Fancy Free Walks *point your feet on a new path*

Puttenham, Hogs Back, Wanborough Manor

Distance: 11 km=7¼ miles or 8 km=5 miles easy walking

Region: Surrey Date written: 1-mar-2016

Author: Fusszweig Last update: 19-jun-2026

Refreshments: Puttenham

Map: Explorer 145 (Guildford) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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

Public rights are restricted to printing, copying or distributing this document exactly as seen here, complete and without any cutting or editing. See *Principles* on main webpage.

Villages, woodland, hills, easy farm tracks, views, historic manor, pubs

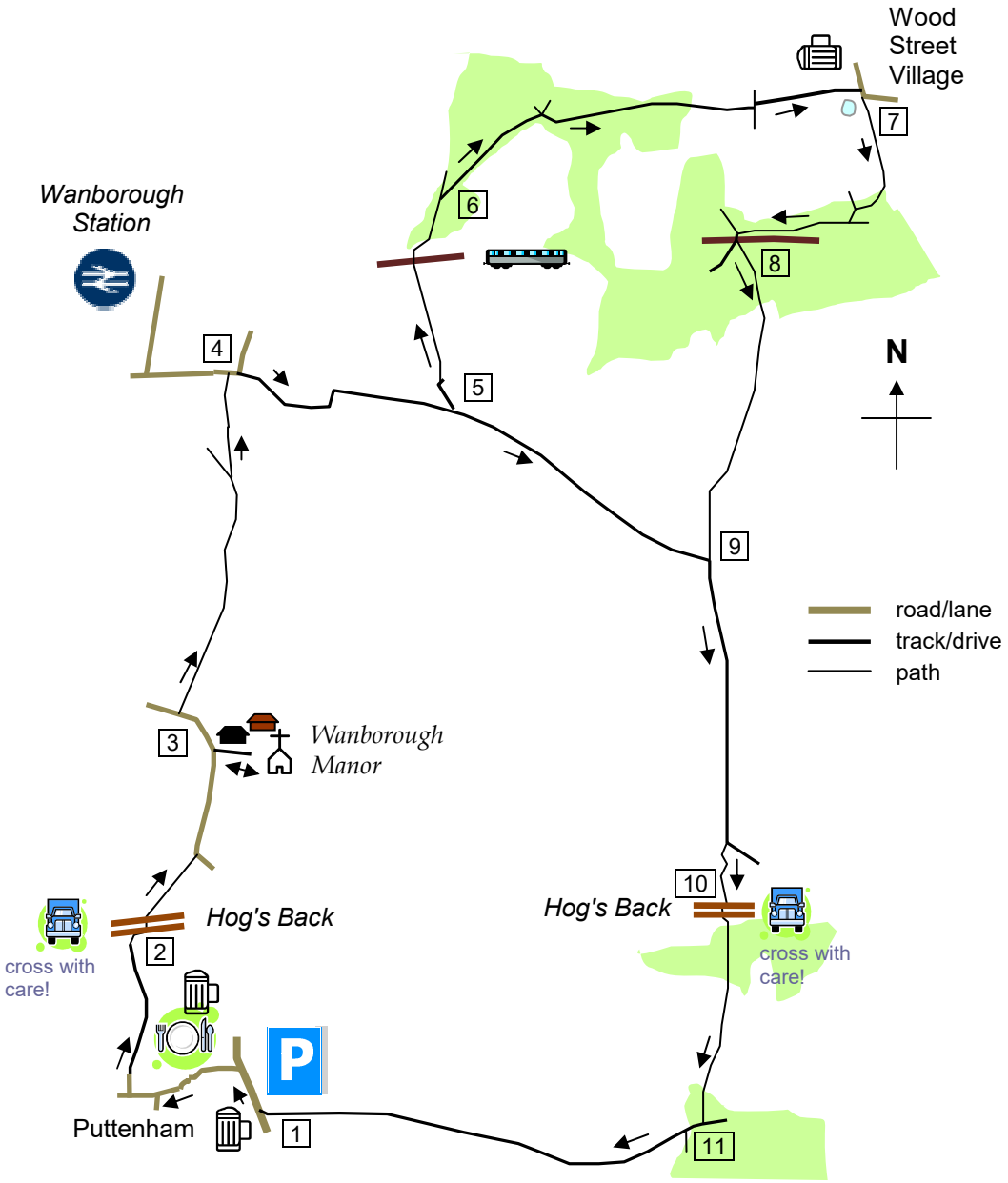
In Brief

This walk takes you across two sides of the Hog's Back in Surrey, with a picturesque village at each end and plenty of variety with interesting and attractive country along the way. In Puttenham there is an excellent pub. (To enquire at the *Good Intent*, ring 01483-923434.)

The terrain used on this walk is mainly good surfaced tracks, enjoyable in any season, and peaceful except for two crossings of the busy A31 Hog's Back dual carriageway. When this walk was researched in February, the wooded area around Wood Street Village had one or two brief short muddy paths which should be much easier in summer or in dry weather. This guide provides a short cut which omits this village, but thereby misses a very pleasant part of this walk. There are some nettles and brambles on one or two sections of this walk, probably enough to rule-out shorts in high summer. Boots are recommended for the reason given above. This walk is not ideal for your dog, because of an awkward stile and two crossings of the busy A31 road (however in 2026 only **one** stile was still standing!).

This walk begins in **Wanborough Railway Station** or opposite the *Pickled Pig** in **Puttenham**, Surrey, w3w:invite.disbelief.clots, postcode **GU3 1AJ**. *Currently (2023-24) "closed for refurbishment". The usual start is the car park opposite the pub (which still shows the original name of the pub: the *Jolly Farmer*), but in 2023-24 the car park is closed with a metal barrier due to fly tipping. There is roadside parking a little way up the main road and, sparingly, in the village. At weekends and holidays, the little school car park on School Lane (w3w:topics.bootleg.arming) may be suitable. Alternatively, you can begin at the opposite end of the walk, at the village green in **Wood Street Village**, w3w:duties.poem.owned, postcode **GU3 3DZ**, placing your mid-walk break in Puttenham, especially advisable since the pub in Wood Street Village is currently **closed**. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



If you are beginning the walk at **Wanborough Station**, come out by the main station building, turn **left** on the approach road which curves right and joins Glaziers Lane. In 200m, where the major road wheels right, turn **left** on Flexford Road. In 250m, at a stream by a willow, keep straight ahead, joining the walk at section 4.

1 Go **right** out of the main Puttenham car park, turn **right** and cross the main road carefully to the (possibly closed) *Pickled Pig* inn. Turn **right** on a tarmac footpath and follow it as it curves left into the side road called The Street, heading for Puttenham village. On your left you pass Puttenham church (worth a visit). In around another 100m, immediately after the *Good Intent* pub, turn **right** on School Lane. After the school, keep ahead on a dirt track, uphill between banks. The meadow on your left is a favourite haunt of deer. Looking back, there is a good view across horse pastures, over this

historic village. The track leads up to the Hogs Back and the (sometimes very busy) main road that runs along the top.

2 Turn **right** the short distance to the entrance to *Springfield Manor*. Cross the westbound carriageway very carefully, singly or in pairs, to a narrow gap and hidden signpost in the central strip. The gap is opposite the nearside gate column. *The traffic runs at 70 mph: you need to be patient whilst waiting for a gap.* Go through the strip and cross the eastbound carriageway to a fingerpost. Take a path diagonally **right** here across a field, usually marked by vehicle tracks, with great views ahead. This field may be very claggy and you'll need to scrape your shoes afterwards. It is comforting to know that this experience is not repeated on this walk. You meet the road at a bend by an unneeded stile and a sign for Wanborough. Turn **left** using the footway, under a line of beeches. At the bottom of the hill you can see the collection of ancient barns, a house and church of Wanborough Manor, a medieval gem.

Wanborough was known in Roman times when travellers along the Hog's Back would use the fresh spring water here before continuing to the Roman temple at Christmas Pie. The parish is named after a barrow (burial place) located on the Hog's Back. The Manor, built in the 1500s with major additions in the 1600s, was frequented by royalty and used for diplomatic visits. During WW2 the Manor was used to train future agents of the Special Operations Executive. They were taught subjects such as explosives and sabotage and the men were put through a resistance ordeal by seduction using beautiful women, alcohol and flirtation, a test which they miserably failed. One SOE agent who trained here was Violette Szabo, celebrated in the film "Carve Her Name With Pride". The Great Barn, dating from the 1300s, is open at least on Saturdays during the summer but a visit can be arranged by ringing the Guildford Museum on 01483-444750.

The Saxon church of St Bartholomew was restored in 1861 by the Gothic Revivalist architect Henry Woodyer. It is one of the smallest in Surrey and is usually open to visitors. Its windows are of great antiquity and the wooden screen (between the nave and the sanctuary) is especially noteworthy.

3 Return to the road, turn **right**, and continue for nearly 200m to the next bend. Just after a house, *Peartree Cottage*, at a fingerpost, turn **right** into a field. The path goes around the field, keeping to the right-hand edge, but if the field is muddy or cropped you can keep to the grass border. At the other side, go over stile (avoidable using the wide gap to its left) and follow the grass verge on the right-hand side of the next field. As you enter the third field, over a stream, ignore the path straight ahead and instead turn **right**. Follow this path along the field edges to the top right hand corner. Turn right here through a small metal gate and over the stream via stepping stones, a pleasant surprise. Follow the path beside the stream, going through a wooden gate into a small green meadow. Keep to the **left**-hand side, coming out via a stile [2026: only one stile was still standing - this one?] to a lane.

If you began the walk in Wanborough Station, turn **left** and, in 250m, turn **right** on Glaziers Lane, leading back to the station. Otherwise …

Turn **right** on the dusty lane.

4 Avoid a tarmac lane on your left, soon passing the buildings of West Flexford Farm. The drive zigzags left-right and runs straight. In 400m, as the field on your left ends, you meet a line of oaks and a tarmac drive sharp left, signed for *The Old School House*.

Decision point. If you are content to miss the next delightful village and its pub, skip to near the end of this document and do the separate section called **West Flexford Lane** before re-joining the walk further down.

5 [Jan 2021: after weeks of rain, the **railway arch** used at the end of this section was flooded; a walker recommends the following: continue eastwards along West Flexwood Lane for a short distance; just before a house called *Quackers*, take the public footpath on the **left** beside the house; turn slightly **left** through a metal gate that says *Beware of the Dog* and go through what looks like the back of a garden before coming out onto a field that no longer shows a path crossing it -- so turn **right** and skirt the field edge and round the top to arrive at a footpath sign leading into woodlands; this path leads to another, drier, archway under the railway, in fact the one used on the return journey and referred to at the end of section 7.] **Or**, in dry weather, taking the intended route: turn sharp **left** on the drive and where it shortly bends right to a house, keep straight on along a woodland path. The path goes over a plank bridge. There are now *three* possible paths leading straight ahead. The path alongside the stream is interesting with some little bridge crossings but it gets very muddy at the end in winter. Fortunately you can switch paths easily. The path on its left goes above it along a bank, round trees and is usually to be preferred. On its left is a path that runs along the edge of the field, strictly for joggers. At the end, go through an arch under the railway onto a good gravel path which curves right. In 200m you reach a fork with a marker post.

6 Take the **right** fork. *Note that you are on the Christmas Pie Trail, a route between Guildford and Farnham, named after a nearby hamlet, site of a Roman temple. The Christmas's, by the way, were a family, serving under the Tudors. "Pie" means a small plot of land.* Your path runs through an oak wood, changing to birch, crossing a drive to Passenger's Farm. In 100m, at a junction of lesser paths by a marker post, keep **right**. Continue through the wood, ignoring several branching paths on your right, with a line of electricity wires on your left. In about 400m, your path goes over a driveway by a sports pavilion, crosses a stream and joins a shingle drive by houses. You pass a fingerpost at the start of tarmac and, after a few cottages and a pleasant grassy space, you finally reach on your left the *White Hart* inn [June 2026: unfortunately closed and boarded up for renovation, although the owner Stonegate are "determined to find a new tenant"; description kept in the hope it may revive].

This is the most seductive corner of the village, with the pond, country houses and even a tie-up on the grass for your horse when you drop in to this very rural, very cosy inn. Note the personal touches like the miniature metal sculpture along the wall. Food is a big draw and the menu is unusual, with Moo & Blue Pie, collops and hoagies, as devised by this three-pub group.

7 After your break, turn **left** out of the *White Hart* (i.e. continue along the lane) to the pretty triangular green in Wood Street Village. Turn **right** on the lane and keep straight on, with a pond on your right, passing a village nursery, continuing on a dirt track. The track gets narrower and runs through woodland, curving right. In the wetter months, the next 150m are very muddy. **Ignore** the **first** path and yellow arrow to the right, veer **left** to a T-junction and turn **right** on another path. Soon you will see the railway on your left. After about 350m along this woodland path, turn **left** through an archway under the railway, by an unneeded stile.

8 In just 10m or so, you reach a fork. Take the **left**-hand narrower option, a footpath indicated by a yellow arrow [Apr 2024: waymarker sign grounded], avoiding the wider path that curves away on your right. This path is also very

muddy, but in 150m you will be completely dry! The path leads gently uphill through woodland. Finally, you come out through a small wooden gate onto a dry tarmac path. Keep straight on along a tarmac drive with the Hog's Back visible ahead. After you come out through the metal gates of a property, keep ahead on a wide cinder track between fields. Where the field on your right ends, you reach a crossing path and a cottage. Keep straight ahead.

Here the West Flexford Lane shortcut re-joins the main walk.

9 The track leads between more fields and you pass a stilted chalet on your right, once a grain store, followed by farm buildings of Flexford Farm. Keep straight ahead, slightly uphill, on a tarmac drive, passing a bungalow. At the top, where the drive curves left, **leave** it by keeping straight ahead on a narrow path into trees, marked by a yellow arrow. The path crosses a drive and continues, taking you over a stile next to a large wooden gate. Turn **left** and immediately **right** along the right-hand side of a rough meadow, going over a stile and another stile onto the Hog's Back and its busy road.

10 Shift 10m to the right and cross the eastbound carriageway very carefully, singly or in pairs, going over a bank, up a narrow path and over another bank. Cross the westbound carriageway very carefully to an arched private entrance on the other side. Turn **left** for 15m along the grass verge and **right** at a fingerpost on a bridleway (although surely the modern traffic would make horseriding impossible). This secton may be overgrown in summer when extra care is needed. The path runs downhill beside a wire fence and ever more steeply down under beeches and yews. It runs down a grassy path beside a house on the left and descends through trees and shrubs. You pass a large metal gate and some farm storage buildings on your right, finally reaching a T-junction by a signpost indicating the North Downs Way (NDW).

11 Turn **right** on the NDW, immediately avoiding a bridleway on your left. This good surfaced track passes some houses on your right. At a 3-way marker post, keep straight on. You now have links on your left belonging to the Puttenham Golf Club (which welcomes unbooted walkers for drinks and nibbles). Keep ahead at all times, passing a farm on your right (*Wildcroft Rare Breeds*) and soon, on your left, *Pilgrims Way Cottage*, a reminder of the role played in history by this national trail. Finally, the main road is ahead and you reach the car park on the right where the walk began.

For final refreshments, nearby, in the village, the "Good Intent" pub has been refurbished (2020). It is open all day Sat and Sun, with a comprehensive menu. For more details of this historic village, see the other walk in this series "Puttenham and the Welcome Woods".

West Flexford Lane 1 km=0.6 miles

Take this short cut if you want to return to Puttenham by a shorter route, omitting the Wood Street Village and the opportunity for refreshment.

Keep straight ahead, ignoring the sharp left turn, passing several houses on your left and finally passing the entrance to Homestead Farm. Continue ahead on a dirt track, West Flexford Lane. Stay on the track for another 600m, where you reach a crossing track and a cottage. Turn **right** on the crossing track.

The walk now continues from section 9.

Getting there

By car: Puttenham lies 4 miles west of Guildford between the A3 trunk road and the A31 Farnham road. It is clearly signposted from both roads.

For Wood Street Village, go through Guildford, following signs for A322 *Bagshot*. After passing under the A3, fork left on the A323 *Aldershot*. In 0.7 mile, at a small roundabout, fork left on Broad Street. Wood Street Village is in 1½ miles.

By bus: bus 65 from Guildford stops on the Hog's Back. Check the timetables.

By train: regular daily service to **Wanborough Station** from Guildford & Waterloo.

*fancy **more** free walks?* www.fancyfreewalks.org