzags and goes down between gardens and meadows. *In late summer, the blackberries here grow in profusion.*

5


Soon you have steep woodland on your left and the path comes out to a drive from *Archers Hill* which leads to a junction of drives. Turn **left** and immediately **right** on a lane, Whitmead Lane. At the main road turn **left** using the footway on the other side, past the village shop. *Tilford village shop was recently re-opened (2021) by new owners as a shop / restaurant / tea room with a loo; it is open every day, including weekends, till 7pm; it is now (2024) "to let" and closes at 3.30.* You reach the ancient Wey bridge of Tilford. Your route is **right** on a signposted bridleway just before the bridge but you will want first to cross the bridge to the village green with its happy crowds and the *Barley Mow* pub. For further details of this blissful village, see the other walk in this series *Puttenham Common and Tilford*.

6 Having turned right on the bridleway (or **left** just after the bridge if you are returning from the village green), keep ahead between a meadow and woodland and uphill to a junction and fingerpost, ignoring a stile on the right just before them. Turn **left** on a tarmac drive, passing to the left of a well-restored house (*Tilhill*, though now unsigned). Your path is now sandy and winding. (You can take refuge up the bank if the path is muddy.) At a marker post, fork **right**, the wider option, marked with a red arrow. Your path crosses a farm track, going uphill and past houses. Veer **right** finally at a junction to meet a tarmac lane beside Sheephatch Farm.

7 Cross straight over the lane to a wide woodland track opposite. The track leads through pinewoods and downhill between steep banks. In about 400m, at a junction in front of a large metal gate, turn **left**, still following the red arrow. In 500m your track comes out to a road, Waverley Lane. (As an interesting diversion at this point, turning **left** will take you in ½ km to Waverley Abbey, run by English Heritage and free to visit. For more details, see the walk *"Puttenham Common, Waverley Abbey & Tilford"* in this series.) Turn **right** on the road for 200m. *Traffic runs very speedily along this stretch, so you need to be careful, particularly if children and dogs are present.* You pass the brick gate-posted entrance to *Hestia*. Immediately after, turn **left** on a signposted bridleway. Follow the drive, ignoring a small wooden gate on your left, passing *Yew Tree Cottage* and *Crooksbury Cottage*. The drive leads uphill past more houses to Crooksbury Road.

8 Cross straight over to a signposted bridleway opposite. This path turns immediately left, parallel to the road. In 50m or so, just before a blue-topped post [2018: propped up against a tree, may be hidden], turn **left** on a narrower path. The path rises and, after about 150m, forks. Take the **left** fork which immediately takes you back to the Crooksbury Hill car park where the walk began.

## Getting there

By car: if coming from the A3 (Guildford) road, turn off at the roundabout just outside Milford, signposted *Elstead*. Go straight through Elstead in the direction of *Farnham*, past the *Golden Fleece*, over the Wey bridge. After 1.9 km=1.2 miles, turn **right** onto Crooksbury Road. The Crooksbury Hill car park is ½ km=⅓ mile on the right.

If coming from the neighbourhood of Farnham, it is best to look for a sign to *Runfold*, to the east of Farnham; just west of Runfold, turn left, signposted *Elstead The Sands*; later ignore a left fork for *The Sands*; stay on the major road at junctions left and right, still signed *Elstead*; the Crooksbury Hill car park is ½ km=⅓ mile on the left.

By bus/train: Stagecoach bus 46 from Farnham or Godalming to Charleshill. Check the timetables.

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