

BANSTEAD COUNTRYSIDE WALK



Challenging Terrain

**8 km
Circular
3 hours**

120618



Access Notes

1. The walking route includes climbs and descents (some of which are quite steep) throughout and follows a mixture of field, woodland and grassland paths.
2. There are many intersecting paths in parts of the commons, so the iFootpath App's live GPS map will be the best tool to aid navigation.
3. Some stretches can get muddy and slippery after periods of rain and in winter, so good boots are a must (or wellies with grips in the winter months).
4. You will need to negotiate several kissing gates and bridle gates plus some steps, but there are no stiles or livestock on route.
5. There is no road walking involved, but there are a couple of road crossings that need care.

A circular walk of just over 8km (5 miles) around the Banstead countryside, close to Chipstead in Surrey.

This beautiful route follows paths through chalk grassland, mixed woodlands and open farmland, all rich habitats for a range of wildlife and flowers. Several of the woodlands are filled with bluebells in the late spring and the chalk grasslands are home to rare plants such as greater yellow rattle and orchids. This walk is part of the Explore Surrey collection, published through a collaboration between iFootpath and Surrey County Council.

There are no refreshments or other facilities directly on route, but you will find The Ramblers Rest on Outwood Lane, just a short drive from the car park. The area is covered by 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

The walk starts and finishes from Holly Lane car park (which is free of charge and has a 1.9m height restriction barrier), near Chipstead in Surrey. The start of the trail can be reached by public transport. Chipstead rail station is around 500m from Holly Lane car park, about a five-minute walk. For help with planning your journey by public transport please visit <http://journeys.travelsmartsurrey.info>.

Approximate post code **CR5 3NR**.

Walk Sections



Start to Crossroads

Standing in the Holly Lane car park with your back to the vehicle exit barrier, walk directly ahead up the slope to reach the enlarged wooden kissing gate (in the middle of the top car park boundary). Pass through this gate and follow the path past one information board on your right and then past a fenced information area on your left. As you reach the first fingerpost, continue ahead on the footpath signed to Perrotts Farm. (On this fingerpost you will notice the first of the Banstead Countryside Walk waymark symbols – a green ring with a brown bird at the centre. You will notice this waymark symbol throughout

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the route).

Pass under the boughs of a large yew tree and you will see a choice of three paths ahead. Take the left-hand option and follow this path with a wire fence running on your left and Banstead Woods immediately on your right. This stretch of path is known as the Yew Walk, and you will pass a number of beautiful yew trees. Further along the path, you will reach a bench on your right and kissing gate on your left, a good spot to pause and enjoy the views over the valley should you wish.

Ignore the kissing gate, simply continue on the same path which later leads you along a narrow tree belt, with the chalk grasslands of Chipstead Downs visible both to your left and right. Ignore any side paths, simply continue on this tree-belt path which eventually bends left and downhill to reach a crossroads with a tall fingerpost on your right.

1 → 2 Crossroads to Coal Tax Post



Turn right here to join the public footpath signed to Banstead Woods. This path leads you ahead, with a wire fence on your left and trees on your right. When the wire fence on your left ends, simply continue ahead on the obvious woodland path. The path climbs steadily and leads you past an impressive line of old beech trees. Beyond these trees you will come to a fork. Take the right-hand branch and, just 30 paces later, you will reach a fingerpost marking a T-junction in the path.

Turn left to continue on the Banstead Countryside Walk and follow the woodland path meandering ahead. NOTE: The next landmark and turn is easy to miss, so pay close attention and use the iFootpath App's live GPS map to help guide you. After about 250 metres, look out within the trees to your right for a waist-high, white-painted, cast-iron post. This is set back from the path by about 15 metres or so and is a Coal Tax Post which dates from 1861. After the Great Fire of London, a duty on coal entering London was introduced to fund the rebuilding of the city. In 1861 an Act of Parliament changed the boundary for coal tax and a ring of these posts (between 12 and 18 miles from

London) were installed to show the boundary within which duty was payable. Click the Listen button below for more details (App only)...

2 → 3 Coal Tax Post to Rail Underpass



Stay on the same path for only a further 10 metres, to reach a small side path to your left. (The waymarker post at this junction was toppled and laying in the undergrowth at the time of writing). Turn left here and follow the narrow path winding steeply downhill – take care as this path is steep and can be slippery. Towards the bottom, go down the flight of steps and then turn left through a kissing gate.

A few paces beyond the gate, the path emerges from the trees and continues along the left-hand edge of a grass meadow, with woodland on your left and the rail line visible down to your right. Continue to a point about 100 metres before the end of the grass meadow, where you will see a choice of paths. Turn right here (at 90 degrees), heading directly down the slope. Pass through an old gateway and kissing gate and keep ahead to pass under the railway via the brick arch.

3 → 4 Rail Underpass to Reads Rest Lane



After passing under the railway you will come to a path T-junction. Turn right on the path signed towards Kingswood. Follow this fenced and tree-lined path, with the railway running to your right. After just 200 metres, pass through the kissing gate ahead to enter Chiphouse Wood, managed by the Woodland Trust.

Follow the main wide path leading you ahead through the woodland. This is a section of ancient semi-natural woodland and you will notice mature oak and beech trees as well as the

rich ground flora. If you are walking in late spring, you will be lucky enough to enjoy the bluebell spectacle here. In autumn the colours of the spindle trees are very striking.

At the far end of Chiphouse Wood, you will emerge via a kissing gate to reach a T-junction with a public bridleway. Turn right (signed to Reads Rest Lane) and almost immediately, you will pass another Coal Tax Post on your right. The bridleway leads you under the railway and then continues very gently uphill between hedgerows. Eventually you will emerge via a bridle gate to reach a T-junction with a track, known as Reads Rest Lane.

4 ➔ 5 Reads Rest Lane to Ruffett Wood



Turn left along Reads Rest Lane and follow this to pass a pair of white cottages, Reads Rest Cottages, on your right. Immediately after these cottages, turn right onto a farm track, passing old and new barns on your right and passing alongside a gate to reach the corner of a crop field. Bear left to follow the field edge path with a hedgerow running on your left.

About half way along this very large crop field, you will come to a tall fingerpost on your left. Turn right here on the public footpath signed to Holly Lane (ignoring the incorrect Banstead Countryside Walk symbol which falsely directs you ahead). The well-walked footpath leads you diagonally through the crops to reach a tree line and fingerpost at the far side.

Bear right (signed Holly Lane), passing alongside an old kissing gate and passing through a tree belt. You will emerge to the corner of a second crop field. Turn left to follow the field edge path, with the trees running on your left. Before the end of the field, fork left (alongside an old kissing gate) to join the path which runs along the edge of the woodland.

As you reach a fingerpost, ignore the footpath off to the left, instead continue ahead and you will soon emerge to the corner of a third crop field. Keep straight ahead along the edge of this third crop field, with the woodland known as Ruffett Wood (another bluebell woodland) on your right and fine views of a hillside mansion in the distance ahead.

5 ➔ 6 Ruffett Wood to Park Downs

Follow the field-edge path winding ahead and down to reach a T-junction with a fingerpost. Turn left (signed to Holly Lane) and follow the path along the edge of the field and then entering a tree belt (alongside an old stile). Ignore the two side paths, instead go straight ahead to follow the narrow path climbing through the trees. At the fork, take the right-hand branch which leads you over the brow of the rise and then descends,



emerging to a concrete access road alongside Holly Lane.

Walk straight ahead, crossing the access road and then crossing Holly Lane itself (take care on this crossing, as this is at the very edge of the 30mph stretch of road and cars are often travelling more quickly). After crossing the road, dog-leg right and then left to reach the corner of a crop field. Walk ahead along the field-edge path with the tree line on your left. As your path continues to climb, you will be rewarded with lovely views.

At the far end of this field, turn right, heading downhill along the field edge for about 50 metres to reach a fingerpost on your left. Turn left here (signed to Park Road) and follow the path leading you into woodland. This woodland marks the start of the area known as Park Downs.

6 ➔ 7 Park Downs to End



Follow the path leading you through the short section of woodland and emerging into the chalk grassland. Keep ahead on the obvious path which leads you along the length of Park Downs, a mosaic of grassland and woodland. In summer rare plants such as greater yellow rattle and many orchids grow here, including pyramidal, bee and fly orchids. These plants support a large population of butterflies, including common and chalkhill blue, orange tip and various skippers such as small and large. There are also interesting birds here, look out for summer-visiting warblers such as whitethroats.

You will come to a waymarker post, marking a junction of multiple paths. Go straight ahead, following the line of a fence on your right, for 100 metres to reach the Banstead Commons noticeboard. Pass this noticeboard on your right and continue for a further 90 metres to reach a fork. Take the smaller left-hand path which leads you through the trees to reach Park Road.

Cross Park Road with care and continue on the footpath on the far side. The path swings steadily left to reach a fork. Take the

left-hand branch, marked with a tall waymarker post. Follow this woodland path ahead, with a chain-link fence (and later a wooden fence) visible just to your left. After around 400 metres you will reach a fingerpost on your left (keep your eyes peeled as this is easy to miss).

Turn right here to join the signed permissive path, a narrow, subtle path which winds downhill through the trees. After the first short stretch, the path bears left and continues cutting diagonally downhill through the woodland. You will emerge from the trees to the corner of a grass clearing. Go straight ahead, crossing over another grass path and then following the left-hand edge of the clearing which leads you downhill. At the bottom you will emerge to the road. Turn left along the verge for a few paces and then turn right across the two roads with care (Park Road and Holly Lane) to reach the car park where the walk began.

If you wish to extend your walk, you can follow the 3 mile iFootpath walk called Explore Surrey: Banstead Woods Nature Trail, which also starts from this car park.

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

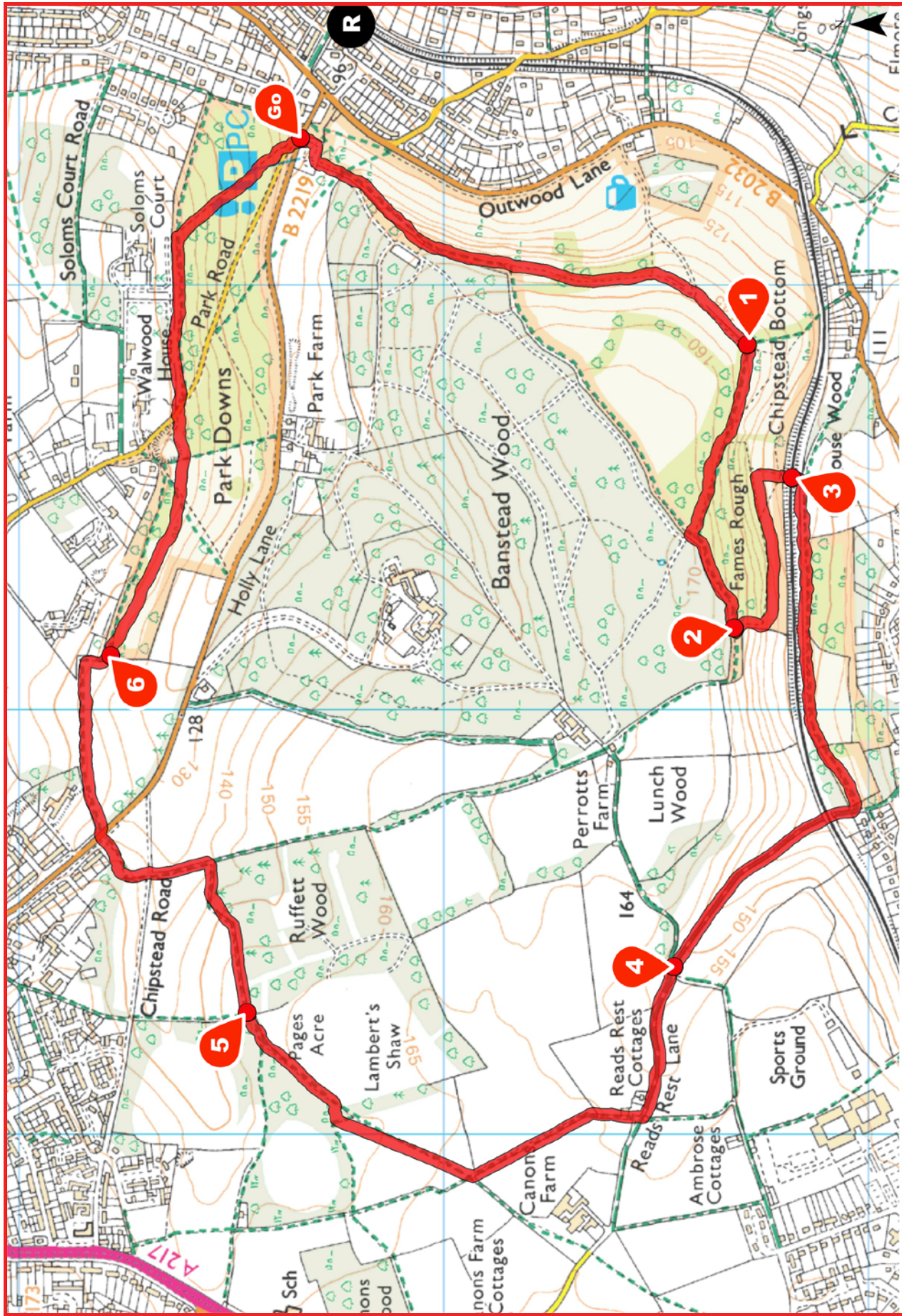
www.surreycc.gov.uk/explore

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.



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R

Rail station

B

Bus stop

Walking route

Go

Start point

1

Waypoint