

DISCOVER GATTON



Moderate Terrain

**3.5 km
Circular
1 to 1.5 hours**

141216



Access Notes

1. Gatton Park is very popular so arrive early on peak days otherwise you may find the car park full.
2. The walk has several slopes throughout, including a couple of quite steep sections.
3. Most of the route follows stone tracks but the sections of path through woodland can be muddy and slippery in places, particularly in wet weather.
4. There are no stiles, steps or kissing gates on route, but you will need to negotiate some staggered barrier gaps alongside vehicle gates (which are approximately 1 metre wide but have tight corners). According to the National Trust, the wide gates alongside these staggered barriers are normally unlocked Easter to October.
5. As such, it would be probably be possible to take a rugged pushchair or disability buggy around the route Easter to October, assuming you can handle the steep sections.
6. Dogs are welcome in Gatton Park, please keep them on leads for the short sections where advised, as sheep are often grazing in the adjacent parkland.

A 3.5km (2 mile) circular easy-access walk around Gatton Park in Surrey, a beautiful area of parkland designed by Lancelot Capability Brown, giving you a glimpse into its diverse history.

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

There are toilets and a popular cafe kiosk (the Urban Kitchen) in the car park at the start of the walk. Ordnance Survey Map: Explorer 146 Dorking, Box Hill and Reigate. 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

Gatton Park is located to the north of Reigate in Surrey, just south of Junction 8 on the M25. The walk starts and finishes from the free Wray Lane countryside car park. The nearest post code is **RH2 0HX**, but as the majority of Wray Lane is a one-way street please check your route rather than relying on Sat Nav. From Junction 8 of the M25, take the A217 south towards Reigate. Stay in the left-hand lane (signed to Merstham) and as you approach the junction, ignore the first left (Gatton Bottom) and instead take the next left (Wray Lane). You will find the car park almost immediately on your right. For help with planning your journey by public transport please visit <http://journeys.travelsmartsurrey.info>.

Walk Sections



Start to Viewpoint

From the car park, walk back towards the vehicle entrance and join the stone path just to the right of this which leads you to the crossing point on Wray Lane. Cross over and go ahead, passing the National Trust sign that marks the entrance to Gatton Park. This path is also part of the North Downs Way.

Follow the path as it swings right and you will come to a fork with a black metal post. (This is the first of many posts along this circular trail). Keep right, following the path downhill; the park's original carriage drive. You will come to another fork at the second black metal post,

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keep left here and follow the driveway as it swings steadily left to reach the third black post at the edge of the fenced section of parkland.

Keep straight ahead, on the relatively level path with the fence running on your right. Soon you will come to a bench on the left, a great place to pause and admire the views across the parkland. Now is a good time to learn a little about the history of your surroundings. Gatton Park, an area of 600 acres, was landscaped in the mid-1700s. Historically, deer would have been enclosed in parklands, but over the centuries they evolved into formal landscapes designed to impress and display the wealth of the owner. The last private owner of the Gatton estate was Jeremiah Colman, most famous for Colman's Mustard. In 1934 a fire gutted the main house and in 1948 the estate was sold to the Royal Alexandra and Albert School. Today, the furthest half of the estate is managed by the Gatton Trust (with public access on a few days per year) and this half is managed by the National Trust (with public access all year round).

1 → 2 Viewpoint to Stone Circle



Continue along the path, with the fence still on your right. Where the fence ends, keep ahead as the path continues steadily downhill between trees. Further along, you will pass Black Post 4 on your left, standing beside a lone yew tree. Simply continue on the main carriage drive, still descending steadily. Towards the bottom, the path runs close to a road on your left, so keep children and dogs close.

At the bottom, the path leads you past the white stone Tower Lodge on your left. Built of Gatton Stone, this was once one of the main park entrances, but today has been converted into private cottages. Immediately after the lodge, you will see Black Post 5 marking a T-junction. Turn right to join the tarmac vehicle access lane. Soon you will come to another bench on the right should you wish to pause again and enjoy the views.

Follow the vehicle track through a gateway ahead and you will come to the Stone Circle within a pasture on your right. The

Stone Circle was commissioned as part of the millennium celebrations of the year 2000. It comprises 10 standing stones, each carved from Caithness Stone and each one representing a 200-year time period within the 2000 years. The first stone is inscribed with words from St John's Gospel and the subsequent nine stones are each inscribed with quotations contemporary with one 200-year period after this, including Shakespeare and TS Elliot.

2 → 3 Stone Circle to Nut Wood



Continue along the driveway as it bears left, until you reach a fingerpost just before reaching a set of properties. Turn sharp right here, leaving the North Downs Way to join the signed bridleway and passing Black Post 6 on your left. Follow the bridleway leading you between fences with the Stone Circle now in the field on your right.

On the left, you will pass one of the lakes within the parkland, hop garden pond. Gatton Park was landscaped by the leading landscape architect of the time, Lancelot Capability Brown. The parkland is typical of his most impressive creations with uninterrupted grassland punctuated by clumps of trees planted on prominent mounds to exaggerate their size. From this lake, a series of linking ponds wind their way down the valley to the largest lake at the bottom. Hop garden pond feeds the engine pond via an underground culvert. The overflow from the engine pond passes over the cascade, through the Japanese garden and into the serpentine. The serpentine is a long winding canal which winds along the western edge of the park. This feature was one of Brown's trademarks and would have been used for punting and as a place to stroll in the evening. The serpentine then falls into the main lake again through a culvert. The ponds all sit within the Gatton Trust section of the parkland and can be visited for a small fee on several open days each year or at the annual Countryside Fair.

Beyond the lake, the bridleway begins to climb steadily, leading you through the centre of the parkland. Views soon open up on your left, down across the parkland lakes and beyond to the continuation of the North Downs ridge. At the top of the slope, you will approach some houses and farm buildings, with a garden fence beginning on your left. A few metres along, keep right at the fork, passing alongside the wide vehicle gate. 20 paces later, you will see Black Post 7 on your left. Turn sharp right here to join the stone track leading steeply up into Nut Wood. (In fact, all the woodland paths in Nut Wood are open access so you are welcome to follow an alternative route if you prefer).

3 → 4 Nut Wood to End

Pass alongside the next wide gate and then stay ahead on the



main track leading you steadily uphill. You will find another bench on your right where you will be rewarded with excellent views (perhaps the best so far) across the park and far beyond. Stay with the woodland path as it swings left and continues to climb.

Eventually the path begins to level off, bearing left to reach a wide wooden gate. Pass through the gap to the left of this and you will come to a T-junction with a bench on your right and Black Post 8 on your left. Turn right and follow the track climbing steadily once again to reach the highest point in the park.

Beyond the brow of the hill, follow the main track which leads you down to a vehicle gate ahead. Pass through the gap to the right of this and stay with the path as it swings right with a fence now running on your right. Here you will have your final view across the parkland. Keep ahead, climbing steadily, to reach Black Post 9 on your left. Bear right, staying with the fence line on your right and continue until you reach the next black post, this is Black Post 3 that you passed on your outward leg. From this point you will be retracing your steps back to the car park.

To do this, turn left at Black Post 3 and stay with the main path as it swings right (passing Black Post 2). Simply stay with this main path which will lead you back to the car park where the walk began. Before you leave, it is worth spending some time enjoying the amazing views to the south from the car park. You may like to get yourself some refreshments from the Urban Kitchen kiosk and spend some time on one of the many benches or deck chairs here.

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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.



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