



North Downs Way Monster Alternative “North Downs Way” Double Walk Box Hill or Dorking to Newlands Corner or Guildford

Distance: 30 or 26 km=18½ or 16 miles (by rail) moderate walking
or 36 km=22½ miles (circular double walk)

Region: Surrey

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Refreshments: Box Hill, Newlands Corner, Shere, Dorking, Guildford

Maps: Explorer 146 (Dorking) and 145 (Guildford)

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

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Woodland, hills, views, parkland, village

In Brief



This guide describes an *alternative* to the *west-bound* North Downs Way (“NDW”), beginning in **Dorking**, or **Box Hill**, and ending in **Guildford**, or **Newlands Corner**. For the Monster walk, the idea is to go in the *east-bound* direction on the *standard* NDW, making a 22½-mile figure-of-eight walk. The Alternative “NDW” crosses the standard NDW at the Netley Plantation, thus allowing a shortening of the route by 11 km=7 miles by omitting Shere village.

This Alternative “NDW” is longer than the standard NDW (12½ miles as against 10 miles) but it takes you through some charming landscapes: the “Whites” of Box Hill, the parkland of Polesden Lacey, some of the Horsley Bridges, some spectacular forest and the picturesque village of Shere.



If you arrive **by train** at one station and depart from the other station, there are two extra rail connections: (1) Dorking stations to Box Hill and (2) Newlands Corner to Guildford Station. Between Box Hill and Newlands Corner, you can walk the *standard* NDW, in either direction (16 miles total) or use the “*Alternative NDW*” described below (18½ miles total). For the two extra rail connections, you need to browse, print or download the following additional walks:

[Box Hill via Dorking Stations](#)

[Guildford Station to Church-on-the-Hill](#)

Look for the “Monster” symbols to find the start and end points.

This guide does not describe the standard NDW in detail because it is so well marked with “white acorn” symbols. If in doubt, you should bring the maps listed above and possibly a guide to the North Downs Way.



Warning! This is an extremely long walk and should not be attempted unless you are physically fit and have back-up support.

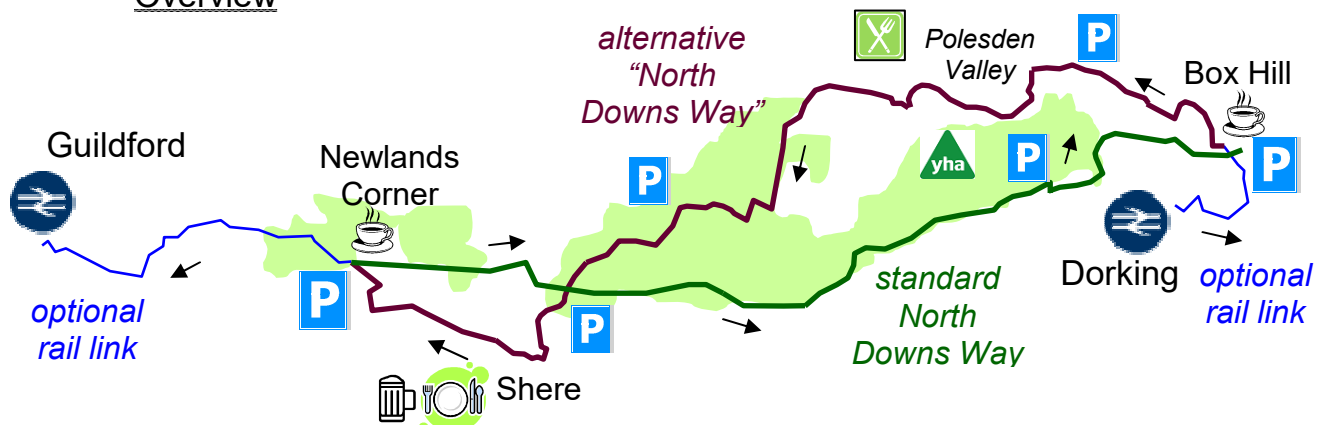


Boots are recommended because of the length of this walk. A hiking pole is also recommended. This monster walk may be too tough for some dogs. There are no nettles or briars to speak of.

The circular **double walk** begins and ends at the car park at the top of **Box Hill**, postcode **KT20 7LB**. You can also begin and end the double walk at the Newlands Corner car park, postcode **GU4 8SE**. Travellers by rail can do the one-way walk, beginning at **Dorking Deepdene** station, ending at **Guildford Station**. For a **one-way walk** along the Alternative North Downs Way, begin at Box Hill car park, ending at Newlands Corner, making use of a lift back. For more details, see **Getting There** at the end of the text of the first walk.

The many historic landmarks you see along this walk are described in shorter circular walks. Further information can be found in the following Surrey guides from this website: "Box Hill: Whites and Stepping Stones", "Effingham and Polesden Lacey", "The Lovelace Bridges of Horsley", "Shere and Gomshall".

Overview



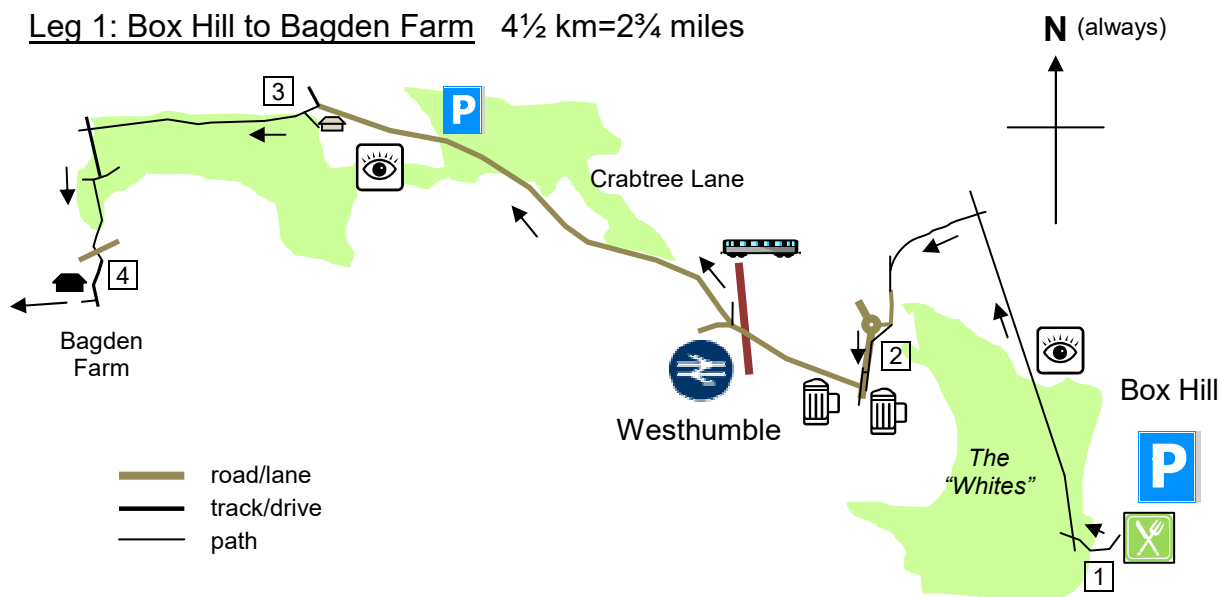
The Walk



Dorking Station Arrival 2¾ km=1¾ miles

This is for walkers who arrive at Dorking Station (main or Deepdene). Follow the first part of the walk *Box Hill via Dorking Stations*, as far as the café/shop on the top of Box Hill. (If you are taking the *standard North Downs Way*, you will meet it just *before* the café/shop.)

Alternative “North Downs Way” 21 km=13 miles

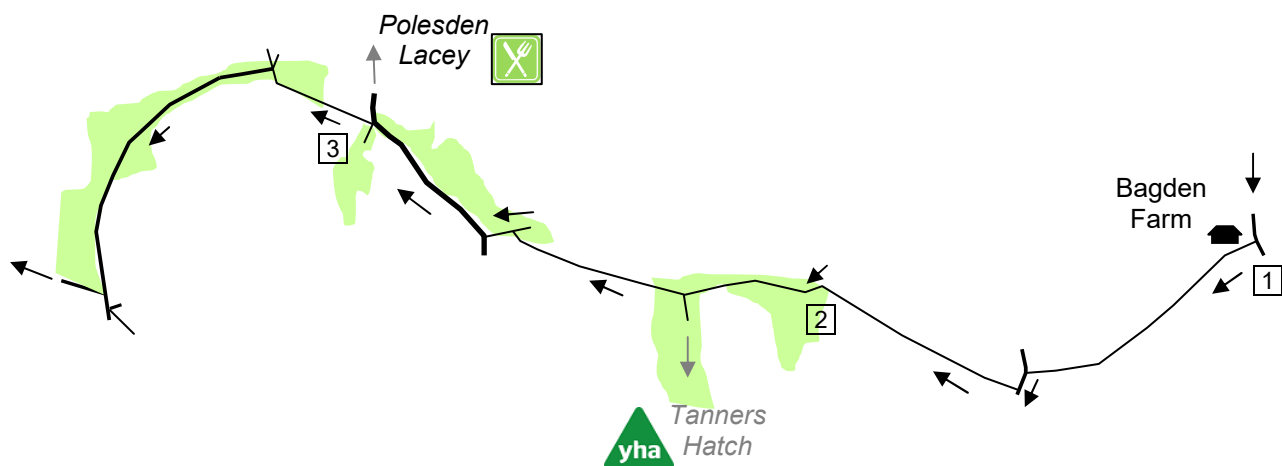
Leg 1: Box Hill to Bagden Farm 4½ km=2¾ miles



-  1 With the Box Hill café/shop on your right, walk across the grass to join a wide path leading away into the trees, passing a private entrance on your left. In 150m or so, veer **right** at a T-junction, soon passing on your right the unusual gravestone of the local Huguenot, Major Peter Labelliere. In another 300m, after coming through a wooden gate, you are on the famous “Whites” of Box Hill. Soon the chalky path gives way to a grassy slope. Keep to the “easy” right-hand side, with wide views. After a breezy 500m or so on a wide path down the slope, look for three isolated trees immediately to the left of your route, the only vegetation on the otherwise bare slope. Just before you reach the trees, turn **left** on a narrow path which leads down the grass and through bushes, going through a small wooden gate, then out to a road, opposite the Burford Bridge car park and *Ryka's Café*. Turn **left** on the road.
-  2 Go past the *Burford Bridge* hotel and veer **left** beside the main A24 road. Keep **left** at a sign for the *Subway*, turn **right** through the colourful passageway under the A24 and **left** on the other side. Turn **right** shortly on a side road, passing the *Stepping Stones* pub. Continue along the road, using the sheltered footway on the right-hand side. Soon, *Box Hill and Westhumble* railway station is on your left (an alternative start). Continue over the railway bridge, ignoring a footpath on your right, to come to a fork in the road either side of an archway. Take the **right** fork, a very narrow quiet tarmac lane, Crabtree Lane, marked as a cul-de-sac. You will be following this lane for nearly 1½ km, on a dark sunken course past houses, then out into the open where you have great high views on your left,

- P** showing the steeple of Ranmore Church. The tarmac passes the Crabtree Lane car park and ends at a house, *Crabtree Cottage*.
- 3** Ignore a wide path on your right and keep straight on past the cottage, avoiding a footpath on your left. You are now on a wide dirt track, soon running beside woodland. (If the path is muddy, you can use an attractive winding path through the woodland on your right which re-joins the main path.) After 700m, you reach a wooden barrier and a 4-way fingerposted junction in a yew glade. Turn **left** downhill on a wooded bridleway. In 100m or so, at a T-junction, turn **right** and immediately **left** to continue your downhill course. In another 150m or so, the path leads you through a small wooden gate into a meadow, then down to another wooden gate and a tarmac lane.
- 4** Cross straight over the lane, a fraction left, onto a wide curving driveway signed to Bagden Farm. In 150m, immediately after the last farm building, turn **right** on a wide unsignposted track, running beside a long flinty shed, coming out through a wooden gate onto an open pasture.

Leg 2: Polesden Valley Walk 2½ km=1½ miles



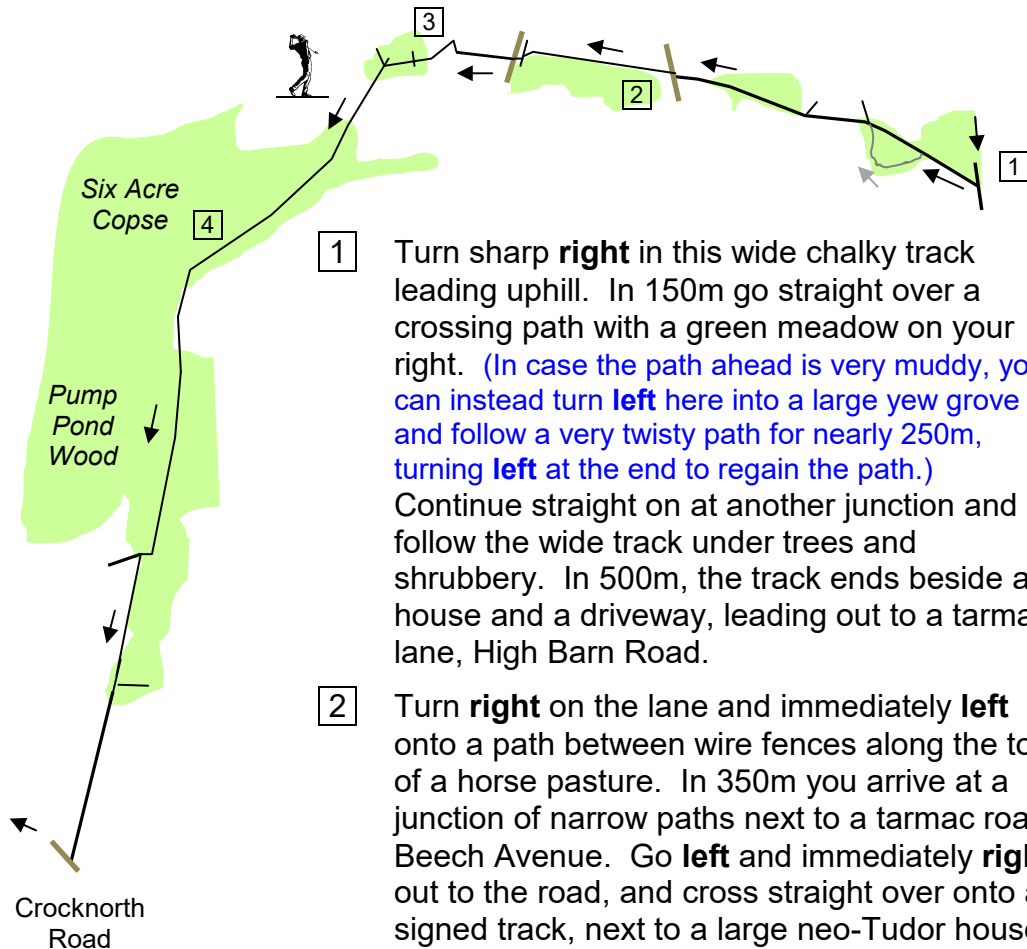
- 1** Keep dead straight on, along the bottom of the valley, with a wire fence on your right. *This is the famous Polesden Valley walk and you will be enjoying it to the far end of the Polesden estate. Very rarely, there are livestock in the field but not usually on both sides of the fence (and it is ok to walk on the right of the fence).* In 400m, at the far end, go through the smaller of two wooden gates. Cross the bridleway and through a gate on the other side. Jink **right** round a tree and pick up the path that continues in the original direction along the right-hand side of the open area.
- 2** Just after the gate at the end of the field, veer **left** down onto a sheltered woodland path. This path winds its way for 200m and enters a pine wood. (The secret woodland path on your left, not part of this walk, is a bluebell walk leading to *Tanners Hatch*, a youth hostel in a quaint timbered cottage.) The path passes a pond on your right and leads you through a small wooden gate into another large sloping meadow. Keep to the right-hand side of this meadow and in the far right-hand corner go through a small wooden gate onto a woodland path. This path passes farm buildings on your left and rises to meet a wider path at a T-junction. Turn **left** for 50m, down to a pair of wooden gates. Go through the smaller gate and veer **right** on a tarmac drive.



- 3 In 250m, the tarmac drive bends right to go under two wooden bridges belonging to the garden of Polesden Lacey. ([Polesden Lacey \(NT\) has a café and restaurant, not requiring an entrance ticket.](#)) **Leave** the tarmac here by keeping straight on at the 4-way junction, going past a notice board on your left and through a small wooden gate. In 200m, the path curves right to end at a pair of wooden gates. Go through the smaller gate to reach a junction of several paths and tracks. Turn sharp **left** on a wide track. Follow this stony rider's track for ½ km, gradually curving left. Look for a clear straight ascending path on your right. (As a guide, this is just before a track on your left and a small wooden gate.)



Leg 3: Through Six Acre Copse 3¾ km=2¼ miles



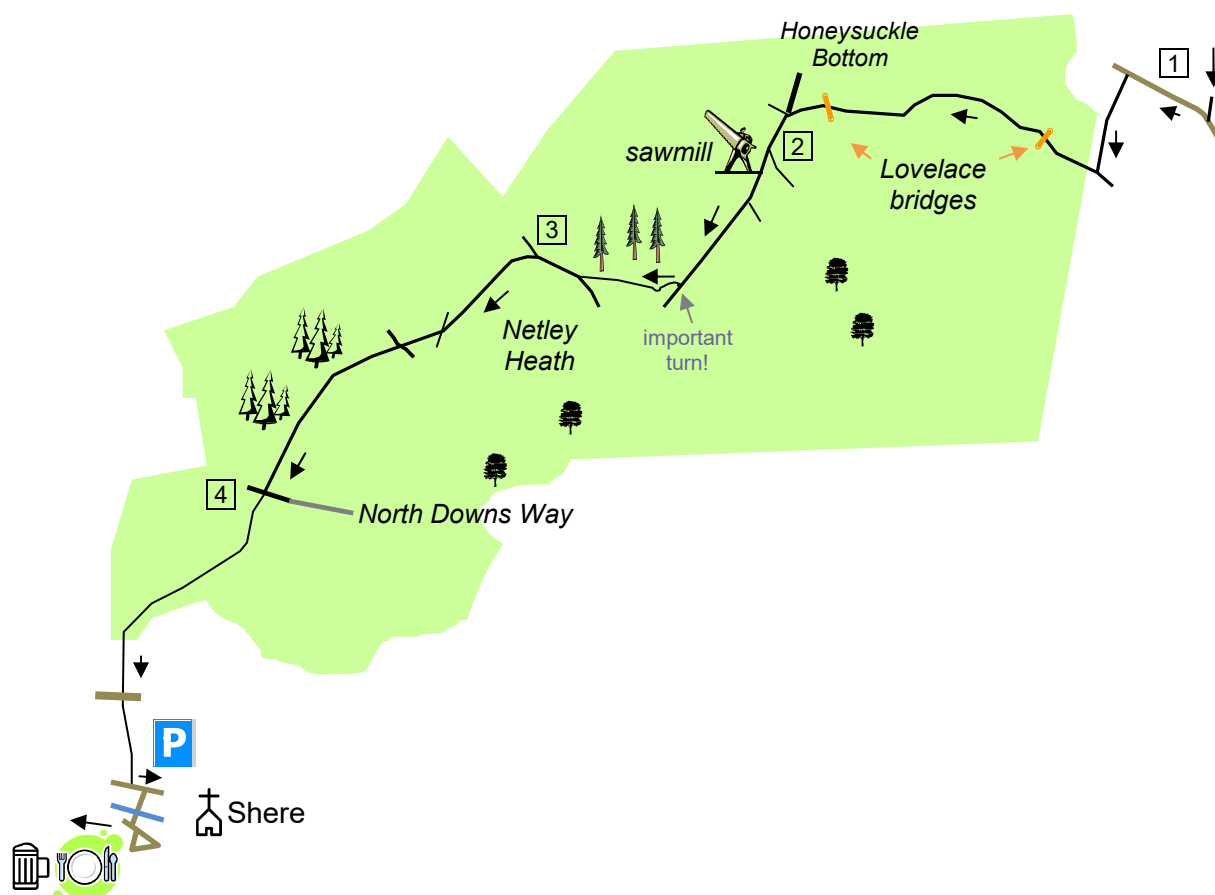
- 1 Turn sharp **right** in this wide chalky track leading uphill. In 150m go straight over a crossing path with a green meadow on your right. ([In case the path ahead is very muddy, you can instead turn left here into a large yew grove and follow a very twisty path for nearly 250m, turning left at the end to regain the path.](#)) Continue straight on at another junction and follow the wide track under trees and shrubbery. In 500m, the track ends beside a house and a driveway, leading out to a tarmac lane, High Barn Road.

- 2 Turn **right** on the lane and immediately **left** onto a path between wire fences along the top of a horse pasture. In 350m you arrive at a junction of narrow paths next to a tarmac road, Beech Avenue. Go **left** and immediately **right**, out to the road, and cross straight over onto a signed track, next to a large neo-Tudor house *Robinswood* on your right. At the end of the track, go through a small wooden gate and keep right, arriving at the open space of Effingham Golf Course.

- 3 Veer **left** and walk straight across the fairway (watching out for flying balls), heading for a small wood where you can see a yellow arrow not far from the left-hand corner. Take a path through the middle of the wood, going over a golfer's crossing path after 40m. In another 70m, you reach a junction and a marker post with yellow arrows. Turn **left**, exiting the little wood after 25m, onto another golf link. Keep the same direction diagonally across the fairway, passing close to a sand bunker on your left, aiming for a post with a yellow arrow just visible at the tree line ahead. Follow the path straight into the woodland of Six Acre Copse, ignoring all turnings off.

- 4 In about 300m, you are walking within sight of a meadow on the left. After 500m and along a short section between railings, the official path bends sharp **left** to a stile into the meadow, runs along the **right**-hand side and re-enters Pump Pond Wood over another stile. (If you want to avoid the stiles, you can keep straight ahead on an unofficial narrow path which snakes its way round several fallen trees and reaches the same point.) After a further 200m or so, the path is joined by a bridleway coming from the left at a marker post, then later curves **right** and comes out to a wide driveway by a large farmhouse. Turn immediately **left** on a narrow path through trees which soon becomes fenced on both sides. This path passes a house on the left, joins its driveway and continues for another 400m between fields to the road, Crocknorth Road. Turn **right** on the road.

Leg 4: Bridges, Sawmill and Village 5½ km=3½ miles



- 1 In 300m, after a dip, turn **left** on a wide signposted bridleway running beside a meadow on your left. In 450m, at a T-junction, turn **right** on a dirt drive called Sheepwalk Lane. This drive runs past *The Hermitage* and, soon after, passes under *Hermitage Bridge*, one of the Lovelace Bridges of Horsley. Continue along Sheepwalk Lane for nearly another 1 km through impressive woodland to pass under *Troy Bridge*, another Lovelace Bridge, but in a woeful state of disrepair. Continue for a short distance further to reach a major crossing track. Turn **left** on a wide track, between timber stacks, leading to a large sawmill.
- 2 Avoiding a major left fork, walk dead straight through the rather muddy sawmill, with the huts on your left, avoiding several more tracks branching off. About 500m from the sawmill, you come to a junction marked by a small post with two blue arrows (which may be hidden in sedge grass).

(This is just where the main track veers slightly left and starts to go uphill.) **Leave** the main wide track here by forking off **right** on a much narrower dirt path. *Don't miss this turn!* (Don't worry if this path is muddy as it soon improves and this section is short.) The path winds between conifers along the valley bottom. In 350m, you meet a wide surfaced track. Veer **right** on it.

3 In 150m you come to a 3-way junction with a signpost pointing to Co(o)mbe Lane, an informal parking space. Keep **left** here, ignoring the signs. In

P 100m or so, a track comes down from the right to join you. Continue to follow this straight forestry track for 300m where a dirt path crosses diagonally by a marker post. In another 100m, you meet a wide surfaced diagonally crossing track by a round concrete tank. (The track to the right comes from the Coombe Lane car park.) Cross straight over, staying on the wide surfaced track, which curves gently uphill beside conifer plantations. In 600m you come past a low barrier where a byway joins from your right. Shortly after, you reach the top and a major 4-way junction in a spot with a name sign showing *Netley Plantation*. Left and right, through metal barriers, is the North Downs Way (NDW). If you are doing the Monster Double Walk, you will be crossing this spot again on the eastbound section.

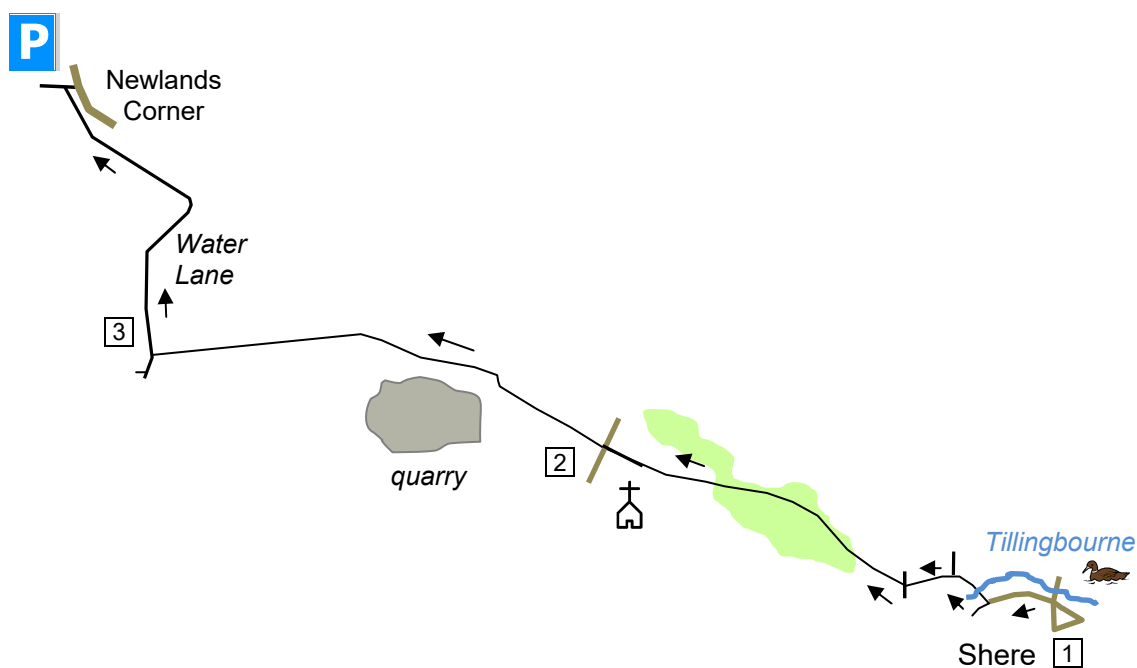
P Cross straight over the NDW onto a wide path opposite, passing another round concrete tank on your right. This flint-chalky path quickly starts to descend, becoming quite narrow and slippery in places. Your path makes a long descent of 1 km into the village of Shere. Near the end, it goes under the main A25 road (there is a "high" bypass on the right which crosses the road to avoid deep mud - see other Shere walks). It finally emerges by a metal barrier next to the Shere car park and comes out to a narrow road. Turn **left** and immediately **right** on Middle Street, passing several shops and eateries, coming over a bridge across the Tillingbourne into the centre of the village, with two pubs, the *White Horse* and the *William Bray* straight ahead.

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Leg 5: Shere to Newlands Corner 3¾ km=2½ miles



1 From the centre of Shere, turn **right** along Lower Street following the Tillingbourne stream on your right, with white ducks and probably lots of children and families. Pass the *Old Forge* and other quaint properties, a scarecrow and flowerpot men. At the next junction, go over a ford on the **right** by means of the footbridge. Soon, at a junction of drives, take a narrow footpath diagonally **left** between houses and follow it for some distance. It crosses a track, goes through a kissing gate and crosses an open meadow with the garden buildings and orchard of the Albury Estate on your left and fine views of the North Downs on your right. The path now runs through a kissing gate, the woodland of Silver Wood and another kissing gate, and reaches another open area. Soon the tower of the Catholic Apostolic church comes into view. Keeping the church on your left, pass through a gate and go down a track to a road.



2 Cross the road, through a swing-gate, on a footpath. Your path leads through a metal kissing-gate and up the right-hand side of a sloping meadow. At the top, go over a stile and up through a tree plantation. The path passes the entrance gates to the Sandpit, a large sand quarry, thankfully hidden from this walk by trees. After passing the works and outbuildings on your right, the path rises and joins a wide track coming from the right. The noisy A25 road is now gradually receding into the distance. You are now walking on part of the Pilgrims Way. You pass a small farmyard with poultry and a house *Timbercroft* and your path runs between attractive woodland and fields. Soon you come through a gate to a drive by a short terrace of cottages. Keep **right** on the drive to meet a T-junction with a wide track, well-named Water Lane.

3 Turn **right** on Water Lane. After 300m, the track veers right beside a small quarry. In 200m, at a junction, keep to the main chalky path as it turns **left**. After another 500m of gradual ascent, you finally reach the Newlands Corner car park.



WC

Newlands Corner is a famous beauty spot at one end of the Albury Downs. The visitor centre has a café and loos.



If you are doing the Monster figure-of-eight walk, after a rest, your return leg is on the standard North Downs Way (unless you did it at the start). Simply follow the white acorn symbols, crossing straight over the road, passing the West Hanger car park, turning sharp right soon after, and left again, always keeping a fairly level course. The walk ends with the Stepping Stones crossing of the River Mole – but remember, you can use the bridge instead!

Guildford Station Departure 6½ km=4 miles

This is for walkers who need to depart from Guildford Station. Follow the walk *Guildford Station to Church-on-the-Hill*, from Newlands Corner (section **7**) as far as Guildford Station.

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