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

High Hampshire Hangers

Distance: 11 km=7 miles moderate walking with easy level sections

Region: Hampshire Date written: 28-mar-2015

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Refreshments: Froxfield, Hawkley

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

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

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Woodland, meadows, views, wooded hills, hamlets

In Brief

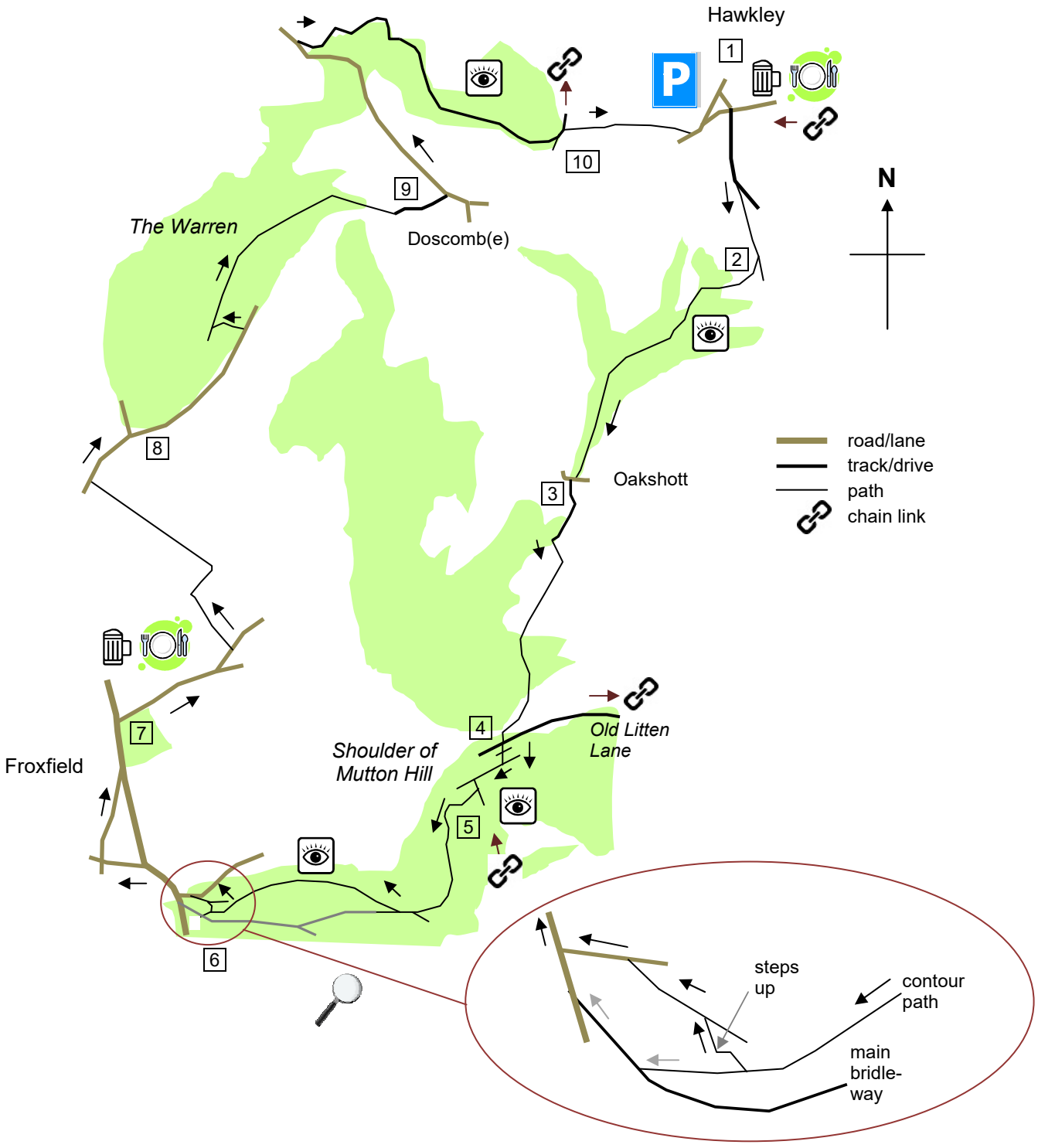
This is a walk to make you fall in love, if you weren't already smitten by the sharp green hills and hidden meadows of East Hampshire. For much of this peaceful hike you will be walking on level paths half way up the side of the densely wooded hills, or *hangers* as they are known. There are some moderate gradients, often assisted by steps, to reach these level paths. Several hamlets make an appearance along the way. At the centre is an excellent pub near the village of Froxfield, open at lunchtime **only on Fri, Sat and Sun** (to book or enquire at *The Trooper*, ring 01730-827293).

There are no nettles to speak of on this walk, so shorts should not be a problem. The paths in the yew forests are always relatively dry but there are sections, especially on the section before Hawkley, which can have shallow mud after rainfall. Fallen trees are a regular nuisance, no real problem though. So boots are always best, although optional in the drier months. The stile count is only moderate and your dog will be able to skip over, under or round them with no problems.

This walk can be combined with the walks *Hawkley and the Hangers, Steep and Steeper* and *Selborne Common and Noar Hill* in a linked chain. Unlike the other Hawkley walk, it goes south of the village, although the starting point is the same.

The walk begins in the village of **Hawkley, Hampshire**, postcode **GU33 6NF**, grid ref 745292, w3w:twinkled.conveying.snail. Park by the Upper Green near the church or, if spaces are in short supply, try a little further along the road. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

Map


Hawkley
1
P
10
9
Doscomb(e)
The Warren
2
N
8
Oakshott
3
road/lane
track/drive
path
chain link
7
Froxfield
4
Old Litten Lane
Shoulder of Mutton Hill
5
6
steps up
contour path
main bridle-way

The Walk

1 Starting in Hawkley, take the side road beside the triangular green with the church on your left. At a road junction, your route is straight over on a tarmac drive for Cheesecombe Farm, marked as a cul-de-sac. *But on your left, down the lane, is the Hawkley Inn, for use now or at the end of the walk, of which more later.* Follow the drive for 200m where you come to a fork. Leave the descending drive by forking **right** here on a level path marked as the Hangers Way (HW). Follow the concrete path to a metal gate and take a narrow earthy path to the **left** of the gate, with the meadow on your right. The path leads you over a stile into a sloping sheep and donkey pasture with great views ahead.

2 Start down the left-hand side and, just before a little shed, veer **right** on a level path across the centre. Go over another stile in the right-hand field boundary, through bushes and into a wild meadow. At a post, as you cross a rivulet, keep left, still on the HW. After a stile, your path runs in a wooded valley with the Oakshott Stream down on your left. It takes you over two bridges and streams with a stile between them, quickly followed by another bridge and stile. The path continues in the valley, now with the stream on your right. Finally you reach the hamlet of Oakshott which is worth a pause and a look around.

3 Cross straight over the lane, just to the left of the entrance to *Middle Oakshott*, on a tarmac drive uphill. In nearly 200m, at the end of the drive after a house, turn **left** on a path between wire fences. This path curves right uphill beside the meadow on your right. After a new swing-gate, your route is straight ahead up a sloping meadow. At the top, whilst regaining your breath, it is worth turning round to admire the view back to Hawkley. After a new swing-gate and a short piece of woodland, your path takes you **left** through another swing-gate. You are on a level path mid-way up the hanger, with steepness left and right – a feature of this walk which will recur again and again. After another swing-gate there is a modest uphill gradient. Near the top, your path turns left at a wooden rail fence in a high horse pasture. Yet another wooden swing-gate takes you to a 3-way fingerpost at a wide crossing track. This is Old Litten Lane, an ancient byway.

Decision point. If you want to take the next **Link** in the **Hampshire Hangers Chain**, turn **left** on the track for nearly 300m to meet a rough track joining from the right, and pick up the *Steep and Steeper* walk at section 5.

4 Ignore the fingerpost and go straight over the track on a very narrow path into the trees [Aug 2024: obstructed by forestry debris: walkers turned **right** along Old Litten Lane, and **left** at a metal gate to reach the wide crossing track, turning **right** to reach Shoulder of Mutton Hill]. Keep straight ahead, going over a narrow crossing path to reach another wide crossing track after only 60m. Turn **right** on this track to reach, in 100m, a sign board for Ashford Hangers. Turn **left** here to a bench on Shoulder-of-Mutton Hill where you have a fine view over to Petersfield and the South Downs. After pausing to admire the view, turn sharp **right** beside the bench into trees on a path downhill, marked with a green arrow as the HW.

The Link from the *Steep and Steeper* walk joins here.

5 Your wide path levels out and drops again more than once with great views left where the foliage permits. Exactly 500m from the start of this path, as it finishes a right curve, you will see a wooden post sharp left (the end of a

wooden fence), and followed shortly by a narrow right fork gently uphill marked by two wooden posts on either side. Fork **right** here on a much narrower path. (This shortcut avoids a long descent to a junction followed by a long ascent.) This nice level path runs along the contour, passing two benches along the way. The slope is steep on both sides and there are places where you need to be extra careful. [2021: in about 600m two fallen trees have blocked the path. But a detour has been made around them. It has a few, properly constructed, steps at each end and a small plaque at each end saying *Duke's Detour*.] After a total of 650m on this contour path you will notice some steps on your right. Turn **right** up these steps. (If you miss these steps, simply continue onwards, down some steps, and turn **right**, back on the main track.)

6 The path zigzags up to the top. Turn **left** here on a narrow crossing path to reach a tarmac lane. Turn **left** on the tarmac lane and **right** on the main road, Stoner Hill. In 100m, fork **left** on a side road (better than the main road) passing *Week Green Farm*, one of the fine houses of Froxfield. In 150m, at a crossroads, turn **right**. In about 150m, as you re-join the main road, use the generous grass verge to reach a junction on your right in 100m or so. This is Honeycritch Lane, the continuation of your route. First, however, you will wish to continue another 50m to reach the *Trooper Inn*.

*The Trooper Inn has had excellent reviews from diners, even from those who have driven here and don't need to replenish their calories as much as us hikers. The pleasant clean interior also has a bar serving snacks and several real ales, including Hop Back, Otter, and Hampshire's own Andwell and Bowman. Note: the Trooper only opens at lunchtime on **Friday, Saturday and Sunday**.*

7 Having turned **right** on Honeycritch Lane (or **left** if returning from the inn), continue to a junction and in 350m take the **left** fork. In 50m, opposite *Honeycritch Cottage*, go **left** on a bridleway, a wide track beside a field on your left. The cottages of Trooper Bottom can be seen down on your left. On entering the next field, your path turns **right**. At the next field junction, wheel **left**, passing a copse on your right. Follow this wide path between fields, passing a copse on your left, and continue straight ahead across the next field on a good path along a line of electricity poles, passing a trig column. At the end, turn **right** on a tarmac lane into the hamlet of Warren Corner.

8 In 200m, at a road junction, take the **right** fork, marked as a cul-de-sac. After passing a large house with an ugly extension, 500m from the fork, look for a Hampshire C.C. sign board on your left for *Ashford Hanger*, a Nature Reserve. [Jul 2026: walkers found the gate locked and had to scramble down a steep slope (care!!!) to reach the path at the bottom; feedback welcome in case there is an alternative way in. If all else fails, stay on the lane.] Turn **left** here into the woods, redolent of wild garlic. The path zigzags down two steps, through a deer-proof fence, down more steps beside a wooden fence, coming down to a level path. Turn **right** on this path [May 2024: negotiating several fallen trees]. It runs along the contour under beeches which soon change to yews, and through another large metal gate. After ½ km on this pleasant path, the woodland lightens and lush farmland comes into view on your left. After you pass another sign board for the Nature Reserve, duck under (or squeeze round) a wooden barrier if it is locked. (These barriers were erected to keep out motor vehicles in years past.) Continue straight ahead on a sunken path, passing another barrier. Keep ahead on

a drive beside a house named *Doscombe* to come out onto a tarmac lane by a small pond in the hamlet of Doscomb(e).

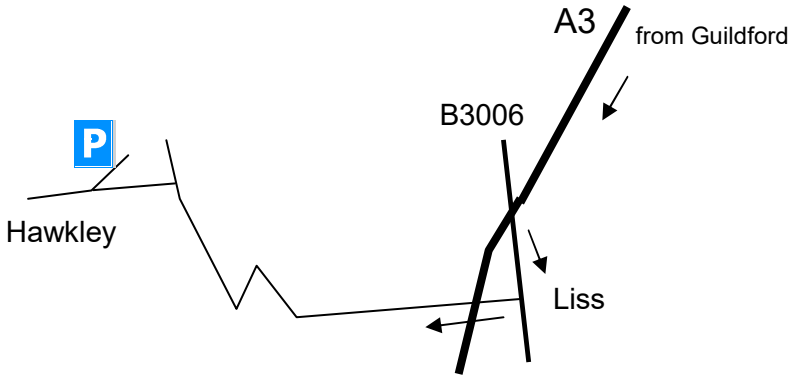
9 Turn **left** on this quiet lane. After a field on your right the lane rises quite steeply and you may feel relieved to reach the top after 700m in total. Here, turn very sharp **right** at a fingerpost on a bridleway. Follow this narrow level winding woodland path. In 400m, your path emerges from the wood and runs beside a field on your left and turns **left** in the corner. Just after the corner, your path turns **right** into bushes. You are now on another level woodland path. There is some mud here after rain or in the wetter months, but it is generally skippable and it does clear. Doscomb(e) is visible again in the valley together with the Oakshott Stream. After 600m, the bridleway is joined by a track from the right and, 50m after, you come to a 3-way fingerpost.

Decision point. If you want to take the next **Link** in the **Hampshire Hangers Chain**, keep straight ahead on the track and pick up the *Hawkley and the Hangers* walk at section 2. However, for refreshments, the *Hawkley Inn* is close by in the village (turn right), one of the celebrated pubs in the area.

10 Turn **right** at the fingerpost and follow a path along the left-hand side of a field, followed by a concrete drive, a bank of primroses (in spring) and a "black cat", leading to a road. Turn **left** back to Hawkley where the walk began. The *Hawkley Inn* is found by forking **right** at the green. *For more about the village and this notable pub, see the walk "Hawkley and the Hangers" in this series.*

Getting there

By car: Hawkley is easy to reach from the A3 road. To get there from the direction of London or Guildford, follow the A3 about 5 miles beyond Liphook, as far as the big roundabout at a diagonal intersection with the B3006 road. Fork **left** at the roundabout signposted *Liss*. In 0.6 mile, immediately after the *Spread Eagle* pub, turn **right** at a brown tourist sign and an old signpost for *Hawkley*. In 2 miles, at a 3-way signpost, turn **left** in the direction of *Village Centre, Upper Green*. At the green turn **right** and park near the church.



Starting in Froxfield near the pub is also possible. You cannot really use the pub car park but there are spaces in Honeycritch Lane, 50m before the pub. Set your navigator to **GU32 1BD**. The best way from the A3 road is towards Petersfield Centre at the A272 **Winchester** exit and **left** at the first roundabout, looping back over the A3.

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