

BRENTMOOR HEATH AND DONKEY TOWN



Easy Terrain

5.5 km
Circular
1.5 hours

250716



Access Notes



1. The walk has just a few gentle slopes throughout.
2. The bridleways are unmade but generally very firm although some of the sections near Sapper Pond and in the heath basin can get very muddy in the wetter months so wellingtons are recommended at these times.
3. This easy access route has been deliberately designed to avoid all obstacles on the heath paths (staggered barriers, narrow bridges and steps) making it suitable for rugged all-terrain pushchairs and disability buggies during the drier months.
4. If you are not limited by avoiding these obstacles, you could explore other paths within the heath (using the GPS-powered map on the App will help you to keep your bearings!).
5. Dogs are welcome on the heath and dog waste bins are provided around the site.

A 5.5km (3.5 mile) circular easy access walk around Brentmoor Heath near West End in Surrey, taking in the beautiful sections of heath and woodland and with chance to visit the local pub.

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

There are no toilets or other facilities within the heath. If you are looking for refreshments, the walk includes a visit to the Hare and Hounds pub in Donkey Town. 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

Brentmoor Heath is located just to the north of West End village, on the A322 (about 2 miles south of the M3). The walk starts and finishes from the Brentmoor Heath free car park (with 1.9m height restriction barrier) which is accessed up a tarmac slope directly off the roundabout between the A322 and the B311 Red Road. There is parking for 10 cars here.

Approximate post code **GU24 9PZ**.

If this car park is full, there is a second car park for the heath (holding 6 cars and with no height barrier) accessed off Red Road (simply adjust the walk by starting at Waypoint 1). Approximate post code GU24 9PY. If both car parks are full, there is also roadside parking on Brentmoor Road (simply adjust the walk by starting at the pub, Waypoint 4). Approximate post code GU24 9QG. By bus, alight at West End and make your way to the Hare and Hounds on Brentmoor Road to begin the walk. For help with planning your journey by public transport please visit <http://journeys.travelsmartsurrey.info>.

Walk Sections

Go 1 Start to Red Road Car Park

Leave the car park via the main bridleway, passing between the two large signs for Bridleway and Resident

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Access Only. Follow the main track leading you into the heath, between gorse bushes, ignoring any smaller paths to the sides. At the fork in the track (with a waymarker post) bear right. As the track swings right, look out for a small path on the left. If it is worth taking a short detour along this narrow path to reach the bench at the viewpoint ahead. Take a moment at this bench to enjoy the views across Brentmoor Heath.

The heath is a local nature reserve, managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust. The reserve is predominantly wet and dry heath habitats, with areas of woodland, acid grassland and ponds. In the dry heath, dominated by ling, there is scattered gorse - a species typical of the lowland heaths of north-west Surrey. Areas of open ground in the wet heath support the insectivorous sundews, cotton-grass and white beak sedge in an otherwise characteristic community of cross-leaved heath, purple moor grass and deer grass. Stands of mature Scots pine and an area of young oak and birch add to the diversity of habitats present on the reserve.

When you have finished at the bench, retrace your steps back to the track and turn left to continue your journey along this. You will come to a junction with the beautiful Heather Hills Cottage directly ahead. Pass to the right of this cottage, noting the stone marker post on the corner. When this common was enclosed in 1879 by the army, the boundaries were marked by these large numbered stones.

Walk ahead alongside the row of houses on your left (New England Hill) and follow the vehicle track as it swings right, passing through a gateway to reach the second car park, alongside Red Road.

1 → 2 Red Road Car Park to Sapper Pond



Standing within this parking area, facing the exit to the road, turn left and take the path which passes between the dog waste bin on your left and the information board on your right.

Continue to a T-junction and turn right to join a wider path leading you through the trees.

At the first crossroads of bridleways (with blue arrows in each direction) go straight ahead to continue through the trees, heading gently downhill. Towards the bottom of the slope, follow the blue arrows which guide you to bear left and then right, before continuing directly ahead through the trees. You will come to the next junction, with sits at the centre of a patch of gorse bushes.

Turn right here and, a few metres along, keep left at the fork to reach a T-junction with a wide bridleway track. Turn right and then immediately left, to join the path heading for an electricity pylon in the distance. This path winds ahead to reach a T-junction with a path directly alongside the road (so take care with children and dogs). Turn left along the path and follow it as it leads you under power lines. Soon afterwards, take the left-hand branch at the fork (with the power lines running on your left).

Pass the first small section of trees and then a clearing on your right (take care as it can get boggy here!). Immediately before the trees begin again on your right, look out for a narrow path heading right into the heath. (NOTE: This is just a small diversion to visit the pond, so don't worry if it is too narrow for your pushchair/buggy). Follow this path for 60 metres for reach Sapper Pond. The pond was created in 1998 by soldiers of the Royal Engineers as part of a project to enhance nature conservation on military training areas. It is an important habitat for dragonflies, damselflies, frogs and newts.

2 → 3 Sapper Pond to Donkey Town Corner



Follow the narrow path back to the main track and turn right to continue your journey along this. You will emerge to a T-junction with a stone vehicle track (and the fences of the military firing range ahead). Turn left, following the line of the military fence on your right. Pirbright Ranges have been used by the army since 1879 and are still in use today for training, indeed you have probably been hearing the gun fire for most of your walk. A number of red deer were released into the ranges in 2010 and help with conservation grazing.

Continue to a subtle path junction at the point where the military fence bears away to the right. Turn left here, following a narrower path through gorse bushes and on into a section of woodland. The path leads you gently uphill to reach a crossroads. Turn right and you will come to a circle of gorse and silver birch trees, marking a junction of multiple paths.

Skirt around the left-hand edge of the gorse bushes, swinging right to reach the brow of Cuckoo Hill, another excellent viewpoint. The views stretch to the North Downs in the south and to Chobham Ridges in the east. During World War II an

Anti-Aircraft Battery was stationed here.

Standing with your back to the main track from which you entered Cuckoo Hill (facing the views), turn right. At the small T-junction turn left and follow this path gently downhill leading you into the centre of the heath basin. You will come to a T-junction with pine trees ahead. Turn left and a few paces later take the right-hand branch at the fork. The path will lead you to a crossroads, with the corner of an area of housing (known as Donkey Town) ahead and to the right.



3 → 4 Donkey Town Corner to Hare and Hounds



Go straight ahead with the houses of Donkey Town across your right. At the junction, turn right (over the wide bridge) and then immediately left to follow a path with a ditch running on the left. You will emerge to the vehicle access track for some of the properties. Keep straight ahead, ignoring the paths signed into the heath on your left. When you draw level with property number 51 on your right, you will see a brideway signed to the left. This is the direction the route will eventually take back into the heath, but first the route takes a worthwhile detour to the local pub.

Keep ahead and, at the end of the houses on your right, follow the vehicle track as it swings right. Stay with the access road as it leads you between houses. Development here started in 1815 following an agreement with the Lord of the Manor, Earl Onslow, who offered half acre parcels of land to any demobilised soldier or sailor. Many took up the offer and this area grew as an extension of West End. In the late 1800s map makers asked the locals what the area was called and they were told Donkey Town, because most of the residents used donkeys for work and transport.

At the T-junction with Brentmoor Road, turn left along the pavement and further along you are forced to swap to the right-hand pavement. Pass Martins Tyres on your right (originally a coach company and today a thriving garage) and soon afterwards you will come to the Hare and Hounds, also on your right.

4 → 5 Hare and Hounds to End

When you are ready to continue stand outside the Hare and Hounds with your back to the pub. If you wish to explore for yourself, it is possible to re-enter the heath via the old village green opposite. However, this easy access route avoids the tight staggered barriers on the green, so turn left along the pavement. Follow this past Martin's Tyres on your left and later

you are forced to swap to the right-hand pavement.

Turn right into Birch Lane and follow it all the way to the last house on the left. Stay with the track as it swings left here, ignoring the first path into the heath on your right. About 100 metres later, directly opposite House 51 on your left, turn right over the wide bridge to join the signed brideway.

You will come to a staggered crossroads, turn right here following the line of gorse bushes on your right. Pass the large noticeboard on your right and stay on the path closest to the hedge on your right. Where the hedge on your right ends, turn right to pass alongside a wooden vehicle barrier and follow this track as it leads you back through the centre of the New England Hill houses. Some of the houses here date back to 1762. After the last house on your left, you will come to a junction with a vehicle track. If you are parked in the Red Road Car Park, turn left to reach your car. Otherwise, keep straight ahead with the line of houses running on your right.

As you pass the last cottage (Heather Hills Cottage) on your right, stay with the main vehicle track, bearing right and then immediately left to re-enter the woodland. The track swings steadily left to reach a T-junction. Turn left and stay with this main path which leads you back to the main car park where the walk began.

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

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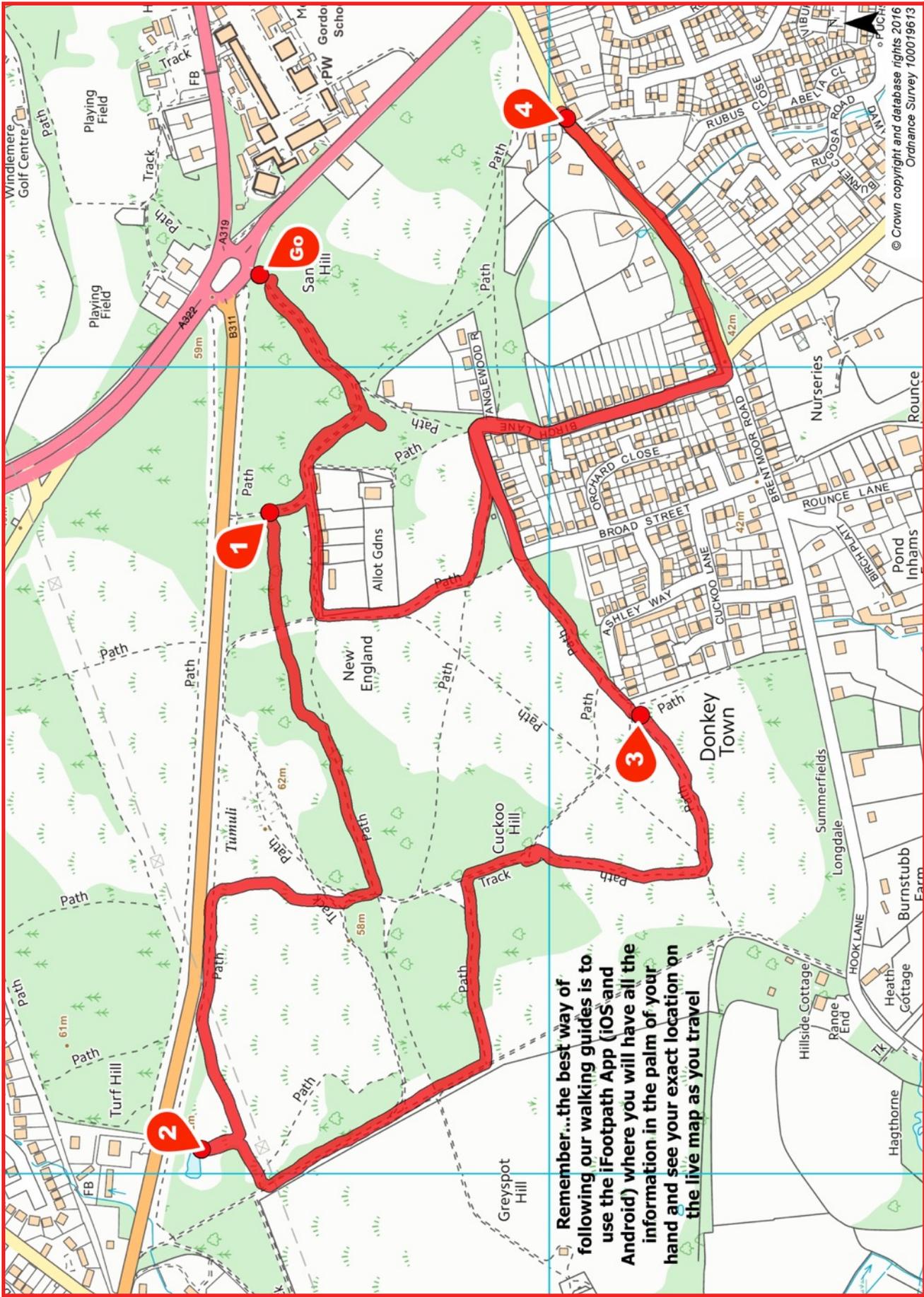
www.surreycc.gov.uk/explore

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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

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