

# A BOOT UP THE SURREY HILLS

REPRINT

Mike Cope

The Surrey Hills was one of the first areas in England to be designated an Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB) in 1958. It stretches across a quarter of the county and includes the chalk slopes of the North Downs, which run from Farnham to Oxted, and the deeply-forested Greensand Hills.

The North Downs sweep into Surrey from the east and terminate at the end of the Hog's Back. They have a distinctive topography with a steep, south-facing scarp slope and a shallow, north-facing dip slope with the valleys of the Wey and Mole being important corridors through them.

Of the ten selected walks in this book, seven of the routes are along the North Downs Way between Compton and Reigate, and the remaining three are at prominent locations along the Greensand ridge, including Leith Hill, the highest point in south-east England. They range from 3 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> - 7 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> 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 Surrey Hills.



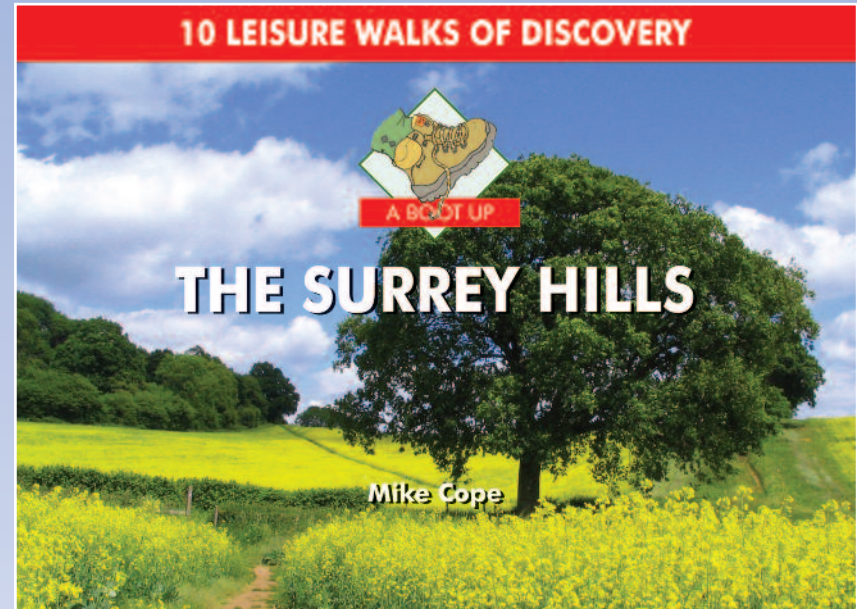
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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. 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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Halsgrove Publishing, Halsgrove House, Ryelands Business Park, Bagley Road,  
Wellington, Somerset TA21 9PZ Tel: 01823 653777 Fax: 01823 216796  
[www.halsgrove.com](http://www.halsgrove.com) e-mail: [sales@halsgrove.com](mailto:sales@halsgrove.com)

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The toposcope on Holmbury Hill



Above: Crossing the River Mole at the Stepping Stones  
Left: Classical pavilion on Colley Hill  
Below: River Wey Navigation



Left: St Catherine's chapel



Example of a double-page spread.

**1**  
Compton and Guildford

Go straight across, at the main road, into the Mead and walk uphill for a stone: There. Some relief may be had by a short detour into Guildford Cathedral (see p. 10) to visit the grave of Lewis Carroll. (The Cathedral opens up, across the valley, as you ascend the 'Mill Difficulty' back to the starting point.)

Lewis Carroll, the author of Alice in Wonderland, never actually lived in Guildford, but the house where his six unmarried sisters lived (The Chantry) was marked in his name. He lived and worked in Oxford as a mathematics lecturer, but made frequent trips to Guildford to visit his sisters.

Guildford cathedral

**2**  
Chilworth and St Martha's Hill

A 7-mile circuit that combines remnants of former gunpowder mills with a hilltop chapel

The gunpowder mills at Chilworth were one of the most important centres for gunpowder production in Britain during the early nineteenth century. Saltpetre, sulphur and charcoal were carefully blended together and granulated by mill wheels, powered by the waters of the

Tilling Bessas stream. William Gibbert visited the place in 1822 and commented the making of gunpowder as 'the most dreadful operations that was going on from the woods of moss, under the influence of the dew'. His remarks were unheeded for the next hundred years, until the massive

disaster in 1920, when a fire at the end of the First World War caused the factory to explode, killing 100 men and more than 400 horses.

Chilworth and St Martha's Hill

Level: 100 ft (30 m)  
Length: 7 miles (11.2 km)  
Terrain: Very mixed terrain along foot paths, tracks, and roads. Steep sections occur from St Martha's Hill, north-east of the park.  
Park and start: The Park Area pub (see p. 10) (see p. 10)  
Start ref: 10 000102  
Postcode: GU14 6PF  
Public transport: Chilworth station is 1.5 miles (2.4 km) from the pub. There are 21 bus routes from Guildford to Chilworth through Chisley.  
Refreshments and facilities: The Park Area pub, 100 yards from the starting point, has a bar and kitchen.

In 1920, big fires and more have now occurred after the production buildings and incorporating mills.

