



This walk starts and ends near Peaslake and climbs to the viewpoint on Holmbury Hill.

Distance: 3 miles

Travel information: For local train and bus information call Travel Line South East on 08706 082608. It is all too easy to become disorientated when out in countryside. We recommend that you always carry a map when out walking, even when following a published route. The most popular and detailed maps which are widely available are the OS Explorer series maps (1:25,000 scale / orange cover). These show the public rights of way network and areas of publicly accessible land, as well as the location of facilities such as information centres, pubs, museums, and gardens. They are available from many bookshops and newsagents.

Refreshment stops: The Kings Head and Royal Oak, Holmbury St Mary, Hurtwood Inn and Peaslake Village Stores, Peaslake.

OS map: 145 & 146

OS grid reference: TQ098431

The walk starts from Hurtwood Control car park No. 1. Leave Peaslake on the Radnor Road the car park is about a mile along on the left hand side. Occasionally the gates to the car park are locked but there is plenty of alternative car parking along the road. The majority of the route is along woodland paths and tracks. The walk can be strenuous in places, with a steep descent at one point to reach Holmbury St Mary and a steady climb after the pubs. The scenery is stunning with the finale being Holmbury Hill Fort the second highest, after Leith Hill, of the range once known as Little Switzerland. The walk starts from Hurtwood Control car park No. 1. Leave Peaslake on the Radnor Road the car park is about a mile along on the left hand side. Occasionally the gates to the car park are locked but there is plenty of alternative car parking along the road. The majority of the route is along woodland paths and tracks. The walk can be strenuous in places, with a steep descent at one point to reach Holmbury St Mary and a steady climb after the pubs. The scenery is stunning with the finale being Holmbury Hill Fort the second highest, after Leith Hill, of the range once known as Little Switzerland.

1. To start, from the car park with your back to the road, leave the car park by the main exit past the barrier. Leaving the pond on the right, continue along the broad and sandy path for 100 metres or so. Take small path branching off on left. The banks here are covered with harts, gorse and heather, which puts up a fine show in August. Cross the next two rides, pass a large pine with a hanging branch (good seat), and just before the path enters a wood, take the countersunk path (hurts on either side) on right.

2. At the next ride, turn left. Carry on here, past electricity poles, until a small path intersects the ride. Take the right hand arm of this path, through a wooden barrier. Go down a steep wooded bank. Near the bottom, go over a wide crossing path continuing your descent, and you will soon come out onto a driveway to a house on your right. Follow the drive ahead to reach a lane in front of some pretty cottages.

The cottages are part of Holmbury St Mary which, despite its ancient appearance, is essentially a Victorian village. The village church, which you meet further on, was built in 1873 and was designed by GE Street who lived at Holmbury, whose most famous work is the London Law Courts.

3. Carry on down the lane (The Glade) into Holmbury St Mary. You will come into the green and a pub – the Royal Oak (good food – walking parties and dogs on leads welcome). Continue on round the green to the right. Either walk along the road past the Holly Bush, take the right hand fork up hill and reach the Kings Head (beer garden and home cooked meals); or take the right lane up to the church. Turn left at a small parking area and tarmac lane, going up some steps, and fork left following a holly hedge to soon enter a churchyard.

Once in the church yard, fork right taking the higher path which runs along the top of the churchyard and exit the other side via a wooden gate. After this, follow a narrow path behind some houses and fork left when you meet a pair of electricity poles supporting a mini generator, to shortly meet a lane. Turn right along the lane which will soon lead you to the Kings head.

4. From the pub, take the higher lane, Holmbury Hill Road, which runs alongside the green and at the end of the green, turn right (still Holmbury Road). A few paces after, turn right onto a track, signposted to Holmbury St Mary cricket club and follow this uphill past the cricket pitch to its end at a large junction of tracks. Deer are often seen here.

5. Take and first turning on your left, a track marked by a blue GW arrow (the Greensand Way). Sometime later, fork right passing to the right of a wooden footpath post and follow a promising path and where applicable the GW arrows, to eventually reach the top of Holmbury Hill. Holmbury Hill Fort dates from the Iron Age and is one of several along the Greensand ridge. Take time to look at the Toposcope (the panoramic guide to the view), which gives further details about the fort, and other useful information. Rest for a while at the memorial to Reginald Bray (and his brother Jocelyn) who made the public access to Hurtwood possible.

6. On leaving Holmbury Hill, with one's back to the memorial seat, take the left hand path over a little switchback (part of the iron age fortifications) and follow this path around the edge of the escarpment. There are excellent views, following extensive clearance, of Pitch Hill and the Weald. Pass pond on right, go over little gully to reach car park No, 1 our starting point.