

OVER THE DOWNS TO OXTED MILL



Challenging Terrain

**8.5 km
Linear
2.5 to 3 hours**

250515



A 5.5 mile (8.5km) linear walk through the North Downs from Woldingham station to Hurst Green station, passing the historic High Street in Old Oxted and Oxted Mill.

The route goes through ancient woodland and chalk grassland, both rich in wild flowers, and there are good views towards the south coast over the Sussex Weald. The return journey can be completed with a single 10 minute train journey. This walk is part of the Explore Surrey collection, published through a collaboration between iFootpath and Surrey County Council.

If you are looking for refreshments there are several options. In Woldingham there is a tearoom within Knights Garden Centre, just a few minutes' walk from the station along Woldingham Road (turn left from the ticket office). There are a number of pubs in Old Oxted High Street near waypoint 5, as well as the Haycutter pub at Broadham Green at waypoint 7. There are toilets and a snack kiosk at Hurst Green station, with shops nearby. Ordnance Survey Map: Explorer 146 Dorking, Box Hill & Reigate. This walk follows public footpaths and bridleways which cross private 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 at Woldingham Rail Station and finishes at Hurst Green Rail Station, both in Surrey. The return leg can be completed by a single 10 minute train journey. For help with planning your journey by public transport please visit <http://journeys.travelsmartsurrey.info>. If you are coming by car, the easiest place to park is near Woldingham Rail Station. There is a pay and display car park at the station, a district council pay and display car park on Woldingham Road near the station, plus limited parking along Church Road adjacent to the railway. The rail station car park fee is £5 per day on Mon-Sat and £2 per day on Sundays and bank holidays (correct Feb 2015).

Approximate post code **CR3 7LT**. Grid ref: TQ359563.

Access Notes



- 1. The walk involves several climbs and descents throughout.*
- 2. The paths and tracks through the woodlands and fields are all unmade so stout shoes or boots are required and wellingtons with good grips are recommended in winter.*
- 3. There are a couple of short stretches of walking along country lanes so take care of traffic at these points.*
- 4. You will need to negotiate some steps, two kissing gates (one of which is very tight so be prepared to breathe in!) and three stiles (all of which have fence surrounds which should be ok for medium-large dogs to pass through –our standard poodle was just small enough – but dogs larger than this may need a lift over).*
- 5. You will pass through some fields holding horses so take care with dogs.*

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Walk Sections

Go ➔ 1 Start to Manor Park T-junction



Within Woldingham Station, make your way to Platform 1. At the southern end of this platform (near the waiting room), exit through the doorway and go down the steps to reach the rear access lane.

Follow the lane downhill, heading away from the rail line. You will pass a vehicle barrier and a lodge house on the right to reach a T-junction. Turn left along the lane, taking care of any traffic. After 470m you will come to the first turning on the left, a track signed as a public bridleway. Take this track and follow it towards Marden Park Farm.

Sir Robert Clayton, the Lord Mayor of London, established the Marden Park Estate in the mid 17th century. He built his home there and planted several plantations. Marden Park House was rebuilt in the late 19th century and is now Woldingham School. The campaigner for the abolition of slavery, William Wilberforce (1759-1833), was an estate tenant and said that it was one of the prettiest spots he'd ever seen.

You will come to a property called Shires ahead. Go through the gap just to the right of this property and follow the path alongside the hedge. Continue along the paved section between the converted stables and barns to reach a T-junction.

1 ➔ 2 Manor Park T-junction to South Hawke Car Park



Turn right on the track, heading uphill. Follow this path for just over 1km to reach the first signed junction (with a metal gate on the right). Turn left here, signed to South Hawke, heading uphill. The track leads you through Great Church Wood.

Great Church Wood is an ancient woodland that contains many species of native English trees: beech, oak, hazel, ash, field maple and hornbeam. All of these have been coppiced in the past and the current owner, The Woodland Trust, has reintroduced the technique. Coppicing involves regularly cutting trees down to the base to stimulate the growth of smaller stems, which can be used for charcoal, garden hurdles and a number of other uses. Coppicing results in extra light falling on the ground of the woodland, which encourages flowers, especially bluebells, to flourish.

After 520m, ignore the path signed off to the left. Further along, at the fork, take the right-hand path signed for the car park. Continue ahead along this main track for another 1km. Along the way you will pass a few benches on the left, strategically placed to allow you to appreciate the views across the rolling hills on the right. You will come to the South Hawke car park.

2 ➔ 3 South Hawke Car Park to M25 Bridge



Cross the car park to reach the vehicle exit to the road. Cross the road (taking great care of traffic) and turn right and then immediately left to go down a flight of steps. At the bottom, turn right along the path which is part of the North Downs Way. You will come to a bench and viewpoint on the left, overlooking Oxted and the Greensand Ridge.

Continue on the main path and, at the next signed junction (where the main path swings right), walk straight ahead to join a more subtle bridleway into the trees. The path begins by running parallel with the M25 down in the valley bottom, then passes between two large beech trees (take care of the roots) and then starts to steadily descend. Note: there is a steep slope to the left so take particular care with children and dogs.

As you approach a fence line ahead, swing sharp left then right to continue your descent. The path approaches the fence line again; turn left here and follow the path with the fence now on the right. Follow this stony enclosed path all the way down to the bridge over the M25.

3 ➔ 4 M25 Bridge to Natural Mound

Cross the bridge and continue ahead along the track which later becomes a tarmac lane. Eventually you will emerge to a junction with Barrow Green Road. Cross over the road with care and go through the (very tight!) kissing gate opposite. Keep ahead on the enclosed path between pastures. Across to the right you will see a large mound.



Some believe that the large bowl-shaped mound is the remains of a Norman motte (or castle with a moat), or was constructed to celebrate a decisive battle against the Danes. Both explanations are very doubtful, and it is probably a natural feature.

4 → 5 Natural Mound to Old Oxted High Street



Continue on the fenced path which leads you past a large pond, Townland Pond, on the right. Further along, as you pass a private property on the left, a single gate ahead leads you out to a T-junction with Sandy Lane. Turn right and follow the lane down across a pretty stream and then under the road bridge which carries the A25 overhead. You will emerge to a junction with Old Oxted High Street.

You may wish to stop here for refreshments or to look at the considerable variety of old buildings along the High Street, some of which date back to the 15th century. Later additions include the Old Lock-Up which was the Oxted Workhouse in the 1820s and had its own jail. You may also wish to try the local ale. All the pubs in Old Oxted are old, but the oldest is probably The Old Bell which is thought to have been built around 1500.

(If you wish, you can take a short cut at this point to reach Oxted Station and return by train from there. To do this, turn left heading downhill to cross the busy A25 by the subway, then follow Church Lane to the roundabout and continue ahead to reach Oxted Station).

5 → 6 Old Oxted High Street to Oxted Mill Pond

To continue the main route, cross over the High Street and



continue ahead along Beadles Lane. After 220m, turn left into the side road called Springfield (passing the Old School House). Where the road bends left, keep ahead on the tarmac driveway (alongside the property called Blackthorns). As you reach the gateway, take the narrow fenced footpath on the right beside the driveway. Further along, the path leads you past the mill pond for Oxted Mill on the left.

Oxted Mill stands on the River Eden. The site of the mill was mentioned in the Domesday survey in 1086. In Victorian times, Oxted Mill was in fact two self-contained flourmills which were attached to each other. Flour milling ceased here in August 1951, and the machinery was removed and the building converted to offices.

6 → 7 Oxted Mill Pond to Tanhouse Road



Beyond the mill pond, cross over the road and continue ahead passing the mill on the left and Mill Cottage on the right. Follow the gravel track which swings right then left and leads you to a kissing gate. Go through this (into a horse paddock, so take care with dogs) and go straight ahead to reach the stile opposite.

Cross the stile (take care as it can be very muddy here) to reach the second paddock and cross this at about 11 o'clock to reach the stile at the far side. Cross the stile and walk ahead keeping the hedge on your left. At the far end of the field, another stile leads you out to Tanhouse Road with the Haycutter pub opposite. Visible across to the right is Broadham Green.

Broadham Green is one of more than 7,000 registered commons in England. In total, they cover almost 1 million acres. It is a common misconception that common land is 'owned' by everyone. This is not the case. The term 'common land' derives from the fact that certain people held rights of common over the land e.g. the right to graze, to take wood, to fish, etc. Until recently, the public only had a right of access to around 20% of

common land, with informal access to many other commons. However, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 introduced a new right for people to walk, subject to some common sense restrictions, over areas of open countryside and registered common land in England and Wales.

7 ➔ 8 Tanhouse Road to End



Cross over the road with care and turn left along the pavement. Continue along the pavement which swings left across a stream and then climbs gradually to reach a crossroads. Cross over with care and go straight ahead into Church Way. Further along you will pass the impressive flint St John's Church on your left. At the T-junction with Oast Road turn right.

Follow the road for just 100m, to a point just past house number 23, (called Green Halt). Here, turn left through the staggered barrier to join a fenced footpath. The footpath leads you past Adsum Cottage (number 25) on the left and you will emerge directly alongside Hurst Green Station, where this walk ends. From here it is a 10 minute train journey back to Woldingham Station where the walk began.

The Surrey & Sussex Junction Railway was authorised by an Act of Parliament in 1865, but was dogged by problems from the start. Within a year of work starting, shady dealings in railway shares led to the financial collapse of the railway's banker, and other crises followed which resulted in the line not opening until 1884. Woldingham Station was originally called Marden Park Station, and was very simple with one small shelter. Hurst Green Station was called Hurst Green Halt and opened on 1 June 1907.

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

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.

