



Chobham Common

Distance: 9½ km=6 miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

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Refreshments: Chobham

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Map: Explorer 160 (Windsor) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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Heath, views, woodland, meadows, lake

In Brief

This is a stunning walk over the high pine-topped heath of Chobham Common, with a short more open section around the nearby verdant farm paddocks. There is at least one good place for refreshments along the walk, but on a Sunday you *must* reserve early if you want lunch at the *Four Horseshoes* (ring 01276-856257).

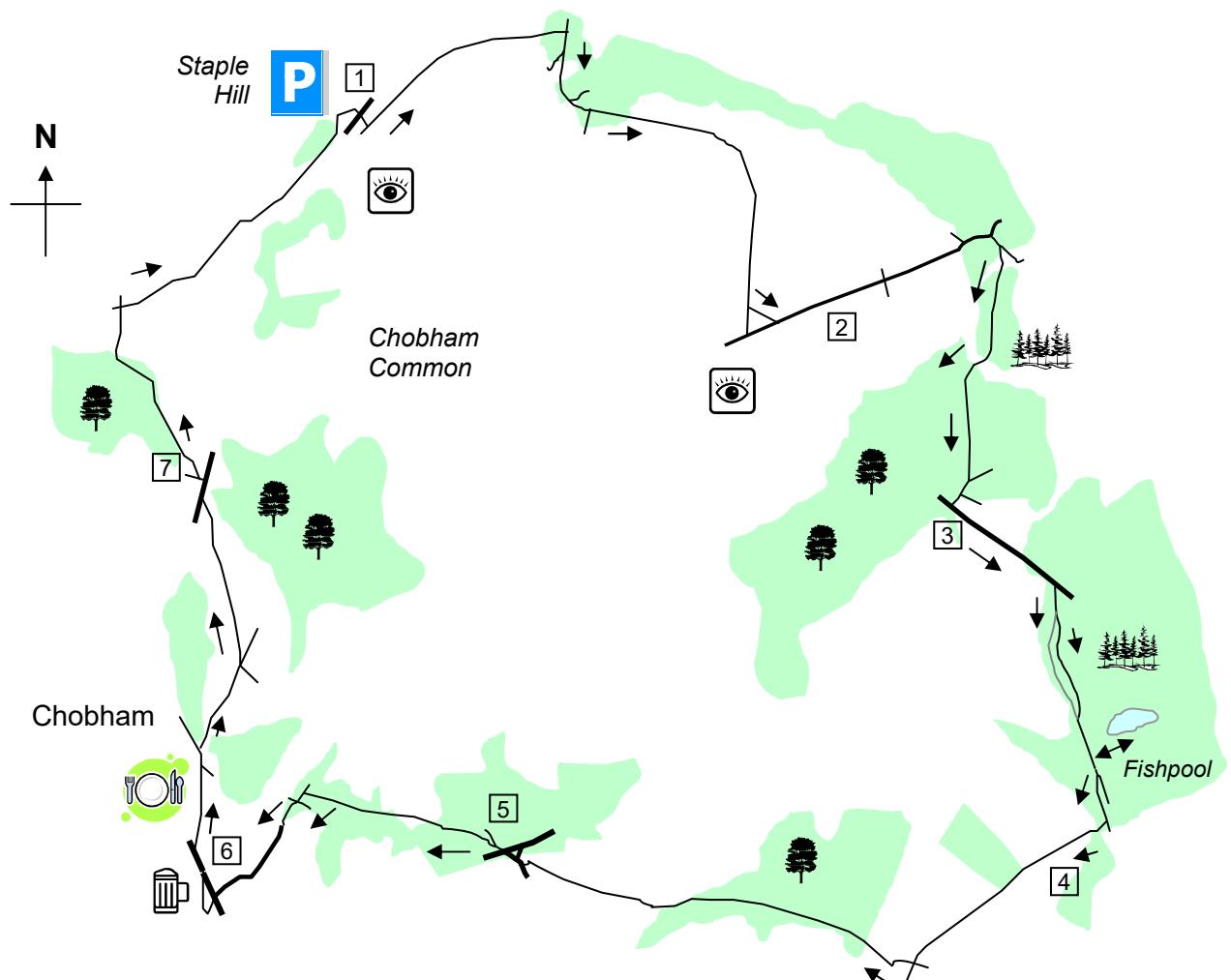


There are no nettles to trouble bare legs. In the wetter seasons there may be quite a bit of mud on some of the paths, so boots are a comfort, as always. Although there is a series of stiles around the farm, there are wide gaps in the fences for a dog to get through so he can come too and will thrive on this walk, with a lead of course, necessary in spring/summer and on the narrow paths where you may unexpectedly meet horse riders.

This walk can be combined with the *Horsell Common* walk to make a superlative 13-miler. The link point is the Fishpool.

The walk begins at the (now free) **Staple Hill Car Park**, near Chobham, Woking, Surrey www.w3w.co/forgot.belt.swear. There are no buildings nearby but one *very approximate* postcode is GU24 8TP. *In case the car park is full, there are free spots elsewhere, such as **Longcross** (see text), or the **Fishpool**, approx postcode GU24 8HN, www.w3w.co/mime.guards.candy, or **Chobham Place Woods**, grid ref SU964642, nearest postcode GU24 8TL, 300m from the walk.* For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



1 Leave the car park by the entrance and cross the road, going past a post with a white arrow onto a narrow path. In 30m, at more posts, turn **left** on a sandy horse path. After 500m, your path enters trees and you come to a T-junction with a wide path. On your left is the small Longcross car park (an alternative start) but your route is **right** on the wide path. In 40m, take the **left** fork, a rising path. This path curves left and, after 120m, reaches another junction and a marker post. *The next stretch takes you over the wildest part of the common, slightly longer but more interesting than the bridleway which clings to the trees.* Keep straight ahead, avoiding the blue-arrowed bridleway that forks away to the left. In 50m, at another post, avoid a path that forks away to the right, staying with your path, marked as a *horse ride* [Apr 2021: marker post grounded in gorse bush]. You have great views to the right. *This area is a favourite for model aeroplane enthusiasts and you may see them flying on any fair weekend.* In nearly ½ km you reach a pine-covered hillock with a seat and a view. Immediately after, avoid a path on the left and keep straight ahead on a narrow path which descends, aided by shallow steps. *Here you have a feeling of the great open space all around.* As you near some overhead power lines, as a short cut, take a smaller path that forks **left** and shortly veer **left** on a major sandy bridleway that runs parallel to the power lines.

2 Your path goes over a crossing path, marked by yellow arrows and eventually meets a bridleway coming from the left, as it runs into trees and between some wooden railings. At a T-junction by a marker post, veer **right** up a slope. In only 40m, just before you go under the overhead power lines, fork **right** on a narrower unmarked path. This path soon widens and runs through pines. Soon your path comes over the brow of a hill. Keep to the path now as it veers **right** downhill, going past a post marked **J15** [2018-2025: now missing] on the other side. Keep to this wide path as it veers left through a dense pine forest. Veer **right** as you come to a junction with a footpath coming in from the left. Continue straight on towards a house to a metal barrier and a notice board and straight ahead on a driveway to a road.

3 Turn **left** on this quiet road, going past *Gracious Pond House*, ignoring a bridleway on your left. After 300m, go **right** at a metal barrier on a signed bridleway. In 25m, at a post, take the **left** fork, the bridleway. (You can also fork right on the footpath but the footpath may be waterlogged in parts in winter and the bridleway is considered more attractive.) After 300m, the bridleway is joined again by the footpath at a wooden barrier. 80m from this junction, look for a narrow path sharp left. Your direction is **straight on**, but there is a chance here for a very short there-and-back diversion to the **P** Fishpool. Even if you are in a hurry, this lovely spot is on no account to be missed. (The Fishpool car park is also an alternative starting point.)

The 1308 Chertsey Abbey Cartulary (a kind of medieval legal tome) lists Fishpool and the nearby Gracious Pond (now drained) as being constructed by the Abbot Rutherford to power a mill. It was formed at the valley bottom by damming one end. It was then called Cratchettes Pond and the name underwent several variations. It also provided water for nearby Chobham Park as well as providing fish for the abbey monks. In 1535, two years before the dissolution of Chertsey Abbey, the manor house was purchased by Henry VIII (why does he pop up in every historical account?) and remained the property of the Crown until sold by Queen Mary in 1558. It deteriorated and in 1771 was "choaked (sic) with weeds". Now restored, it is a reserve run by the Surrey Wildlife Trust.

Continuing straight on along the main bridleway, go about another 40m to a fork in the path. Leave the main path which curves away to the left and instead take the **right** fork, the narrower option. Just ahead, you pass a marker post. On your right you can see a large metal gate in a wire fence. Keep ahead for 150m, gradually getting nearer to the fence. You come to a junction of paths with a metal kissing-gate on your right at a point where the wire fence ends and a tall wooden garden fence begins, within sight and sound of a road. Go **right** through the kissing-gate and into a meadow.

4 The meadow is used by the Pony Club and it is a pleasant contrast, after so much  woodland, to be walking in the open with views. Follow the **left**-hand edge. At the corner, go straight ahead to cross a narrow gravel path. After going through posts, continue straight ahead to a metal kissing gate. Pass some horse paddocks on your left with a wood on your right, finally going over a stile to the left of a wooden fieldgate. [Nov 2025: care! the lower step of the stile is missing and the high step is wobbly]. As you near the buildings of Chobham Park Farm, at the start of a tarmac drive, turn **right** at a 3-way fingerpost. This path takes you over a stile, across a green meadow, **left** over a bridge, **right** along a grassy path, over a stile and along a woodland path. In 300m the path goes through a wooden swing-gate. After another swing-gate, the path runs beside a lawn, joins a tarmac drive and passes a white gate, out to a road, Mincing

Lane. Turn **right** on the road and follow it round, ignoring a junction on the right, quickly reaching a major road, Red Lion Road.

 5 Cross the road to a footpath directly opposite between posts. In 50m your path forks. Take the **left** (unsigned) fork, the narrower option. *Don't miss this turn!* Keep to this path, avoiding all minor turn-offs. In 150m or so, just before a birch and a tall pine, both with a triple trunk, your path forks into two narrower branches. Take the **right** fork, shortly going over a crossing path. When you reach a stand of very tall straight pines, keep to the **right** of them, as your path widens. At a T-junction, turn **left** on a wide horse path. In 20m, turn **right** with the main path. In only 10m, just *before* a marker post, turn **left** onto a horse path, shortly going between concrete bollards, with a transformer station on your right. Continue ahead and keep **right** shortly on a tarmac road (Gorse Lane). Follow this lane all the way to the main road. The *Four Horse-shoes* pub is directly opposite, beside the small Burrow Hill Green. *This pub is on the "up", with more brews and some tempting food offers. It's leased by Marstons (not E.P. as the signs say). The attractive setting and cosy interior are now attracting crowds. In case this pub is over-booked, you can try the dog-friendly Red Lion (now blandly re-branded as the "No. 15 Restaurant & Bar" (closed Mon & Tue) which serves excellent food with friendly staff, new management and a winsome garden. They also serve Sunday roast (ace baked potatoes!) and a veg option in perfectly adequate portions. To get there, turn left on the main road and after 130m turn left on Red Lion Road; the pub is 300m along the road on the left.*

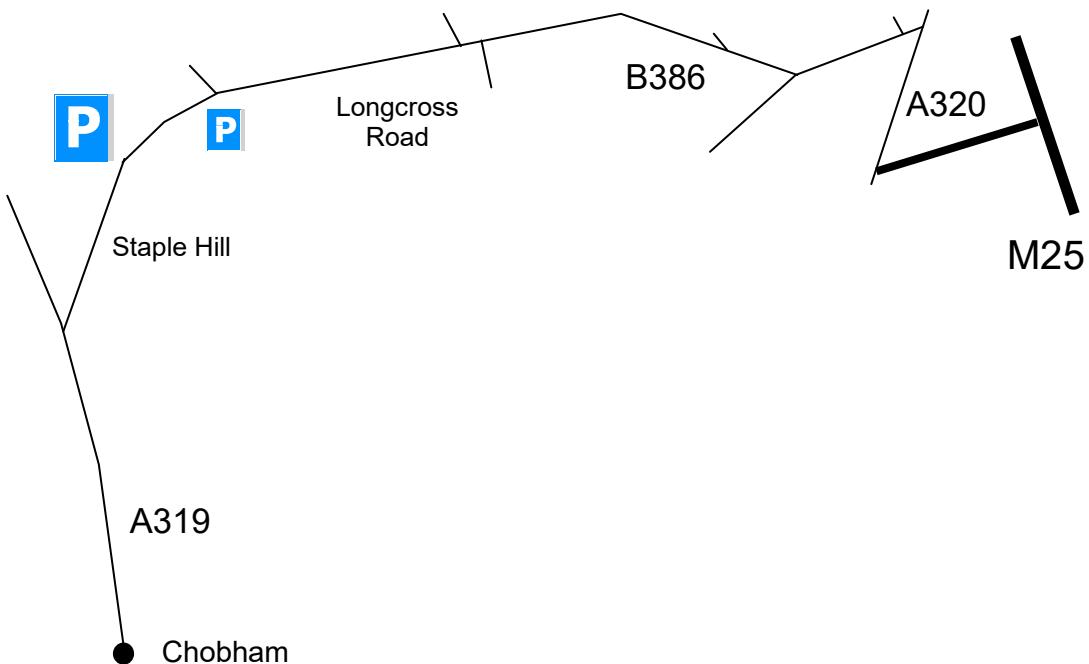
6 After refreshment, turn **left** out of the pub, cross the road and turn **left** (that is, **right** if you didn't visit the pub), using the raised footpath. You pass the site of a closed restaurant, which may have been bought up when you walk, then a row of cottages and, in 200m or so, the *Eastern & Oriental* restaurant boasting "true flavours and a Feng-Shui décor". Ignore a path that runs beside the restaurant and continue a little further to pass the *White House*. Immediately afterwards at a fingerpost turn **right** and take the narrow path that twists its way through woodland and reaches open heath. About 250m from the start of the footpath, you meet a wide sandy bridleway coming from the right. Veer **left** on the bridleway, to pass immediately under power lines. In 75m, at a wide crossing path, go straight over, now on a much narrower bridleway. This takes you in 300m to a road, Staple Hill.

7 Turn **right** on the road for only 20m and go **left** at a post with yellow and blue arrows. Almost immediately, take the **right** fork, the bridleway. You go under the chestnuts and birches of Chickabiddy Hill. *[Sep 2015: after the wet summer, there was extensive flooding in this area (though dry in 2017-21); if this persists, you may need to backtrack to the road, turn left and follow the road – or a parallel path – to the parking area mentioned below.]* You reach open heath where heather is abundant. Keep going until your path veers left beneath wires, veers right away from them, goes round a marshy patch, and finally meets a very definite crossing path, with blue arrows and "J7" on a post (hidden in a gorse bush). Turn **right** on this path and follow it until it crosses a redundant parking area beside the road. Continue on a narrow path parallel to the road, through heather and gorse, with great views to your right, until you come through gorse bushes to the Staple Hill Car Park where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: the easiest way is from the M25. Come off at junction 11, *Woking*. Follow signs for *Woking A320, Chobham (A319)*. At the end of the dual carriageway, at a roundabout, go **right**, in the direction of *Chertsey, Staines* (not Chobham) on the A320. After $\frac{1}{2}$ mile turn **left** on the B386, signposted Windlesham. Ignore a junction on the right and in over $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, at a fork, keep **right** on the B386 signposted *Windlesham, Longcross*. Follow the Longcross Road for more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles until the road divides near a small car park. Keep **left** here, signposted *Chobham*. The Staple Hill car park is another $\frac{1}{2}$ mile on the right.

You can also go north on the B383 from Chobham village (signposted *Sunningdale*) and, in 1 mile, fork **right** on Staple Hill, signposted *Longcross*. There is an alternative car park at Jubilee Mount on the right $\frac{1}{4}$ mile before reaching Staple Hill Car Park.



By bus/train: several services from Woking station to Chobham. Check the timetables.