

Main walk last checked	Pub diversion last checked	Westhumble Circular last checked	Dorking ending last checked
19 November 2020	19 November 2020	23 November 2020	19 November 2020
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Effingham to Westhumble

Polesden Lacey and England's largest vineyard

Length:	Main walk	15.2km (9.4 miles)
	Pub lunch in Effingham	adds 1.7km (1.1 miles)
	Ending in Dorking	adds 1.1km (0.7 miles)
	Westhumble Circular	13.3km (8.2 miles)

Toughness: 4 out of 10

Maps: OS Explorer 146, OS Landranger 187

Features

The idyllic estate of Polesden Lacey is the highlight of this walk, a fine country house nestling in a landscape of hidden valleys, pretty woodland, and gentle pasture. It also has a finish along the North Downs escarpment, with extensive views, and a visit to England's largest vineyard. The walk has something to offer at almost any time of the year. In late April and early May there are a couple of bluebell woods towards the end of the walk, in autumn there is plenty of golden colour in the woodlands, and in summer the walk offers several spots for a picnic, and - despite being relatively close to London - a deep rural tranquility. The long evenings also make this the best time to come if you want to also make a detailed visit in the afternoon to the house and grounds at Polesden Lacey itself.

Walk options

There are two **minor variations** possible for the main walk.

- One takes you to the **Sir Douglas Haig pub** in Effingham, 4.3km (2.6 miles) into the walk, and was created to provide a pub lunch option for the walk. However this pub is currently (November 2020) **closed and boarded up**. The site is due to be redeveloped and a "pub or restaurant" was due to be part of this, but how this has been affected by the Covid pandemic is not clear. This diversion adds **1.7km (1.1 miles)** to the walk length.

- You can also **finish at Dorking station** (which has more frequent trains than Box Hill & Westhumble station), adding **1.1km (0.7 miles)** to the walk.

The directions also contain a **Westhumble Circular** option, starting from Box Hill & Westhumble station and getting you to Polesden Lacey in just 5.5km (3.4 miles). This is ideal if you want to spend more time visiting the house and gardens, and introduces a quiet valley not traversed by the main walk. After Polesden Lacey you rejoin the main walk route to get back to Box Hill & Westhumble station, making a total circular walk of **13.3km (8.2 miles)**. To do this option start paragraph 57 on page 6: *if doing this option you **don't** need to print pages 3 to 5.*

Transport

For the **main walk** two trains an hour run from **London Waterloo** to **Effingham Junction** daily (fastest journey time: 38 minutes). Take **the train nearest to 10am** from Waterloo to get to lunch at the right time, though an hour later is OK if you plan to eat at the Sir Douglas Haig. Buy a **day return to Effingham Junction**. You will then need to buy a single for the short distance from Box Hill & Westhumble or Dorking to Leatherhead on the return journey.

For the **Westhumble Circular**, take the train nearest 10.30am from **Victoria** to **Box Hill & Westhumble** station.

One train an hour (two on Sundays) returns from Box Hill & Westhumble to Victoria (journey time: 56 minutes): change at Epsom for Waterloo. Trains from Dorking are much more frequent - usually at least two an hour to Victoria and two to Waterloo, both taking around 55 minutes.

Lunch & tea

Granary Cafe, Polesden Lacey (01372 452048). 7.4km (4.6 miles) into the main walk or 5.5km/3.4 miles into the circular walk from Westhumble, this self-service National Trust eatery is currently the only lunch stop on both the main walk and the Westhumble Circular walk. It serves hot meals from 12-3pm and tea and cakes all day to 4pm November to February and 5pm at other times.

Sir Douglas Haig (01372 456886) in Effingham village, 4.2km (2.6 miles) into the main walk via a special diversion, used to be a possible lunch pub for the main walk, but is currently (November 2020) **closed and boarded up**. The site is to be redeveloped, with plans for a "pub or restaurant" as part of that, but how this has been affected by the Covid pandemic remains to be seen.

Denbies Wine Estate Conservatory Restaurant (01306 876616, www.denbies.co.uk). There's a spectacular glass roof over this self-service restaurant, which makes an excellent tea stop at the end of the walk. It is open till 5pm daily from April to October, 4.30pm November to March

Pilgrim Cycles The Old Booking Hall, Box Hill & Westhumble Station, (01306 886958 www.pilgrim-cycles.co.uk). This cycle shop on Box Hill station also has a cafe. It is open till 5pm Monday to Saturday and 4pm Sunday, but may stay open later than the stated times for groups who phone in advance.

The **Stepping Stones** (01306 889932, www.steppingstonesdorking.com), 400 metres beyond Box Hill and Westhumble station, is a comfortable pub which also has a garden.

Picnic: Several good places in the environs of Polesden Lacey are highlighted in the walk directions (eg in paragraph 105 on the main walk route and paragraphs 79, 94 and 96 on the Westhumble circular). The escarpment on Ranmore Common (paragraph 117) is also a wonderful place to have a picnic tea.

WALK DIRECTIONS

For the **Westhumble Circular** walk go to paragraph 57 on page 6.

Effingham Junction to Great Ridings Wood (2.7km/1.7 miles)

1 Leaving platform 2 at Effingham Junction station, climb the stairs and turn right on the road.

2 In 50 metres, ignore a road to the right (the entrance to the station car park, which is also signposted as a public bridleway).

3 In 40 metres more, where the pavement on the right-hand side of the road ends, fork right through wooden posts, emerging in 20 metres into the open space of **Effingham Common**. Keep straight ahead along the edge of

the common, with a line of trees to your right.

- 4 In 170 metres, about 80 metres before you get to the far end of the common and 20 metres before the tree line to your right appears to end, turn left up a grassy path that cuts across a corner of the common.
- 5 After 150 metres the path converges with the edge of the common to your right. Carry on along this boundary, keeping to the wood edge, slowly curving to the right up a narrowing neck of the common.
- 6 In 300 metres, at the top of the neck, cross a ditch on a plank bridge (or via the metal cattle grid to its right) into a large open area. Here go straight on up a grassy path passing to the left (or right) of a clump of trees around a pond in 20 metres and then on up the centre of the open space. You are aiming for the apex (top right-hand corner) of the open space.
- 7 In 400 metres, when you get there, pass through a line of wooden posts and cross a lane. Take the **left-most** of two paths into the woods (themselves to the left of a gravel drive), a signposted bridleway. This path soon curves left into the heart of the woods.

It is commonly assumed that England is a lot less wooded than it used to be. In fact, the last 150 years or so has seen many former farmed areas and commons revert to woodland as traditional methods of countryside management die out.

The wood you are passing through - **Great Ridings Wood** - is a fine example. Though it looks like ancient English woodland, it was all cultivated arable land as recently as the 1770s. The bridleway through the wood - **Old London Road** - was, as its name suggests, once the main road to London.

- 8 Ignore all ways off. In 700 metres there is a (somewhat decaying) mossy stone wall along the right-hand edge of the bridleway, which veers slightly to the left along it.
- 9 In 200 metres more, at the top of a small rise you come to a three-way junction of car-wide bridleways (actually a crossroads, if the way

through locked wooden gates to the right is counted).

- At this point for **diversion to the Sir Douglas Haig pub**, *turn left* and continue with the directions in paragraph 10 below, *but note that currently (November 2020) this pub is **closed and awaiting redevelopment** (which may still include a pub or restaurant).*
- **To continue on the main walk**, keep straight on at this junction, along a car-wide bridleway and continue with the directions in paragraph 27 on page 4.

Great Ridings Wood to Effingham (1.6km/1 mile)

*This route was created to provide a diversion to the **Sir Douglas Haig** in Effingham village, but this is currently **closed and awaiting redevelopment**.*

- 10 Having turned left at the three-way junction, follow a car-wide bridleway away from the gates marked private. This soon starts to go downhill.
- 11 In 300 metres you emerge from the wood, with a field to the left, and in 70 metres more come to a tarmac road, where you go straight on.
- 12 You can follow this road all the way to the Sir Douglas Haig pub in Effingham, but a prettier route is to turn right up footpath signposted to the right in 300 metres, at the top of a rise in the road and at the far end of a small lay-by.
- 13 This path initially goes up the driveway to a house, but in 15 metres turns left, following a yellow footpath arrow, into an alley between two garden fences.
- 14 Follow this for 250 metres between gardens and then out onto a path between fields.
- 15 In another 80 metres you emerge into a larger open field, which you cross diagonally. If the path is not clear, head towards a large red house with two chimneys, which is to the right of more modern houses.
- 16 In 220 metres, in the far corner of this field, pass through a gap and go left along a path between gardens.
- 17 In 30 metres this becomes a tarmac driveway and in 70 metres brings you to a road, with a parade of shops to

the right. This is the village of **Effingham**. Turn left along the road.

- 18** In 250 metres on the right is the **Sir Douglas Haig**, the lunchtime pub.

Continue with the directions in the next section.

Effingham to the golf course (1.6km/1 mile)

- 19** Coming out of the pub, turn left to retrace your steps slightly uphill.
- 20** In 250 metres, just before the parade of shops on the right, and just beyond a private residential road to the right, go right up a tarmac driveway, reversing the way you came into the village.
- 21** In 70 metres, where the tarmac ends, keep to the right of a brick wall up a path. In 30 metres ignore a way into a field to the right and keep straight on up a grassy path.
- 22** Stay on this path, which has hedges and fields on either side, for 600 metres until it emerges into an open field.
- 23** Carry straight on across this field, heading for its far left-hand corner.
- 24** In 170 metres, when you reach the far corner, turn left through the field boundary and then right on a track.
- 25** Keep straight on and in 350 metres, **10 metres before you come to the main road**, the A246, turn right up a path running parallel to the road, with a wooden fence to the right and a line of trees to the left.
- 26** In 100 metres you emerge onto the A246 next to a house called "The Beeches". Cross the road with care, and go through a wooden gate to the right of a driveway with a metal fieldgate, a signposted public footpath.

You now continue with paragraph 30 opposite.

Great Ridings Wood to the golf course (1.5km/0.9 miles)

*This is the **main walk** route **avoiding** the **Sir Douglas Haig** pub in Effingham village.*

- 27** Keeping straight ahead at the three-way junction in paragraph 9, in 700 metres, after a gentle descent and a

long gentle climb, you come to a residential road, Calvert Road. Turn right on this.

- 28** In 400 metres you come to a main road, the A246. Turn left along this, following the pavement on its left-hand side.
- 29** In 400 metres, at the top of a hill, you pass a house called The Spinney to the left, and just beyond that a telegraph pole. 10 metres beyond the telegraph pole, by the entrance to a house called The Beeches, cross the road and go through a wooden gate to the right of a driveway with a metal fieldgate.

Continue with the directions in the next paragraph.

The golf course to Polesden Lacey (3.2km/2 miles)

- 30** Follow a fenced-off path down the left-hand side of the field. In 60 metres pass through a gate to the right of a concrete block building.
- 31** Carry on around the back of the building to emerge in 20 metres onto a golf course, with an artificial lake to your left.
- 32** Go straight ahead across the golf fairway ahead of you, your direction 150 degrees, aiming for a wooden footpath signpost in 120 metres on the far side. (Watch out for flying golf balls on the fairway.)
- 33** At the signpost keep straight on to pass through a gap at the far corner of the field in another 50 metres.
- 34** Veer slightly left across the corner of the next field, your direction 140 degrees.
- 35** In 120 metres **pass through a very small and inconspicuous gap** in the hedge (with a footpath signpost, but this is currently part fallen over), descending a small bank to the next field.
- 36** Your onward way is now half right across this field, heading for a footpath sign to the left of a clump of trees at the top of the hill, your direction 130 degrees.
- 37** In 120 metres, when you get to the sign, carry straight on over a raised golf tee. Beyond take a faint path across an area of rough grass, your direction still 130 degrees, **heading for a wooden hut** you can see before

a wood 170 metres away, just behind another golf tee.

- 38** The onward path, **very easy to miss**, is a grassy path straight into the wood, 15 metres to the left of the wooden hut.
- 39** 20 metres into the wood, **fork left on a path that stays inside the wood** (while the right fork soon takes you out of it and onto the golf course again).
- 40** In 80 metres cross a track, still in the wood.
- 41** In 40 metres more emerge onto another golf fairway. Keep straight on across this, your direction 60 degrees, heading for a footpath post on the far side to the left-hand edge of a hedgerow.
- 42** In 70 metres, when you get to the post, veer right to pass around the right-hand corner of an evergreen garden hedge in 20 metres and go through a wooden gate to the right of a fieldgate.
- 43** Beyond, keep straight on down a grassy strip with the garden hedge to your left. In 50 metres this becomes a track.
- 44** In 80 metres pass through a wooden kissing gate to the right of a fieldgate. In 20 metres more cross a road and go on up a car-wide path through a wooded strip.
- 45** In 30 metres, at a T-junction, turn left. In 20 metres more turn right up a fenced path on the right-hand edge of a field, ignoring a path straight ahead under trees.
- (There are extensive views to your left, which on a very clear day include the Shard and the towers of the City of London on a bearing of about 30 degrees, and later on a broad sweep of London around to Heathrow airport.)*
- 46** In 400 metres, at the far end of this field, turn right on a road.
- 47** In 10 metres turn left up a tarmac driveway to High Barn, which soon becomes a broad path with a hedge left and wooden fence right. In 50 metres it enters a wood.
- 48** In 250 metres more ignore a metal kissing gate to the left.
- 49** In 200 metres more, at a footpath crossroads, with the end of the wood

visible ahead, **go left** through a wooden gate onto a path just inside the woods.

- 50** In 250 metres turn right through a kissing gate into a large field and turn left along the wood boundary.
- 51** In another 250 metres pass through a wooden gate and turn right onto a broad path, with a wire fence now to your right.
- 52** In 200 metres go around a wooden barrier, straight on across a track, and through a gate to the right of a double metal fieldgate into a field. Follow a track as it curves right and then left around the corner of this field, and then carries on down its right-hand side, heading towards a white house ahead.
- 53** In 180 metres, this brings you to a tarmac lane just before the white house, one of the outbuildings of **Polesden Lacey**.
- **If you are not planning to visit the house or stop for lunch or tea there**, *turn right* on this lane, downhill towards a covered bridge with a thatched roof. Continue with paragraph 101 on page 8.
- 54** **For lunch or tea at Polesden Lacey**, or to visit the house and gardens, *turn left* on the tarmac lane.

Polesden Lacey was built in 1821, but it was in the Edwardian period that it really came into its own. Between 1906 and 1909 it was taken over and extensively rebuilt by Mrs Ronald Greville, a society hostess, and was the scene of many glamorous house parties. King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, mother of the present queen, spent part of their honeymoon there in 1923.

Now lovingly preserved by the National Trust, the real appeal of the house today is its stunning location on the crest of a hidden valley of the North Downs (there are fine views from the gardens), and the pastoral tranquility of the estate.

Both the house and gardens are open till 5pm February to October and till 4pm November to January

- 55** In 30 metres ignore a private driveway through a fieldgate to the right, but in 10 metres more turn right through a wooden gate into a car park. Keep to

its right-hand edge.

- 56** In 200 metres you come to the visitor entrance to **Polesden Lacey**, a blue wood-sided building on your right. There is a cafe - the Cowshed Coffee Shop - in this building, but the **recommended lunch or tea stop** is to the right in the courtyard of the white building you see ahead of you - the **Granary Cafe**, a self-service restaurant. It is possible to visit this without paying to go into the house or gardens.

After lunch or tea, continue with paragraph 99 on page 8.

Box Hill station to Polesden Lacey (5.5km/3.4 miles)

*This is the start of the **Westhumble circular** walk.*

- 57** From platform 2 on Box Hill & Westhumble station (the one you arrive at when coming from London), do NOT go up the metal footbridge over the railway lines, but instead go up the concrete steps to the right of it, following a white wooden fence for 30 metres to the road.
- 58** Turn left on the road, over a brick bridge.
- 59** After the bridge, ignore a road and two driveways forking right, one through an ornamental arch, and keep on uphill along the road.
- 60** 30 metres later, where the pavement on the left-hand side of the road ends, veer left onto a tarmac path parallel to the road.
- 61** In 120 metres, where this comes to an end, rejoin the road, ignoring a private road turning to the left called Pilgrims Way. Keep straight on, taking care of traffic on this narrow road.
- 62** Ignore driveways and roads left and right until in 300 metres there is a field to your left. Here fork left uphill on a footpath between wire fences.
- 63** In 200 metres you come to a tarmac road, where you go left uphill.
- 64** In 300 metres, just before the road curves sharp left, go straight ahead up a signposted public footpath along a field edge.
- 65** In 25 metres go right through a kissing gate into the field. Keep straight on
- across it, following a line of mini pylons. (*Turn around for a fine view of Box Hill across the valley.*)
- 66** In 250 metres, at the end of the field, curve left to pass through a kissing gate to the left of a metal fieldgate.
- 67** Carry on along a path with a field to the right and a wood to the left.
- 68** In 250 metres pass through another kissing gate and keep on along the right-hand edge of a field.
- 69** In another 250 metres pass through a kissing gate and turn right downhill on a road.
- 70** In 150 metres you come to a road T-junction, where you go left, following a sign to Polesden Lacey. Take care on this road which though quiet sometimes has quite fast traffic.
- 71** In 500 metres ignore a driveway between black metal fences left, but in 40 metres more, just before a signposted bridleway to the right, turn left up a track leading to Badgen Farm.
- 72** In 20 metres this curves right, and in 20 metres more you pass a National Trust sign for Polesden Lacey.
- 73** 40 metres later you pass a house on your right. In 60 metres more, just beyond a complex of old farm buildings, turn right up a footpath.
- 74** In 50 metres pass through a wooden gate to emerge into a field. In 20 metres follow a fence along a grassy bank on your right-hand side, as it gently curves to the right.
- 75** In 400 metres, at the far end of the field, pass through a wooden gate and go left up a car-wide path.
- 76** This climbs steadily uphill and in 500 metres passes **Tanners Hatch Youth Hostel** on the right. 40 metres beyond this, where the track veers left uphill, go straight on along a forest path, with a wooden fence to your right for the first 20 metres.
- 77** In 200 metres, after you have gone down into a dip and up the other side, the trees end to the right and you have **a view of Polesden Lacey** house across the valley.
- 78** In 120 metres the path goes back into the woods and starts in another 40 metres to climb steeply.

- 79** In 250 metres more, at the top of the hill, turn right at a footpath T-junction. In 20 metres, you come to a gate, but before you go through it, go left for 20 metres to two benches for a **magnificent view of Polesden Lacey** directly across the valley. This is a fine **picnic spot**.
- **If you don't want to visit Polesden Lacey**, you could switch here to paragraph 106 on page 8 (ignoring the phrase "to resume your former direction" as you will in fact be doubling back on yourself).
- 80** Otherwise, **to continue the walk**, pass through the gate, and carry on downhill on a track towards Polesden Lacey.
- 81** In 450 metres pass through another gate, to merge with a concrete track and carry on downhill.
- 82** In 50 metres more you pass Polesden Farm on your right and keep on up the tarmac lane, which curves left uphill.
- 83** In 300 metres ignore paths left and ahead, and curve right uphill with the lane under a wooden footbridge.
- 84** In 130 metres pass under a thatched footbridge (*built to enable the owner of Polesden Lacey to pass from one part of her gardens to the other*) and keep on uphill.
- 85** In another 80 metres, at the top of the hill, ignore a bridleway to the left opposite the entrance Garden Cottage to the right, and keep straight on. *On a clear day you can see Heathrow Airport ahead (or slightly to the left), with the air traffic control tower visible, as well as the long low white building which is the British Airways cargo terminal.*
- 86** In 30 metres ignore a private driveway through a fieldgate to the right, but in 10 metres more turn right through a wooden gate into a car park. Keep to its right-hand edge.
- 87** In 200 metres you come to the visitor entrance to **Polesden Lacey**, a blue wood-sided building, on your right. There is a cafe - the Cowshed Coffee Shop - in this building, but the recommended lunch or tea stop is to the right in the courtyard of the white building you see ahead of you - the **Granary Cafe**, a self-service restaurant. It is possible to visit this without paying to go into the house or

gardens. (See panel on page 5 for more information on the house).

After lunch or tea continue with the directions in the next section.

Polesden Lacy to Ranmore Common - circular walk route (1.8km/1.1 miles)

*This is a variation on the main walk route up onto Ranmore Common for those on the **Westhumble Circular walk**. Apart from its start, it avoids duplication with your morning route.*

- 88** Turn left out of the visitor centre entrance at Polesden Lacey, and retrace your steps down the side of the car park.
- 89** In 200 metres when you get to the lane, turn left. In 50 metres the tarmac lane starts to go steeply downhill, passing in 80 metres under the thatched bridge, and in 130 metres under the modern wooden bridge.
- 90** 20 metres beyond the second bridge, do not go left with the road (the way you came up) but instead keep straight on downhill on a car-wide bridleway under trees.
- 91** In 150 metres this gets to the bottom of the valley and starts to climb.
- 92** In 170 metres you come to a T-junction with a gravel track, where you go right uphill.
- 93** In 150 metres, at Yew Tree Farm, curve right with the track, taking the left fork - a stony track - 10 metres later.
- 94** 100 metres beyond this you pass a bench on your right with a tranquil view of the valley, another good **picnic spot** (as is the bench in paragraph 96).
- 95** In 50 metres more ignore a track forking right through a fieldgate and stay on the main track.
- 96** In another 130 metres, where a field ends to the left, there is another bench to the left with one last view backwards to Polesden Lacey. Keep on up the track, now with an easier gradient.
- 97** In 300 metres the field ends to your left (visible through double metal fieldgates) and you pass around a metal barrier. In another 80 metres **there is a crosspath**, marked by a

footpath post to the right of the track but **easily missed**. Here **turn left** up a path, passing through a wooden barrier in 10 metres.

- 98** In 90 metres, at a T-junction, turn right (where left goes to a wooden gap in a fence in 20 metres) onto a grassy path into a clearing (sometimes filled with bracken in summer).

Now continue with paragraph 108 opposite.

Polesden Lacey to Rammore Common - main walk route **(1.8km/1.1 miles)**

- 99** **After lunch or tea** turn left out of the visitor centre entrance, and retrace your steps down the side of the car park.
- 100** In 200 metres when you get to the lane, turn left. In 50 metres the lane starts to go steeply downhill.
- 101** In 80 metres pass under a thatched bridge (*built to join two halves of the garden: the lane was apparently sunk below ground level to hide passing tradesmen from the house*) and in 130 metres under a modern wooden bridge.
- 102** 20 metres beyond this second bridge turn left with the lane, ignoring paths that go straight on and right.
- 103** In 300 metres, at the bottom of the hill, curve right with the lane, passing Polesden Farm on your left. Here the tarmac lane becomes a concrete track.
- 104** In another 50 metres, where the concrete track curves right, go straight ahead through a fieldgate, and uphill on a track on the left-hand edge of a field.
- 105** In 450 metres, at the top of the hill, go through another fieldgate. Your onward way is straight ahead, but take a moment to walk 20 metres to the right to the wooden benches from where you get **a fine view of Polesden Lacey house** across the valley. This is also a good **picnic spot**.
- 106** Returning to the track, turn right to resume your former direction. In 10 metres ignore a signposted path downhill to the left and pass a house, Prospect Lodge, on your right. Keep on up a path which soon becomes car-wide, climbing gently into the woods.

- 107** In 400 metres pass through a gap in a fence and keep straight on. You are now on **Ranmore Common**. In 20 metres more ignore a path forking right, and instead keep more or less straight on, following two arrows on a post, into a small clearing (sometimes filled with bracken in summer)

Ranmore Common to Ranmore escarpment **(1.2km/0.7 miles)**

- 108** In 100 metres more, 30 metres **before** a wooden barrier ahead, turn left at a three-way junction onto a car-wide earth bridleway, your direction 120 degrees initially.
- 109** In 150 metres this bridleway starts to descend and in another 200 metres it comes to a crossroads with another bridleway in a dip. Go straight across this bridleway and up the steep slope beyond, **ignoring** a broader path/track slanting up the hill half left
- 110** Keep on this path, ignoring ways off. *Most of the year the path is clear, but in autumn when the ground is covered in freshly fallen beech leaves, note that **in 60 metres or so the path veers slightly right - not left**, as also looks possible. The route is still then somewhat indistinct, but in 170 metres more, as the slope levels out, the path is clearer and more closely bordered by holly and yews.*
- 111** In 600 metres (*370 metres after the path is more closely bordered by holly*) you come to a metal barrier and the end of the woods. Turn right here onto a gravel track, which in 40 metres brings you to a road.
- 112** Cross the road and turn left along its grassy verge. In 40 metres fork right up a gravel track for 10 metres, and then turn right up a signposted footpath which in 25 metres goes into the trees.
- 113** Carry straight on down this path, with a field visible through the trees to your left.
- 114** In 100 metres turn sharp left at a T-junction with a car-wide path (the **North Downs Way**. (*There is an area of **bluebells** to the right at this junction in late April or early May, if you want to make a short diversion.*))
- 115** In 20 metres pass through a gate into a big open space, **Steers Field**, with a

view of Dorking and the Greensand Ridge to your right. On a clear day you can also see the South Downs.

Ranmore escarpment to Denbies visitor centre (3.5km/2.2 miles)

- 116 Beyond the sign take the right fork, straight ahead along the crest of the hill.
- 117 In 200 metres there are two benches on your left. This is a good spot for a **picnic tea**. It is also worth stopping here to look back over your right shoulder for a fine view up the valley towards Gomshall.
- 118 30 metres beyond the second bench go left at a three-armed footpath sign, still on the North Downs Way.
- 119 In 70 metres pass through a kissing gate and turn half right.
- 120 In 30 metres you come to a road T-junction. Go straight ahead down the road opposite, signposted to Bookham, Westhumble and Parish Church.
- 121 In 100 metres you pass through a wood that is carpeted with **bluebells** in late April and early May. In another 100 metres you pass the church of **St Barnabas** on the right.
- 122 500 metres further on, where the road turns left, with the entrance to Denbies house right (*note: this is **NOT** the Vineyard Visitors Centre*), keep straight on down a concrete track, following the North Downs Way sign.
- 123 In 40 metres go right on a stony track, still following the North Downs Way.
- 124 In 180 metres, at a crossroads, go left along a tarmac track.
- 125 In 170 metres pass through a high metal gate, the entrance to **Denbies Wine Estate**, and carry on down the tarmac track. Initially there is scrub to your right - a former vineyard that is becoming overgrown. Later there is a view of Dorking, and then Denbies vineyard.
- 126 In 600 metres pass through another high metal gate. Soon after this the track emerges from the trees to give you a fine view of Box Hill and the Denbies Wine Estate Visitor's Centre in the middle of the vineyard below.
- 127 In 150 metres you enter the woods again. In another 400 metres there is

a signposted crossroads with gravel tracks left and right.

- At this point, **if you are NOT having tea at the Denbies Wine Estate tearoom AND you also plan to finish at Box Hill station**, you can go straight on, remaining on the North Downs Way. In 150 metres where the track turns concrete and veers right, **go straight on** along a gravel track, following a yellow arrow on a post. 40 metres after this, ignore paths right and left. In 220 metres ignore an unmarked footpath to the left. In another 200 metres, **at a four armed footpath sign**, easily missed in summer, **go left through a kissing gate** on a public footpath signposted to Westhumble, leaving the North Downs Way. From here follow the directions in paragraph 135 on page 10.

- 128 Otherwise **to have tea in the Denbies Wine Estate Visitor Centre** (and also **to end in Dorking**) go right at the crossroad, downhill into the vineyard.

Billing itself as the "largest wine estate England has ever seen", **Denbies Wine Estate** produces 400,000 bottles of wine a year, or around 10 percent of total UK production. It particularly specialises in white and sparkling wines, having a similar soil and geology to the Champagne region of France. The estate has a large visitor centre, open until 5.30pm April to October and 5pm November to March. There are also vineyard tours.

- 129 In 150 metres merge with a concrete track and follow this downhill towards the buildings of Denbies Wine Estate, which you reach in 400 metres.
 - Just before the buildings there is a four-armed footpath sign. To end the walk in Dorking **without** having tea, turn right here and refer to paragraph 143 on page 10.
- 130 Otherwise, keep straight ahead at the four-armed footpath sign, keeping to the right of the buildings.
- 131 In 120 metres more turn left through a gate to cross a grassy hill in front of the farm shop and then carry on along the front of the **Denbies Wine Estate Visitor Centre** to find its entrance, an arched doorway, in 100 metres. Once inside, turn right through the shop to

the glass-roofed courtyard and the self-service restaurant.

*After tea to end at **Dorking station** go to paragraph 141 opposite. To end at **Box Hill station** continue with the next section.*

Denbies visitor centre to Box Hill station (1.3km/0.8 miles)

- 132** Coming out of the Visitor Centre, turn right for 100 metres along the edge of the car park and past the farm shop, to turn right on the road beyond.
- 133** In 120 metres, just beyond the Farmhouse Bed and Breakfast, you come to a four-armed footpath sign. Turn right here onto a car-wide grass path between the vines. (*Note: **NOT** the gravel track sharp right, which leads back to the vineyard buildings.*)
- 134** In 300 metres leave the vineyard by a wooden gate, and keep straight on across the North Downs Way to a kissing gate.
- 135** Beyond the gate keep straight ahead across a field for 40 metres to another kissing gate. Carry on up a path between garden fences.
- 136** In 250 metres cross a road and carry on up a path to the right of the wooden fence ahead, and to the left of a driveway. This path, which is soon bounded on both sides by garden fences, is narrow and sometimes a bit overgrown.
- 137** In 200 metres you come to a road and turn right. Take care on this road, which is not over busy but narrow.
- 138** In 40 metres, just after a private road turns off to the right, you can escape from the road by taking the path between two wooden fences, passing to the left of a 15 mph sign (staying parallel to the road, not going up the residential side road).
- 139** In 120 metres this path rejoins the road, and there is now a pavement to the right-hand side of the road.
- 140** In 60 metres this brings you to a brick railway bridge. **Box Hill and Westhumble station** is down the white-fenced path to the right on the far side. **Pilgrim Cycles**, with its cafe, is in the old booking hall of the station. Cross the footbridge to platform 1 for trains to London.

For the **Stepping Stones** pub, carry on down the road beyond the station for 400 metres to find it on the right.

Denbies visitor centre to Dorking (2.4km/1.5 miles)

- 141** Coming out of the Visitor Centre, turn right for 100 metres along the edge of the car park and past the farm shop, to turn right on the road beyond.
- 142** In 120 metres, just beyond the Farmhouse Bed and Breakfast, you come to a four-armed footpath sign. Turn left here onto a broad gravel track across the vineyard.
- 143** In 500 metres, where the gravel track curves right at a two-armed footpath sign, keep straight on along a car-wide grassy path (possibly more muddy in winter) towards the trees ahead.
- 144** In 170 metres pass through a gate to the right of a metal fieldgate to leave the vineyard and carry on uphill on a clear path.
- 145** In 100 metres, at the top of the hill, ignore a minor path to the left, but fork left up a larger path which initially looks to be heading for a field. In fact, it runs between hedges, with the field to the right.
- 146** In 400 metres, at a three-armed footpath sign just **before** a gap leading into the driveways of houses ahead, turn left onto a path that runs along the left side of a house (Kelvin Lodge). In 25 metres you can see the vineyard to your left.
- 147** In 130 metres pass through a gate to emerge in 10 metres onto a road. Keep straight on down this.
- 148** In 130 metres turn right down another suburban road.
- 149** In 200 metres this brings you to the main road. Keep straight on down the side of this. Cross a minor side road, and then in 80 metres a larger one marked by traffic lights.
- 150** In another 80 metres the sign to **Dorking Station** can be seen on the other side of the A24. You can cross to it by the pedestrian subway just beyond another side road, Croft Avenue.