Fancy Free Walks

point your feet on a new path

Chiddingfold and Ramsnest Common

Distance: 11 km=7 miles — easy walking

Region: Surrey — Date written: 14-mar-2016

Author: Fusszweig — Date revised: 24-jul-2020

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Chiddingfold, Ramsnest Common, Ramster Garden

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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Village, woodland, views, bluebells, stream valley

In Brief

Here is a peaceful rural ramble through the meadows and woodlands of southwest Surrey. It starts in Chiddingfold, one of Surrey's most picturesque villages which offers good chances for a rest and refreshment. Near the end, it takes you through some spectacular wooded terrain. At the time this walk was done, there were no ploughed fields along the way and only a few sheep for companionship.

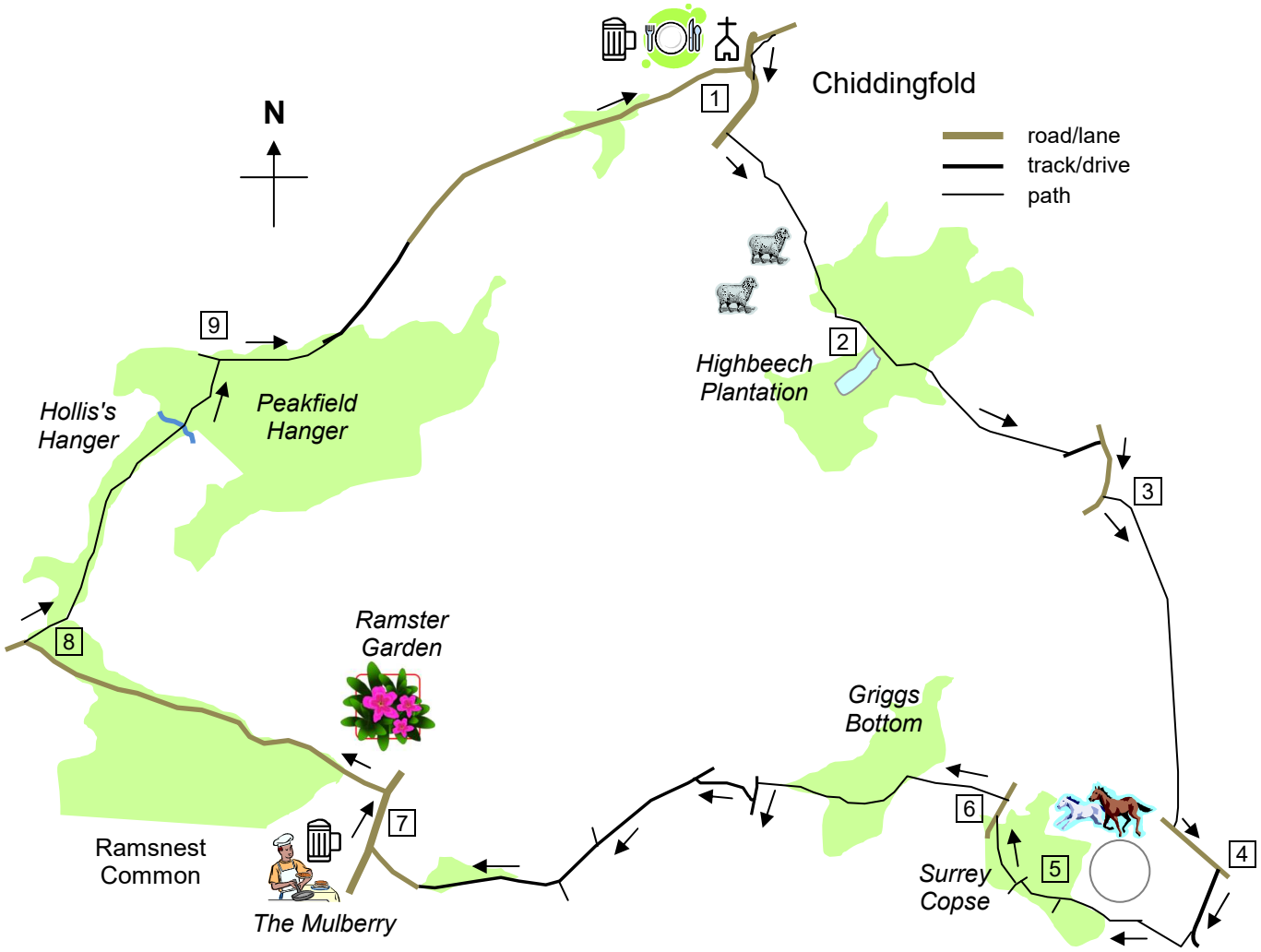
The best time to do this walk is late spring, when many of the paths are fringed with bluebells. In the centre of the walk there is a chance to visit one of Surrey's best secrets: a garden famous for its blazing spring blooms (modest entry fee). Nearby, there is also is an excellent pub/restaurant (to enquire at *The Mulberry*, ring 01428-644460).

The paths on this walk are usually clear but in high summer you will encounter one or two patches of nettles and other undergrowth when shorts are definitely not recommended. Much of the walk is along good farm tracks or quiet lanes. However, since this is a Wealden walk, inevitably you will encounter some muddy sections, making boots necessary, except possibly in dry summer weather. The stiles at the start of this walk now have wire fencing, leaving no gap for your dog, so he cannot be too big to be lifted over.

The walk begins at **Chiddingfold**, Surrey, w3w:parrot.farm.devoured, postcode **GU8 4TX**. Park alongside the Green. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

There is a shop at Chiddingfold and the Crown Inn (founded 1250) and the Swan Inn serve good food. There is also "Elliotts Coffee Shop". You will find a hilarious and informative account of the village in another walk in this series: "Witley, Hambledon, Chiddingfold".

The Walk



1 Go along the side of the Green towards the church and the *Crown Inn*. Just before the inn, go **left** through a passage, re-joining the road by a butcher's shop and continuing past the *Swan Inn*, crossing a bridge over the Anstead Brook and ignoring a side road, *Turner's Head*. At a fingerpost after the last house, turn **left** on a signed footpath (often overgrown and easy to miss!). This narrow path runs between fences, by a field, through a kissing-gate and along the right-hand side of a meadow. Ignore a post with a yellow marker and keep straight on*, veering **right** in the corner to go through a kissing-gate. (*The official footpath goes right up steps and left beside a fence, but this way is awkward.) Your path leads uphill through a bluebell wood and turns **right** over a stile into a sheep meadow. Turn **left** along the edge of the meadow. Go over a stile in the first corner *(don't miss!)* onto a woodland path in the Highbeech Plantation.

2 Go carefully down the slope ahead, aided by steps, and past a pond on your right. The path takes you over a stream, up and along a grassy path by a fence and a large pasture. The path elbows left by a gate and finally bends **right** to go over a stile [Jul 2020: NB: lower step broken: be very careful!]. Turn **left** on the grass beside the driveway coming from *Old Pickhurst* and, at a T-junction, turn **right** on a road, immediately avoiding a road junction on your left.

3 After 150m, go **left** over a stile into a small green meadow. Your path runs close to a wire fence on your left before veering away right and turning **right** in 80m over a small bridge and a stile into a sheep pasture. (2026: There is now a large plantation of young exotic trees with lush grass and wild-flowers obscuring the path: you may need to rely on footprints left by previous walkers). Cross the pasture aiming for the right-hand edge of a line of trees on the other side. Once there, go through a metal gate, or over a stile, and continue uphill next to a fence on your right. In the far corner, crossing some planks over a damp patch, go through a metal kissing-gate and cross the centre of the next sheep meadow, aiming well to the right of a large cream-and-red house visible ahead, adjoining some long buildings (actually racing stables). Cross a ditch by a flat bridge, go over a stile next to a large metal gate to a road and turn **left** on it.

4 In 40m ignore a fingerpost on your right next to a ditch. (This used to be the route, until in 2022 the planks over the spring vanished and the vegetation grew wild.) Continue a further 150m to the corner of some woodland and turn **right** on a wide gravel drive marked as a footpath. At the end go through a (usually open) wooden gate and keep straight ahead across the grass, straight past a marker post, to a duck pond. Turn **right** here and go straight over a stile in a wooden fence onto the large horse exercise area belonging to Robins Farm Racing Stables. Cross a very wild and overgrown area, going over both gallops, watching out for horses and riders, shifting a bit to the right to avoid the guard rails. Now aim straight ahead to the **left**-hand side of a hedge of a crop field, going over a dirt track and a small ditch. Keep close to the hedge along the right-hand edge of the field. In 130m you pass a signpost. Continue as before for a further 100m to the corner of the field where you meet woodland and a wide farm track. Go **right** here through a wide gap and immediately **left** along the edge of the grass, with the woodland on your left. In 15m, ignore the first yellow arrow on your left (almost hidden in bracken) and continue to the far corner.

5 In the corner, go up over a 3-plank bridge and take a path straight ahead, gently uphill through a wood, Surrey Copse. Soon your path crosses an open strip under wires. At the top, veer **left** at a yellow arrow immediately reaching a fingerpost (hidden in trees on your left). Turn sharp **right** on a clear path into the woods. The floor here is thick with bluebells in late spring.

The path finally leads out into a small meadow. Veer **left** to a gap beside a metal gate and turn **right** on a tarmac lane. In 70m, go **left** through a modern kissing-gate into a large sloping meadow.

6 Go straight across the meadow, keeping well to the right of oak trees in the middle of the field. Ignore a metal gate over to the right and aim instead for the metal gate straight ahead. Go through the gate, by unhooking the heavy chain, into the woods of Griggs Bottom and immediately turn **left** at a fingerpost. In 60m your path veers up right deeper into the wood. In about 150m, the path emerges into a large sloping green field. Keep ahead along the right-hand side of the field. At the corner, go through a small wooden gate and turn **left** on a wide farm track. In 30m, follow a hairpin round to the **right**. In 200m veer **left** towards the farm buildings. Note: if you have a dog, he *must* be on a lead anywhere near the buildings! You pass a leafy pond and, on your right, *Redlands Farmhouse*, then *Honeypot Cottage* and the buildings of Gostrode Farm. Stay on the tarmac, ignoring a footpath on your right and a bridleway on your left at a bend. Finally you pass some houses, go over a grid (or through a small wooden gate), pass a footpath

on your left, and progress onwards till you reach the main A283 Petworth Road by a BP filling station (which serves snacks and drinks) in the hamlet of Ramsnest Common.

*You will be continuing by crossing the road and turning right. But first, less than 100m along the verge on your **left** is one of the best pub/restaurants in the neighbourhood. The Mulberry is nice-sized and welcoming with a little garden on the side, reported "excellent" by walkers. As much a restaurant as a pub, it offers an inventive menu, including such things as crabmeat profiteroles, herb-stuffed chicken in serrano and a daily special. The opening hours are generous too.*

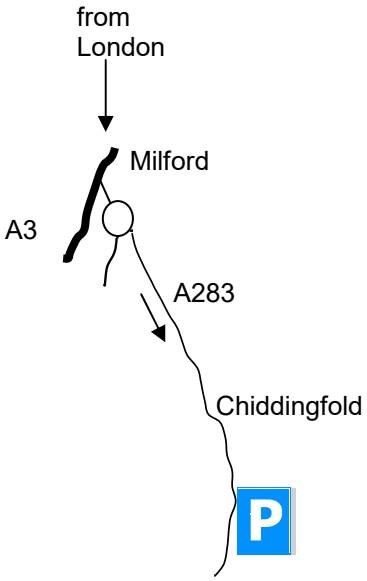
7 Having crossed the road and turned **right** (or going straight on if returning from *The Mulberry*), go 150m along the footway and turn **left** on a side road, Killinghurst Lane. *However, by continuing another 100m or so along the main road, you could make an excursion to Ramster Garden (pay on entry), famous for its glorious spring colours.* Follow quiet Killinghurst Lane, catching a glimpse of the Garden on your right as you go. The lane dips to go over a stream, passing farm buildings and winds its way uphill. The lane zigzags through a broken wall and descends. You pass a meadow on your left with a beautiful cedar, belonging to historic *Kilinghurst House*. Finally, after 1.2 km, the lane takes a left bend.

8 **Leave** the lane here by turning **right** at a fingerpost on a narrow path. The path (very overgrown in summer) runs along the right-hand side of a field (sometimes aglow with rape) and, in 40m, forks right into woods. You are in a long strip of woodland known as Hollis's Hanger. It runs beside a stream gully down on your left [2020: over several fallen trees, all manageable]. This primeval and exciting landscape will be yours to enjoy for 1 km – and probably alone because few people come here. *In late spring, this is a notable place for bluebells too.* Eventually the path descends to the level of the stream and crosses it by a bridge. After the bridge, keep left, following a thin stream (a dry gully in summer) on your left, following the yellow marker. You may need to hop around the mud in this section. Your path crosses the stream using a 3-plank bridge. At the top, you come to a T-junction with a much wider path. Turn **right** on this path.

9 The path runs past some corrugated farm sheds and onwards through woodland (testing your mud-hopping skills again). It eventually joins a tarmac driveway coming in on the left from *Hollyhurst*. This lane soon passes houses on both sides in the hamlet of Upper Sydenhurst. Keep straight on along this very quiet cul-de-sac lane passing several footpaths on the left. In one more km, the lane reaches the main road in Chiddingfold. Turn **left** and cross the road to the *Crown Inn* and the Green where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: Chiddingfold is on the A283 Milford-Petworth road. If coming from the London area, turn off after Guildford through Milford and take the A283 south.



By bus/train: there are several bus routes to Chiddingfold from Haslemere station but they run on odd days. The best idea is to check the web for the latest options.

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