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## Outwood Common Two Woods, Oaks and Buttercups

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Distance: 8½ km=5½ miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

Date written: 22-may-2020

Author: Schwebefuss

Last update: 15-jan-2022

Refreshments: Outwood

Map: Explorer 146 (Dorking) *but the maps in this guide should be sufficient*

*Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: [feedback@fancyfreewalks.org](mailto:feedback@fancyfreewalks.org)*

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*Woodland trails, village, buttercup meadows, views*

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### In Brief

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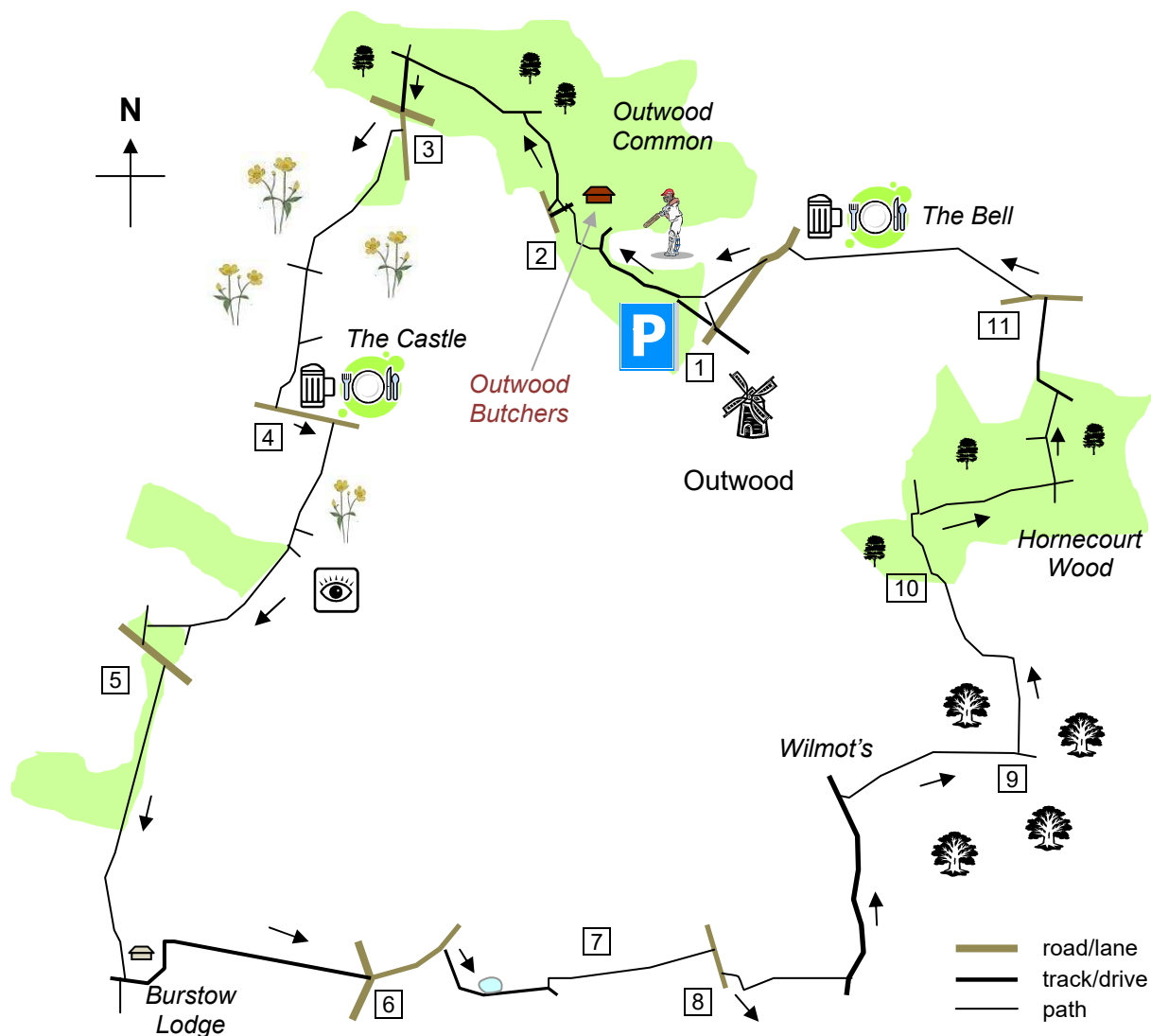
This second Outwood walk should be done every year on 1<sup>st</sup> June (or the last week of May) and again in autumn – in fact, at any time of the year. The great oaks dominate the second part of this walk, standing like guardsmen around each field. The first part is a stellar display of buttercup meadows, one after another on a carpet of green grass. There are two woods at each extreme of the walk: Outwood Common is on the Greensand and this walk finds a specially-made route to avoid the corkscrew paths; Hornecourt Wood by contrast is a typical Wealden beech wood. There are so many twists and unexpected turns and surprises that the walk may seem longer than the length given in the header.



Outwood Common has some muddy sandy paths but this walk avoids them by finding a wide shingle path. The other wood, Hornecourt, is more peaty with good wide paths. The walk was perfectly clear and dry when researched in May, but there are some short sections through undergrowth and in winter there will be more damp patches, especially in Homecourt Wood, near the end. So the general recommendation is for boots and long trousers. But in a dry period, such as at the time of writing, trainers and shorts will be fine. Your dog is very welcome if he is not too large (three stiles at Section 7).

The walk begins at the **Outwood Common** car park near the Windmill in Outwood, Surrey, postcode **RH1 5PW**, [www.w3w.co/shade.then.luxury](http://www.w3w.co/shade.then.luxury) (so appropriate!). For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

## The Walk



For more information about Outwood and its Windmill, please see the sister walk "Outwood and Bransland Wood".

- 1 Begin the walk at the back of the car park, going past a large wooden gate onto a wide woodland path. Very shortly, the path goes beside a cricket pitch on your right, with a pavilion in the far corner, and begins to curve round the edge. About half way round, look for some double wooden gates leading onto the pitch and, just *before* you reach these gates, locate a small wooden gate that also leads onto the pitch. Turn **left** here *opposite* the small gate onto a narrow unsigned path into the dense woodland. Keep straight on, as far as the bumpy terrain allows, going down over a (dry?) stream and up again. Soon you can make out a red tiled house. At a fork, keep **right** to arrive in front of an extraordinary shop, celebrated by villagers as a local secret: the *Outwood Butchers*.

*The Waltons started their shop generations ago in Market Bosworth, Warwickshire in 1891. They slowly headed south, via Hinckley, Leicestershire and Coalville, before settling in this celebrated shop in Outwood. If you don't want meat, there are fresh veg, bread, cheeses, pickles, jams and local honey. You can even pick up a bottle of wine.*

**2** Cross the driveway in front of the butchers where there is a picnic table and some chairs. Turn **left** on the drive for just a metre or so and turn **right** on any of the small paths through the trees to meet a wide specially-made shingle path. Turn **right** on this easy path, going past a wooden barrier. In 150m or so, at a junction, keep **left** past a slanting info board (empty at the time of writing), staying on the pleasant shingle path. After 400m on this gently curving path, you come past a wooden barrier and your path bends right past a house. Follow their driveway to a 4-way junction and turn sharp **left** on a dirt drive, Church Walk. *Just before you reach the road, on your right is the church of St John the Baptist, built in the medieval style in 1869, worth a visit and accessible at the front or down a side path on the right.*



**3** Cross straight over a major road to Wasp Green Lane opposite. Just after the first house, turn **right** at a signpost on a footpath. [May 2021: the planned path diversion, a right turn just before the next house, has not happened yet.] Immediately **before** some wooden gates, turn **left** on a narrow path through the wild vegetation. This winsome little path runs between a garden hedge and a bramble patch. A modern kissing-gate leads up into a buttercup meadow. A small metal gate by a yellow arrow leads into a similar meadow. In the corner, go straight over a crossing path, through a modern kissing-gate and along the left-hand side of a meadow, beside a ribbon fence. After a concrete stile your path leads you under dark cypresses and right-left round garden walls to come out to a road next to the *Castle* pub.



*The Castle is a friendly pub with a good restaurant, a patio and a garden, open all day from noon at weekends.*

**4** Turn **left** on the road for 120m or so. The hedge on your right conceals two lines of houses. At a wide gap in the hedge, turn **right** on a grass path between the houses. Your path runs between hedges and leads over a stile into another buttercup meadow, soon with your first great views south across the Weald. Continue along the left-hand side, ignoring two stiles and footpaths on your left in close succession. In the bottom corner, go over a stile into a long sloping meadow. Go down the **right**-hand edge, now with terrific views. Where your path meets the corner of a wood, go **right** through a modern kissing-gate into a wood. *In late spring, this little wood is remarkable for a dense covering of bluebells.* After the wood, a 2-plank bridge and a wooden swing-gate take you on a narrow path between a fence and a hedge, followed by a stile and then a path across the centre of the next meadow. Turn **left** on a track leading away from a house, passing a large wooden gate to reach a road, Rookery Hill.



**5** Turn **left** on the road. In 100m, turn **right** at a fingerpost on a bridleway through woodland. *The velvety surface makes this a favourite route and you may meet other walkers and joggers.* You pass a footpath on the right (closed as it only leads to the M23) and soon you glimpse, on your left, a corner of the moat at Burstow Lodge Farm. *Burstow Lodge was one of several manor houses in the district and many of them were moated for protection in the late Middle Ages.* At a T-junction turn **left** on a track and follow a tarmac drive, wheeling **left** through the business centre, keeping the industrial units on your right and ignoring a footpath on the right. You pass a stone house and a thatch. Turn **right** on a concrete drive leading out of the property, passing a large buttercup meadow on your left. You emerge at a junction of three roads.

6 Cross over the first road on your left (Rookery Hill again) and turn **left** on the second road (Norman Road, although there's no sign here). In 180m, after passing Winnett's Stables, turn **right** on a wide tarmac track signed for *Hollesley Farm*. You are on a pleasant horsechestnut avenue. A lily pond is on your left, graced by a wooden duck and many live ones. At a 4-way fingerposted junction, keep ahead, still on the tarmac. On your left shortly is *The Old Cottage* – nothing remarkable except that you are about to make closer acquaintance. Immediately facing the house, go **left** at a yellow arrow through a small wooden gate into the front yard of the house (yes, this is correct!). Turn immediately **right**, clinging to the fence, passing narrowly to the right of a converted wooden outbuilding. A grass path leads beside their garden to an old rusty gate.

7 Go through the gate (it has a bolt and a handle and may need a shove) into a meadow. Take a path straight ahead across the centre. A stile leads into a pasture. Keep straight on, with a ditch and a neighbouring pasture on your right. *There may be some quiet heifers and calves here: in case you want to leave them in peace, you can walk on the other side of the ditch or simply make a wide circuit of this large field.* At the far side, go over a stile to a lane. Turn **right** on the lane for only 50m and go **left** over a "stile" which is more like a small gate.

8 Your path across this new buttercup meadow quickly bends **right**, goes through a gap in the hedge, and turns **left** along the edge of the adjoining meadow. A stile leads across the edge of a short meadow to another stile (or large wooden gate). Turn **left** on a tarmac lane, Wilmot's Lane, a quiet cul-de-sac. In 400m, immediately before the corner of a house with a laurel hedge hiding a stone-ball gatepost, turn **right** at a fingerpost on a footpath which leads out into a cereal field. *You are entering a land of oak trees, standing like tall guards-of-honour around each field as far as you can see.* Follow the left-hand edge and continue similarly in the next field, crossing under wires. *If you look diagonally right here, you can see the spire of the 14<sup>th</sup>-century church at Church Farm, Horne.* The third field has a good path across its centre giving you a wide perspective of those great oaks. You come through a hedge at the far side.



9 Immediately turn **left** along the edge of the next field, with the hedge on your left. Soon the path turns abruptly **left** and **right** round two sides of the field. Now cut straight across the short section of the next field. Your path crosses a cluttered patch where a new trackway is under development and leads on the other side into woodland by a post with a yellow arrow. A concrete bridge leads into Hornecourt Wood.

*Hornecourt Wood is quite different from Outwood Common, being a typical Wealden beech forest rather than raised Greensand. It is hugely popular and there is a NT route (although the Woodland Trust manages the wood). This walk finds its own beautiful way through. You may need to concentrate a little.*

10 Keep **left** at first, then follow the yellow arrow straight ahead uphill. At the top, at the corner of a field, turn **right** with the path, meeting a log bench seat. Avoid the wide path on your left leading uphill and instead keep straight ahead on a level path. The path goes down a dip and steeply up. It soon dips a second time and rises to meet a crossing path. You are nearly 350m from that last turning by the log seat. (As a double check, there is a bench seat about 30m ahead.) Turn **left** at the crossing path, uphill through a beautiful mixed wood of beech, oak and tall cedars. You

pass a junction on your left, thus joining the NT route. After 200m or so, you reach the edge of the wood with a meadow visible ahead. Turn **left** and follow the path, curving right, beside a field on your left, shaded by oaks. You come out beside a large metal gate to a road.

- 11 Turn **left** on the road for only 20m and turn **right** over a stile into a crop field. Your path takes you **left** and then diagonally **right** between fields. You now come through a thick hedge, over a (bypassable) stile and along the right-hand side of a field, with Outwood Windmill now visible. Veer **right** into trees to go over a stile, unexpectedly into the car park of the *Bell Inn*.

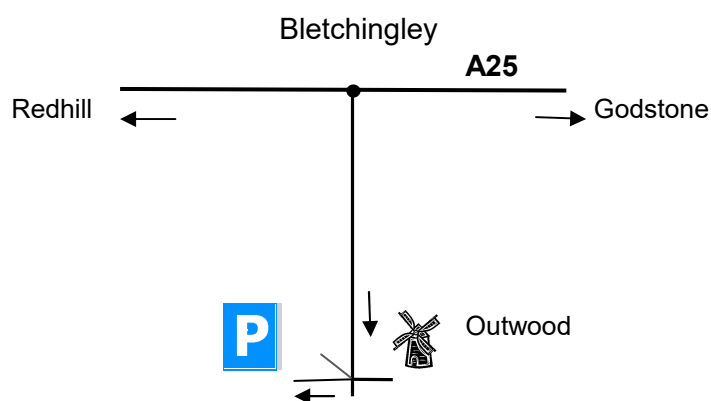


*The Bell is a Fullers pub which was once a coaching inn. It dates from 1635. The menu is seasonal with a good choice of fairly standard dishes, served from 12-3 but all day from midday on Sunday. The interior is (appropriately) oak-beamed and there is a charming patio and garden.*

After a possible break, turn **left** on the road. At the start of the green, fork slightly **right** at a fingerpost, going across the grass, over a tarmac drive and a dirt track, arriving at the car park where the walk began.

## Getting there

By car: Outwood is reached (appropriately) via Outwood Lane, 3 miles south of Bletchingley and the A25 road. You can join the A25 either from Redhill or (usually easier) from Godstone. When you reach the Windmill, turn **right** at a crossroads, ignore the dirt drive on the right and keep straight on along a tarmac drive, leading to the car park. Note that you *cannot* easily reach Outwood from the M23.



By bus/train: By bus/train: Cruiser bus 315 runs from Redhill station to Outwood, weekdays only. Check the timetables.

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