

RUNNYMEDE MEMORIAL TRAIL



Challenging Terrain

7 km
Circular
3 hours

230816



Access Notes

1. The walk has several climbs and descents throughout.
2. The majority of the paths are unsurfaced and so can get very muddy at times and the route also crosses some water meadows which can have standing water, so good boots are a must and wellingtons will be needed in the wetter months.
3. There are no stiles on route, but you will need to negotiate some kissing gates and some steps.
4. There are a few road crossings that need particular care.
5. A couple of the fields may be holding livestock so take care with dogs.
6. The Air Forces Memorial is closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

A 7km (4.5 mile) circular walk from Cooper's Hill in Englefield Green taking in the Runnymede meadows, a stretch of the River Thames and visiting three beautiful memorials along the way, the John F Kennedy Memorial, the Magna Carta Memorial and the Air Forces Memorial.

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

There are public toilets alongside the car park at the start of the walk, and in the summer months there is a refreshment chalet alongside the River Thames. If you are looking for refreshments after your walk, you will find many pubs, restaurants and cafes in Englefield Green. Ordnance Survey Map: Explorer 160 Windsor, Weybridge and Bracknell. 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 free car park on Cooper's Hill Lane, just north of Englefield Green. The car park is alongside the recreation ground (at the junction between Hollycombe and Cooper's Hill Lane) and is marked with brown tourism signs as the car park for the Air Forces Memorial.

The nearest post code is for Hollycombe **TW20 0LQ**.

For help with planning your journey by public transport please visit <http://journeys.travelsmartsurrey.info>.

Walk Sections

1 Start to Priest Hill Farm

Leave the car park onto Cooper's Hill Lane and turn left along the road (heading away from the signed Air Forces Memorial, which we will visit at the end of the walk), taking care of any traffic. Pass between a handful of houses and then ignore the side road on the left, simply follow the main lane ahead with a red brick boundary wall

Get the iFootpath App for a smarter walking experience. Hundreds of walking guides in the palm of your hand with live maps that show your progress as you walk. Say goodbye to wrong turns!

get iFOOTPATH



iFootpath.com



running on the right.

NOTE: Extra care is needed for the next stretch as the main road can be busy. Follow the lane all the way to the T-junction at the end (keeping left at the fork to reach this). With care, turn right along the narrow grass verge and follow this steadily downhill (along Priest Hill). You can cross over the road to join the pavement running on the left-hand side of the road if you prefer.

Part way down the hill, turn right through the white gate to join the tarmac lane signed as a public footpath. Simply follow this tarmac lane leading you steadily downhill for some distance. At the bottom you will reach Priest Hill Farm.

1 → 2 Priest Hill Farm to Magna Carta Memorial



Keep straight ahead (passing the buildings of Priest Hill Farm on your right) to join the unmade track leading you past a National Trust Runnymede sign on your left. At the junction, keep straight ahead and the path will lead you directly to a cobbled clearing which is home to the simple stone memorial to John F Kennedy. The 7-ton block of Portland Stone is thought to be around 100 million years old.

With your back to the memorial, walk straight ahead and follow the cobbled steps (the steps of individuality) continuing downhill. There are 50 steps in all, each representing one of the States of the USA. Each of the cobble sets are said to represent the multitude of pilgrims on their journey to enlightenment.

At the bottom of the steps, go through the kissing gate into Runnymede fields and turn right, following the stream and boundary fence on your right. Just before you reach the field corner, turn right through the wooden gate to enter the site of the Magna Carta Memorial, which is worth taking your time to explore.

The Magna Carta (which translates from Latin as the Great Charter) is a charter that was agreed by King John in these very fields back in 1215. The charter was written in a bid to make peace between the King and a group of rebel barons who strongly believed the King should not be above the law. Runnymede was chosen as the meeting place to sign the charter as it was located on neutral ground between the royal fortress at Windsor Castle and the rebel's base in Staines. The water-logged nature of the meadows also gave reassurance to both sides that they would not face military threat. Magna Carta represented a major step forward in political reform, promising protection of church rights, protection from illegal imprisonment, access to swift justice and limitations on royal powers. Many of these principles still stand today including trial by jury and other civil liberties. The domed classical temple memorial, dedicated in 1957, is a tribute to Magna Carta and was built of Portland Stone with eight octagonal pillars. Surrounding the memorial are eight English oak trees.

2 → 3 Magna Carta Memorial to Queen Elizabeth Statue



When you have finished exploring the memorial, leave via the gate from which you entered. Turn right for a few paces to reach the field corner. Do NOT go through the gate ahead, instead turn left along the field edge heading towards the road, with the wire fence running on your right. On your right you will pass a memorial plaque, marking the 800-year anniversary celebration of Magna Carta held in June 2015.

As you reach the road ahead, turn right through the kissing gate (NOTE: this field may be holding livestock) and follow the field edge with the fence and road running on your left. After 150 metres, turn left through the kissing gate and cross over Windsor Road with care, using the central island. At the far side, keep ahead across the grass verge and then turn right to join the Thames Path, with the River Thames running on your left and the road running on your right.

Continue on the Thames Path, following the river downstream and, further along, stay with the river as it swings left leading you away from the road. On the right you will come to a relatively new statue, of Queen Elizabeth II, which was unveiled in June 2015 as part of the 800-year anniversary Magna Carta celebrations. In front of the statue is an extract from Magna Carta that still forms part of today's statutes: No free man shall be taken, imprisoned, stripped of his rights or possessions, outlawed or exiled or in any way ruined nor will We proceed against or prosecute him, except by the lawful judgement of his peers and by the law of the land. To no one will We sell, to no one deny or delay right to justice.

3 → 4 Queen Elizabeth Statue to Bell Weir Lock



Simply continue along the Thames Path with the river running on your left and the fields of Runnymede Pleasure Grounds on your right. You will pass the paddling pool and refreshment chalet on your right (and there are also signs for public toilets should you need them). Stay with the riverside path, keeping left at the fork to pass Wraysbury Skiff and Punting Club on your right.

Follow the riverside path passing properties lining each side of the river. Just beyond the large black commercial building on your right, ignore the bridleway signed to the right. Simply keep ahead on the Thames Path and you will come to a boatyard.

Your route will eventually turn to the right at this point but, before continuing, it is worth taking a detour further along the river to enjoy more river life. Keep ahead along the towpath, going over the humped bridge and continue until you reach Bell Weir Lock. In the summer this is a hive of activity as boats queue to pass through the lock, heading up and downstream. In the winter months, however, you are more likely to see birdlife here. We were lucky enough to see seven cormorants using the weir's infrastructure as fishing posts.

4 → 5 Bell Weir Lock to Cooper's Hill



When you have finished enjoying your time at the lock, turn round and walk back along the towpath heading back to the boatyard. Cross the humped bridge over the water inlet and, immediately after the boatyard buildings, turn left down the tarmac access road, called Yard Mead. At the end of the road you will come to a junction with Windsor Road. Cross over with care and go through the staggered barrier to enter the field ahead. Take the tarmac path which leads you across the field at about 11 o'clock.

About 10 paces before the wooden barrier at the end of the field, stop and look to the right. You will see a choice of two subtle grass paths across the grass water meadow. Take the right-hand of these two paths, heading for the summit of the tree-covered hill in the distance (you may be able to see a cream-coloured property peeping above the hilltop treeline). Follow this (often boggy) path directly ahead, passing through a small belt of reeds and trees and on to reach a wooden kissing gate at the far end. NOTE: If the ground is too waterlogged you could divert and follow the left-hand field boundary instead.

Pass through the kissing gate to enter a pasture (which may have livestock) and walk in the same direction, up the hillside to reach the gate at the top. Pass through the kissing gate to reach a junction with a rough vehicle track, Cooper's Hill.

5 → 6 Cooper's Hill to End



Turn right joining the tarmac track which leads you steeply uphill. Further along, the track leads you past the entrance gates for a property on your left. Eventually, towards the top of the hill, ignore the gate into Cooper's Hill Wood on your right. Simply stay with the main track which swings left and then becomes a road passing university halls of residence on your left. Beyond these buildings, stay with the vehicle lane swinging right. After 40 metres you will reach the entrance gates for the Air Forces Memorial on your right. This is well worth exploring.

The memorial, unveiled in 1953, consists of a shrine enclosed by cloisters. More than 116,000 men and women of the commonwealth air forces gave their lives during World War II. This memorial is a fitting tribute to the 20,000 with no known graves. Make your way through the central courtyard (noting the names listed within the cloisters) and, at the far side, you will find a balcony with views across the River Thames. If you able, it is well worth climbing the spiral staircase to reach the roof-top viewing platform. On a clear day this will give you magnificent views of Windsor Castle, Heathrow Airport and beyond.

When you have finished exploring, return to the road and turn right to continue your journey. Continue past the Air Forces Memorial Lodge on your right and, further along you will come to the Cooper's Hill Lane car park on your left, where the walk began. If you are looking for refreshments, it is just a short drive into Englefield Green where you will find a number of pubs, cafes and restaurants.

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.

If you would like to know more about Explore Surrey and find more walks please visit

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.

