

## Habitat and wildlife

The combination of stunning spring displays of bluebells in Frank's Wood, rhododendrons in the Rhododendron Wood and abundant primroses and foxgloves in areas of newly coppiced hazel herald the start of the new year and warmer months to come. An early morning visit will be rewarded with the amazing sounds of birds singing their dawn chorus.

Summer brings much nocturnal activity with woodcock *roding* and nightjars *churring* on Duke's Warren, whilst badgers and bats search for new forage along traditional feeding routes. Butterflies are abundant on the south side of Leith Hill with white admirals and silver-washed fritillaries in Church Wood and Dingwall Wood. Dragonflies, such as the golden-ringed, can be seen on Duke's Warren, whilst

male southern hawkers patrol woodland rides.

The flowering heather brings extra colour to the heathland in the autumn, whilst the sunken lanes and holloways lined with beech trees start to lose their leaves and carpet the woodland floor. The outstanding figure of Leith Hill Tower becomes a navigation point for many birds migrating south to warmer climes; birds of prey in particular can be seen soaring in the last of the warm weather.

Crisp, fresh walks in the winter weather can produce amazing views across mist-filled valleys and birds such as redwings, redpolls and crossbills add colour to the leafless trees. On the heathland small hints of yellow can be seen as the gorse starts its unseasonal bursting of coconut-scented flowers.



## Greensand Way

The Greensand Way is a long distance walking route that starts in Haslemere, Surrey and ends at Hamstreet, Kent. It follows the Greensand Ridge along

the Surrey Hills and crosses Leith Hill. If you would like to know more and download maps, please visit Surrey County Council's website: [www.surreycc.gov.uk](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk)



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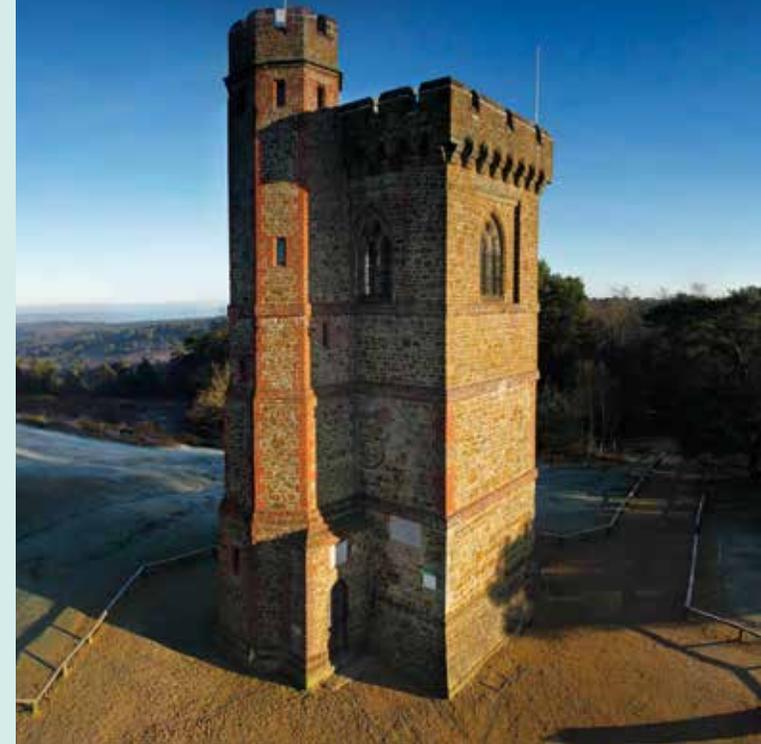
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# Leith Hill Walks



National  
Trust

The highest point  
in south east England

Leith Hill is set within the beautiful Surrey Hills. Its gothic tower rises majestically above the surrounding hills providing sweeping views.

# Woodland, heathland, parkland & farmland set in the Surrey Hills

## Leith Hill Tower

Leith Hill's majestic tower rises above the hill to display sweeping views across 14 counties. London landmarks to the north and the English channel to the south are all visible through the free telescopes at the top.

This Georgian prospect house was built by Richard Hull of Leith Hill Place in the style of a gothic tower. Large amounts of sandstone were used for wall construction and the many hollows on the nearby slopes are evidence that material was quarried on site.

Spectacular views seen from Leith Hill's treeless summit made it a popular spot for Victorian picnics. Large numbers of day-trippers were ferried up the hill by horse and carriage to feast around the tower.

Richard Hull was buried beneath the tower and his remains were found during a recent excavation of the foundations.

## Leith Hill Place

This seventeenth century Georgian house sits quietly among the rolling parkland and beautiful woodland.

Created by General John Folliot, Leith Hill Place and its grounds grew to become a landscape of natural splendour and includes a Ha-Ha, Lime Avenue and extensive tree planting.

Some of the country's most influential families have lived at Leith Hill Place. Their lineage includes the names Wedgwood and Vaughan Williams.

A close relative of the Wedgwood family, Charles Darwin frequently stayed at Leith Hill Place. While at the property, he conducted research around the estate and his 'worm-stone' still sits within the grounds today.

The composer, Ralph Vaughan Williams was the last of the family to live here. He gave the Leith Hill Place to the National Trust in 1944. Leith Hill Place can be seen along the route of the circular woodland trail. Also included on this trail are General Folliot's parkland and Darwin's worm stone.

## Rhododendron Wood

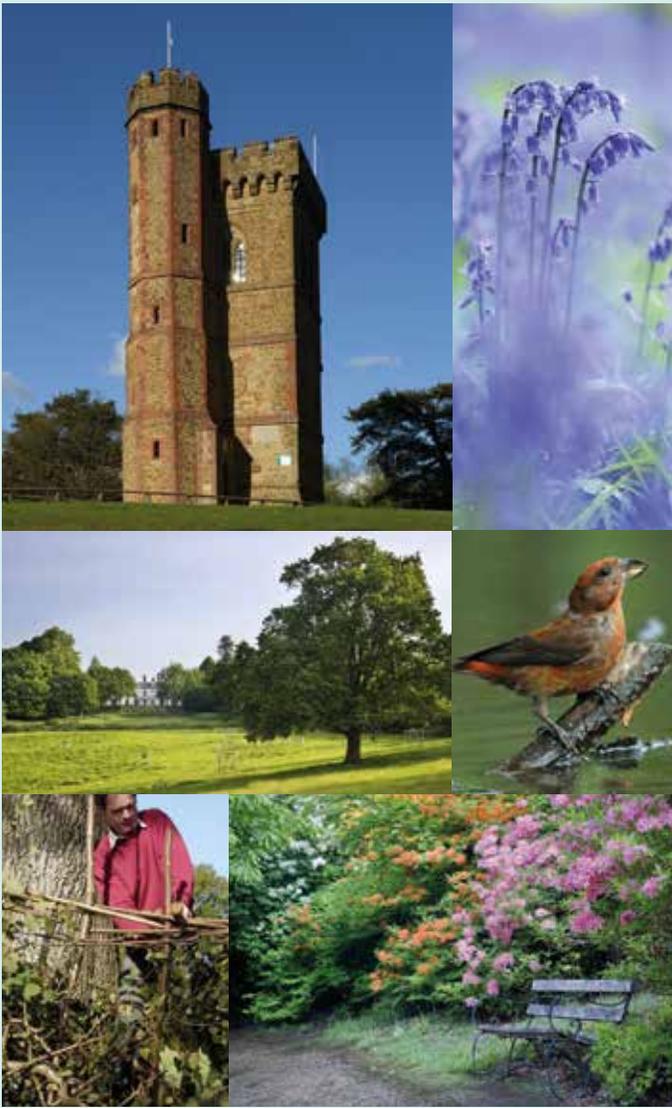
This beautiful shaded and formally planted landscape provides a tranquil place for people to relax among the scented blooms.

Created by Caroline Wedgwood, the sister of naturalist Charles Darwin, the wood provides a colourful vista when seen from Leith Hill Place.

The collection of towering specimen trees include redwoods to provide the shade needed for the rhododendrons and azaleas that line the serpentine paths. Some of these rhododendrons are believed to be the first introductions into the country.

Sadly some of the trees and shrubs were lost during the Great Storm of 1987. Extensive replanting, thinning and aftercare has now restored the damaged parts of the wood to their former glory.

Open throughout the year, the wood has blooms that are at their best from early spring to summer. The Rhododendron Wood can also be seen as part of the self-guided, woodland trail.



Leith Hill Tower 360° panorama view from the battlements



**Henman Bunkhouse**

Located in Broadmoor, Henman Bunkhouse provides residential accommodation for National Trust volunteers, corporate groups, recreational groups and family holidays. It is fully equipped and can sleep 16 people.

For more information contact the office or visit [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/leith-hill](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/leith-hill)



**Leith Hill Tower**

Sweeping views across 14 counties with London landmarks to the north and the English channel to the south, all visible through the free telescopes at the top. Find out about the Tower's history in the upper room. At the base is a servery selling hot and cold food and drink (not NT).



**Leith Hill Place**

Once the childhood home of one of England's greatest composers, Ralph Vaughan Williams.

**Finding your way around the Leith Hill Estate**

Leith Hill is crossed by a number of footpaths and bridleways that allow you to explore the surrounding landscape. Ordnance survey map 'OS Explorer Map: 146 - Dorking, Box Hill & Reigate' and 'OS Landranger Map: 187 - Dorking, Reigate & Crawley' will show all the available routes in the area.

If you prefer, here are four waymarked nature trails:

**Woodland Trail (orange)**  
The woodland trail offers a lovely walk at all times of year with autumn being particularly stunning due to the turning colours of the trees. Graded as 'medium' the 2.5 miles long route does have some steep parts and will take up to 2 hours. It is our longest trail and will take you through parts of the original estate and woodland.

**Etherley Farm Loop (purple)**  
The loop will add an additional 1.5 miles to the woodland trail, taking you across a landscape of farmland and parkland. This hour long walk is graded as 'easy' but can become very muddy underfoot, if wet.

**Heathland Trail (green)**  
The heathland trail takes you on a journey through the high, sandy, open heath of Duke's Warren. Graded as 'easy' the 1.75 mile long route does have a steep climb back up to the tower and will take approximately an hour to complete. The trail will take you through a landscape of heather, bracken, bilberry, gorse, pine and birch.

**Frank's Walk (pink)**  
This walk guides you to the historic arboretum, through the conifer avenue and into Frank's Wood with its spectacular spring display of bluebells. Graded as 'medium' the walk is our shortest at 1 mile long and should take around half an hour to complete. There are some steep slopes, steps and muddy patches.

**What to look out for**

- A Lime Avenue & Walled Garden**  
An extensive formal garden was once a notable feature of the estate. A decorative Lime Avenue and a walled garden which provided a plentiful supply of fruit and vegetables for Leith Hill Place.
- B Hazel coppice**  
As well as providing pea and bean sticks, the cut shoots of the hazel are split then woven into fencing panels known as hurdles. The hazel regrowth is cut on a six to seven year cycle, providing a diverse range of habitats for a variety of wildlife.
- C Etherley Farm**  
Managed by tenant farmers, Etherley Farm is maintained as a pastoral farmland of small fields and hedgerows. There is a small farm shop selling their produce and an adjacent camp site.
- D Parkland**  
Mature parkland trees provide a home for a rich variety of native wildlife, including little owls, bats, rare lichens and many dead wood insects such as stag beetles.
- E Darwin's wormstone**  
Here lies one of Charles Darwin's worm stones. The famous naturalist made numerous trips to Leith Hill conducting research around the estate with his nieces. Darwin studied how worm casts will eventually bury stones that lie on the surface of the ground.
- F Tillingbourne source**  
Natural springs rise to form the Tillingbourne stream that flows west towards Abinger, on through Gomshall to Albury and joins the river Wey at Guildford. Its flow was harnessed in past centuries to power local industry such as Shalford Mill.
- G Heathland**  
Duke's Warren was once part of the extensive woodland that surrounds the heath, but deforestation after the First World War changed the area to an open landscape of heather, bracken, bilberry and gorse with stands of pine and birch. Duke's Warren now supports communities of nightjars, woodlarks and other heathland specialists.
- H Boundary banks**  
Layered beech hedges line many of the holloways in the surrounding landscape. Originally planted to protect plantations from deer and grazing livestock, they were abandoned for many decades and have since grown to an enormous size.
- I Coldharbour cricket pitch**  
Located above Coldharbour village, the cricket pitch is thought to be the highest in south east England. The turves that form the wicket were transplanted from the original pitch in the heart of Coldharbour during the 1940s.
- J Stone pits**  
Sandstone was used in the area to build boundary walls and surface tracks. Quarrying sandstone until the early part of the last century has left the woodland around Leith Hill pitted with hollows and gullies.
- K Dakota crash**  
In winter 1944, four US Douglas Dakota aircraft crashed into the hillside above Mosses Wood, with no survivors. The first crash saw two aircraft hit the ridge whilst a third belly-flopped onto Duke's Warren. A few weeks later, tragedy struck again when another Dakota crashed in almost exactly the same place.
- L Piggot-Brown gate**  
Mosses Wood was given to the National Trust by Lady Piggot-Brown in memory of her son who was killed in action on Christmas Day, 1942. A plaque attached to the gate commemorates his life.
- M Frank's Wood**  
Named after National Trust woodsman, Frank Longhurst, the oak trees were planted in 1949. He planted three acorns for each hole; one for the mice, one to fail and one to grow into a beautiful oak. In spring the woodland floor is covered with bluebells.