

## SILENT POOL AND ST MARTHA'S HILL



*Challenging Terrain*

**9.5 km  
Circular  
3 hours**

210716



### Access Notes

1. The walk has several climbs and descents throughout, including a steep climb up to the top of the North Downs.
2. Several of the paths can be muddy and some of the chalk slopes can be very slippery when wet so good boots are a must (or wellingtons with grips in the winter months).
3. You will need to negotiate some steps, one kissing gate and two stiles (both of which have open fence surrounds for dogs to pass through).
4. There is just one field, at the end, that may be holding livestock with the rest of the route following paths through heath and woodland.
5. The route crosses two busy roads so take particular care at these points.

**A 9.5km (6 mile) circular walk in the Surrey Hills, visiting a number of popular attractions including Silent Pool, a stretch of the North Downs Way, Newlands Corner and St Martha's Hill and offering superb views.**

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

There are public toilets and refreshment available at Newlands Corner (waypoint 2). Albury Vineyard is located alongside the car park at the start and end of the walk and offers wine tasting on most Saturdays (check the vineyard website for details). Ordnance Survey Map: Explorer 145 Guildford and Farnham. 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 from the Silent Pool free car park (which has width restrictions making it suitable for cars only). The car park is about 5 miles south east of Guildford and is accessed from the A25, just opposite the junction with the A248. Approximate post code GU5 9BW.

The Silent Pool car park can be very busy at peak times, in which case the walk can be easily adjusted to start at the other car parks on the way round. Newlands Corner car park is also on the A25 (with a fee of £4 per day - correct 2016), and you can start the directions from the section called Newlands Corner to Keepers Cottage. Alternatively, the St Martha's Hill car park on Guildford Lane is free and tends to be a little quieter with nearest post code GU5 9BG. (If you are starting here, start the directions within the section called St Martha's Church to Water Lane).

### Walk Sections

#### **Go → 1 Start to North Downs Way**

From the Silent Pool car park, take the path which starts between two noticeboards, about halfway along the car park's length. Follow this path heading away from the

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road and then swinging right to reach a junction with a vehicle track (with the entrance for Albury Vineyard to your left). Go straight ahead to reach the viewing platform at Sherbourne Pond, the newer of the two pools here. It was dug out in the 1600s to provide water to power fountains, grind animal feed and irrigate the vineyard that served Albury village.

When you have finished on the viewing platform, come back to the stone path and turn right along this, following the line of a fence on your right. NOTE: On the off-chance this permissive path is closed for maintenance, there is a footpath running parallel about 10 metres to your left (accessible just by the vineyard entrance).

Stay with the fence on your right as the path leads you past Sherbourne Pond and you will be able to see the cascading waterfalls at the far side. At a junction in the path you will come to Silent Pool ahead, with a handy bench to sit and drink in the atmosphere. Nestling in a hollow at the foot of the North Downs, Sherbourne Pond and Silent Pool are fed by springs and are known for the eerie blue hue to the water. It is a site of mystery and ancient legend.

Silent Pool has always been a popular place to visit and many feel an eerie stillness looking over the still water surrounded by the evergreen box trees. Legend has it that this is due to the fate of a woodcutter's daughter who was surprised by a nobleman on a horse as she bathed in the pool. Having failed to lure her to the bank, he rode his horse into the water and caused the girl to move into deeper water where she drowned. When the woodcutter returned and found her body, he also found the nobleman's hat floating on the water. It bore the crest of none other than Prince John!

Turn left up the flight of wooden steps to reach a T-junction with the higher parallel footpath. Turn right along this, with the vineyard running on your left. Stay with this path as it begins the steep climb up the North Downs (take care as the path can be very slippery). Underfoot and in the right-hand banks you will see the white chalk bedrock of the downs. Stay with this path all the way to the top of the hill where it meets a crossroads with the North Downs Way, marked with a fingerpost.

## 1 → 2 North Downs Way to Newlands Corner

Turn left to join the North Downs Way heading west. You will pass a waymarker post with a purple arrow and this Purple Ox Trail route is the one you will be following throughout. For this stretch, the North Downs Way follows a fairly level wide track, once a Drove Road which would have been used by farmers to move their livestock. The woodland verges are thick with bluebells in the late spring. The whole North Downs Way runs for a total of 153 miles, from Farnham to Dover (but don't worry,



we are not walking all of it today!).

Simply stay ahead on the North Downs Way, following it for some distance until you emerge alongside a vehicle barrier to reach a junction with the A25. Cross over with care (taking care to both listen and look for traffic as this can be a busy road). At the far side you will be greeted with the spectacular views for which Newlands Corner is famous. In the spring and summer the open grassland is covered in wildflowers and the woodland is alive with birdsong. The famous novelist Agatha Christie staged her disappearance from here in 1926, causing a huge search of the Downs.

Turn right along the stone path and follow it up into the car park at Newlands Corner. Bear left, to walk along the length of the car park, passing the toilets and visitor centre across to the right.

## 2 → 3 Newlands Corner to Keepers Cottage



Continue through the Newlands Corner car park, heading away from the road, all the way to its end. At the far end, pass alongside the vehicle barrier and continue directly ahead on the obvious path running along an avenue within the woodland. Pass alongside the next vehicle barrier and continue on the woodland track. Ignore any small paths into the clearings on the left, although these do make a nice detour to enjoy the views should you wish.

Further along, (within an often muddy stretch) keep a look out for a fingerpost on the right which marks a permissive horse ride on your right. Do NOT take this, instead keep ahead for 10 metres to reach a small waymarker post on your left (with the purple arrow). Turn left and follow this path into the trees. The path swings right leading you under the branches of several large yew trees. Immediately after these you will pick up the next waymarker. Follow the arrow which directs you onto the path swinging steadily left, heading downhill, and you will emerge into a parking area.



Cross over and take the continuing purple path directly ahead. The stone path swings left and then levels off. At the next waymarker post turn sharp right onto a stone path heading downhill through the trees. Keep left at the fork (Note: keep children and dogs close at this point as you are heading for a road). Pass through the staggered barrier to reach a junction with a quiet lane.

Cross over and take the steps directly ahead. At the top, the path swings left to run parallel with the road on your left. Stay with this roadside path as it leads you steadily downhill until you reach a T-junction with a half-timbered black and white cottage directly ahead, Keepers Cottage.

### 3 → 4 Keepers Cottage to St Martha's Church



Turn left (alongside the gate) and then immediately right onto the stone track signed as the North Downs Way, passing the cottage on your right. Soon after the fence ends on your right, you will pick up the next purple waymarker which confirms you are on the right path. Stay with this path which leads you to a major junction, marked with a couple of waymarker posts.

Turn right here to join the permissive horse ride, also marked with the purple arrow. Follow the main obvious path which winds and undulates along the northern edge of St Martha's Hill, passing between several tall coniferous trees. As you pick up the next waymarker post, stay with the purple trail which bears left heading uphill to reach a T-junction. Turn right and you will pass a stone boundary marker dating from 1933.

20 metres later, turn left onto a sandy path leading you uphill once again. At the top of the hill you will come to St Martha's Church directly ahead. Part of the church dates back to the Norman period. Several circular earthworks nearby suggest a much longer history of occupation.

### 4 → 5 St Martha's Church to Water Lane

Turn left immediately before the church, joining the North Downs Way once again and passing the church immediately on your right. Beyond the churchyard, keep ahead on the most obvious path which bears right leading you to the southern edge of the hilltop. Take time to enjoy the superb views here which stretch for miles. The two villages in the valley below are Chilworth (ahead) and Albury (to the left). An obvious landmark is the red brick tower of St Peter and St Paul's Church in Albury.



Turn left to join the wide sandy path with the fence and views running on your right. Just as the fence ends you will come to a fork, keep right and follow this path fairly steeply downhill. Stay with the main path (following the purple arrows) heading gently downhill, ignoring all the side paths. Towards the bottom you will pass a brick pillbox on your left and, soon afterwards, the path leads you directly into the St Martha's Hill car park on Guildford Lane.

Leave the St Martha's Hill car park through the vehicle entrance. Turn right along Guildford Lane for 50 metres and then turn left to join the signed public bridleway (picking up the next purple arrow waymarker that this route follows). Stay with the left-hand fence line and, further along, the path leads you past a woodland on your right (which is filled with bluebells in the late spring). Beyond the woodland you will come to a crossroads with a grass track.

Go straight ahead through the gap in the hedge and walk diagonally right across the field (at about 1 o'clock). As your path reaches the right-hand fence line, fork right between the old gate posts to join a narrower path into the trees and scrub. Stay with the path as it leads you steadily downhill and then makes a steeper descent to reach a junction with a sunken lane, Water Lane.

### 5 → 6 Water Lane to End



Turn left and then immediately right to join the stone access track, a public bridleway. After passing a house on the right, keep directly ahead alongside a gate and follow the path between fields. Simply follow this path climbing steadily and eventually you will reach a property on your right, Timbercroft.

Continue ahead, passing the house on the right and a smallholding paddock on the left (where you may see pigmy goats and chickens). Beyond this paddock, follow the vehicle track ahead and at the fork bear right to join a smaller path leading you through the trees. Further along you will come to a

junction with the concrete access track for a waste facility site, so take care of any lorries. Cross over and continue ahead on the woodland path.

This stretch of path will lead you to a stile. Cross the stile into the field (which may be holding livestock) and walk straight ahead following the left-hand fence line. You will be able to see another of Albury's churches ahead and to your right. At the far side cross the stile and then go through the kissing gate to reach the A248. Cross over with care and turn left along the pavement (which is separated from the road with a hedge). You will come to the junction with the A25 dual carriageway. Use the designated crossing point to cross the dual carriageway, taking particular care as the traffic is quite fast moving. At the far side turn left along the pavement and you will come to the Silent Pool car park on your right where the walk began.

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#### 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.





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## Waypoint

## Start point

### Walking route

## Bus stop

## Rail station