



Bookham and Effingham

Distance: 14 km=9 miles or 12 km=8 miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

Date written: 7-jul-2014

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Refreshments: Ockham

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Maps: Explorer 145 (Guildford) and 146 (Dorking) *hopefully not needed*

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

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Woodland, green meadows, views, gardens, nature reserve

In Brief

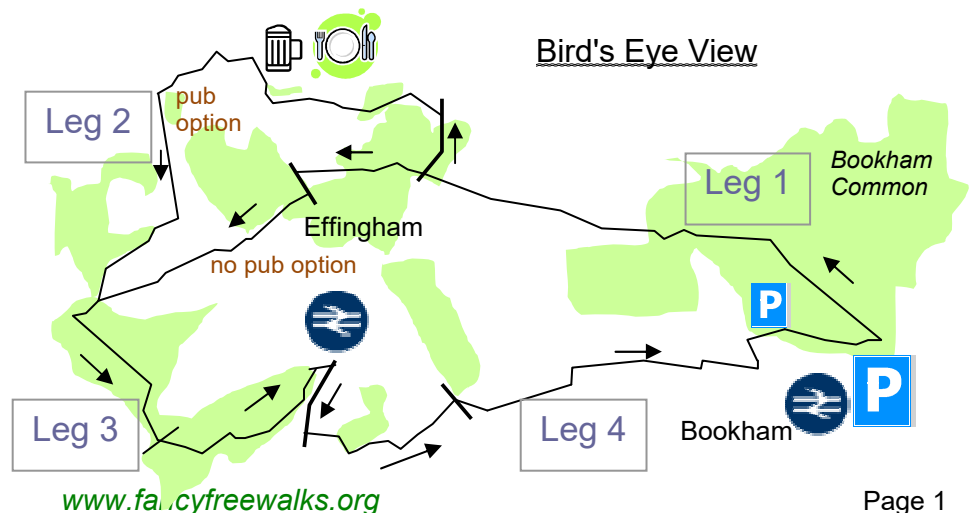
Everyone who knows Surrey does this walk (or a similar one: it is unusually standard for this site). No hills, but plenty of views. One or two plain sections are suddenly followed by areas of great beauty. Always changing, always interesting. For those who want a full day out, there is a really good lunch stop (to enquire at the *Black Swan*, ring 01932-862364).



There are some nettles and briars in the wooded sections, so shorts are not recommended. Underfoot is generally dry when conditions are reasonable but you will encounter one or two muddy patches in the woods, and some deep wet in the grass meadows, so high boots are recommended except during a very dry summer. Your dog can come too if he is not too large and can manage the stiles.



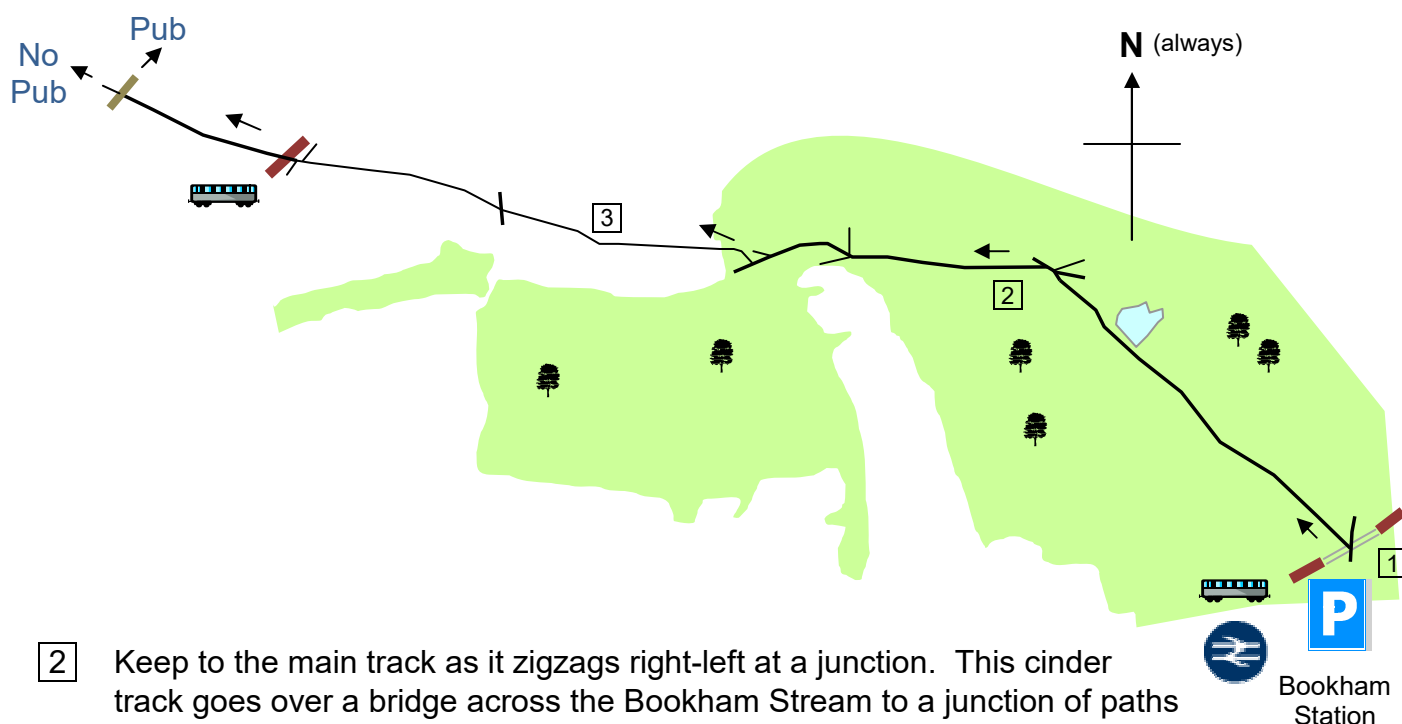
The walk begins at **Bookham railway station** or the **Tunnel car park** 300m east of the station, postcode **KT23 3ET**. The Tunnel car park makes a charge, payable by mobile phone, free to NT members. For **free** parking, try the small **Bookham Common car park** at a bend in Maddox Lane, postcode **KT23 3HS**, www.w3w.co/able.track.horses. If you want the pub break more than half way round, you can park at **Effingham Junction**, postcode **KT24 5HX**, which now charges £3.50 for the day on Sundays and Bank Holidays. There are many other possible starting places along the walk. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



The Walk

Leg 1: Bookham Common to Horsley Road 3 km=2 miles

- 1 If starting in **Bookham station**, go **left** on Church Road and, in 150m, at a right bend, turn **left** into the car park. From the back of the Tunnel car park, take the main path, going past a noticeboard. In 20m, fork **left** on the main track with a notice for *Handleys* and *Merritts Cottages*. Immediately **ignore** a narrow footpath on the left at a yellow NT sign. As you go, you will pass several more of these side paths, all to be avoided by staying on the main track. After 600m you see a large pond on your right (summer foliage permitting), followed by those two cottages with a field all on your left. *This tiny group of cottages is known as the Isle of Wight for some reason and the pond you passed is called the IoW Pond.* You reach a noticeboard where the track veers right to a junction. Turn sharp **left** with the track and, in 20m, fork **left** on a bridleway marked *Effingham Common*.



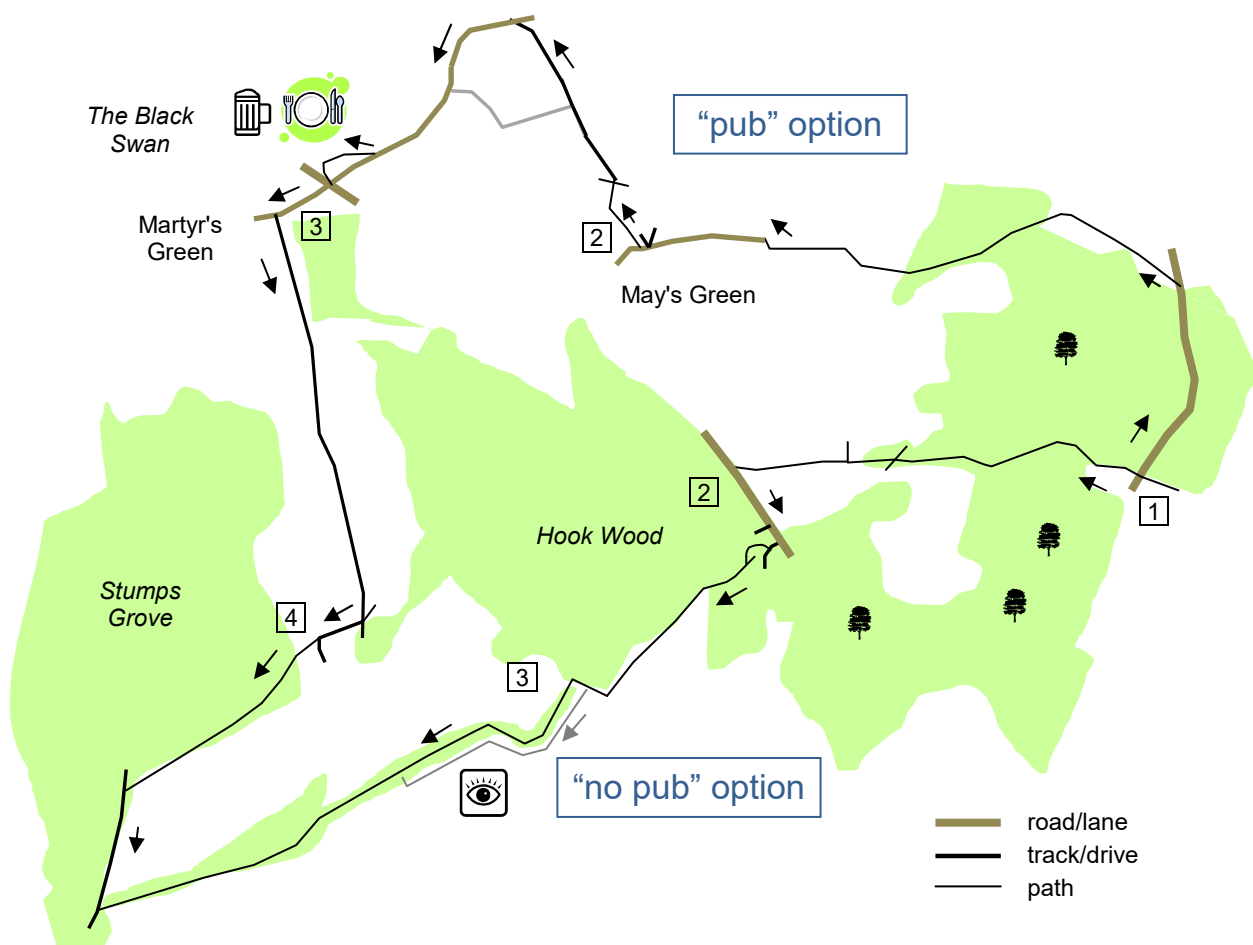
- 2 Keep to the main track as it zigzags right-left at a junction. This cinder track goes over a bridge across the Bookham Stream to a junction of paths and tracks. Avoid a muddy path on your right and a narrow grassy path ahead by veering **right** on the main track. The track passes *Five Halls* and *Ivy Cottage* on your left. Immediately **avoid** a private drive that forks right to another large cottage. In a further 80m, take a grassy footpath on your **right**, as directed by a yellow arrow. The path goes through the smaller of two metal gates and straight across the centre of a large hay meadow (swampy in wet weather). This clear path leads you through a new metal gate. Cross over a bridge and a stile and go through a small wooden gate into a horse pasture.
- 3 Keep ahead across the left-hand half of the pasture and through a similar wooden gate. Your path now crosses a grassy track and goes over a (shaky) stile and a 3-plank bridge into a large meadow that is often used for clay pigeon shooting [Jun 2024: sometimes watery: walkers used an adjoining field]. Veer a fraction right and stay near the right-hand edge of the meadow, aiming for a railway arch visible in the distance. Your path exits the meadow in the far corner. Go under the railway, past a large metal gate, and keep

ahead on a wide track through the chaotic Newmarsh Farm (with its collection of old buses). At the end of the track you meet the Horsley Road.

Decision point. The main walk now takes you for refreshments to the *Black Swan* pub (highly recommended!). If you prefer to take a shorter option, forgoing the chance for food and drink, skip the following Leg 2A and do **Leg 2B** (which is also interesting in its own right).

Leg 2A: Horsley Road to Blue Ride With Pub 4½ km=2¾ miles

- 1 Turn **right** on the Horsley Road and walk 400m until you reach the entrance to the *Delta Force Paintball Centre*. *This is big business here where young people dress in decontamination suits and fire pop-guns in a scene of action movie props. You will probably hear the rat-a-tat in the woods as you pass.* Cross the road and turn **left** over a small stile into a hay field. Cross the field diagonally heading for a pair of trees, passing the corner of a wood on your left. Head for a fingerpost at the edge of the woods on the other side. (The fingerpost is just to the right of a jutting corner.) The footpath takes you into the woods. *If this section is rather overgrown, don't worry: it soon clears.* Your path goes over a stile and through more woods. Suddenly, over a 2-plank bridge, you are out into a wheat field. Your path goes straight across to a solitary oak, then veers right to another post at the corner of some trees. Veer **left** at the post on a grassy path beside a field on your left. After 150m go **right** over a stile and **left** on a tarmac drive, soon passing a redbrick cottage and approaching more houses of May's Green.



- 2 Just before a left curve, you will see two tracks on your right opposite a fingerpost. Avoid the tracks but continue another 5m to go **right** through a kissing-gate across grass, passing to the left of a garage. Your path goes

over a bridge and between high wooden fences, ending over a stile. Go straight over a crossing path on a path (known as Downside Walk), then on a concrete track by Orchard Farm, keeping ahead on a tarmac drive with excellent views on your right. Where the tarmac drive bends left, keep straight ahead on a fenced track. The track curves left and right by garden fences and comes out to Ockham Lane. Turn **left** on the lane passing a pink house. In 450m, you reach the entrance to the car park of the *Black Swan* at Martyr's Green. Turn **right** into the car park and **left** through a wooden gate into the pub's garden.



The Black Swan, Ockham, used to be a bikers' pub famous for real ale binges. A few years ago, under new management, it was transformed into a superior gastropub which will not disappoint, although it might make a small hole in your wallet. One innovation is the "Black Swan Parlour Board", an array of victuals to share. Try the chicken liver starter or the oatmeal-crusted mackerel (the menu changes often) or the crab scotch egg with soft yolk!. Beer is Surrey Hills and three other craft pulls. The garden and patio are charming as is the service. Google their website for menus and ring to enquire: 01932-862364.

- 3 After your break, continue in your original direction to a crossroads just by the pub. Go straight over the major road to a road opposite with signs for *Ockham Village*. In 100m turn **left** onto a signed footpath on a tarmac-and-concrete drive with a sign for *Blackmoor Farm*. Your track goes down a dip and rises, continuing between horse pastures. The track passes a line a trees into a new field: keep ahead on the track. You come level with *Stumps Grove Cottage* on your right at a junction of tracks. Turn **right** here, staying on the main concrete drive, passing the cottage.
- 4 As the concrete track bends left, leave it by going **right** on a narrow path, over a wide bridge, into woodland. At a marker post, fork **left** on a bridleway running just inside the wood of *Stumps Grove*. After nearly 400m on this beautiful woodland path, you come to a T-junction with a wide track. Turn **left** on this track. In 200m, you pass a fingerpost on your left by a low bar and meet a path coming from a field on your left.

The "No Pub" option for Leg 2 meets you here. Your route continues with **Leg 3**.

Leg 2B: Horsley Road to Blue Ride With No Pub 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ km=1 $\frac{2}{3}$ miles

Take this route **instead of Leg 2A** if you want to shorten the walk by omitting the paths to *May's Green* and the *Black Swan* pub.

- 1 **See map under Leg 2A.** Cross the Horsley Road and take a wide track opposite, to the right of a large redbrick house. The track quickly leads to a path through woods – a contrast from the preceding terrain. The path is fairly narrow and unclear in parts: just keep straight on through the wood between banks [Aug 2023 : manoeuvring past two fallen trees via the bank on your right, later looping left...]. Follow the narrow path through the undergrowth, guided most of the way by a rope on your right. After around 125m you reach a wide track at a post with a yellow arrow [Jun 2024: gone]. Cross the track and head slightly left. [Jun 2024: on a Sunday you may encounter clay pigeon shooting (not dangerous but noisy?)] The footpath here is heavily overgrown. [Spring 2024: walkers had the choice of fighting through dense undergrowth or climbing over two excavator scoops.] Continue ahead until you eventually fight your way through to the edge of a builder's yard (a graveyard for large old diggers). Walk along the right-hand edge, squeeze

past a large concrete barricade to meet a wide drive. Turn **left** and continue along the drive until it meets the road, Old Lane.

2 Cross Old Lane and turn **left** along it. On your right is part of that Paintball Centre, which this walk neatly avoids. Ignore the first track on the right, by a metal bar, but take the next turning **right** to Lake House, as directed by a fingerpost. [Apr 2023: the owners have made a walker's gate and footpath just to the right of the entrance drive, you might as well use it: it's not official.] Follow a clear path through Hook Wood which soon leads you over a bridge into an open meadow.

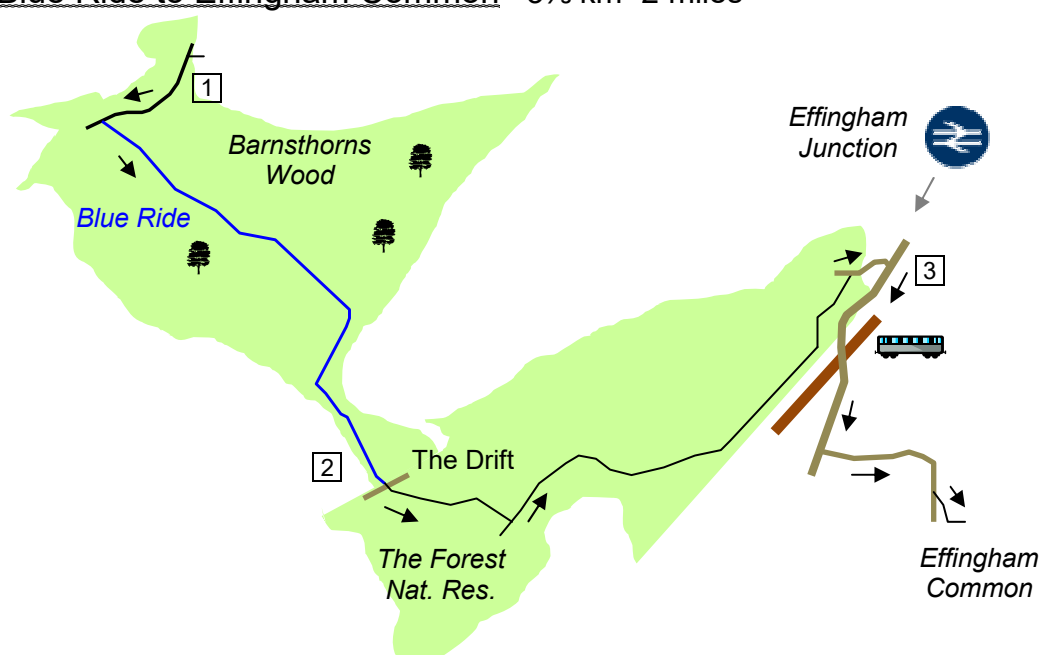
3 Keep ahead along the right-hand side of the meadow, passing to the right of an open barn. In the next meadow, bear **right**, continue into the trees and turn **left** at a yellow arrow on a narrow path along a woodland strip parallel to the meadow on your left. (Many people walk on a nice wide path along the edge of the field, because the woodland path used to be overgrown; it is now perfectly clear.) The woodland path curves right and left. On your left there are wide views with no habitation in sight giving a feeling of deep country.)



After another 150m the path breaks cover and on your right is a private drive to the redbrick Blackmoor Farm. Continue ahead on the woodland path. After 500m the woodland path ends at a low metal bar and leads immediately to a T-junction with a wide track. Turn **left** on the track.

The "With Pub" option of Leg 2A meets you here and you now continue together.

Leg 3: Blue Ride to Effingham Common 3½ km=2 miles



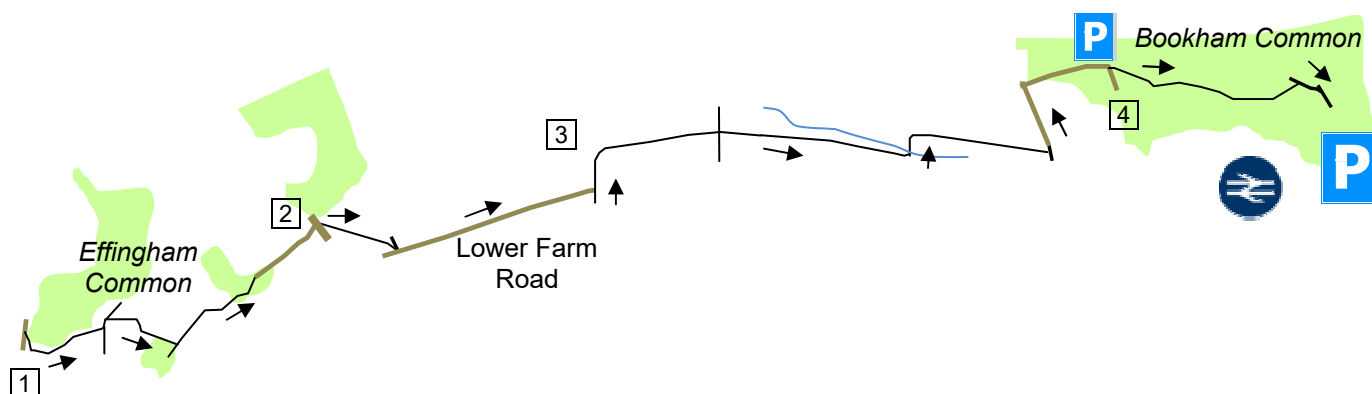
1 In 200m, turn **left** at a fingerpost (don't miss! it may be hidden), going over a small bridge, on a path through rhododendrons. This part of Barnsthorns Wood is the so-called Blue Ride, rather ironically as horses are not allowed. Follow this beautiful wide path through mixed woodland. After more than 600m, the path wheels **right** through rhododendrons, approaches a meadow and turns **left** beside it. After running beside a wire fence for 200m, the path comes out to a tarmac lane known as The Drift.



A walker suggests this diversion for refreshment. Turn **left** on The Drift to find, in 650m, on the left, the Drift Golf Club who serve excellent restaurant / bar snacks. Coming out the golf club, continue on the road to where The Drift meets Forest Road, from where you can pick up the route again. (Club caterers are independent and they love a chance to increase their revenue!)

- 2 Cross straight over the lane, over a 3-plank bridge, past a fingerpost into a woodland nature reserve known simply as *The Forest* and part of the Horsley Jubilee Trail (HJT). You pass an open-air classroom. Keep ahead, avoiding all side paths, to arrive at a T-junction in over 200m. Turn **left** here, following the yellow arrow, still on the HJT. In 60m, you reach a 4-way junction with a marker post. Keep straight on and follow this nice wide path through more woodland. The path curves right and left and, after about 400m, you become aware of the railway on your right. In another 350m you come to an information tablet about the nature reserve. Just before a little bridge and the main road, turn **right** onto a narrow woodland path. In 100m you reach a major road, Forest Road.
- 3 Turn sharp **right** on Forest Road using the footway. The road curves left over the railway. 200m after the bridge, turn **left** on Heathway which is also marked as a footpath and as the HJT. *On the opposite side of Forest Road is one of the Earl of Lovelace's old flint buildings, Forest Farm (see the walk "The Lovelace Bridges of Horsley" in this series).* Continue past bungalows and bunga-not-so-lows to the end of the road and turn **right**, still on Heathway. In 50m, go **left** between posts on a path into trees. **Care: do not stray!** In 20m, at a junction, turn **right** for 15m to reach the open space of Effingham Common by a noticeboard.

Leg 4: Effingham Common to Bookham Common 4 km=2½ miles



- 1 Take a path along the left-hand edge of the common and stay on the edge near the trees as the path curves left round the edge, then right again and, after 150m total, reaches a junction of paths. Turn **left** over a ditch (by a new cattle grid or a small bridge) and immediately turn **right** on a path across the open space, alongside the ditch. At the other side, fork **right** in the direction of a post with a yellow arrow and follow the path through two wooden barriers near a yellow coated house. Turn **left** on a tarmac drive, past Hooke Farm on your right, and follow it as it becomes gravel and tarmac again, passing a cricket pitch on your left, leading out to the Effingham Common Road.
- 2 Cross this main road carefully to a drive on the other side for Norwood Farm. Do not join the drive but immediately turn **right** on a path diagonally across the grass. In the far corner, go through a band of trees, veer **right** on a gravel drive and immediately turn **left** onto Lower Farm Road. *You could hardly imagine a more essentially residential road of middle England, with every possible style of house and garden, some one-storied, some opulent. White House has a long artistically sculpted hedge.* At the far end of this cul-de-sac, go over a small ladder stile, next to a locked metal gate, into farmland.

3 Turn **left** on a track and turn **right** with the track in the corner in 100m, along a line of oak trees. Your path leads you through three (bypassable) large metal gates. Where the track bends left through a locked gate, keep straight ahead through a modern kissing-gate. The path now leads over a raised sandy section with a stream on your left. In the far left-hand corner, go over a concrete bridge and a stile with large farm buildings ahead. Turn immediately **left**, avoiding the farm, going over a long bridge with stiles. Your path turns **right** past a disused stile and then over a stile onto an enclosed path, running beside the railway. At a T-junction with a wide track, turn **left**, going over a railway bridge. You are now on a residential track, Maddox Lane. At the end, turn **right** passing the old *Bookham Grange*, now apartments and executive homes. At a bend, you reach the small Bookham Common car park (alternative start).

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4 Keep straight ahead, passing the entire car park and its noticeboard on your **left**, by a National Trust sign, and go through a swing-gate. Continue on a winding path over a wild grassy area and, in 150m, go **left** over a bridge across a stream. Keep dead straight on for 150m, still on a grassy, sometimes very marshy, path. Go through another swing-gate and shortly veer **left** over a bridge with broken rails. Ahead are three possible paths. Take the path on the **right** and, at a T-junction, turn **right** again and **right** at a wooden barrier onto a track and **right** again into the car park where the walk began.

Bookham station is 150m to the right on Church Road.

Getting there

By car: Bookham lies just off the Leatherhead-Guildford **A246** road but the station is rather out-of-the-way. If coming from the Leatherhead direction, you need to continue 1 mile after the big Bocketts Farm-Fetcham roundabout (follow a brown sign for *Polesden Lacey*). Go through one set of traffic lights by an Esso station. You will see a road sign *Bookham Church, Station 1*: turn **right** onto **High Street**. Continue past quaint shops to a crossroads with traffic lights and go straight across on Church Road with the church on your right. Proceed for $\frac{2}{3}$ mile where the road curves left and, at the next left bend, go **right** into the car park. If coming from the **Guildford** direction, turn **left** off the A246 at the traffic lights by the Effingham Golf Club. Follow the road to the mini-roundabout, turn **right** and continue from (a) below. If coming from the direction of **Effingham Junction** (e.g. from Cobham or the A3 road), turn **left** at the mini-roundabout at the start of Effingham village. (a) go $\frac{2}{3}$ mile and turn **left** at a mini-roundabout onto Little Bookham Street. In $\frac{3}{4}$ mile the main road bends right and passes the Station. Continue onwards to a right bend and here go **left** into the car park.

If you start at **Effingham Junction**, from the car park, go **right** (away from the main road) on a driveway. 20m after the start of some factory buildings, at a fingerpost, turn **left** onto the wide green space of Effingham Common. Turn **right** along the edge. In 150m veer **left** on a path across the centre. 130m after passing trees on your right, veer **left** to the corner of a cricket pitch. Passing the pitch on your left, turn **left** on a tarmac lane. Resume at Leg 4 section [2](#). Memorise the landmarks for the return at the end of the walk.

By bus/train: start at Bookham or Effingham Junction station; regular service from London Waterloo.

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