





## 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](http://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 (SCRП) 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](http://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](http://nationalrail.co.uk) for details.

**By bus:** Visit [traveline.info](http://traveline.info) for details of services.

### CONTACT

**Surrey Hills AONB:** [SURREYHILLS.ORG](http://SURREYHILLS.ORG)

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# RAIL TO RAMBLE

## A SURREY HILLS WALK BETWEEN SHALFORD AND CHILWORTH RAILWAY STATIONS



Louise Dunckley





# RAIL TO RAMBLE

## Shalford\* to Chilworth

**DISTANCE: 8 km / 5 miles**

**ALLOW: 2.5 hours**

**GRADIENT: 140M**

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

\*This walk can also be started from Guildford Station by following the river path towards St Catherine's to join at point 5.

**1.** From Shalford Station exit towards the A281. Cross at the traffic lights by the railway bridge. Turn right and then first left into the driveway towards the Cemetery Chapel. Follow the path outside the hedge around the left hand side of the chapel and graveyard.

**2.** At the next T-junction, with another brick bridge to your left, turn right on this wide path. After 150m, at a staggered junction, turn left through a metal kissing gate and take the steep slope down to the river flats below. *(BEWARE: the slope may be slippery in wet weather and the route is prone to flooding after prolonged rain).* Follow the boardwalk and then bear left with the river on your right.

**3.** At the weir, cross the metal bridge via the gate and continue on, with the River Wey now on your left. Go through a wooden gate by the Lock Keeper's cottage and continue ahead.

**4.** At the next weir, go through the metal kissing gate, over the river and then over St Catherine's Lock on the Wey Navigation. Turn right and follow the path with the Wey now on your right. After 650m you reach some bright golden sand and a bridge over the river. Pass underneath and then take the steps up to the wooden bridge. Cross the river again.

**5.** Keep following the path and after about 40m take the path away from the river. This path will quickly lead you into Shalford Park. Cross straight over the sports field. *(There are some public toilets here to your left).* At the A281, cross over, picking up the North Downs Way (NDW) signposts. Follow Pilgrims Way (opposite) for 400m, and then cross the road, bearing right by NDW signpost at Chantry Woods.



**6.** Follow this wide track past the car park on your left. At the junction of tracks immediately after the car park, continue straight ahead on the NDW. Stay on this wide track through woodland for 850m where it bends to the left. Continue straight ahead, on the narrower path, following the NDW signs. At a large crossroads of paths continue ahead still on the NDW. The path will start to narrow.

**7.** At the next T-junction with a road (Halfpenny Lane), turn left and then almost immediately right up a bridleway on the other side of the road, still signposted NDW. Continue straight ahead, crossing a tarmac drive, with a car park to your left, and continue through a metal barrier up the wide sandy path to the top of St Martha's Hill and Church.



**8.** At the top, go into the churchyard to enjoy the views. Don't miss the viewpoint plaque identifying local points of interest. Continue around the church and leave through another wooden gate staying at the top of the hill. Head gently downhill on a sandy slope, keeping to the right, until you come to a wide intersection of paths. Here, the NDW heads left, a WW2 pill box is straight ahead of you, and a nearby stone cairn marks the Downs Link path.

**9.** Turn sharp right by the cairn and follow the Downs Link down the hillside following the edge of fields as you go. When you reach a junction at the bottom of the hill turn left. *(Note, if you turn to the right and follow a permissive path you can explore lovely views over Chilworth Vineyard, then return to*

*the junction).* Continue heading down hill. Cross the stream at the bottom (Tillingbourne River). Ignore any turnings until you reach a path with wooden barriers on your right about 90m after the bridge and with a Chilworth Gunpowder Mills sign board.

**10.** Turn right into the Gunpowder Mills site, with a small stream running on your left and ruined buildings on your right. Continue on this path for about 400m until you come to a wide open picnic area. Take the path to your left over the small stream, called "Vera's Path", and continue up this path passing Chilworth Infants School on your left. At the road, turn left and follow the pavement past the school towards the Percy Arm Pub. Chilworth Railway Station is opposite the pub.





**THE RIVER WEY** is rare in that it has two man-made navigations. The Wey Navigation from Guildford Millmead to Weybridge was constructed in 1653, around the time of the English Civil War, whilst the Godalming Navigation was created a century later to extend the route upstream.



The canals, by providing almost 32 kilometres of navigable water connecting the county with London, ensured that Surrey became one of the wealthiest and most influential areas in Britain.



The Godalming Navigation past Shalford, although not as financially successful as the older Wey Navigation, provided the key to more safely transporting hazardous shipments of gunpowder from Chilworth to the magazines outside London.

**ST CATHERINE'S** – as the waterway approaches Guildford it skirts the edge of an historic hill on which stand the ruins of St Catherine's Chapel. The hill bleeds its golden sands into the waters and it is said that the 'golden ford', which for thousands of years provided safe passage to travellers across the river here, gave its name to Guildford.

**THE NORTH DOWNS WAY (NDW)** – this walk follows part of the NDW from the river bridge at St Catherine's as far as St Martha's Church, taking us from river level up to the top of St Martha's Hill with its spectacular views across the Surrey Hills. The NDW National Trail offers walkers 246 km of spectacular scenery, picturesque villages and glorious countryside. [www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en\\_GB/trails/north-downs-way/](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/north-downs-way/)



**ST MARTHA'S CHURCH** is a Grade II historic building. Perched on the top of the hill on the North Downs Way, the building is accessible only by foot. A 12th century church existed here before falling into ruin by the 18th century. It was rebuilt in 1848–50.



The graveyard of the church includes memorials to several famous people including actress and singer Yvonne Arnaud, whose ashes were scattered there.

**CHILWORTH GUNPOWDER MILLS** is one of the earliest examples of a gunpowder mill. Started in the first half of the 17th century by the East India Company, it was the sole legal producer of gunpowder in England. Although the majority of the buildings were demolished in the 20th century, more than 100 key structures still remain.



The Tillingbourne River runs along the northern boundary and the original gunpowder mills canal runs along the southern edge. Today, Chilworth Gunpowder Mills is a wonderful place to walk and enjoy nature whilst learning more about the industrial heritage of the Tillingbourne Valley.

More information about the Gunpowder Mills and the industrial heritage of the area can be found at [www.surreyhills.org/discover-route/chilworth-trail/](http://www.surreyhills.org/discover-route/chilworth-trail/)

