

## Leatherhead Common Walk

UPDATED WINTER 2020

This is a fairly easy three-mile circular walk, mainly on public rights of way, to the north of Leatherhead. Allow up to two hours to complete the walk.

This walk has been specially devised and signposted by the Lower Mole Partnership and Mole Valley District Council to provide an easy-to-navigate route into the countryside.

It is signposted with a series of timber finger posts. Look for the distinctive green arrow with the acronym "LCW".

The ground is reasonably level and there are no stiles, but conditions will vary according to the weather and boots or stout footwear is recommended. The majority of the walk is in woodland, but there are contrasting open areas too. Its character will vary with the seasons, so it is worth repeating at different times of the year.

There are several busy roads in the area and the route also crosses the Leatherhead Golf Course. Special care is therefore needed in places on the route.

Ideally this walk description should be used in conjunction with an Ordnance Survey Map Explorer 146 (1:25 000).

*A good starting point is the entrance to Tesco's on Kingston Road. Take the footpath along the left edge of the road leading into Tesco's. Tesco's petrol station is ahead of you on your right, and the Rye Brook on your left. Keep following this footpath into the woods ahead. At the timber footbridge turn right to follow the path along the edge of Teazle Wood.*

Teazle Wood is a splendid wood with a great variety of native trees. Taller trees include English oak and ash. Also present is turkey oak, an introduced species which grows vigorously in Great Britain. Look out for spurge laurel, a rare native evergreen. Beneath these are smaller trees of hawthorn, hazel, holly, elder, dog rose and field maple. In spring a spectacular display of bluebell carpets the woodland floor.

Further along the path, on the right, is Rowhurst Forge – the home of the Fire & Iron Gallery - where fine quality metal work is produced. Just visible beyond the forge is a mid-fifteenth century building, thought to have been used as a hunting lodge for Hampton Court Palace.

*The path winds its way between mature oak trees before reaching the M25. Here it turns left to follow the top of the motorway cutting. On reaching Oaklawn Road, cross over the road (with care) to the pavement on the other side and turn right to cross the bridge over the Motorway. At the end of the bridge, continue along the pavement past the first entrance to Combat Stress, at the second entrance cross back over the road (with care) and go down the footpath into the woods opposite. Continue along this path for about 150 metres before crossing a bridge over a small stream and bearing left. Carry on to a footpath sign and turn left (near some mobile phone masts) to join a straight path to Oxshott Road. At Oxshott Road you will reach a gate. Pass by*

*the gate to the road and turn right to walk a few metres before crossing the road (with care).*

*Take the tarmac road past a stone pillar, into Pachesham Park. Follow the road straight ahead across a golf course fairway and then pass some houses on your right. The road then becomes a narrow track and crosses another fairway. Keep straight ahead, through a break in a belt of trees. Carry on in the same direction across a practice area to a woodland belt parallel to the A243 Kingston Road. Follow a narrow path a short distance through the woodland belt to where the path emerges onto Kingston Road. Great care is needed here on this fast, busy road. Cross the road to the footpath/cycle path opposite and turn left along Kingston Road for 200 metres until you reach a gate and a path leading onto Ashtead Common National Nature Reserve.*

Ashtead Common is a relic wood pasture owned and managed by the City of London. Wood pasture had a dual purpose of supplying wood from the branches of trees, as well as grazing and shelter for domestic animals. The branches were cut on a rotational basis above the browse line of cattle created pollards. These ancient oak pollards are characteristic of this type of woodland. Some may be 500 years old and they support lichens, mosses, liverworts and specialised invertebrates of dead or dying wood. They also provide homes for birds, such as woodpeckers, owls and nuthatches and oak loving butterflies such as purple emperor and purple hairstreak.

*Follow the signposts straight on through the woodland for about 600 metres, when the route turns sharp right near the edge of the Common, to then follow another waymarked route along a winding path for about 450 metres. At the perimeter of Ashtead Common, you will emerge from woodland with a view to the south on your left-hand side. Cross over the wide path here into more woodland ahead for about 350 metres. When you emerge from this section of woodland, keep to the footpath straight ahead, and after a very short distance, bear left to a tarmac path where you turn right to an underpass under a large roundabout. Follow the path through the underpass and then over the footbridge across the M25. Continue straight ahead, down the hill and past the B&Q store until you come to a small roundabout. The Tesco store, the starting point for the walk, is on your right.*

### **How to Get There**

**By Car** – There is a car park at Tesco's but parking is limited to 2 hours maximum. On street parking can be found in Old Kingston Road, where the B&Q store is located. Please do not park in or near farm or field entrances.

**By Train** – The nearest station is at Ashtead. From the station there is an attractive walk across Ashtead Common, along Public Footpath 28 (to the left of the open grass area by the Station) and then left along Public Footpath 25 to join the walk where it crosses the Common.

**By Bus** – for details and timetables see [www.surreycc.gov.uk](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk) and click on "Bus Timetables".