

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| 1 st walk check | 2 nd walk check | 3 rd walk check | |
| 9 June 2007 | 29 Sept 07 | | |
| Current status | Document last updated: 5 Oct 2007 | | |
| <p>This document and information herein are copyrighted to Saturday Walkers' Club. If you are interested in printing or displaying any of this material, Saturday Walkers' Club grants permission to use, copy, and distribute this document delivered from this World Wide Web server with the following conditions:</p> <p>* The document will not be edited or abridged, and the material will be produced exactly as it appears. Modification of the material or use of it for any other purpose is a violation of our copyright and other proprietary rights.</p> <p>* Reproduction of this document is for free distribution and will not be sold.</p> <p>* This permission is granted for a one-time distribution.</p> <p>* All copies, links, or pages of the documents must carry the following copyright notice and this permission notice: Saturday Walkers' Club, Copyright © 2007, used with permission. www.walkingclub.org.uk</p> | | | |
| The publisher cannot accept responsibility for any problems encountered by readers. | | | |

Holmwood to Reigate

Via Leigh, Surrey

Length 13.0 km (8 miles). Three hours 15 minutes walking time. For the whole outing including trains and meals allow 7 hours.

Maps OS Landranger Map No 187. Explorer Map No 146. Holmwood, map ref TQ 175438 is in Surrey, 6 km south of Dorking. Reigate is in Surrey near Redhill.

Toughness 2 out of 10.

Features

This walk in the Low Weald of Surrey in the Mole Valley provides broad paths through gently undulating country with glimpses of the North Downs ridge to the North. In the morning the walk passes through Hammond's Copse Nature Reserve, an ancient semi-natural woodland, with a wide variety of bird-life. The lunch stop is in the attractive village of Leigh with its village green, pub and church. In the afternoon the walk crosses the Mole at Flanchford Bridge and then rises on the Greensand ridge near Reigate Priory to give extensive views of the North Downs and on a clear day down to the South Downs near Devil's Dyke.

Shortening the walk

You could order a taxi at the Plough in Leigh and go to Reigate station. There is one bus on weekdays at 12.50 from Leigh (The Glebe) to Reigate. There are no buses on Saturday or Sunday.

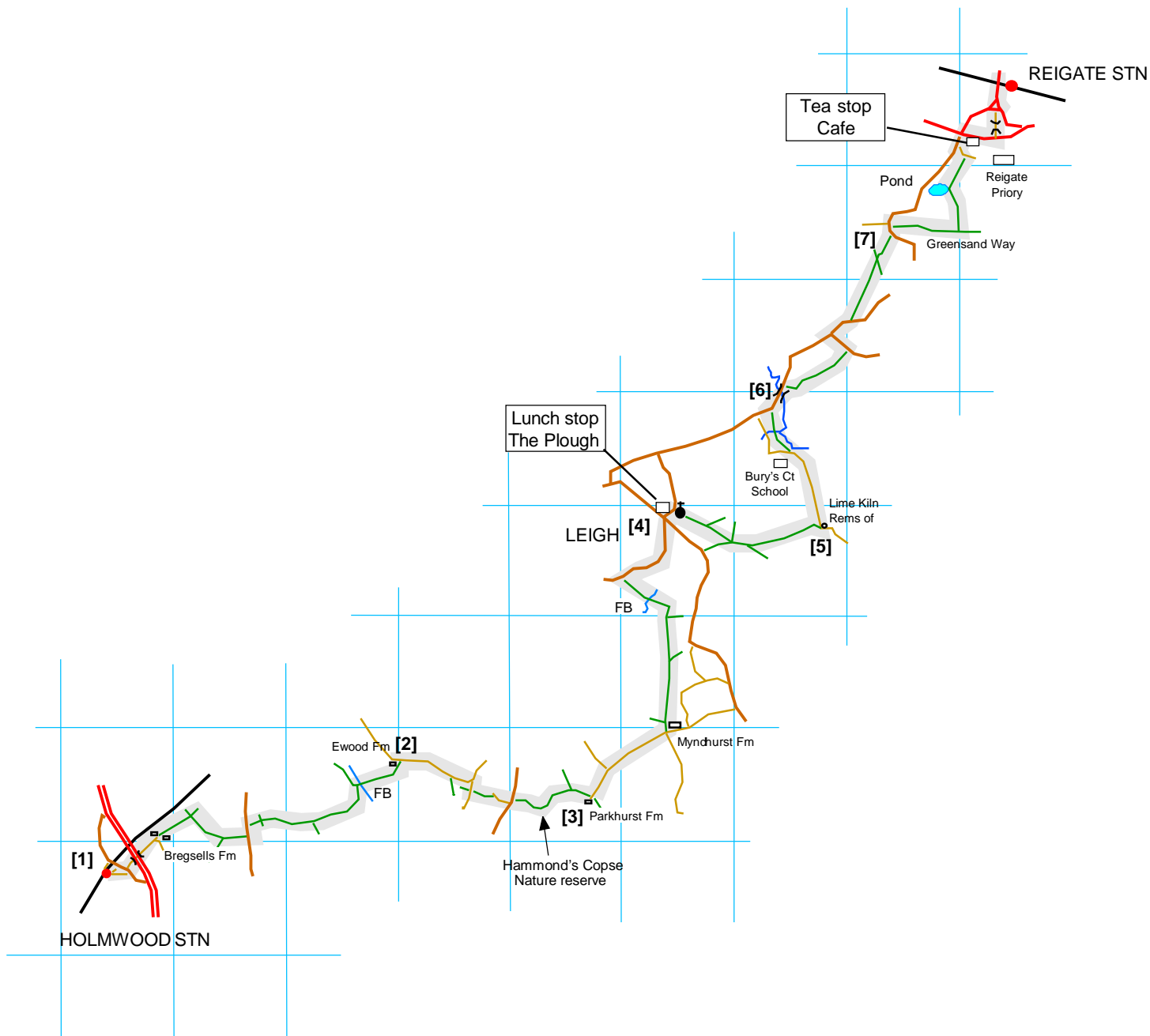
Saturday Walkers Club

Take the train nearest to **9.30 am** (before or after) from Victoria Station via **Dorking Main line** to **Holmwood**. Trains back from **Reigate** run once or twice an hour, changing at **Redhill**. *There are no trains or buses to Holmwood on Sundays so this is definitely a Saturday walk.*

Lunch The recommended lunchtime pub is the **Plough** in Leigh (01737 832149), which has an attractive patio and serves excellent home-cooked food. Large groups are advised to phone ahead and book.

Tea The suggested tea place is **Café Puccino's**, 65 High Street Reigate (01737 249 000), which offers toasted teacakes and home-made cakes. There are many alternatives including Café Rouge. The station is a 10 minute walk from the town centre.

WALK MAP



WALK DIRECTIONS

Holmwood to Ewood Farm

[1] [Numbers refer to the map.] Coming off the train from London, walk up the steps at the London end of the platform to the road and turn right, your direction 120 degrees. In 60 metres cross the road and turn left into Bregsell's Drive, signposted public bridleway towards Bregsell's Farm, your direction 45 degrees. After 150 metres pass underneath the A24, then after a further 150 metres ignore a track off to the right. In a further 20 metres ignore a footpath to the left and continue between farm buildings until you reach a metal field gate.

Pass through this gate into a field, your direction 60 degrees, with the railway on the left-hand side and a hedge on your right. Continue through fields for 350 metres to a metal gate where you turn immediately right over a stile following a yellow footpath sign, your direction 130 degrees, towards an electricity pole on the horizon. The path is not clearly defined. Bear slightly to the right of the power pylon and on the far side of the field cross over the remains of a stile and turn half left, your direction 110 degrees. There is a large water trough on your left-hand side. This area can be muddy.

Cross the field towards a three-armed footpath sign and go through the remains of a gate. Turn half left, your direction 80 degrees and follow the field edge with the hedge on your left-hand side. After 100 metres [*and 100 metres before the end of the field!*] cross over a stile on your left-hand side and turn right to continue in the same direction as before with the hedge now on your right-hand side. Cross over a stile and a footbridge over the ditch and on reaching the road turn left.

In 70 metres turn right on to a public footpath, go through a metal field-gate and proceed with the hedge on your left-hand side, your direction 70 degrees. After 125 metres ignore a stile on your left-hand side and continue round the edge of the field with the hedge and trees on your left-hand side, your direction now 110 degrees. Follow the meandering field boundary for 500 metres keeping the hedge and ditch on your left-hand side. After a time the hedge peters out but the ditch indicates the field boundary.

As you approach Brook Copse go through a gap in the hedge with a large oak tree on your right-hand side, follow the path round to the right and in 10 metres you come to a three-armed signpost where you turn left, your direction 70 degrees. Follow the path as it meanders through the copse for 300 metres. On your right you will see a tall post and a police dog training area. Turn left at a two-armed signpost. As you emerge from a copse into an open field carry straight on, your direction 50 degrees, with the field boundary on your left-hand side and pass under another mini-pylon. At a singular post follow the path turning half left, your direction 350 degrees.

At a three-armed post turn right, crossing over a concrete bridge over a stream and go through a metal field gate. Proceed with the field boundary on your left-hand side ignoring a gate on the left, your direction 80 degrees. In 450 metres as you approach Ewood Farm there is a duck pond on your right-hand side.

Ewood Farm to Parkhouse Farm

[2] Pass to the right of the farm buildings, and join the driveway of Ewood old

farmhouse and turn half right on the tarred drive, your direction 110 degrees. Follow the road for 700m, passing Orchard Cottages on your left-hand side and Croft Cottage on your right-hand side.

At the end of Ewood Lane turn right into Mill Lane, your direction 190 degrees, and after 100 metres turn left on to a bridleway, your direction 110 degrees. After 300 metres emerge on to a private driveway and continue in the same direction. At the road cross over, slightly to your left, into Hammond's Copse. The copse is a nature reserve with bluebells in spring and migrant chiffchaffs and blackcaps. All is revealed on an interesting poster as you enter the copse. Follow the main path straight ahead, your direction initially 110 degrees, ignoring ways off to your right, unless you wish to fully explore this interesting woodland.

After 550 metres you come to the edge of the copse where you proceed through a gate following the blue bridleway sign round to the right, your direction 120 degrees. In 250 metres you come to Parkhouse Farm where you turn left on to the concrete driveway, your direction 30 degrees.

Parkhouse Farm to Leigh

[3] Follow this concrete road for 900 metres and then just before the farm buildings, at a four-way footpath sign, cross over a stile on your left-hand side and head towards another footpath sign to the left of an oak tree, your direction 320 degrees. Cross the stile and over a chalk track and immediately cross over an electric fence protected by a blue plastic pipe. Cross the field heading just to the left of the large oak tree in the middle, your direction 360 degrees. The exit is over the brow of the field in the top right hand corner.

Cross over the stile and follow the broad track into the woods. This broad track can become very muddy but a dry path runs parallel to it just inside the woods to your right. So in 200 metres turn right at the signpost into the wood *and immediately left* to follow the unofficial path just inside the wood for 150 metres, your direction 340 degrees, where you can get back on to the board track again having avoided the mud.

The broad track emerges into an open field with woods on your left-hand side. After 250 metres and at the edge of the field continue straight on through a gap in the hedge ignoring a footpath off to your right. In a further 100 metres turn left and follow the rather indistinct path across the field towards an isolated tree, your direction 290 degrees. At the edge of a field follow a footpath sign into a wood with a tumble-down building on your left-hand side. Cross over a stile and over the remains of the old Hammer Bridge. At the road turn right and follow the road for 900 metres to the Plough Inn, the recommended lunchtime stop.

Leigh to Limekiln

[4] Coming out of the pub, cross over the road, turn half left, and enter the churchyard by the footpath sign, following the footpath around through the churchyard to the right of the church. Leave the churchyard by an old metal gate and walk along a path with a fence on your right-hand side. Cross over a stile and walk across the middle of a field, your direction 120 degrees. Cross over a footbridge, cross over a stile, and ignore the obvious path across the field and walk along the right-hand side of the field with the hedge on your right-hand side, your direction 120 degrees.

After 275 metres cross over a stile and join a broad track where you turn left, your direction 90 degrees. Pass through a wooden gate and continue straight on, following the blue bridleway sign. After 150 metres ignore a footpath half right and continue with the field boundary on your left-hand side. Pass through a metal gate and continue with a wood on your right-hand side, your direction 80 degrees. On your left there are distant views to the North Downs and Betchworth Quarry.

Walk through an avenue of poplar trees following the path half right to a three-armed footpath sign. Here turn a very sharp left on to a broad earth track, your direction 320 degrees, but before you go on just cross over the track and to the left of a very old oak you will find the remains of a limekiln. This was used to make lime to fertilise the fields and probably used chalk from the nearby Betchworth Quarry.

Limekiln to Park Lane

[5] From the limekiln return to the broad earth track and continue, your direction 320 degrees. The earth track soon becomes a concrete road. Proceed through a metal field gate, with a stile on the left-hand side and continue along the road for 500 metres passing a brick-built keeper's cottage on your left-hand side. Looking back on your left-hand side is Bury's Court School, built by the Charrington family.

Just after the school the road veers to the left. Leave the road, cross over a stile and take the footpath on your right-hand side. The river Mole is visible through the trees down to your right. After 120 metres pass through a gap in the hedge and turn half right, following a footpath sign. Cross over the stream on a footbridge and continue straight on. Leave the field to the right of a large oak tree, cross over a stile, and at the road turn right. Cross over the river Mole on Flanchford Bridge **[6]** and in 20 metres turn right by a public footpath sign on to a wide gravel track. After 90 metres turn left by a public footpath sign in front of an old WWII pill-box and cross a field, your direction 45 degrees. Continue on a broad grassy path with farm buildings on your left-hand side for 250 metres, then cross over a farm track and continue in the same direction into the next field, with the field boundary on your left-hand side. After 350 metres emerge on to the road with a cottage on your right and turn left. Where the road bears left, turn right into Clayhall Lane.

After 200 metres turn left and cross a stile into a field by a public footpath sign, your direction 20 degrees. At the edge of the field continue straight on through a gap in the hedge into the next field and towards a footpath sign. At the edge of the field go through a wooden kissing gate and continue in more or less the same direction up a gravel driveway with a house on your right-hand side and a lawn on your left-hand side. Turn right at Quince Cottage and walk past a garage on your left-hand side and through the remains of a gate to a footpath which leads uphill, your direction 30 degrees.

Park Lane to Reigate Station

[7] At the road turn left and in 100 metres turn sharp right by the Greensand Way

marker to go up a steep path with wooden steps. At the top of the steps turn left to climb up through the wood, your direction 90 degrees. At the top of the hill, turn left at an unmarked T-junction and follow the path round to the right, your direction 90 degrees again. When you emerge onto a more open area, continue in the same direction on a broad green ridge for 400 metres. Where there is a slight dip in the ridge turn left down a steep unsigned path to the woods below. Continue downhill, crossing another path, until you reach the playing fields.

Once in the open turn half left towards the pond, your direction 300 degrees. Near the pond, turn right onto a gravel path and follow this round to the left over a small humpback bridge to a place where you can feed the ducks. Once you have done so, retrace your steps but just before the humpback bridge turn left and walk across the grass towards the town, your direction 45 degrees. Once you are over a slight rise in the ground aim for a large yellow vehicle barrier at the edge of the park. At the barrier turn left and follow the driveway out of the park passing between two tall brick pillars with stone pineapples on top. Follow the road round to the right and walk uphill towards the main road. At the main road turn right and you soon come to Café Puccino's on your right-hand side at 65 High Street, the suggested afternoon tea stop.

It is about 800m (0.5 miles) to the station so allow 15 minutes to catch your train. Coming out of the café turn right and walk down the high street towards the Old Town Hall built 1729 in the middle of the high street. Just beyond the Old Town Hall turn left by Café Rouge and go through the pedestrian tunnel under the grounds of Reigate Castle. Continue towards the roundabout and cross over two pedestrian crossings past Dame Margot Fonteyn's statue to continue north towards the station.

Ignore the path to the right just before the railway line and go over the level crossing, turning right into Holmesdale Road. To get to the platform, do not go up to the ticket office (which is usually closed) but turn right through a gate 30 metres along the road. Take the first train to Redhill and change there for London Victoria or London Bridge.

History

Part of the ancient Manor of Dorking, **Holmwood Common** was owned by King Harold before the Norman Conquest. After Harold's death it passed to William the Conqueror. After the Norman Conquest, farming became established in the surrounding areas but Holmwood Common was too swampy. It was not enclosed but left to become wild and inaccessible. In 1755, a toll road was built across the common, linking Horsham and Dorking. Despite this improvement, the area remained notorious for sheep stealing, smuggling, thieving and highwaymen.

St Bartholomew's, Leigh is a 15C church built on the site of an earlier church dating back to 1121 AD.

Remains of **limekiln** are similar to the larger limekiln works at Brockham where the chalk was burned to produce quick-lime, used to make mortar and fertilisers.

Bury's Court was completed in 1876 as a home for Edward and Georgiana Charrington. The successful **Charrington** brewery in the East End of London had made Edward a very wealthy man. He designed the traditional Victorian front of the building and Georgiana designed the gable-ended section at the rear. In 1930, a Miss Sheard founded Bury's Court Girls' School with the motto 'Learn to Live'. In 1939 it was taken over by Lloyds Insurance, then in 1946 Bury's Court opened as a hotel. In 1952 it was sold out of the family for the first time, to Kenneth Farnsworth, who opened **Bury's Court Preparatory School for Boys** in September of that year.

Reigate Priory, a Grade I listed building, is set in 65 acres of parkland, with gardens, lake and waterfowl and playing fields. The Priory was originally founded before 1200 and was converted to a mansion in Tudor times following the Dissolution of the Monasteries. In June 1541 Henry VIII granted the Manor and Priory of Reigate to Lord William Howard, uncle of Catherine Howard, Henry's fifth wife. Today the buildings contain a school and a small museum open Easter to October 2.00–4.30 pm Wednesday and Saturday.