WALK THE CHALK
DORKING TO GOMSHALL

Special wildlife
Inspiring views
Rich in history

Illustrated map inside – explore today!
A “station to station” walk, through some of the finest chalk grassland in Surrey.

The walk starts at Dorking Railway Station, where there is a pay and display car park, grid ref: TQ170504. It finishes at Gomshall Railway Station, where there is limited car parking, grid ref: TQ089478.

This 7-mile, 11km walk takes you through the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is one of England’s finest landscapes, one of 36 nationally protected landscapes equal in status and protection to a National Park. For more information, please visit www.surreyhills.org

Part of the route runs along the North Downs Way. One of 15 National Trails in England and Wales, the North Downs Way offers 153 miles of spectacular downland walking from Farnham to Dover. For more information, please visit www.nationaltrail.co.uk/northdowns or telephone 01622 221525

Part of the route runs through Hackhurst Downs, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Local Nature Reserve, managed by The Surrey Wildlife Trust. Surrey Wildlife Trust’s mission is to protect and regenerate Surrey’s wildlife. For more information, please visit www.surreywildlifetrust.org or telephone 01483 795440

For up-to-date public transport information, contact Surrey Traveline on 0871 200 2233 or visit www.traveline.info

This leaflet is best used with OS maps:
1:25,000 Explorer 146
(Dorking, Box Hill and Reigate)
1:25,000 Explorer 145
(Guildford and Farnham)

Suitability
This walk has a number of hills and is steep in places, which makes it unsuitable for wheelchairs and buggies.

Footwear
Chalk paths can be slippery, especially during the winter months and after rain – walking boots with good treads are recommended.

Refreshments
Refreshments are only available at the start and end of the walk.

Transport
For up to date public transport information contact Traveline on 0871 200 2233 or visit www.traveline.info

Dog Walkers
Sheep and cattle may be seen on this walk. They are helping to manage the chalk grassland by controlling the growth of coarse grasses and scrub.

Please keep your dog under close control when walking near livestock.
The scenery is spectacular and the area rich in wildlife. The views are outstanding – viewpoints along the North Downs were strategically important during the Second World War, which is why so many pillboxes were built here.

The first farmers in this area removed much of the original woodland cover to create fields for their crops and livestock. Their grazing animals prevented the regrowth of trees and coarse vegetation, which allowed the special wildlife habitat known as chalk grassland to develop and thrive.

Chalk grassland has always depended on continued active management for its survival, which is why the National Trust and the Surrey Wildlife Trust use cattle and sheep to control the growth of vegetation.

As a result, the chalk slopes are rich in orchids and chalk-loving butterflies such as Adonis and Chalkhill blues, Silver-spotted skippers and Marbled whites.

Much of the area has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest in recognition of this special habitat and the walk lies within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The chalk slopes are rich in orchids and chalk-loving butterflies

This walk takes you along the dramatic scarp slope of the North Downs
Welcome to this new walk, from Dorking to Gomshall railway stations, via some of the finest chalk grassland in Surrey.

1 This walk starts at the Pay & Display Car Park at Dorking railway station (located at the edge of the car park, opposite the Lincoln Arms). Walk down the subway and up the right hand steps at the end, then turn left and walk towards the traffic lights. At the traffic lights, turn left and walk up Ashcombe Road (A2003), keeping Ashcombe School on your left.

2 Continue along Ashcombe Road (crossing over Chalkpit Lane) until you reach a T-junction. (Dorking West railway station is to your left, just past St Martin’s C of E Primary School. Note: there is no parking at Dorking West – street parking may be possible.) At the T-junction, cross over the road and turn right. (This is Ranmore Road, although it is not signed here.) Continue up the road, passing St Martin’s School on your left, and then turn left by a speed limit sign onto a public footpath that skirts the school grounds. (You will pass by a bank with yew and box trees growing on it – sure signs that there is chalk below your feet.)

3 Turn left by the National Trust sign onto another path, leading to Denbies Hillside. Follow the path until you reach a track and turn left. (This is an old carriage road built in the 1890s by William Joseph Denison, who owned Denbies House and Estate.) Ignore any paths to the left and right and carry on along the track for the next two miles.

4 The track ends at a T-junction. Turn right onto the path, which runs along the foot of the North Downs. (On your left this path leads downhill to Landbarn Farm where the National Trust Surrey Hills North Downs West Team is based.) Continue straight on for a mile, ignoring all paths to the left and right. Where the switchback path joins from the right, go right and follow this up the hill, with a bank of yew trees on your left. Near the top of the hill is ‘God’s seat’. Stop here for a break and admire the stunning view.

5 Turn left onto the North Downs Way (NDW) and follow this until you meet a road (White Down Lane). Turn right onto the road, and then almost immediately turn left off the road to rejoin the NDW. Continue following the NDW (you will soon see another National Trust sign; you are now on Blatchford Down). Continue past the Second World War pillbox on your right. At the National Trust information panel cross over the public bridleway and continue following the NDW.

6 When you meet an ancient byway, known as Beggars Lane, cross over and continue straight on. At the first kissing gate on your left, turn left, through the woodland and follow the public footpath signs diagonally across the hillside. (You are now leaving the NDW and entering Hackhurst Downs. You will pass juniper trees that have been enclosed with tree guards to protect them from grazing animals.) Go through a gate and onto National Trust land, and carry on following the public footpath diagonally down the hill.

7 Go through another gate and you will see the picturesque Colekitchen Farm to your right. Follow the path downhill, bearing right where it splits in two (ignore the gate on your right). (You will pass a huge ancient ash tree on your left and some tall redwoods.) Open pasture appears, and a substantial ditch and bank now runs along the left-hand side of the path.

8 Go through two kissing gates, crossing over a track that leads to Churchfield Farm, part of the Wotton Estate. The path sinks between steep banks and meets a road called Colekitchen Lane. Turn left and walk along this ancient sunken land until you meet another road, which is the A25. (Note the badger setts along the bank as you pass, but also look out for traffic.)

9 When you meet the A25, turn left and walk along this main road through Gomshall, where you will find a number of pubs, restaurants and shops. Carry on until you reach Station Approach on your left (there is a bus stop here where you can catch a bus back to Dorking). This will take you to Gomshall railway station and the end of the walk. (Note: there is some car parking here.)

Congratulations! You have now walked the chalk from Dorking to Gomshall, a distance of 7 miles.
The old Carriage Road, built in the 1820s, is a haven for wildlife. Whitethroats sing from bramble patches and fence posts while buzzards soar above. Adders sunbathe on sheltered banks and Chalkhill Blue butterflies are commonly seen. Dormice also live here. Fossil sea urchins have been found along the Carriage Road. They remind us that the North Downs was once covered by the sea.

Cattle were driven along some of these paths and Canadian troops used them during the Second World War. They are now used by all kinds of walkers.

Hackhurst Downs supports the largest remaining juniper population on the North Downs. Thirteen different invertebrate species rely on these ancient trees for their survival.

Many chalk-loving wild flowers grow here, including round-headed rampion, bee orchid and pyramidal orchid.
This leaflet was produced by the Old Surrey Downs Project, in partnership with the National Trust.

Restoring our beautiful chalk grassland

We restore our beautiful chalk grassland through practical management.
We raise awareness of the importance of chalk grassland as part of our natural heritage.
We encourage others to take part in discovering its past and securing its future.

For information, telephone: 01737 733933
email: info.oldsurreydowns@surreycc.gov.uk
or visit: www.oldsurreydowns.org.uk

National Trust

Much of this route runs over land owned or managed by the National Trust.

The National Trust is an independent conservation charity that manages this beautiful countryside for the benefit of wildlife and visitors.

Landbarn Farm, near Westcott, provides a base for staff and volunteers working on the Trust’s North Downs West properties.

For more information, telephone 01306 887485
or visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk

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