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## Whitewood

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Distance: 9½ km=6 miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

Date written: 20-jun-2021

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Last update: 29-oct-2024

Refreshments: picnic or local inns after walk e.g. *Wiremill* or *Red Barn*

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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*Easy field paths, wide shaded tracks, fine houses, landscaped garden, woodland, easy gates*

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### In Brief

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This walk is a perfect soothing country ramble on good wide paths with no stiles to worry you, and a pleasing interchange of patches of woodland and open spaces, surrounded by hedgerows and those great oaks that dominate this part of Surrey.

The start and end points of this walk are the site of the now closed 18<sup>th</sup>-century country pub, the *Jolly Farmer*. The pub has been demolished and replaced by two dwellings. (The old pub name may still be showing.) Parking is on the roadside, westwards shortly after the site of the pub.

This walk can be combined with the *Bletchingley* walk to make a stupendous 12-mile hike with an enviable choice of drinks and nourishment in that handsome historic village.

Apart from a tiny section at the start, all the paths are wide and clear, so shorts will be fine. The walk was researched following a day of torrential rain but even then the mud was manageable without wellies. So on a more typical summer day, all the paths should be pleasant to walk, with boots advisable. This walk would be fine for your dog too, with a short lead for South Park of course.



The walk begins in Whitewood Lane in the hamlet of Whitewood, near **Godstone, Surrey**. There is a dirt strip and a grass verge just before the start of the walk. The postcode is **RH9 8JR** and the what3words location is [www.w3w.co/shakes.random.comet](http://www.w3w.co/shakes.random.comet). For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

## The Walk

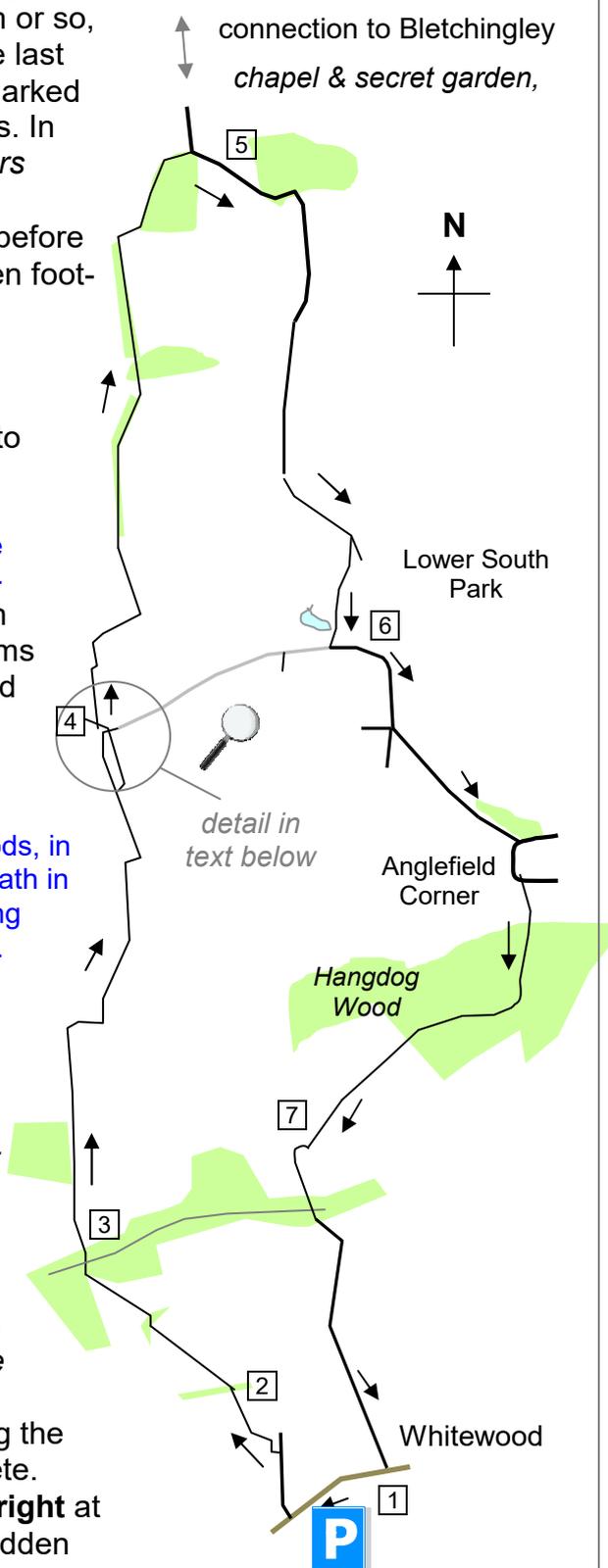
- 1 Starting at the informal parking strip, stay on the right-hand side of the road and continue a further 100m or so, making use of the grass verges, until you pass the last house. Turn **right** here on a wide track marked to Stubbs Grove Farm. You pass several cottages. In 200m, opposite a rather wide house called *Beggars Roost*, turn **left** on a gravel patch next to a horse exercising area. The narrow footpath turns **right** before a metal gate, then **left** in the corner, over a wooden foot-bridge and out into a crop field.
- 2 Go straight ahead across the field, using a path (clear except after ploughing) which takes you through a band of trees, veering **left** a little, out into the next crop field. Take another path across the centre, leading to a gap in the edge and a stone bridge-with-rail. [Nov 2021: the path from here to the woodland was ploughed up and walkers had to go left-right round the perimeters in two places.] A third path leads across to the far left corner. If the path seems to peter out, simply keep straight ahead over a wild patch. Leave the field through a gap or past an unneeded stile, into woodland. Go over a bridge-with-rail to meet a wide bridleway.

If you turn **right** on the bridleway through deep woods, in an (unresearched) 700m you will reach the return path in section 7, making a 3 km=2 mile walk, but missing nearly *all* the best things on this walk. Otherwise ...

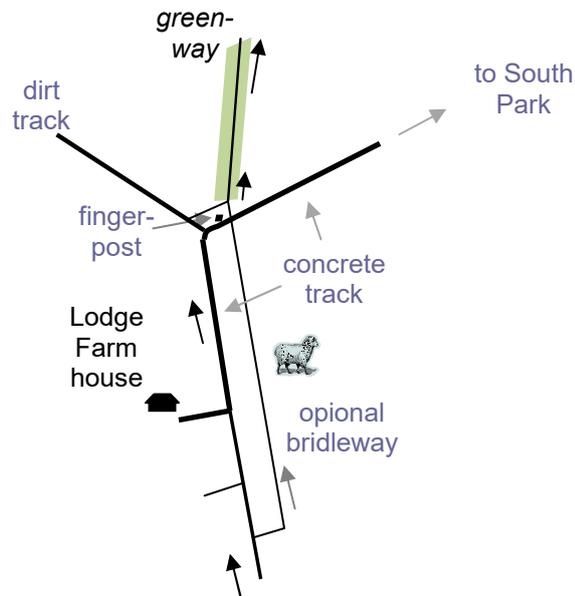
- 3 Go straight over the bridleway and follow a wide shady path straight ahead, with a large meadow close-at-hand on your right. Soon you pass another large meadow, now with woodland on your left. *Ahead, there are views of the North Downs.* At the end of the meadow, your path bends right and, in 100m, left again beside a large cereal field, under oaks. Finally, your track curves right and shortly turns **left** on a wide track between hedgerows. Soon the big old black barn of Lodge Farm comes into view. When you are 50m *before* the barn you will notice on your right an unsigned bridleway\*. Ignore it and keep straight on, passing the barn, along the driveway which changes to concrete. Stay on the concrete drive where it shortly bends **right** at a junction, but in only 15m turn **left** on a narrow hidden footpath. **See mini-map overleaf.**



\*Strictly speaking, the bridleway is the official right-of-way but, with no sign and some mud in the last section, almost everyone stays on the main drive. If you decide to use the bridleway, turn **right** and **left** alongside a sheep pasture and, in 150m, cross straight over the concrete drive onto a narrow footpath opposite.



- road/lane
- track/drive
- path



If you turn **right** on the concrete drive, in an (unresearched) 650m you will meet the return path coming from the garden of Lower South Park at the start of section [6], reducing the walk to 6½ km=4 miles, but missing some wonderful features. Otherwise ...

- [4] Almost at once, by a 3-way fingerpost, keep **right** on a wide grassy path. Follow this pleasant greenway between meadows and hedgerows, soon under a line of oaks bordering a cereal field. At a blue arrow the path leads you through a small metal gate into a wide strip of woodland. After a large meadow on your right, your path crosses the Salfords Stream into a mature wood, past another meadow on your right. As you come out of the trees, your path turns right and runs through a dark wood of old coppiced beeches and firs. Finally the path zigzags right-left and comes out of the wood onto a wide concrete track. Your course is **right** on this track.

However, there is a short rewarding there-and-back excursion available by turning **left** on the track (where the railway tunnel runs beneath). In 150m go through the smaller of two metal gates to arrive at the *Secret Garden* and *St Mark's Chapel* on your right. A description of these two highlights will be found in the adjoining *Bletchingley* walk.

- [5]  Having turned **right** on the concrete track, follow it gently downhill with great views ahead to the South Downs. This nice easy trail winds its way through woodland as the surface alternates between hardcore and gravel. A narrower section leads under a canopy of great oaks. Your path is now much narrower, but always perfect to walk on. The ever-changing landscape includes wild meadows, with parkland on your right. Finally, after a short stretch of concrete, take the **right** fork to avoid a barred gate. The path emerges from the wood, passing two large noble ash trees. A wooden gate and a tennis court now open up a wonderful surprise: the immaculate garden of Lower South Park. *The original timbered barn, dating from about 1600, can be seen on your left shortly, with the main house to its left; the barn is used for wedding receptions etc.; the lake, lawn and a potpourri of ornamental trees make for a memorable sight.* Where the path ends at a tarmac drive, turn **left**.

- [6] Follow the drive as it bends right. In a further 150m, take the obligatory **left** fork, staying on the main drive. You pass scattered houses, some opulent, some modest, under tall beeches, as you enter the prosperous hamlet of

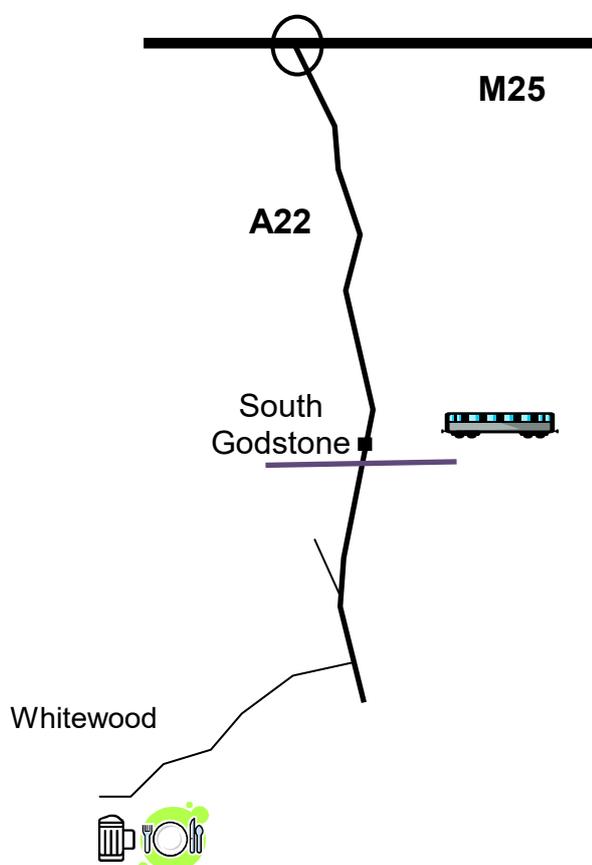
Anglefield Corner. At a T-junction turn **right** on a quiet residential lane. At a junction in 150m, keep straight ahead on a narrower dirt drive marked *Tile Barn Farm*. You pass the deep sloping Hangdog Wood on your left, with the cascading Putney Gill evident on your right. The track bends right and passes an isolated pair of semi-detached cottages, entering more dark woodland. After going round a large metal gate, your path runs between open meadows.

- 7 As you near Tile Barn Farm, keep **right** on a track to avoid the converted barn and immediately **ignore** a stile and footpath on your right. The path curves down into a covering of shrubs. After a band of woodland, keep straight on at a 3-way fingerpost, soon passing a small meadow on your right and a muddy patch. **Ignore** a yellow-arrowed footpath by a large metal gate on your left and keep straight on. The path emerges into the open by a neglected house and, in a minute or so, you reach the main road. Turn **right**. In around 100m you will reach the dirt strip where the walk began.

## Getting there

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By car: Whitewood is easily reached from the A22 (Godstone - East Grinstead) road. From the M25, follow the A22 through South Godstone. After 1 mile you pass on your left a huge purveyor of marquees and tents. After a further 350 yds you reach a junction on the right for *Horne, Smallfield*. Turn **right** here. After a bendy 1½ miles, you pass on your left the site of the old pub, now a pair of houses. Continue a further 120 yds or so to find an off-road dirt strip and grass verge on the right.



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