

Witley to Haslemere walk

A gentle walk to Chiddingfold and the Crown Inn



Chiddingfold & the Crown Inn

Length 14.5km (9 miles), 4 hours. For the whole outing, including trains and meals, allow 8 hours.

Toughness 3 out of 10.

OS Maps Explorer OL33 (was 133) or Landranger 186. Witley, map reference SU 948 379, is in **Surrey**, 12km south-west of Guildford.

Features This is an easy but interesting walk to a historic pub, the 12thC Crown Inn in Chiddingfold.

From Witley (where walking sticks used to be made - hence the local copses of ash and sweet chestnut), it passes the former RSPCA Lockwood Equine Centre and Combe Court manor house and its fifteenth century farmhouse, through the churchyard of St Mary's Church to the medieval village of Chiddingfold, with the Crown Inn as the suggested lunch stop.

After lunch the walk is through Frillinghurst Wood and various National Trust estates, coming out into Haslemere High Street near two tearooms.

The bridleways on this walk, particularly those immediately after the former Lockwood Centre, can be very muddy in winter or after periods of heavy rain, so do wear appropriate footwear.

Walk You could shorten the walk by catching a bus, approximately once an

Options hour, from outside the lunchtime pub in Chiddingfold to Haslemere.

History Chiddingfold's main splendour is the lunchtime pub, the twelfth century **Crown Inn**. In the late fourteenth century, the publican was convicted of selling ale 'contrary to the assize' (courts tested ale by pouring some on to a wooden bench, then sitting on it - if it had a sticky quality, it was pronounced good). In 1552, Edward VI stayed at this inn, while his 4,000-strong retinue camped on the green.

Chiddingfold was the centre of the stained glass industry between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries and the village was isolated enough to be able to keep working through the plague years, supplying stained glass for St Stephen's Chapel at Westminster in the 1350s.

In the churchyard of the thirteenth century **St Mary's Church** in Chiddingfold, there is a 1776 epitaph to Arthur Stedman, one shared with many blacksmiths across the country: 'My fire is out, my forge decay'd... '

One kilometer from the village on the afternoon leg of this walk, you come to the grounds of **Sydenhurst**, on which stood until 2013 the care home of the **Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain** in 30 acres of parkland. The Association purchased the property in 1949 as a safe haven for war veterans and invalids unable to work. By 1985 the home had become a residents care home and was registered as such, and opened to non-Ukrainians as well as Ukrainians. The Association sold the property in 2013 to a wealthy businessman who demolished the old premises and built in its place a grandiose Palladian style Mansion, some 27,000 sq ft of Georgian opulence, no expense spared, and named "Balthazar". The owner put his creation on the market for £ 30 Million in summer 2019.

The town of **Haslemere** is lucky to be surrounded by National Trust land in almost every direction thanks to the campaigns in the early 1900s of Sir Robert Hunter, one of the National Trust's founders, who lived in Haslemere.

In Tudor and Stuart times **Haslemere** was a centre for the iron industry. With the coming of the railway in the mid-nineteenth century it became a popular spot for literary people. The poet Tennyson's house, Aldworth, is on the slopes of Black Down where he loved to walk; and George Eliot wrote *Middlemarch* in Shottermill.

The town has an interesting **Museum** up the High Street, just north of Darnleys tearoom. The museum is open 10.00 am to 5.00 pm Tuesday to Saturday, and has important natural history collections. Other highlights include an Egyptian mummy, Zulu beadwork and Eastern European peasant art, plus a fine explanatory display of local wild flowers in the foyer.

The RSPCA Lockwood Equine Centre (previously The Lockwood Centre for horses and donkeys, and originally the Lockwood Donkey Sanctuary) in Sandhills, was one of the oldest donkey sanctuaries in the UK, having been established by a Mr and Mrs Lockwood in the 1950s. On Mrs Lockwood's death in 2005, the sanctuary was bequeathed to the RSPCA which until recently managed the centre. Sadly, with the advent of Covid-19 the RSPCA has had to cut its costs, and as a result it made the decision in June 2020 to close this centre. The last of the Lockwood resident horses, ponies and donkeys were rehomed on 30-09-20 to another of the charity's three remaining centres in the South of England. It is understood the RSPCA will now put the property and land up for sale.

Travel

Take the train nearest to **10.10am** from **Waterloo** Station to **Witley** . Journey time about 55 minutes. There are four trains an hour back from Haslemere (two on Sundays). Journey time 50-60 minutes. Buy a day return to Haslemere.

Parking at Witley is easier than Haslemere. The station car park is free at weekends. Trains back to Witley are hourly and take 5 minutes.

Lunch

The suggested lunchtime stop is the **Crown Inn** (tel 01428 682 255) in Chiddingfold, some 6.1 km into the walk. As of 2022, the pub is closed on Mondays and until evening on Tuesdays, but open for food, including lunch on all other days, from early morning as follows: Wednesday to Friday until 2.30 pm, Saturday until 9 pm and Sunday until 5 pm. It is best to book ahead from Witley with numbers, and booking is *essential* on Sundays, preferably the week before. If you cannot get in to the Crown, you have the alternative, very good option of the **Swan** pub or the comfy **Treacle's Tea Shop** , both nearby. Opposite Mill lane is **Youngs Butchers** which sells sausage rolls and pasties - as well as local game.

Updates

No major changes. Darnleys reopening noted December 2020. Permanent closure of Lockwood centre, and lunch pub updates both added October 2020. Book check and walk update October 2020

Tea

Haslemere town centre (about 10 mins walks from the station)

- There are 2 suggested teas places, both with inside and outside seating areas. [Darnleys](#) tearoom (tel 01428 643 048) on Haslemere High Street, a long-term friend of SWC walkers, closes at 5.00 pm. It reopened in November 2020 after extensive refurbishment.
- Opposite Darnleys, and open until later, is [Hemingways](#) (tel 01428 643 048), a large coffee shop, cafe and wine bar, is also highly recommended. It's cakes are delicious.
- Alternatives, for those in need of a stronger drink, are the [Swan Inn](#), or the [White Horse Hotel](#) (formerly a Wethies, food: midday-3.00pm and 6.00pm-9.30pm Monday to Friday; midday-9.30pm Saturday; midday-9.00 pm Sunday), both in the High Street.
- Nearby on West Street, on your way to the railway station, is the [Real English Drinks House](#) (and post office!), open to late Monday to Saturday and until 5.00 pm on Sundays.

Haslemere station

- [Metro Café](#) and takeaway (tel 01:428 651 535) is just before the station (open till 10pm; 9pm Sundays).
- There is a bar at [Harper's Steakhouse](#) (formerly The Station House / Inn on the Hill) opposite the station

Help Us! After the walk, we would love to get your [feedback](#)

You can upload photos to the  [SWC Group on Flickr](#) ([upload your photos](#)) and [videos to](#)  [Youtube](#). This walk's tags are:



By Car **Start** GU8 5TB **Finish** GU27 2PD

Help National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline (bus times): 0871 200 22 33 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

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Walk Directions

1. **[1]** On arrival at **Witley Railway Station**, cross the footbridge to platform 1. At the bottom of the steps keep straight on to the end of the platform where you join a

- public footpath, your direction 260°, shortly bending right, your direction north. 100 metres from the bend, immediately after passing a house called Inglewood on your right-hand side, at a crosspaths you *turn left*, your direction west, on to a car-wide earth and gravel track, with trees on either side.
2. In 340 metres you come to Pinewood Lodge on your right-hand side, and keep ahead through its parking area. In 40 metres go through posts with Greensand Way (GW) markers, on to a path into woodland. In a further 200 metres, with a house called Redlands on your left-hand side, *turn right off the path* to cross a road and go up a sand shingle drive *directly ahead of you*, your direction 300°. In 15 metres, by a post on your left marked with a GW disc, *fork right* and head quite steeply uphill, your direction 350°. But, 50 metres up the slope, with a viewing seat and bench over to your right, ignore a GW sign to the right, to *turn left* (slightly downhill), on a narrow path, your direction 260°.
 3. In 120 metres your path merges with a driveway and in 30 metres it comes out on to a road, by a red phone box. *Turn right* on this road, your direction 280°. In 60 metres *turn left* down Hatch Lane **[2]**, a worn tarmac lane signposted public bridleway.
 4. In 150 metres you pass what was until recently The RSPCA Lockwood Equine Centre on your left-hand side, to keep ahead down bridleways that can be very muddy in winter. In 400 metres, keep straight on as you enter a wood, passing by a double metal fieldgate to your left.
 5. In 110 metres, by a post offering a public footpath or a public bridleway, follow the public bridleway *straight on down* through the wood (ignoring the planks and steps to your right). In 200 metres *bear right* with the path to cross a wooden footbridge over a stream.
 6. 10 metres beyond the bridge, at a path junction, *bear right then left* to follow the direction of a public bridleway sign, gently uphill. The path swings to the left and in 80 metres, at a path junction, with a post with discs on your left, *keep ahead* uphill. In 70 metres exit the wood over a ditch on two sleepers to go straight on across a large open field, your direction 140°.
 7. In 160 metres you cross the railway by stiles either side, then across a tarmac drive and over another stile. *Continue straight on* with the field fence and treeline on your left-hand side, and fenced-in horse paddocks to your right.
 8. In 130 metres cross over a drive covered in wood chips and go over a stile, still straight on, down along the edge of a wood. In a further 230 metres, at the bottom of the slope, cross over a farm access way and in 20 metres you cross a stream by a brick bridge to go up the other side. In 30 metres you cross a minor car-wide track with a metal fieldgate on your left to keep straight on, now steadily uphill, through the wood, your direction 120°. In 160 metres cross a stile to leave the wood, going straight on across a grassy field, with a wooden fence on your left, your direction 140°, with **Combe Court** (marked on the OS map) visible ahead to your left.

9. In 120 metres go through a metal swing gate in a fenceline and keep straight on, your direction 145° , passing Combe Court (behind a fence and hedgerow) on your left-hand side. In 180 metres, by a prominent tree stump on your right, **[!]** *bear left* over a stile in a metal fence, to continue down an enclosed, grassy path with a fence and hedge on your left-hand side. The path swings left and in 245 metres ignore a pair of metal fieldgates on your right (giving access onto the drive of Coombe Court Farm) and swing left with the path. In 95 metres go through a metal swing gate to the left of a car-wide black painted metal estate gate and in 20 metres you come out onto a car road.
10. *Turn right* along this road, your direction 250° , to pass the entrance to Combe Court Farm on your right and then a property named Brackenwood. 230 metres along this road take the first car road *to the left* **[4]** called Pook Hill.
11. Follow this road steadily uphill, with woodland to your left and treeline to your right, through bends in the road, ignoring all ways off. In 300 metres you come to Langhurst Manor on your right-hand side, just over the crest of the hill. You now head downhill and in 50 metres **[!]** *turn left* following a public footpath sign, up three earth steps and through a metal kissing gate, to go along the left-hand side of a grassy field, your direction 80° .
12. In 240 metres, with a wooden fieldgate ahead of you, your way *swings to the right*, gently downhill, with a fenceline on your left, and in 80 metres go through a wooden kissing gate to go straight across a tarmac driveway, with a modern cottage over to your left, then ahead between fences, your direction 145° . In 30 metres you *fork left* with the hedge to a more substantial house on your right-hand side.
13. In 60 metres go through a rusty metal kissing gate. 20 metres further on, go over a stile and straight on across a grassy field, with the field boundary over to your left, your direction 140° . In 200 metres at a brow you pass a finger of woodland close by on your left and *bear left* with a treeline now on your left. In 100 metres ignore a stile on your left and keep ahead. In a further 150 metres, at the end of the field, as a path joins from the right, *bear left* to exit the field over a stile, then pass by a redundant stile, to continue now with close-boarded fences on both sides. In 100 metres you go over a gravel access drive to come out onto a tarmac lane at a bend, with Wrens Hill house on your right-hand side. Continue ahead along the lane, with hedges and detached private houses on both sides. In 230 metres, when the lane comes to an end (latterly with a gravel surface), continue *straight on* through a metal kissing gate, onto a path. In 5 metres ignore the path on the right and keep ahead downhill on the path along the edge of light woodland.
14. In 200 metres you pass a burial ground on your right-hand side to go through a metal kissing gate. Here, *turn right* through a gap where previously there was a wooden swing gate, into the burial ground along its left-hand side and keep straight on, your direction 200° , with some of the paving stones underfoot made of old headstones. Within the burial ground are a number of Commonwealth War Graves. In 110 metres you *turn left*, with a wall on your right-hand side, to pass a modern church hall with

eco-friendly grass-covered curved roof on your left-hand side before you come to Chiddingfold's **St Mary's Church** (usually open and worth a visit). Beyond the church, in 30 metres, go through the church lychgate and opposite is the **Crown Inn**, the suggested lunch stop. 70 metres to its left is **Treacle's Tea Shop** and **The Swan** pub is around the road bend to the right of the Crown, both serving food at lunchtime.

- L5. Coming out of the Crown Inn after lunch, *turn left* to then cross the busy A283 road with care and *turn left*. In 10 metres, *turn right* up Mill Lane.
- L6. Continue along this tree-lined road, gently uphill, and in 500 metres you pass on your left-hand side the exit drive to the rebuilt Sydenhurst Estate. The road becomes steeper as you keep ahead, now in a woodland strip. In 400 metres, as the road begins to level out, you pass on your left-hand side the entrance to the Sydenhurst Estate (formerly a Ukrainian care home). In a further 230 metres, just beyond the end of Orchard Cottage's garden on your right-hand side **[5][!]**, *turn right* through a metal kissing gate, with a metal fieldgate to its right-hand side, to follow the direction of a public footpath sign, 310°, initially down the right-hand side of a field. Your way soon veers slightly to the left and in 150 metres, where the field narrows, you pass a field boundary with fenceline on your left-hand side. Here ignore the metal kissing gate over to your right and keep ahead, down the field, your direction now 300°.
- L7. In 80 metres, your way swings *to the right* and you go through a metal kissing gate into a wood, a garden fence to your right. In 30 metres drop down and turn *sharp left* with the path, your direction now 310°. Keep ahead through the wood on a meandering path. In 220 metres cross a stile to the left of a metal fieldgate, to exit the wood, and keep ahead along the right-hand edge of a large open grassy field, with woodland to your right, your direction west. In 300 metres you pass a red brick house on your right-hand side and in a further 50 metres, where the edge of the field goes sharp right (as you pass under mini-pylon cables) you continue *straight on* across the field towards a part timber-framed house visible ahead.
- L8. In 120 metres **[6]** at the far end of the field, go through a metal swing gate, cross a tarmac lane and go through a metal kissing gate, with a single arm footpath sign on your left, to continue *half left* across and down the middle of a field, your direction 200°, towards a stile visible in the distance. In 200 metres at the far end of the field cross over the stile then in 3 metres go through a metal swing gate to *veer half right* across the next large open grassy field, your direction now 210°.
- L9. In 320 metres at the far side of the field go through a metal swing gate into woodland and drop down a rough, winding, narrow path for 30 metres and at the bottom cross over sleepers over a ditch to come out onto a car road. Here *turn right* down the road, your direction 260°. In 130 metres the road swings to the left to go over a bridge **[!]** but you *keep ahead, slightly right*, along a tarmac access drive, signed Frillinghurst, following the direction of a public bridleway sign. Head up the drive, passing Little Frillinghurst on your left and Frillinghurst Farm (house and outbuildings) on your right.

20. Some 330 metres along the drive from the road junction, you pass on your right a large corrugated barn then on your left the entrance to Frillinghurst Mill. In a further 40 metres **[7]**, *turn left over a stile*, with a metal fieldgate to its left, your direction 190°, and bear *slightly right* over a field towards a wooden kissing gate visible in a wooden fenceline ahead of you. In 130 metres go through this gate and carry on in the same direction for 65 metres to the edge of the wood, where you *turn right* to follow the edge of the wood on your left-hand side.
21. In 90 metres you pass by - and ignore - a three-armed footpath sign and a metal kissing gate on your left. In a further 20 metres go through a metal kissing gate into **Frillinghurst Wood** (marked on the OS map), straight on, your direction 250°.
22. In 35 metres ignore a turn up to the right and keep to the main path. In a further 120 metres, cross a stream by a wooden bridge (being rebuilt October 2020) and head uphill. The path swings to the right and in a further 120 metres at a path junction, with a two-armed footpath sign on your left, **[!]** *fork left*, your direction 240°, through the wood along a well defined path marked by footpath posts along the way. In 320 metres **[!]** at an unsigned path crossing *keep ahead* on a path now close to the left-hand edge of the wood. In 70 metres exit the wood to come out into a large field. Keep ahead on a broad grassy way along its left-hand edge with a hedgerow to your left towards a cottage on the far side of the field, your direction 230°.
23. In 260 metres, and some 60 metres before you reach the cottage, you *go through a gap in the hedge on your left* and *turn right* into the next field, to continue on in the same direction as before but now with the field hedge on your right-hand side and your path now a bridleway. In 85 metres pass through a field boundary and in a further 15 metres at a car-road T-junction, with a lake in front of you, **[8]** *turn left*, your direction 130° and in 20 metres *turn right* on a tarmac road, your direction 220°, with the lake now on your right-hand side.
24. In 130 metres *veer right* with the road, the barns of **Imbhams Farm** (marked on the OS map) on your left-hand side. Keep ahead along the road through bends, with woodland to your right and open fields behind fences to your left. Some 500 metres beyond the barns, the fields on your left end and you keep ahead, now with woodland on both sides. In a further 150 metres you come out to a car road **[9]** which you cross, slightly to the left, to continue on a signposted public footpath, through a gap (the wooden swing gate is missing), with Holdfast Cottage on your right, your direction 230°. Your path swings to the right to follow the right-hand edge of a small field.
25. In 220 metres, having entered light woodland, go through a wooden kissing gate and *turn right* along a track, keeping a white painted house on your left-hand side. In 100 metres you enter the National Trust's **Swan Barn Farm** by a wooden swing gate to the right of a wooden fieldgate and keep the field edge on your right-hand side. In 110 metres you go through a wooden swing gate to head down over a stream on a three plank bridge with wooden handrail then up earth steps to pass through another wooden swing gate. Keep ahead along the right-hand edge of the next field.

26. In 100 metres drop down to go through a wooden swing gate and down over another little bridge over the stream and up earthen steps to go through another wooden swing gate after 35 metres. Keep ahead along the right-hand edge of the next field which curves to the right, with woodland on your right. In 110 metres go through a wooden swing gate to enter the National Trust's **Witley Copse** and **Mariners Rewe**. Keep ahead through the wood.
27. In 230 metres **[!]** *veer right* at a path junction (with a 1.8 metre high chain link fence on your right-hand side). In 100 metres head down and *turn left* to cross over a stream via a wooden bridge, *turn right* past a bench seat on your right and then in 20 metres *swing left* on a clear path up through the Copse in a westerly direction.
28. In 300 metres **[!]** *fork left downhill* where the main path turns right uphill, for 25 metres then *turn left* to go over a small wooden bridge which you cross to then go through a wooden swing gate to enter a field. *Turn right* along the lower side of the field, gently uphill. In 80 metres at the corner of the field, go through a car-wide gap and *veer left* up across the next grassy field, gently uphill. In 110 metres you pass by a wooden swing gate on your left-hand side to *veer round and up to the right*.
29. In 65 metres you cross a plank bridge (with no handrails) and keep ahead, uphill, now with a fence on your left. In 95 metres you leave the National Trust's **Swan Barn Farm** by its sign and a wooden kissing gate and *turn right* along a gravel path, your direction 30°, with fine views over to your right across the meadows to wooded slopes. In 80 metres *turn left* between buildings to reach **Haslemere High Street**. *Turn left* along the High Street for 50 metres to your suggested tea stops: **Hemingways** on your side of the road and the newly reopened (November 2020) **Darnleys** directly opposite. Nearby on West Street, on your way to the railway station, you have the **Real English Drinks House**, your third tea shop option in the town. Or for a stronger drink you could go to the **White Horse** pub further down the High Street on the left-hand side.
30. Coming out of Darnleys tearoom, *turn right* and in 25 metres, *turn right again* down West Street, signposted to the police station. In 120 metres, where the main street curves to the right past the police station (which is on your right-hand side), take the street *straight on* to the fire station but then not the tempting path straight on; instead, *turn left* in front of the fire station along a tarmac lane and in about 50 metres *turn right* along a narrow tarmac path to continue to the left of the fire station, your direction 315°. Now follow this path, with a stream to your right and later a playground to your left, till you come out on to a tarmac road with Redwood Manor opposite. *Turn left* and in 40 metres, *turn right* on to the B2131, leading in 260 metres to **Haslemere Railway Station** on your right-hand side. The London platforms (2 and 3) are over the footbridge.

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saturdaywalkers@walkingclub.org.uk

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