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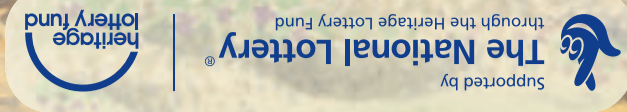
Special wildlife
Inspiring views
Rich in history



Explore and Enjoy



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Waymarks for these walks have been installed by Downlands Project staff and volunteers. If you would like more information about the project, or contact us at: The Downlands Project, The Omnibus Building, Lesbourne Road, Reigate, Surrey RH2 7JA. Tel: 01737 737700 or visit www.downlandspj.org.uk



For information telephone: 01737 733933 email: info.oldsurreydowns@surreycc.gov.uk or visit www.oldsurreydowns.org.uk



This leaflet was produced on behalf of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council by the Old Surrey Downs Project.

Nature has shaped this landscape, but the beautiful countryside you can explore here is the result of centuries of human activity.

This walk will lead you past isolated hamlets and pretty villages, some of which were recorded in the 7th century, and guides you through 18th century parkland, with its large mansions, fine specimen trees and extensive views.

Illustrations by John Davis 01243 512351. Leaflet produced by JBD Media Limited 01787 220028 09/04/09 (140K).



The Shabden and Upper Gatton Parks Circular Walk is one of six walks that link with the Millennium Trail, a long-distance footpath that stretches from Banstead Downs to Horley. For further information, telephone Reigate and Banstead Borough Council on 01737 276000 or visit www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk

This 7 mile, 11 km walk takes you through some of Surrey's most scenic countryside. It starts and finishes at the Chipstead Meadows Recreation Ground near Elmore Pond, Chipstead. Grid Ref: TQ 277 568. Nearest Railway Station: Chipstead (one mile from Chipstead Meadows Recreation Ground) For up-to-date public transport information, contact Surrey Traveline on 0871 200 2233 or www.traveline.info



Much of this countryside is farmland, which has also changed over the years. The dry chalky soils of this area are not very fertile and the area was traditionally used for sheep grazing for many centuries. This allowed a wide variety of chalk-loving wild flowers and other wildlife to thrive alongside the grazing livestock and this kind of chalk grassland is now one of our richest wildlife habitats, supporting many rare and scarce species.

We gratefully acknowledge the Colebrook Family and Lodge Farm (Fanny's Farm Shop) for allowing a permissive route to pass across their land.

Sheep and cows may be seen on this walk. They are helping chalk-loving wild flowers to thrive by controlling the growth of rank grasses and rough vegetation. Please respect the Countryside Code by keeping your dogs on a lead when walking near livestock.

Dog Walkers

Some parts of the walk may be muddy – stout walking boots with good treads are recommended.

Footwear

Much of this walk is level, although there are some stiles and steep slopes over uneven ground that makes it unsuitable for wheelchairs and buggies.

Suitability

This leaflet is best used with OS maps: 1:25000 Explorer 146 (Dorking, Box Hill & Reigate) 1:50000 Landranger 187 (Dorking & Reigate)

Intensive farming methods, including ploughing and the use of fertilisers, were used here in the 1960s and 70s, which enriched the soil and destroyed its structure. This caused much of the wildlife to disappear. Such methods were stopped in the 1980s.

Determined efforts to use more traditional, wildlife-friendly farming methods by Surrey Wildlife Trust Countryside Services and the tenant farmer of Shabden Park Farm has resulted in sheep grazing the land once more and wildlife is now returning to the chalk grassland.

Welcome to the Shabden and Upper Gatton Parks Circular Walk – a historic journey through Country Estates and rural downland parishes.

This walk starts at Chipstead Meads Recreation Ground car park.

1 From the car park, turn left and walk along the pavement in front of Elmore Pond.



Elmore Pond

This is Chipstead's village pond – a feature that has disappeared from much of the English countryside. It was used for many centuries as a watering place for the sheep and cattle that were driven along the High Road to livestock markets in London.

2 Cross Elmore Road and continue straight on along High Road, eventually passing the entrance to Shabden Park Farm on your right. (You will pass an old well house, built for the Shabden Park Estate in the late 1800s and restored by the Chipstead Village Preservation Society in 1989.) Use the pavement on the right hand side after the Cricket Club. Just before the road curves round to the left, cross the road and take the footpath on the left through woodland, which brings you to Hogscross Lane. (Much of this woodland is cherry laurel, an exotic evergreen from South East Europe, widely planted in Victorian times to provide game cover. The leaves contain cyanide, which is why insects do not eat them.) Turn left onto Hogscross Lane and walk along the road for about 50 metres.

3 Take the footpath to the right, leading between two buildings and through Noke Farm (now a new housing development). Go through the kissing gate, bear right and continue downhill to a barrier. Carry on with the hedge edge to your right, until you reach a stile at the bottom of the slope. Cross the stile and follow the path diagonally across the field, then cross another stile and walk uphill into woodland. Come out of the woodland and cross another field. (Wild cherry trees grow in the clay-with-flints soil found here. Primroses and violets grow on the wooded banks in spring.)

4 At the other side of the field, turn right before you reach the hedgerow, and follow the permissive path with the hedgerow on your left (this is not a public right of way). Go through two fields and shortly after going through a small wooded area you will reach a gap in the trees. Follow the path and bear left through the gap and continue following the path straight on, with the woodland on your right. (The large flints you see at the edge of the fields are from the clay-with flints layer that caps the tops of the chalk hills in this area. Although they look like the remains of an old wall, they have been left here by the farmer to make ploughing easier – stone-picking was a job done by women and children in the past.)

5 At the crossways, turn left and follow the footpath, cross a stile and go straight on across the field. Cross another stile and bear left to follow the path through the trees, along the left hand edge of the field near to the hedgerow. Cross a stile that leads you out onto Harp Oak Lane. Turn right and follow the road, then take the first footpath on the left, go through a kissing gate and along a track, past a cottage on the left and then go left beside the entrance to Boorsgreen Farm.

6 Cross the stile and follow the right hand field edge to a kissing gate. Go left then shortly right through another kissing gate and follow the path straight on with the hedge to your right. Go through another kissing gate and carry straight on until you come out into a large field with the M25 in front of you.



The view from Furze Field Shaw, at the top of Ashtead Hill

(Here, from the top of Ashtead Hill, you have a fine view of the North Downs ridge stretching away into Kent, with the M25 running along the foot of the Downs and Reigate Hill Golf Course on the other side of the M25.)

7 Turn right and follow the permissive path along the field edge (this is not a public right of way). Go through a gap in the hedgerow, cross a stile and follow the path between the fence and the hedgerow until you reach a gap in the hedge leading out onto Markedge Lane (so-called because it marks the parish boundary). Cross Markedge Lane and go straight on into the entrance to Fanny's Farm Shop.



Chickens and cakes can be found at Fanny's Farm Shop

8 The path here is not a public right of way. Carry straight on past the shop on the path through Lodge Farm. (If for any reason it is not possible to walk through the farm, cross Markedge Lane and turn left. After 50 yards take the footpath to your right, passing Lodge Farm on the right.)



9 Turn right onto the public bridleway and through a field. Before you reach the wood at the other side, turn left and follow the field edge (with the woodland on your right). At the corner of the field, cross the stile and follow the path through Upper Gatton Wood. (This woodland is a sea of blue in the spring – the bluebells indicate that there has been woodland here for at least 400 years.) Keep following the path straight on; ignore a path off to your right and cross a stile out into a field beside an old air-raid shelter. Walk through the parkland, following the woodland edge, passing another old air-raid shelter on your left.

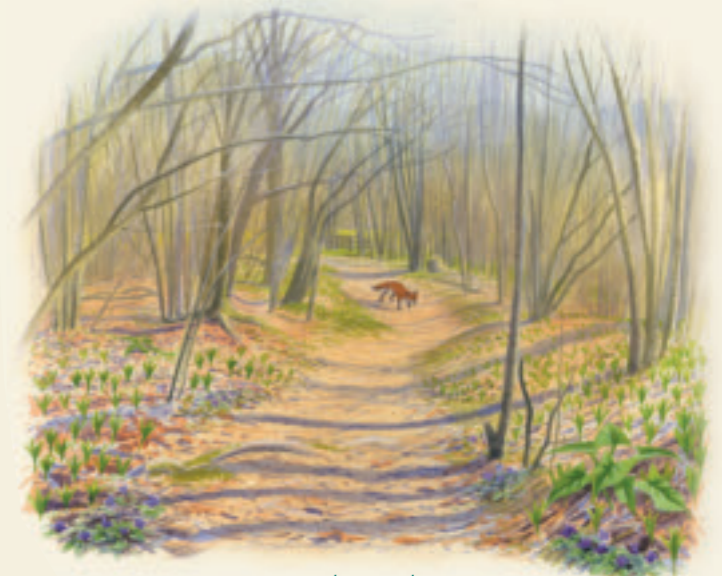


There be dragons at Upper Gatton Park...

10 Cross a stile and turn right onto High Road, then immediately left onto a footpath. Cross the stile and follow the path as it dips down and then up again to edge of the field. Cross the stile and a road. Go straight on, through the gate and follow the footpath between the fields, over a stile and then through a kissing gate. Carry straight on along the field edge, ignore the footpath on the right and carry on downhill to the corner of the field. Turn left and then shortly turn right and follow the path beside the hedge (keeping the hedge on your left).

11 At the corner, turn right and follow the field edge. (You are now walking part of the main Millennium Trail, so follow the blue waymarks from now on.) Cross two stiles, then cross Green Lane and follow the path straight on, beside the woodland and then alongside fields. Cross Monkswell Lane and carry straight on through two kissing gates and along the path beside the field. Go through another kissing gate and then downhill through the woodland to Chipstead Lane.

This walk will take you past the Well House Inn – so called because the garden contains a well, known as St Margeret's Well or Mag's Well. (The name Mugswell is derived from this.) The Inn, which is supposedly haunted, dates from the 14th Century, although the well is mentioned in the Domesday Book.



The Long Plantation

12 Cross Chipstead Lane and follow the footpath straight up the hill. Cross a stile and carry on through woodland. Follow the waymarked posts across the golf course (beware of flying golf balls!) until you reach woodland on the other side. Go straight on into the woodland and then out onto Waterhouse Lane. (The main Millennium trail goes straight on here, so follow the orange circular walk disks.) Turn right and walk along the road verge with care. Take the first bridleway on the right, along a private road. Once you reach the houses, follow the road to the left past the pond on your right. Continue between the houses and just past the last house on the right, take the footpath to the right and follow the path back onto the golf course and downhill towards the woodland. Cross the stile into the Long Plantation, go straight on at the cross-roads and where the path forks go right, following the path downhill towards a field.

The Long Plantation was planted by John Fanshawe, who acquired the Shabden Park Estate in the 1770s. It has since been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest by English Nature, (now Natural England), in recognition of its chalk woodland and grassland flora.

13 Go through the kissing gate and carry on downhill through the field towards a road. Bear left before the kissing gate and follow the permissive path around the field edge, uphill until you reach the corner of the field.



Shabden Valley & sheep

Excellent views of the lovely Shabden Valley, with its beautiful flower-rich chalk grassland, can be seen to your left. The Shabden Park Estate is now owned by Surrey County Council and managed on their behalf by Surrey Wildlife Trust Countryside Services Ltd.

14 Turn left and follow the path straight on through the field. Go through the gate, turn right and follow the track through the woodland. Go past Shabden Park Farm on the left and follow the track up to High Road. Turn left and follow the road, cross Elmore Road and walk past Elmore Pond. When you enter the car park you have returned to the start of the walk.

Legend:

- Busy Road
- Car Park
- View
- Toilets
- Cafe/Tea Shop
- Public House/Bar

Shabden and Upper Gatton Parks Circular Walk (indicated by an orange arrow)

Millennium Trail (indicated by a blue arrow)