



Brook: The Dog and Pheasant

Distance: 6½ km=4 miles easy walking with one short steep ascent

Region: Surrey

Date written: 22-nov-2013

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Date revised: 27-jul-2018

Refreshments: Brook

Last update: 19-sep-2023

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere) *but the maps in this guide should be sufficient*

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Village, pub, hills, woodland, green meadows

In Brief

You'll find the *Dog and Pheasant* immediately opposite the *second* most important place in Brook: the Cricket Pitch. The pub was purchased in 2008 by four local businessmen one of whom lived at the pub as a boy. The pub really is the centre of the community with every day a special day. Every Wednesday the chef comes out of the kitchen and will grill your T-bone steak in the inglenook. Bring together more than five people and you can have a suckling pig. Note that the chef leaves for a pint at 8.30 pm sharp! Beers are Ringwood, TEA and a rotating range of other guests. For bookings, call 01428 682763.

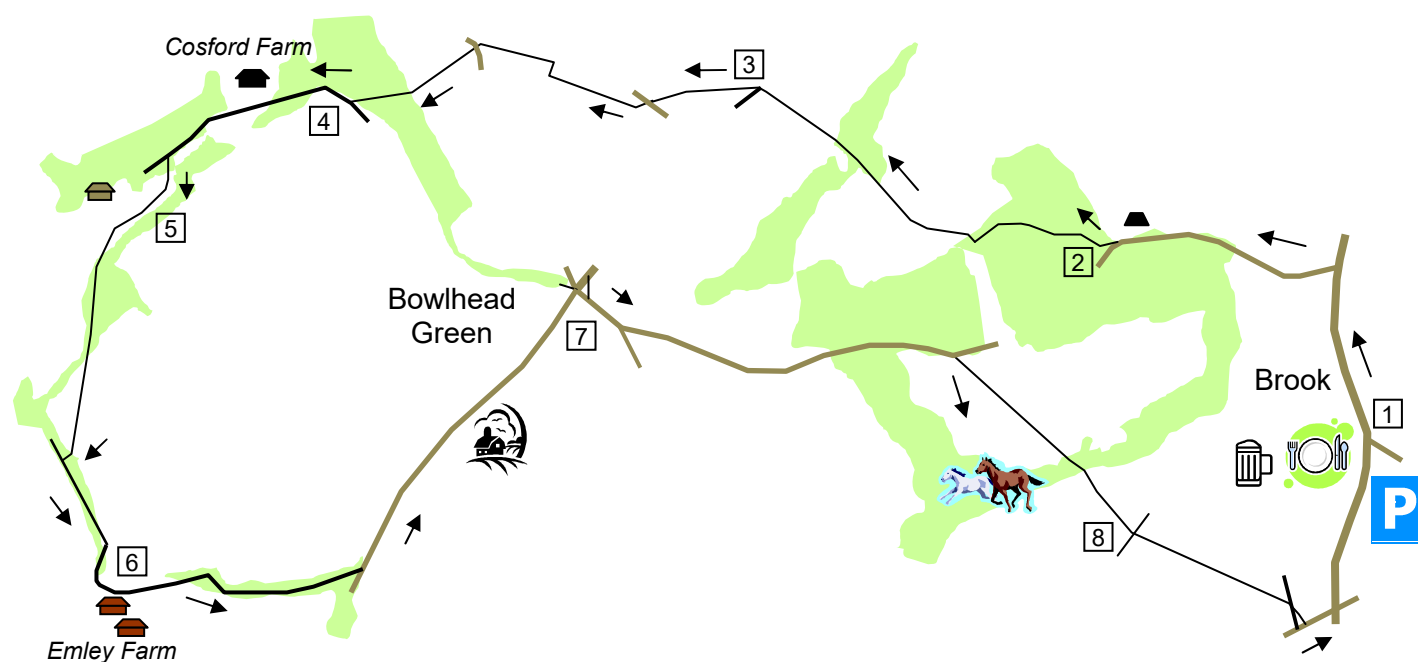
You may arrive in time for the Brook Fête on May Bank Holiday when the pub plays host to the Brookfest with live bands. The other notable building is the *Pirrie Hall*, given in 1923 by Lord Pirrie, owner of Witley Park (see below), looking a bit like a cricket pavilion. You will see the Pirrie name on many of the old metal gates all over the area as a letter "P" inside a round steel shield with a star below a crown, a reminder that this was once part of the Lea Park estate of Lord Pirrie. (He was not a modest man.)



There are no nettles on this walk so any sensible clothing should be fine. In summer it is fairly dry underfoot, although boots will make you more comfortable. In a wet winter, high boots or wellies are necessary. Most of the stiles have a big gap for your dog to get through but if he is large he may have some difficulty.

The walk begins in the village of **Brook, near Haslemere, Surrey, post-code GU8 5UJ**. Park opposite the *Dog and Pheasant* pub in a side road alongside the green. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



- 1 With the pub on your left, walk along the main road for about 300m. Just after the 50 mph sign, turn **left** on a narrow lane, Bowlhead Green Road. *Note that you are walking part of the Greensand Way (GW) long-distance path: you will be following it for 2¼ km.* You pass houses on your left whilst on your right is the long stone wall enclosing Witley Park. (For its remarkable story, see the walk in this series “Witley, Hambledon, Chiddingfold”.) After 400m along the lane, you reach a small gatehouse on the right, Pine Lodge. Fork **right** immediately after the lodge and go through a tall metal kissing-gate in the wall ahead.
- 2 The path veers right and leads uphill rather steeply under ever-darkening laurel trees. Thankfully, the path soon levels out and on your left is a beautiful green field dotted with mature oaks. The path darkens again under hollies and takes you through another old (unused) kissing-gate as it veers left with the oak field on view again. At the end of this narrow section, your route veers right and left to run along a wide green path between wire fences with open meadows on each side. The path veers right and runs under chestnuts and oaks as it descends into the valley and rises again on the other side. At the top, your path takes you through a tall kissing-gate in front of Lower House. Avoid a driveway on your left and cross straight over to go through a small metal gate, past a disused kissing-gate into a small narrow meadow.
- 3 Keep left in the meadow between lines of young cherry trees and go through a modern kissing-gate at the far side. Keep ahead along the right-hand side of another small meadow and go through a large metal gate onto a tarmac drive. Cross the drive, up steps opposite, through a small wooden gate and immediately go **right** along the right-hand side of a large field. As you wheel **right** round the first corner, go through a white gate and turn **left** on a path running under trees. At the end, you reach a tarmac lane. Cross the lane to go up a bracken-covered bank and through a small modern kissing-gate. Continue across the centre of the pasture heading for a wood ahead. *There were some young dairy cows on the other side.* As you

reach the other side, go over a stile and through another modern kissing-gate, then down through woodland. In 30m keep straight on by a marker post steeply for another 70m, and veer **right** where you meet a bridleway coming in from the left.

- 4 In 20m, take a path on your **left** by a marker post and descend a short steep path with some stone steps, going under yew trees, with a large pond visible to your right, and soon passing a large pond on your left. You are now walking in front of *Cosford Farm House* on a wide grassy route between old brick walls. You pass a spectacular piece of topiary and join a tarmac drive coming from the house. Where the tarmac drive immediately bends right uphill, **leave** it to keep left along a dirt track, indicated by a yellow arrow, thus leaving the GW. Follow the track gently downhill between banks for just over 100m until your track goes through an old hidden open metal gate. Turn **left** here through a kissing-gate. [2018-19: This left turn *may* bring you close to some lovely young pedigree cattle, described in colour below. If you prefer to avoid them, do as follows. **Ignore** this left turn and continue straight ahead on the track for another 400m, veering **left** at a junction, till you pass a pond on your right. Turn **left** at a yellow arrow beside a pair of metal gates onto a sunken uphill path; this is the path referenced by "*" in the next section.]
- 5 Your path goes over a stream and bends right under wires along the top of a sloping meadow with a timbered cottage and its barn forming a comely picture below. Aim for the top left corner and when you reach it go through an old metal swing-gate. [2018: the author found the corner completely blocked by a group of cute young cattle of both genders, and prodded them gently aside to get through.] Continue along a narrow path through a dense holly wood. Your path emerges through a metal kissing-gate into a meadow. Keep the same direction across it diagonally, cutting the right-hand corner of the meadow. At the top corner, your path leads you through a kissing-gate and veers **left** onto a wide enclosed path [*]. In 150m or so, go over a robust stile (or through the adjoining metal gate) and turn **right** on a track.
- 6 Shortly you reach the ancient buildings of Emley Farm. *Dating from the 1600s, this is a grade-II listed timber-framed farmhouse with its barns and outbuildings all unchanged from the 1800s. If it seems familiar, this is because it a favourite location for film and TV productions that need a pure unspoilt historic rural setting.* Keep straight ahead through the farm on the wide driveway **ignoring** a stile and a yellow arrow between the barns visible up on your right. The driveway, which is also a footpath, zigzags right-left and finally leads past a 1-bar barrier to a lane. Turn **left** on this quiet narrow lane between high hedgerows. You pass a Bowlhead Green Farm with its converted barns and lifesize "cow" and arrive at a crossroads in the centre of the quiet hamlet of Bowlhead Green.
- 7 Turn **right** at the crossroads on a lane signposted *Brook, Witley*, immediately keeping **left** at a fork, passing a pond and a seat on your right. This narrow shady lane passes several entrances to properties and soon runs alongside the wall of Witley Park on the left. After a total of 600m on the lane, look for a triangular road sign warning of 16'-0" headroom ahead (in fact a bridge on the Witley Estate). *Immediately* opposite the road sign you will see a fingerpost high up on the bank. Go **right** here up some steps (possibly obscured by bracken) and through a kissing-gate into a large grassy meadow. [In summer the steps and the fingerpost are harder to spot and some walkers turned right later through a new metal gate.] Go straight across

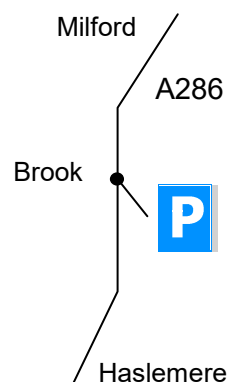
the centre, aiming just to the left of a narrow gap in the trees ahead. **The author saw a herd of very shy heifers on the other side; another walker also passed them without incident.** As you go over the crest of the slight slope, you see a modern kissing-gate ahead.

- 8 Go through the kissing-gate, descending through thick bracken and through an old metal gate (it opens with a firm shove). Your path takes you through more dense undergrowth, down steps on another overgrown path to another ornate metal gate (*with another of those round Pirrie shields*) and down to a track by another old metal gate. Cross over the track to a modern kissing-gate and go across the pasture to go through a pair of similar gates either side of a ditch (**care! you may need to watch your footing**). Bear a fraction left on a faint grass path, going past an oak on your left. The path becomes clearer and, as you proceed you will see another kissing-gate at the far right-hand end of a wire fence. After going through this gate, cross a drive to an old metal swing-gate. Turn **left** on a road and immediately **left** again on the main road leading back to the *Dog and Pheasant* where the walk began.



Getting there

By car: Brook is on the A286 road between Milford (near Guildford) and Haslemere, Surrey.



By bus/train: bus 70 from Haslemere or Guildford station, not Sunday. Check the timetables.

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