





SURREY HILLS SOCIETY

The Surrey Hills Society is an independent charity promoting the positive enjoyment and care of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for those who live, work in or visit the area. The Society encourages people of all ages to explore and learn about the area's special landscape.

The Society has been run almost exclusively by dedicated volunteers since it began in 2008 and their passion for the area helps to keep the charity in the public eye. They have become a successful and well-respected organisation, running their own events, signposting and supporting other related activities, giving talks and attending shows.

For more information, take a look at www.surreyhillsociety.org and consider joining the Surrey Hills Society. You can follow them on social media and, of course, they would love to meet you.

 @SurreyHillsSoc  @surreyhillsoc

 @surreyhillsociety



Registered Charity number 1125532



Southeast Communities Rail Partnership

The Southeast Communities Rail Partnership CIC (SCRCP) covers 8 lines, working to connect communities to their railway across Berkshire, Hampshire, Kent, Surrey and Sussex. They work in partnership with GTR Southern, GWR, SWR, SER and Cross Country on those lines, joining up with community groups, local authorities and local businesses to help them achieve their objectives through the railway and are supported by the Community Rail Network (CRN). GWR's North Downs Line runs through the beautiful Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, providing many points from which to begin walks and cycle rides. Help shape the future of the railway, have your say, and bring your local station into the heart of the community: www.southeastcrp.org

Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of 46 nationally protected landscapes in the UK, having equal landscape status and protection to a national park. The Hills stretch across a quarter of the county of Surrey and include the chalk slopes of the North Downs from Farnham in the west to Oxted in the east and extend south to the deeply wooded Greensand Hills which rise in Haslemere.

RESPECT • PROTECT • ENJOY

For a safe and fun visit to the Surrey Hills please remember to follow the Countryside Code.

Respect other people – Consider the local community and other people when enjoying the outdoors. Keep to designated paths and bridleways, leaving gates and property as you find them.

Protect the natural environment – Keep dogs on a lead around livestock and wildlife and remember to bag and bin dog poo. Take all litter home and don't have BBQs or fires.

Enjoy the outdoors – Plan ahead, follow advice and local signs.



GETTING HERE

By Rail: Great Western Railway operate the North Downs line from Gatwick to Guildford, then onto Reading. Visit nationalrail.co.uk for details.

By bus: Visit traveline.info for details of services.

CONTACT

Surrey Hills AONB: SURREYHILLS.ORG

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 | Great Western Railway

RAIL TO RAMBLE

A SURREY HILLS WALK BETWEEN GOMSHALL AND DORKING DEEPDENE RAILWAY STATIONS



Louise Dunckley

RAIL TO RAMBLE

Gomshall to Dorking Deepdene

DISTANCE: 10.3 km / 6.5 miles

ALLOW: 3 hours

GRADIENT: 100M

PATHS: Uneven surfaces, some sections can be muddy after wet weather. Take care when crossing or following roads.

This walk can be connected with the Chilworth to Gomshall or Dorking to Betchworth routes to create longer explorations.

1. Leave Gomshall Station on the side furthest from the car park. Go through the white gate and follow the footpath down the slope between the hedge and the fence.

2. Cross the road (A25), turning left and continue along the pavement. Just after Tillingbourne Farm & Smokery cross the road again and take the marked byway up the slope away from the road.

3. Turn right at the first signposted footpath, into Piney Copse. Follow the path through the copse and then pass through a gate, with a field on your left and the North Downs in the distance. Pass through a second gate. Cross the road onto National Cycleway Route 22. Go through another gate and continue straight ahead. At the next crossroads continue straight ahead on the wide path (Cycleway 22), ignoring all paths left and right. Keep following Cycleway 22 until you come to a large stone Celtic cross, which is the Wilberforce Memorial, on Abinger Roughs.

4. Continue on Cycleway 22 until you reach a road (White Down Lane). Cross over the road, bearing left to stay on Cycleway 22 (ignoring another footpath to your right).



5. At Park Farm bear left staying on Cycleway 22. Once you reach the front of the farm house, at the junction of paths, leave the Cycleway and take the left path directly towards the North Downs. Go through a gate at the top of the field and into the woods, signposted White Down Lease. Follow the broad bridleway to the left which curves right uphill.

At the next junction after 100 metres (marked A) you have a choice. Energetic walkers may wish to turn left here and continue up the slope for about 500m to enjoy the view of Dorking and its surrounding countryside from a picnic spot at the top (marked B) before returning to the route at this point.



5(cont). Continue on the path down the slope. Go through a gate and continue ahead on the path as it winds through woodland and then open downs. Go through various wooden gateways.

6. You will then pass through two metal gates about 150m apart on open downs. Immediately after the second gate, where you re-enter woodland, by a large yew tree, take the wide path curving to your left going up the slope, away from the railway line that has been running parallel to you. Climb gradually up the slope of the North Downs.

7. At the next T-junction take the lower path. Continue on this track until it reaches a white building straight ahead with a "Private" sign. Turn right down the slope marked with a blue NT arrow.



At the next marker post continue straight on down the slope, this time following the NT yellow arrow. After 75 metres you reach a tarmac fenced drive. Turn right and continue down the hill. The footpath soon joins Ranmore Road.

8. Veer right and after 20 metres turn left into Ashcombe Road. (Note: It is possible to leave the route here and instead of turning into Ashcombe Road, continue along Ranmore Road to reach Dorking West Station on your right after 100m). At the next roundabout on Ashcombe Road, continue ahead, passing Ashcombe School on your right. At the junction with the main road (A24) turn right and then cross over at the pedestrian lights to access Dorking Deepdene Railway station.



PINEY COPSE – composed mainly of oaks, sweet chestnuts, and beech trees, is 1.7 hectares (4.2 acres) of woodland located just east of Gomshall railway station and north of the Surrey village of Abinger Hammer. It was once owned by E. M. Forster, who used to live nearby and purchased the wood using funds from book sales – principally from ‘A Passage to India’ – in order to prevent it from being developed into housing. When Forster died in 1970, he transferred ownership of the land in his will to the National Trust. In 1926 Forster wrote a short essay about Piney Copse in ‘Abinger Harvest’, entitled ‘My Wood’.



THE WILBERFORCE MEMORIAL – on 19 July 1873 Samuel Wilberforce, ‘Soapy Sam’ the Bishop of Winchester, had a tragic accident on the Abinger Roughs. His family erected a granite memorial on the spot where he fell, and you can see this Grade II listed monument near Leasers Barn.

The Roughs was formerly part of the Abinger Hall Estate. In the late 19th century the land was planted with specimen trees, plantations and rhododendrons to form open glades with interlinking paths; a wilderness garden. It was created by Thomas Henry Farrer of Abinger Hall, and you can still see some of the original garden today.



NATURE SCULPTURE – near the old Carriage Road which forms part of this route, you will come across a dramatic butterfly sculpture, created by local Abinger artist-sculptor, Iain Hamilton Crafer. The National Trust, whose land this stands on, asked Iain to create a sculpture that depicted various elements in the life of the Adonis Blue butterfly and also its habitat, our beautiful hillside. The sculpture is carved from a 2 tonne piece of felled oak, from Bookham Commons, and created using mostly traditional tools.



The Adonis Blue is the rarest of the blue butterflies in the UK. It is found on sunny, south-facing grassland that is rich in herbs – such as this Denbies Hillside location. It doesn’t travel far, so colonies can become isolated and vulnerable to extinction if their habitat is disturbed.

OLD CARRIAGE ROAD – the old carriage road was built in the 1800s by William Joseph Denison, one-time owner of Denbies House & Estate. A haven for wildlife, fossil sea urchins have been found here, a reminder that the North Downs was once covered by sea. The route also takes you past chalk grassland, which has developed as a special wildlife habitat due to grazing of animals.

THE ASHCOMBE NAME – our walk takes us along Ashcombe Road and past the Ashcombe School. These are named after George Cubitt a local politician who was created 1st Baron Ashcombe in 1892. George was the son of Thomas Cubitt, a British master builder, notable for his work in developing many of the historic streets and squares of London, especially in Belgravia, Pimlico and Bloomsbury.

Thomas had purchased the Denbies estate in 1849. At the time, he was working on Osborne House for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and the mansion he designed to replace the old one was a more modest version of Osborne. The estate was expanded by a further 2,000 acres and stretched as far as Birtley Court, near Bramley and Churt.



Subsequently, death duties forced the family to begin selling parcels of land. Cubitt’s mansion was abandoned until its demolition in 1953. In 1959 the Treasury accepted about 1,128 acres of land in lieu of death duties which it passed on to the National Trust. The final part of the estate was marketed in 1984 and developed as Denbies Vineyard.