



Fernhurst and the Temple of the Winds

Distance: 8 km=5 miles

moderate walking

Region: West Sussex

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Refreshments: Fernhurst

Last update: 30-sep-2021

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere) *but the maps in this guide should suffice*

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

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Woodland, heath, parkland, views, village, lake, vineyard

In Brief

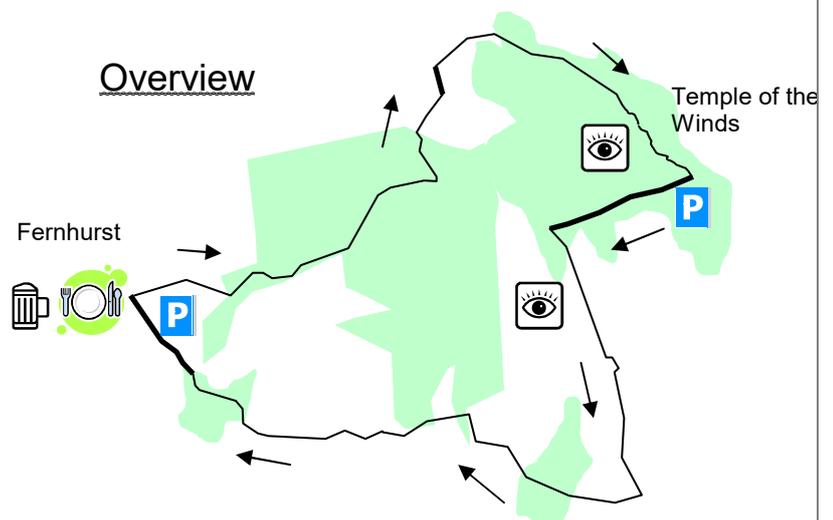
This is an unforgettable ramble in some of the best walking country of this part of West Sussex, not far from the Surrey border and easy to reach from the Guildford or London area. You ascend the highest hill in Sussex, by a gentle route, from where the views are amazing. You then descend gradually keeping those views and meeting some wonderful surprises along the way. You can treat this walk as a pub walk based on the excellent *Red Lion* in Fernhurst. This is a fine walk for wild flowers, especially in spring-time when daffodils, primroses and (later) bluebells are abundant.

Fernhurst is blest with a highly recommendable old country pub. (For enquiries at the *Red Lion*, ring 01428-643112.)



There are just a few nettles and brambles on this walk but some walkers manage ok with shorts. Greenery is waist-height in one or two places. Good boots are essential to handle the long climb at the start, unless conditions have been very dry. Your dog can certainly come too.

The walk begins at the free car park by the Green in Fernhurst, West Sussex, postcode **GU27 3HY** (NB *not* the car park signed off the main road). If you want the refreshments in the middle of the walk, begin the walk at the Temple of the Winds car park, nearest postcode **GU27 3BS**, grid ref SU 922 291 (details below). For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



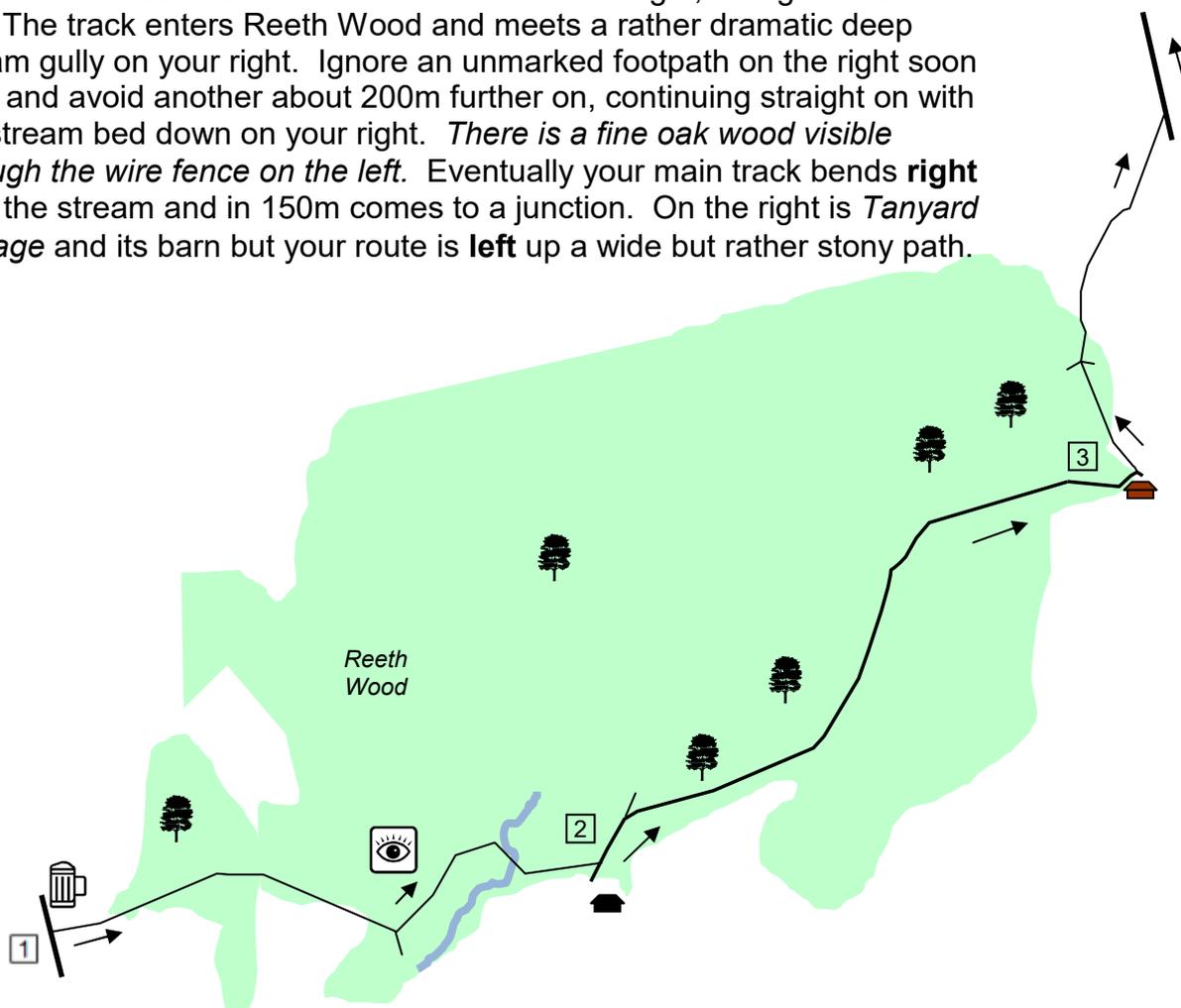
The Walk

Leg 1: Fernhurst to Temple of the Winds 3 km=2 miles

Fernhurst is a large village and parish. The village originally developed around crossroads and the village green, and ancient remains, both Stone Age and Roman, have been found here. Iron working took place in the 17th and 18th centuries and a turnpike ran through the village. St Margaret's church (c.1100), several old houses and the Red Lion pub dominate the picture-book green. With the coming of the railway at Haslemere the village gravitated north beyond the crossroads, and since the 1960s the village has expanded further in that direction. The village houses a large commuter population, attracted by the scenery and the ease of travel. In the 2001 census there were 1,158 households with a total population of 2,765 of whom 1,244 were economically active. Local claims to fame include the fact that Bertrand Russell wrote Principia Mathematica in the house "Millhanger" a mile or so southeast of the village.



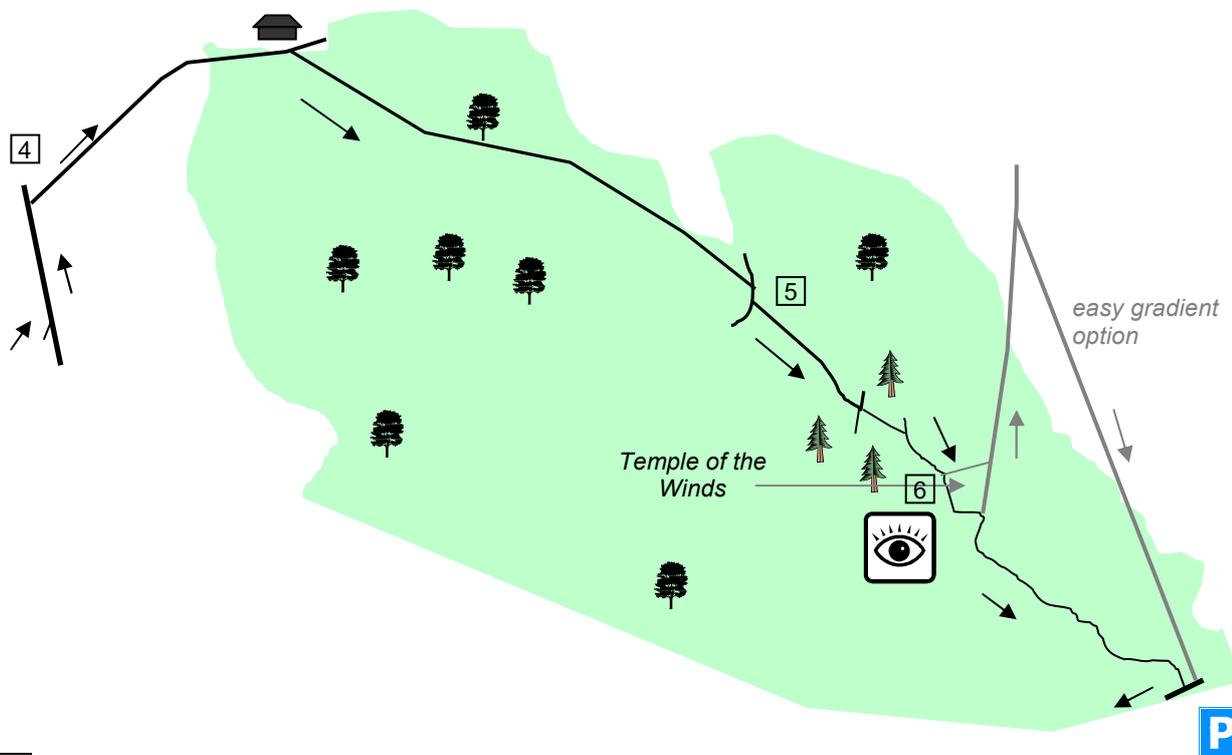
- 1 Take a wide passageway which runs between the *Red Lion* pub (on your left) and a house. Tennis courts are soon on the right, with gardens on the left. The track enters Reeth Wood and meets a rather dramatic deep stream gully on your right. Ignore an unmarked footpath on the right soon after and avoid another about 200m further on, continuing straight on with the stream bed down on your right. *There is a fine oak wood visible through the wire fence on the left.* Eventually your main track bends **right** over the stream and in 150m comes to a junction. On the right is *Tanyard Cottage* and its barn but your route is **left** up a wide but rather stony path.



- 2 In 70m at a fingerpost, ignore a track forking left and continue on the stony ascending path which may seem arduous because of its length rather than the gradient. Later, the path shares its course with a stream, but it is easy to skip around. In about 400m, there is a high parallel path on the left, which avoids the muddiest section. **Don't be put off by mud on this path. The rest of the walk is generally much drier.** Ignore all paths branching off and keep following the signposts or yellow arrows and overhead wires. In

350m, keep straight ahead at a marker post. In another 150m, at a crossing path, keep ahead, a fraction right, still following the wires, now on a much narrower path. In another 250m the track comes out past a small yard on your right to a tarmac drive by a house, *Reeth*.

- 3 Opposite the house entrance, turn sharp **left**, almost going back on yourself. Soon the track comes to a junction. Ignore the left fork and continue straight on uphill. This passes two fields on the left and comes out to a lane. Turn **left** on the lane.



- 4 Within 100m, just after some stables and before a house on the right, turn **right** on a marked brideway. This lane leads up to a farmhouse, Cotchet Farm, on the left. Turn **right** opposite the farmhouse through a gate past a National Trust sign onto the extensive open space of Blackdown. **Any cattle here are the gentle belted Galloway breed, but dogs should be on a lead!** The track leads upwards under rowan trees through open heath land. After an exhilarating ascent, at the top, the track meets a wide level track coming in from the left. Continue straight on here, past a seat on the left.
- 5 Follow the track until you reach a 3-way fingerpost. Continue straight ahead here, disregarding all the directions pointed to by the fingerpost. Almost immediately you are on the other side of the hill. Veer **right** now on another path where you have extensive views on your left to the east. This takes you quickly down to a viewpoint with a wide stone seat, a memorial and direction finder. This is the *Temple of the Winds*.



Blackdown, or Black Down, is the highest point in Sussex, at 280 metres (918 feet), being second only to Leith Hill (295 metres, 968 feet) in south-east England. The pine and heather-covered slopes are owned by the National Trust. Although it is common land, Blackdown was the property of various landowners until W.E. Hunter donated it to the National Trust in 1944, as a memorial to his wife. The Hunters are remembered by an inscribed stone seat at the Temple of the Winds. Flint artefacts show that there has been a settlement on Blackdown since mesolithic times, around 8000 years ago. The poet Alfred (Lord) Tennyson lived nearby in Aldworth House and frequently walked to this southernmost point known by this poetic name.

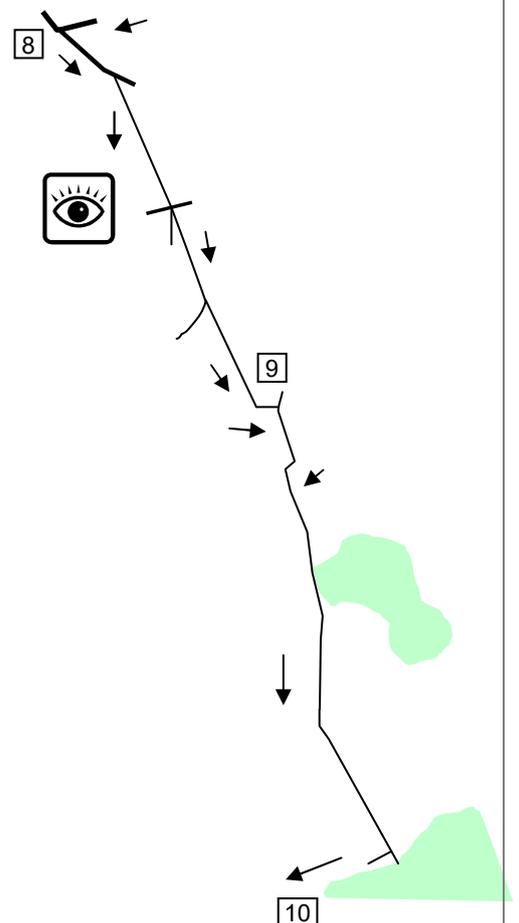
- 6 After enjoying the view, take a narrow descending path [see * below] just to the left of the viewing platform. [Care! Some walkers found more than one path and took the wrong one: your path is well used, going southeast, part of the *Serpent Trail*.] This path is much easier than it seems because it takes a wide snaking course keeping a shallow gradient, although steep in parts. The only problems are the loose leaf mould underfoot that makes it slippery, the scratchy undergrowth and the occasional high stone step where you need to be careful. So take your time! After the scrubland comes holly and you pass through a small wooden gate. There are steps to help you now as you descend through yew trees. Finally you reach Fernden Lane opposite the small car park. If you began the walk here, the adventure is finished. Otherwise, turn **right** on the lane. [* Or, for an easier gradient, you can go **back**, keeping **right** along the hillside for 500m and turning sharp **right** at a fingerpost.]

Leg 2: Temple of the Winds to Fernhurst 5 km=3 miles



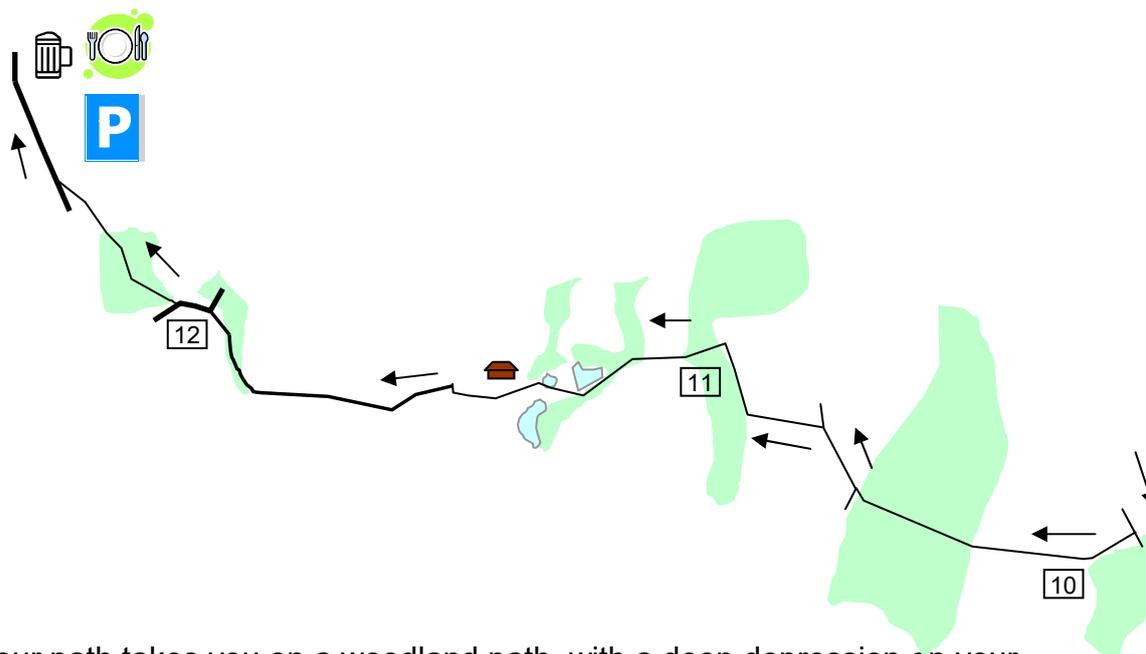
- 7 If you are beginning the walk at the small Temple of the Winds car park at the foot of Blackdown, with your back to the car park, turn **left** on Fernden Lane, going west. (If the lane turns immediately right to become Quell Lane, then you are going the wrong way!) You will be following this quiet lane for 650m. Notice on the way a milestone, as this was once the trunk road between Haslemere and Petworth. Avoid several tempting paths leading off both left and right and stay on the lane until it suddenly bends right. On your left are the gates for Blackdown Park. Go **left** here over a thin stone step (or through the gate, if open). You instantly have terrific views south. Follow the tarmac drive **a short distance** down through the parkland, enjoying the spreading vista.

- 8 In only 80m, you will see a signpost with yellow arrows beside the lane on your right. Fork **right** here across a hayfield, heading for a driveway visible on the other side. Cross the drive and continue ahead in the same direction on a rather unclear path which runs, fairly straight and level, round the hill. You pass on your right a small oak in an enclosure and reach a wooden fence which marks the start of a new vineyard. Go straight on through a makeshift metal gate on a wide grassy path



running between the vineyards. (The one on your left is partly hidden by hawthorn and brambles which yield their own rich harvest in late summer: blackberries!). *The first vines of Blackdown Ridge were planted in 2010; the soil is perfect for white wines similar to those of the Champagne region.* The distant mast just to your right is the relay transmitter on Bexleyhill. Soon you reach a stile on your left.

- 9 Go **left** over the stile and turn immediately **right** so that you are keeping the same general direction, on a gravel track on the other side of the hedge, still between vines. In 70m, before a large wooden gate, fork **right** to an old metal gate, go over a stile beside it and continue your walk in the same direction, once more with vines and a wooden fence on your right. At the end, by an avoidable stile, continue straight ahead. Just before a wood, at a 3-way fingerpost, turn **right** on a wide grassy path with the wood on your left.
- 10 At the next corner, keep ahead between a hedge and a fence on your left. Where the fields end and the fence turns left, go straight ahead past a fingerpost with a yellow marker. Suddenly you are in a dark forest. Keep ahead on a woodland path where the many fallen trees testify to its pristine nature. Finally a 2-plank bridge and a stile by a signpost take you out of the wood. Keep straight ahead on a very wide path between fences, along a line of oaks. At the end of the first meadow on your left, go abruptly **left** at a post with a yellow arrow, passing a small redundant wooden gate, onto another wide path between meadows. At the far side, turn **right** beside the fence. As the fence bends right again, leave it by veering **left** down to a large wooden gate.



- 11 Your path takes you on a woodland path, with a deep depression on your right, and into a meadow. Keep **left** in the meadow, soon entering more woodland and walking along the left-hand bank of a small lake. Veer **right** at the next fingerpost, heading for Lower House Farm with ponds on both sides. Go past the house and some stables on a concrete track and continue direction on a tarmac drive lined with lime trees. Follow the drive to its end where it comes out between two gatepost lions *sejants-rampants*.
- 12 Keep **left** on the lane ahead, ignoring a junction. In 150m, just after a wooden gate into a house and garden, at a *no cycling* sign, fork **right** on a tarmac footpath, an unexpected delight. Your path goes over a stream, runs round the garden of the delightful cottage *Jackett's Hollow*, over the

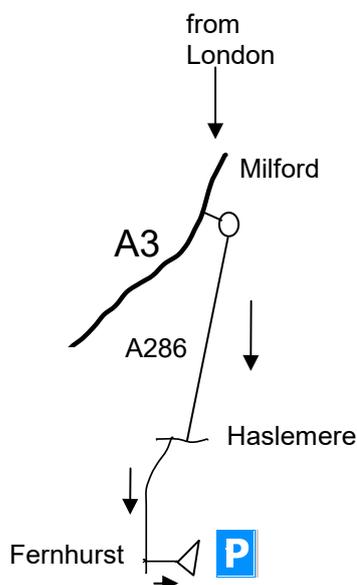
stream again, then over a bridge and past a water garden of a house called *The Bottom*. Continue on the path parallel to the road. Soon you arrive at the Green in Fernhurst, with the *Red Lion* ahead, where the walk began.



The Red Lion (Fullers) is an idyllic pub, loved by everyone, both walkers and villagers. The tables at the front embellish the Green with their colourful umbrellas and provide a delightful spot from where to watch village life go by. There is a garden at the back with a barbecue area. The pub is open all day every day but food is not served between 3pm and 6pm.

Getting there

By car: (see drawing), to get to **Fernhurst, West Sussex**, take the A286 road from Haslemere, following signs to Midhurst. On reaching Fernhurst, turn **left** up to the village green. There is a large car park on the other side of the green next to the cricket green, not far from the *Red Lion*.



One way to get to the **Temple of the Winds** car park is: take the A286 from Haslemere in the direction of Midhurst. About 250m after the *Welcome to West Sussex* sign, turn **left** on Fernden Lane, which is a clear junction but not signposted. The very small car park is just over 4km=2½ miles on the right. It is exactly at the end of Fernden Lane, where the road turns sharp right and becomes Quell Lane.

By bus and train: no. 70 from Haslemere to Fernhurst (**not Sunday**).

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