

CHESSINGTON COUNTRYSIDE WALK



Moderate Terrain

**8.5 km
Circular
3 hours**

260515



A 5.5 mile (8.5km) circular walk taking in the countryside around Chessington. As you walk this route it may come as a surprise to you how much attractive countryside there is close to the London-Surrey border.

This walk is part of the Explore Surrey collection, published through a collaboration between iFootpath and Surrey County Council.

There are public toilets and a picnic site alongside the car park at the start of the walk and there is a brick seat at the top of Winey Hill. There are no other places for refreshments directly on the route itself. Ordnance Survey Map: Explorer 161 London South. This walk follows public footpaths and bridleways which cross private and public land. Information is included for your interest, but please respect people's privacy, keep dogs under control and remember the Countryside Code.

Getting there

The walk starts and finishes at the car park for Horton Country Park which is accessed off Horton Lane, south of Chessington (marked with brown tourism signs). The car park is free, has a 1.9m height restriction barrier and closes at dusk each day (9pm in the summer). If you are coming by public transport, you can adjust the walk to start and finish at Chessington South rail station (Waypoint 2) which is served by both trains and buses. For help with planning your journey by public transport please visit <http://journeys.travelsmartsurrey.info>.

Post code for car park **KT19 8PL**.

Walk Sections



Start to Bonesgate Stream

Access Notes

- 1. The walk has a few gentle slopes throughout with just one short, steeper climb.*
- 2. The woodland and field paths can become very muddy so stout boots are required and wellingtons are recommended in the wet winter months.*
- 3. You will need to negotiate some steps and kissing gates plus one stile.*
- 4. The stile is low and has wide open fence surrounds, suitable for all dogs to pass through or hop over. Whilst most of the paths are enclosed, the route crosses the public open space of Winey Hill where horses graze freely, so please take care with dogs at this point.*
- 5. The route crosses a couple of busy roads so please take your time to ensure you can cross safely.*

The walk starts from the car park of Horton Country Park. To begin the walk, make your walk to the square brick toilet block by the vehicle entrance for the car park. Stand with your back to the vehicle entrance with the toilet block on the right (and some information boards just ahead to the right). Walk ahead along the tarmac lane and, where this bears right, keep straight ahead to join the footpath between trees, signed for the Thames Down Link and the Chessington Countryside Walk. You will be following the waymarks for the Chessington

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Countryside Walk for the full length of this route.

Through the trees to the right you will see the large barns of the equestrian centre within Horton Country Park. At the T-junction turn right and, a few paces later, keep straight ahead at the junction on the bridleway signed to Chessington. Keep straight ahead along this track which passes the Polo Club car park to the right and horse paddocks to the left.

Horton Country Park was established in 1973 when 400 acres of land were purchased by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council from the Greater London Council (the successor of London County Council which had built five psychiatric hospitals in the area in the late 1800s and early 1900s). This land had been farmland which supplied both food and work for the hospital patients. Today, the country park is a rural landscape of fields, hedgerows, woods and ponds of wildlife and historical value. It is a designated Local Nature Reserve and has adopted the symbol of the green woodpecker, a common sight here.

Ignore the first bridleway signed to the left, simply keep ahead between the fenced pastures. Through the hedge to the right are the fields of a children's farm centre so you may see a wide variety of animals, including donkeys, grazing here. A little further along, ignore the bridleway signed right to McKenzie Way. A few paces later you will come to a fork in the path. Take the left-hand branch, signed to Chessington.

The track will lead you to a crossroads. Go straight ahead on the narrow footpath between trees (signed to Green Lane). Go through the kissing gate which leads you to the edge of a large crop field. Turn right along the right-hand field boundary and follow this as it swings left. In the far right-hand corner, pass through the gap in the hedgeline (alongside a disused stile) and keep ahead along the right-hand edge of this next crop field. Follow the path ahead to reach a footbridge over a stream, Bonesgate Stream.

1 → 2 Bonesgate Stream to Chessington South Station



Cross the footbridge and follow the path steadily uphill with a fence on the left. At the top of the slope you will emerge to a T-junction with a residential lane, Green Lane. Cross over and turn left along the pavement. When the pavement ends, keep ahead (with extreme care) along the road edge for a few more metres. Just a few paces beyond the 30mph signs, turn right up the steps to join the footpath signed to Garrison Lane.

The path leads you between houses on the right and a golf course on the left. At the end of the path you will emerge to a T-junction with Garrison Lane. Turn left along the pavement and this will lead you past Chessington South Station on the right. Soon afterwards, use the pedestrian crossing to swap to the right-hand pavement.

2 → 3 Chessington South Station to Viewpoint



(NOTE: If you are starting the walk from Chessington South Station, leave the station onto Garrison Lane and turn right along the pavement).

Continue along Garrison Lane using the right-hand pavement. Pass the community college on the right and you will reach a T-junction with Kingston Road. Turn right along the pavement for just a few paces and then use the pedestrian crossing to cross Kingston Road. At the far side, turn left along the pavement (passing the junction with Garrison Lane from where you emerged on the left). Turn right into Barwell Lane (signed as a bridleway to Claygate).

Follow Barwell Lane taking care of any occasional traffic. The lane runs between tall hedges with houses to the right and sports fields to the left. Ignore the first bridleway to the right, simply keep ahead (now between horse paddocks each side). Just before the road bears right (alongside Virginia Cottage on the right), turn left through a gate into the site of Winey Hill. NOTE: There are horses grazing freely within this site so take care with dogs.

Follow the path ahead and then swinging right up the hill. As you emerge from the trees keep straight ahead onto the brow of the ridge. Turn left along the brow of the ridge and you will come to a brick and flint plinth, marking the viewpoint on Winey Hill (just before you reach a fenced pond ahead). Take a moment here to appreciate the views, there are benches built around the plinth to allow you to rest. From here there is a magnificent view towards the North Downs to the south and across the Thames Valley and London to the north. Volunteers from the Lower Mole Project constructed the viewpoint in 1995 which indicates famous landmarks which can be seen from here.

3 → 4 Viewpoint to Chessington Wood



When you are ready to continue, stand with your back to the plinth, facing the fenced pond. Skirt to the left of the pond and then walk straight ahead on the (subtle!) path with leads you steadily downhill. At the bottom, pass through the kissing gate and join the fenced path with open fields and great views to the right. Through the fence on the left is Chessington World of Adventures, an adventure park and zoo; you will probably be able to hear some of the rides (and screaming!) in operation.

A little way along, turn left onto the path signed to Leatherhead Road. You will come to a T-junction with the corner of the car park access lane within the adventure park. NOTE: This access lane can be very busy at peak times so take extreme care. Bear left to follow the access lane, with the fence for the park running on the left. The lane leads you steadily downhill, passing a series of parking fields on the right (named after a variety of animals such as leopard, vulture and macaw).

At the bottom of the slope you will come to a crossroads with a vehicle track. Go straight ahead, passing a disused stile, to join a grass track between trees (signed as a public footpath). A stile leads you out to the pavement alongside Leatherhead Road. NOTE: This is a very busy and fast road so take extreme care here. Cross over the road with care, using the central pedestrian island for your safety. Keep straight ahead on the public bridleway (signed to Ashtead Common) which leads you into Chessington Wood.

4 → 5 Chessington Wood to Ashtead Common



Follow the main path which swings steadily right (this can get quite muddy). The path leads you across a footbridge, back over Bonesgate Stream, and on between lines of trees/hedgerows. This green track follows the line of a route that has been in use since at least 1495. Not so long ago, horses and

carts would have regularly used this track. Much of the surrounding land has been in the ownership of Merton College, Oxford since the 1200s. It was an important link between Kingston and Leatherhead.

Towards the end of the path you will come to a junction of paths with a brick pillbox visible to the right. This World War II pillbox has been converted to a new use as a bat roost. The work was carried out in 1991 by the Lower Mole Project volunteers and Surrey Wildlife Trust and involved bricking up the gun slits and hanging tiles inside to create crevices.

Keep straight ahead for a few more metres and cross over the sleepers to reach a T-junction with Rushett Lane. Cross over with care, turn left for a few paces and then turn right through the gate to join the bridleway signed to Ashtead Common. Follow the obvious bridleway which crosses the crop field at about 11 o'clock. At the end of the first field dog-leg left and then right to maintain your direction across the second crop field.

Follow this path directly ahead to reach the top of the field where a gate leads you into Ashtead Common (with a noticeboard ahead and a short white post on the left). This white cast iron post is a City of London coal duty boundary marker or coal tax post. From late medieval times to 1890 the Corporation of the City of London had the right to levy a duty on coal brought into the city. This duty helped to pay for the rebuilding of St Paul's Cathedral and several other churches that were destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666. The 1861 London Coal and Wine Continuance Act enlarged the area for the collection of duties and over 200 coal tax posts (including this one) were erected to mark the new boundary. Some of the posts, including this one, have been restored by the Lower Mole Project.

5 → 6 Ashtead Common to Stew Ponds



It is worth taking a moment here to understand the importance of Ashtead Common, a National Nature Reserve, owned by the City of London. Ashtead Common was once the wasteland of the Manor of Ashtead and is steeped in history. There are many oak pollards, one example of which can be seen ahead, remnants of a medieval management system known as pasture woodland. This type of woodland had the dual purpose of providing grazing and shelter for domestic animals, whilst providing wood from the branches which were cut on a rotational basis about the browse line. Ashtead Common holds National Nature Reserve status for the pollards and the rare beetles associated with them.

With your back to the gate, turn left along the bridleway (signed to Epsom Common) passing the coal tax post on the left. At the first crossroads, keep straight ahead (still signed to Epsom Common). At the second crossroads (just after another coal tax post), go straight ahead on the bridleway signed to Christchurch

Road.

You are now within Epsom Common, a Local Nature Reserve, bought by the council in the 1930s. Follow the path winding downhill and you will pass a pond on the right (there is a second larger pond behind this). The two ponds were constructed by the Abbots of Chertsey in the 12th century. The larger, Great Pond, was restored in the 1970s after being drained when the dam was breached in the mid 1800s. The smaller pond is known as Stew Pond, which means fish pond.

6 → 7 Stew Ponds to End



Keep straight ahead along the bridleway (ignoring the first path on the left which only leads to a car park). Further along you will come to a signed junction with a vehicle barrier on the left. Fork left here (Bridleway 29), signed as the Thames Down Link. The path leads you to a crossing over Rushett Lane. Cross with care and continue on the bridleway ahead (signed to Horton Lane).

Across the fence to the left is the site of West Park Hospital, formerly a large psychiatric hospital, one of the five on the Horton Estate. Most of the site has now been redeveloped to a housing complex, Noble Park. Keep ahead past a couple of properties on the left and ignore the footpath signed to the right. Instead, bear left on the sandy track, cross over the Noble Park entrance road and then bear left along the fenced bridleway (with the Noble Park grounds through the fence on the left).

Follow the path with the tall wire fence on the left and after 100m you will come to a signed junction. Turn right here on the path which still forms part of the Thames Down Link. The path winds along the right-hand edge of open rough fields. Cross over a small tarmac lane and continue on the woodland footpath opposite. Bear right to merge with a wider green track. Follow the track as it bends left (signed to Chessington) and then turn immediately right (before the picnic field) to reach the Horton Country Park car park where the walk began.

This walk is part of the Explore Surrey collection, published through a collaboration between iFootpath and Surrey County Council.

Surrey is the ideal place to explore the outdoors on foot. Whether you're an adventurous walker or someone who prefers a short stroll, there's a walk to suit you.

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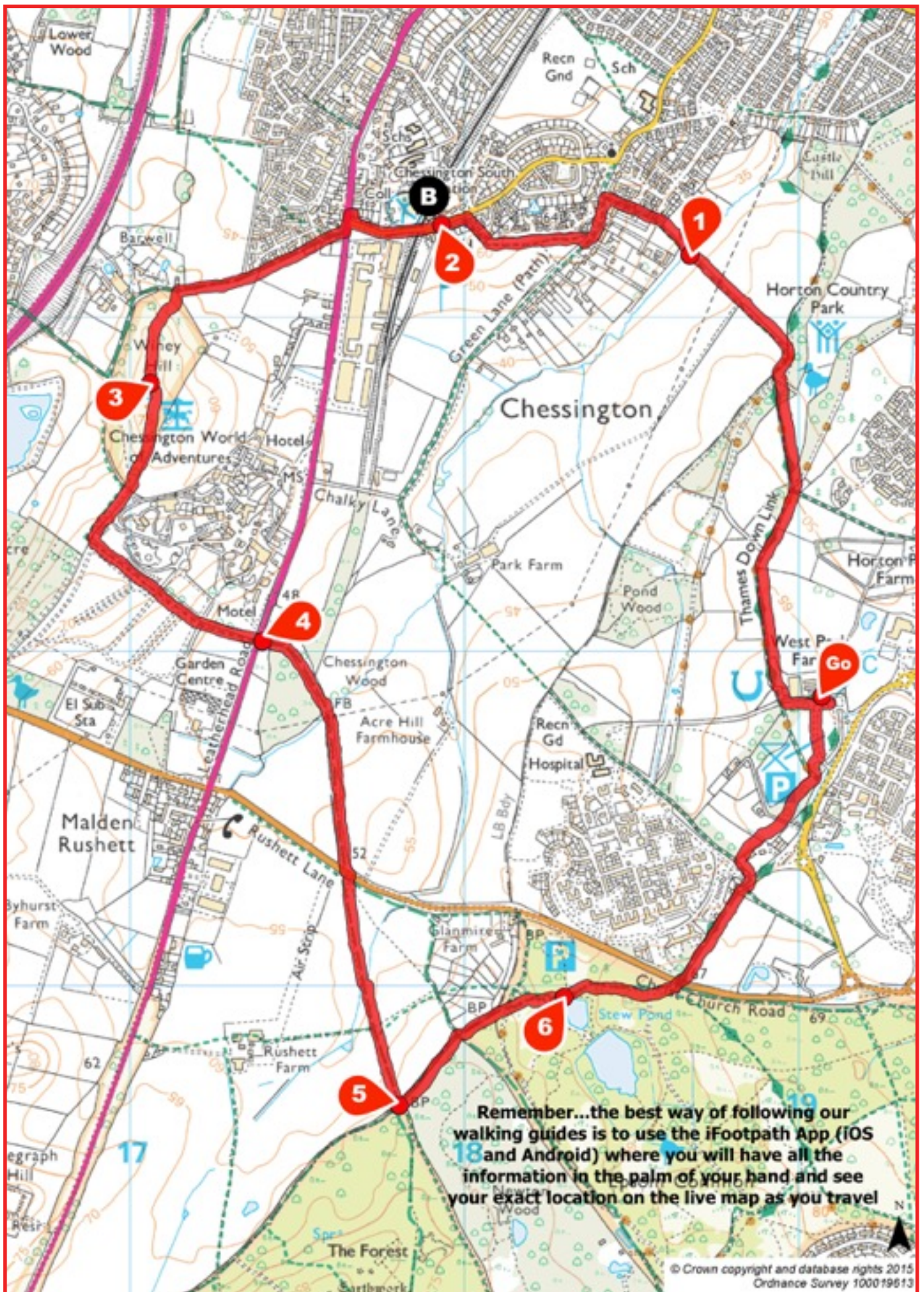
www.surreycc.gov.uk/explore

Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and an Ordnance Survey map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.



R Rail station

B Bus stop



Walking route

Go Start point

1 Waypoint