

10 Leisure Walks of Discovery

A Boot Up THE HAMPSHIRE HANGERS

Mike Cope

The Hampshire Hangers are a belt of ancient woodland that clings to the steep slopes of the Chalk and Upper Greensand scarps, that stretch from Langrish to Binsted. The term 'hanger' is derived from an old English word 'hangra', meaning a wooded slope.

The area around the Hampshire Hangers has inspired many writers and artists. Selborne is associated with the eighteenth century curate Gilbert White, author of the 'Natural History of Selborne', and one of the founding fathers of natural history recording. Steep was where Edward Thomas found the inspiration and material for the majority of his poetry. Jane Austen spent the last eight years of her life at Chawton, writing and revising her great romantic comedies.

The village of Selborne lies at the heart of the Hampshire Hangers. Of the ten selected walks in this book, six of the routes are along the Chalk Hangers to the south of the village, and the remaining four are largely confined to the Upper Greensand Hangers to the north and east. They range from 4½ - 9¼ miles and suit the needs of families, groups of friends or individuals looking for a gentle stroll or a longer walk, and reflect the many varied facets of the area – its people, its history, and its landscape and will help first time visitors to experience some of the great scenery the area has to offer. Many of the walks feature a pub along the route.

Halsgrove's new-format guidebook, containing maps, photographs and useful information will ensure a great walking experience. Packed with colour, the book is an ideal reminder of a visit to the Hampshire Hangers.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mike Cope lives in Woking, Surrey and has been walking the Surrey countryside on a regular basis with local and national walking groups for over 20 years. He is a freelance writer for *Country Walking* magazine, and has published over 30 walking routes for Surrey, Hampshire and Staffordshire. In 1995, he became a member of the Edward Thomas Fellowship, and has been captivated by the Hampshire Hangers countryside ever since. He has a Ph.D. in analytical chemistry, and when he isn't walking or writing, works as a lab manager for a multinational pharmaceutical company.

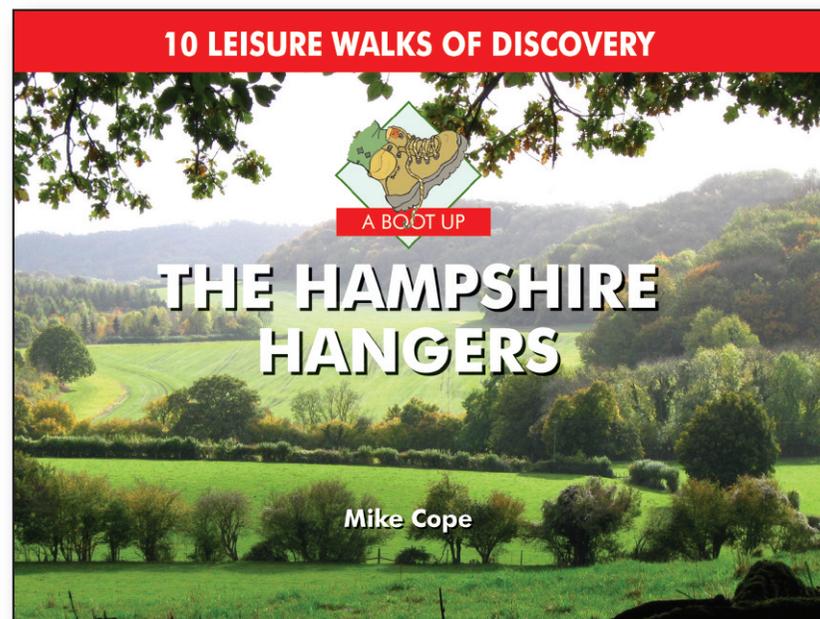
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A BOOT UP THE HAMPSHIRE HANGERS



Detail from St Francis window in Selborne church



Footbridge near St John's Hill



The Rhenish Helm bell tower of Hawkey church



Grassed-over chalk pit on Noar Hill



Admiring the view from the Shoulder of Mutton Hill

1 Sheep and Ashford Hanger

11 Go left along enclosed path, cross a stile and then bear right along tarmac lane near horse paddocks. Cross another stile and when you reach a main road, turn left.

12 Take the first right along Bell Hill Ridge road. When the tarmac runs out, keep ahead along enclosed path.

The grounds of Bedales School

13 At the next junction, bear left along the Hangars Way. When you reach a road, turn left along it, and keep ahead at the next right hand bend, near Sheep House Nursing Home.

14 Re-cross the A3 at the footbridge, then go immediately right. Keep ahead along an enclosed path, past the playing fields of Bedales School, until you reach Sheep church.

Sheep church

In the church of All Saints, Sheep there are two memorial windows, designed and engraved by Laurence Whistler, to commemorate the centenary of Edward Thomas's birth. The windows were dedicated in 1978 by the poet R.S. Thomas.

2 The Warren and Happersnapper Hanger

Explore hanging woods that tumble down the slopes of a deep chalkcombe on this 5 1/2 mile circuit

The White Horse Inn - at 235 metres above sea level - is Hampshire's highest pub. In 1914, Edward Thomas used it as his setting for one of his finest prose poems: 'Up in the Wind'. In the latter half of the poem, the 'cockney bornmaid' expresses her occupation for the wind that keeps her awake at night, and her relief when it blows the sign down. The reason for her being there is a blend of accidents, personal destinies and demographic shifts. Despite not having a signboard, many manage to find their way to the 'Pub with no name' for the Longest Day Beer Festival, which takes place on the nearest weekend to the Solstice.

Signpost near Hawkeye Hanger

Level: 50'

Length: 5 1/2 miles (8.5 km)

Terrain: Some alpine deserts around the Warren and one enclosed covert up Happersnapper Hanger

Park and start: The White Horse (Pub with no name), From Down Start ref: S3 714250

Postcode: GU32 1DA

Public transport: None to start, but Eastleigh line has (only) 953 stops at Warren Green

Refreshments and facilities: The White Horse (Pub with no name), From Down, the Trooper Inn, Festival

The Warren and Happersnapper Hanger

Example of a double-page spread.