

## How to get there

The area is accessible on foot, cycle, by car or by public transport.

Nearby railway stations include Riddlesdown, Upper Warlingham, Whyteleafe and Kenley.

For train timetables and information contact National Rail [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk), 08457484950

There are bus links from central Croydon, 412 (to Purley) which stops along the A2022, Mitchley Hill, and the 403 (West Croydon to Warlingham) stops along Limsfield Road for access into the Whitgift Field.

For travel times and details contact London Travel Information on 0843 222 1234 or visit [www.tfl.org.uk](http://www.tfl.org.uk)

## Car parks

Available at Whyteleafe Recreation Ground, 3 hours maximum stay, height barrier, for opening times contact Tandridge District Council 01883 732967

Explore the beautiful countryside which extends from the chalk downland of Sanderstead through open fields and woodland to the Bourne river valley and Whyteleafe.

Further information is available from:

Sanderstead to Whyteleafe Countryside Warden, based at the Downslands Countryside Management Project Depot, in Park Road, Caterham on the Hill, Tel. 01883 341140

Emergency telephones are available at the entrances from Downs Court Road, Eskdale Gardens, Honister Heights and Tithepit Shaw Lane. Their locations are shown on the map overleaf.

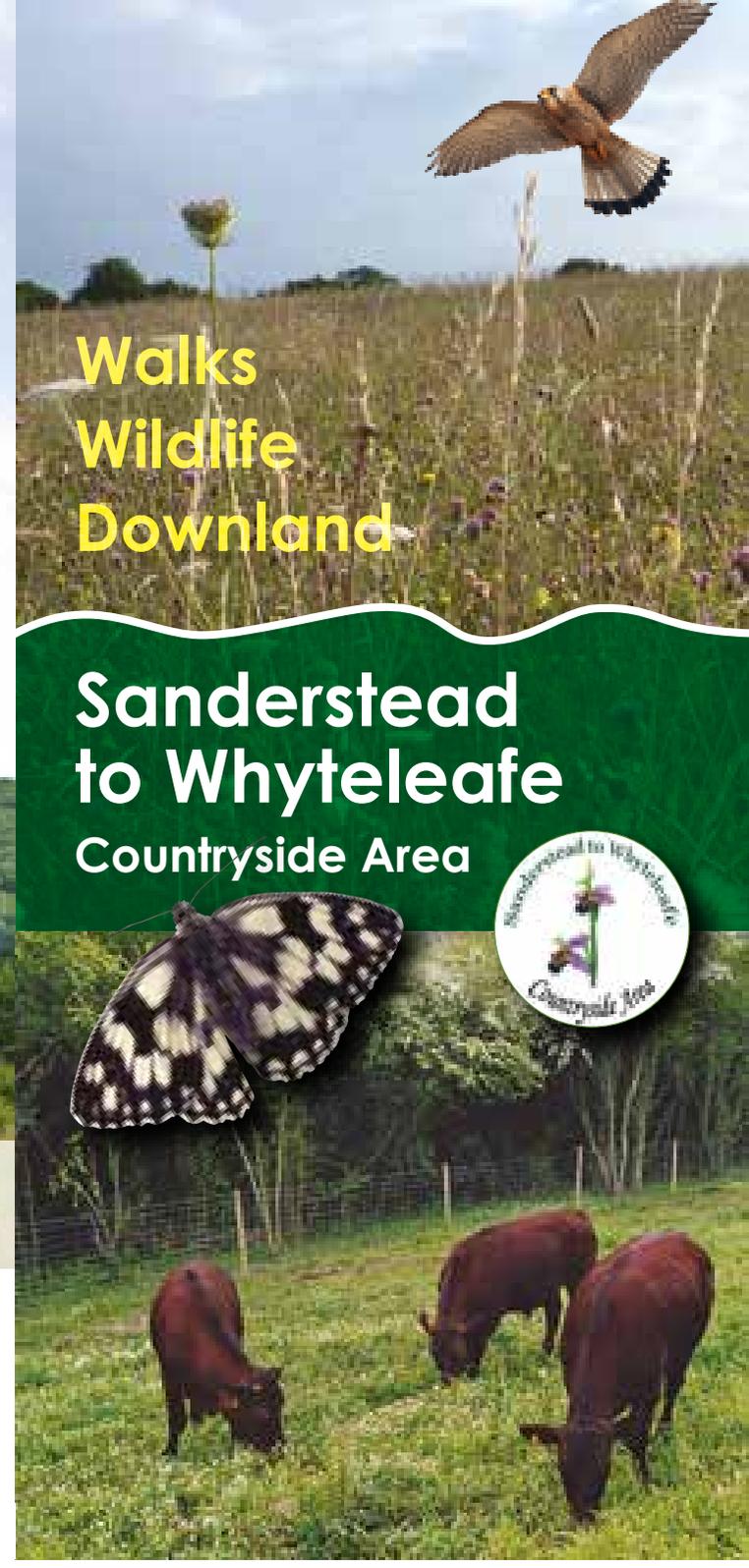


Great care has been taken to provide accurate information in this leaflet, however the London Borough of Croydon, Tandridge District Council and the Whitgift Foundation cannot be held responsible for any errors, omissions or subsequent changes.



Walks  
Wildlife  
Downland

Sanderstead  
to Whyteleafe  
Countryside Area





## Local walks

There are two self guided walks that cross the Sanderstead to Whyteleafe Countryside Area. Why not use these to discover some of the sights and views the area has to offer.

### London LOOP

The 150 mile London Outer Orbital Path (LOOP) is a long distance footpath which encircles Greater London. The route is divided into 24 sections accessible by public transport. Section 5 – Hamsey Green to Farthing Downs – passes through the Sanderstead to Whyteleafe Countryside Area. Each section is signposted and has its own leaflet. For more information or copies of the leaflets for the local area contact the Downlands Countryside Management Project on 01737 737700 or email [downlands@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:downlands@surreycc.gov.uk).

## Warlingham Countryside Walk

This 10.5km or 6.5mile walk starts at the White Lion Pub in Warlingham. The walk takes in some nice views and crosses field and woods. Copies can be obtained from Warlingham Parish Council 01883 342876 and downloaded from their webpage <http://warlinghampc.org.uk>

### Other walks

More leaflets with self guided walks in the North Downs area are available from the Downland Countryside Management Project by calling 01737 737700 or email [downlands@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:downlands@surreycc.gov.uk).

Riddlesdown Common, which borders the Sanderstead to Whyteleafe Countryside Area, is managed by the City of London.

The Countryside Warden offers regular guided walks and volunteer taster sessions across the area and throughout the year. All events are advertised in the Croydon Council publication 'Into the Great Green Yonder', which offers free guided walks through Croydon's parks and open spaces. The programme is available from all Croydon libraries, or by calling Parks on 020 8726 6900. It can also be downloaded <http://www.croydon.gov.uk/leisure/parksandopenspaces/walks>

Please respect this place and other visitors by following the Countryside Code:

#### Respect – Protect – Enjoy

- **Keep dogs under close control and clean up after them**
- **Do not pick wild flowers or disturb wildlife and grazing animals**
- **Camping, fires, barbequing and motorcycling are not permitted**
- **Take your litter home**

The Sanderstead to Whyteleafe Countryside Area lies on the border of Purley and Whyteleafe forming part of the North Downs. This beautiful 200 acre area includes downland, fields, woodland and scrub.



Butterfly Orchid

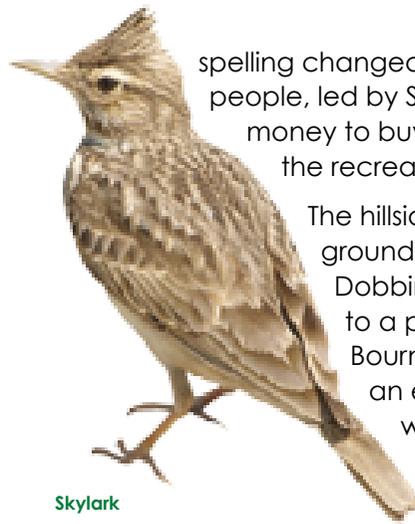
The chalk down and fertile valley of the Bourne below have attracted man for hundreds of years. Signs of early man include an ancient earthwork (Newe Ditch) on Riddlesdown, a Saxon Cemetery close by in Mitchley Avenue and Iron Age pottery fragments found in Whyteleafe Recreation Ground. In 1843 White

Leaf was just a name of a field, referring to the white underside of the leaf of a whitebeam tree, a chalk loving tree, common on the North Downs. During Victorian times this name was adopted for the whole area and the



Old postcard of Riddlesdown Common

Croydon Local Studies Library



Skylark

spelling changed to Whyteleafe. Local people, led by Sir William Jones, raised money to buy the land now forming the recreation ground in 1924.

The hillside above the recreation ground is known as 'The Dobbin', which according to a publication from the Bourne Society in 1962 had an engine that worked a wire and pulley system for hauling up waste which used to be dumped at the top.

The Skylark Field, named after the ground nesting bird, was once part of a larger common, consisting of Hamsey Heath and Ryddelesdowne, which was grazed by tenants from both Sanderstead and Warlingham.

At the north end of the field stands 'The Rifle Butt', a huge earthen mound behind the targets of a rifle range set up by the 2nd Surrey Rifle Volunteer Corps in 1860. In 1866 it was described as 'one of the finest long ranges in the kingdom'. The range was in use until at least 1891.

The Bridleway from Tithepit Shaw Lane to the junction of Dunmail Drive and Honister Heights was once named Broadway, according to a document from 1575.

Halfway along the Broadway stands a concrete pillar, which is an Ordnance Survey Triangulation Point. It is one of the many fixed points from which the O.S. made its surveys.

The Whitgift Field at the northern end of the area



Pyramidal Orchid

is made up of two old fields, which in 1844 used to be called Knockendon and Upper Knockendon Fields. The fields have not been farmed for several years and have become completely overgrown. Volunteers have spent many hours clearing dense ash thickets to bring back the chalk wildflowers which used to grow here.

## Wildlife

The Sanderstead to Whyteleafe area is of considerable value for wildlife. Of particular importance are the areas of open grassland. These areas support a variety of chalk loving plants including carnation sedge, kidney vetch, common milkwort, rockrose, wild thyme and marjoram.

A variety of other grassland species such as knapweed, field scabious and greater yellow rattle are also present, as are orchids like the pyramidal, bee and common spotted. Greater yellow rattle was once widespread throughout Britain but is now restricted to just a few locations; many populations are found on the North Downs. The warm south facing slopes are ideal for many small animals like lizards, slow worms and glow worms. Glow worms, which are beetles, crawl onto



Roesel's bush cricket



Many volunteers help us to look after the area

blades of grass at dusk and shine a light from their tails to attract a mate. Butterflies are also plentiful and include green hairstreak and brimstone. From early spring through to summer listen for the high pitched song of the skylark, now a bird on the red list due to its population decline. The open downland fields provide a good habitat for these ground nesting birds, which is why dog owners are asked to keep their dogs on leads during the nesting season.

The hedgerows and field edges also provide a habitat for the elusive dormouse, a nocturnal mammal with golden fur. Once common in the UK, there are now just a few small populations left in the area.

Beech, oak and lime trees, common on chalk, contribute to the wooded appearance of hillsides around Whyteleafe. Woodpeckers are a familiar sight here, while areas of scrub are favoured by yellow hammer, meadow pipit, linnet and whitethroat. Flying high above the whole area you may see the familiar silhouette of the kestrel searching for small mice and voles in the grass below, or the slightly larger silhouette of a peregrine falcon hunting for pigeons.

## Looking after the Downland

Throughout the twentieth century, increasing pressure from development and changes in agriculture has led to the loss of vast areas of chalk downland. Additionally many areas have suffered from a lack of appropriate management.

Traditionally, extensive sheep grazing maintained the open nature of the Sanderstead to Whyteleafe Countryside Area. When the sheep were taken off in the 1930's regular grazing ceased and the open landscape soon changed with extensive areas of coarse grass and scrub quickly developing. Areas became overgrown, leading to a loss of open grassland and a decline in the wildlife.



Please keep dogs on leads during the bird nesting season

The London Borough of Croydon, the Whitgift Foundation and Tandridge District Council are trying to restore downland by actively managing the area. Most of the Sanderstead to Whyteleafe Countryside Area is now part of a Higher Level Countryside Stewardship Scheme. This scheme, run by Natural England, encourages the management of land for the benefit of wildlife and public access.

On the Sanderstead to Whyteleafe Countryside Area the main aims of management are to:

- Restore and manage the downland by selective scrub control, mowing and grazing
- Restore arable fields to grassland
- Encourage the survival of uncommon arable 'weeds'
- Manage existing hedgerows and plant new ones
- Encourage public access