



I G Liddell

Get out of London!

South to Gatwick Airport

The text in this document is merely an indication of what might be possible ... or what might have been possible at the time of researching (2019) or later revision. All walking routes are subject to change, but the pace of urban change is greater than in rural areas.

Each reader must assess whether each part of the route qualifies as suitable or safe for public access. The author does not warrant any point of legality or safety in any part of the description of the route.

Thanks are due to many people who have helped me with route-finding and with intelligence local to a number of areas traversed by the route. Their contributions enrich the route and the stories along it. Clearly, any mistakes and misinterpretations remain with the author.

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Front cover photograph:
Kenley Common

Trafalgar Square to Gatwick Airport

CARD S

Start	Nelson's Column, Trafalgar Square — WC2N 5DU
Finish	Gatwick Airport station — RH6 0RD
Distance	60.4km
Duration	13 hours 22 minutes
Ascent	791m

Introduction

The route of the walk starts at the foot of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square, one of the most iconic spots in London.

Trafalgar Square was laid out from 1830, on land which used to be royal mews stabling for Whitehall Palace (which is down Whitehall on the left). Work began on the National Gallery in 1832, and Nelson's Column was erected in 1843 (the Landseer lions only arrived in 1867).

The statue of King Charles I to the south of the square is the London zero-point for road distance measurement. Rather confusingly, the epicentre of road *numbering* for England and Wales is at St Paul's Cathedral, next to St Martin le Grand, which was the headquarters of the General Post Office. The days of the post coaches may have passed, but the atavistic streak maintained the GPO at the heart of the road system.

The route passes through Kennington Park, Brixton, and a sequence of parks to reach Penge West. There is a mix of parkland and streetscape to Croydon, crossing the tramline at Lloyd Park. At this point, the route becomes quite hilly as it crosses the valleys which drain into the Croydon Basin: it becomes truly rural after leaving Sanderstead. Thus far, well-soled trainers are adequate, but south of Sanderstead, lightweight walking boots are *de rigueur*. The route crosses the ridge of the North Downs on

*Admiralty Arch and the
equestrian statue of King
Charles I, Trafalgar Square*



the approach to Merstham. The rest of the route to Gatwick, though not entirely devoid of ascent, is much flatter, but still rural enough to demand boots.

Public transport access will pose no problem as far as Coulsdon Road, but beyond that point it becomes more sketchy. There are railway stations at Merstham and South Nutfield, and there are buses (non-TfL) at Merstham and Smallfield.

The situation regarding shops and other facilities is broadly similar to the public transport mix. You will encounter no problems as far south as Sanderstead. On the route beyond Sanderstead, there are convenience shops at Merstham and South Nutfield, a café at Merstham, and pubs at Kenley, Coulsdon Common, and Merstham. The pub at Outwood, though currently (2024) noted as open, has been at times closed.

It will be clear from the above that you must plan your journey carefully, especially when walking to route between Sanderstead and Gatwick Airport. You should carry all necessary provisions and always have a Plan B to deal with the unexpected — this plan includes extra rations, whether for yourself or for someone else in greater distress. However, the beginning of the route benefits from careful planning, inasmuch as an early start (before 0800 if possible) from Trafalgar Square will result in less congestion as you pass between the square and Lambeth Bridge. Check also the potential for disruption from demonstrations or from one of the ever more frequent events which clutter up Trafalgar Square.

The route is split into four sections, *viz*

- Trafalgar Square to Penge West (*see* page 5)
- Penge West to Godstone Road (*see* page 19)
- Godstone Road to South Nutfield (*see* page 29)
- South Nutfield to Gatwick Airport (*see* page 37)

The map for each section is referenced as part of the sectional introduction.

Trafalgar Square to Penge West 16.3km; 3hr 31min 162m ascent

Introduction

1.1 The route leaves Trafalgar Square and passes the Palace of Westminster before going through Lambeth and Kennington Park to reach Brixton. It passes through Brockwell Park, Dulwich Park and Crystal Palace Park to reach Penge West station. You should not encounter mud on this section of the route, except after heavy rain, which may cause run-off onto the tarmac within the parks.

The map at <https://explore.osmaps.com/route/18389915> covers this section of the route.

Route

1.2 Start off by walking to the south-eastern corner of the Square (the corner nearest to the Bakerloo Line entrance to Charing Cross Underground station), and reach the right-hand

*Equestrian statue of
King Charles I glimpsed
between the lions,
Trafalgar Square*



footway of Whitehall cross by means of four light-controlled pedestrian crossings, *viz*

- from the square to the island facing Northumberland Avenue
- turn right to reach the island with the equestrian statue of King Charles I
- turn left (with Admiralty Arch on your right) to reach the island at the top of Whitehall
- turn right to reach the right-hand footway of Whitehall

where turn left.

Admiralty Arch, completed in 1912, was commissioned by King Edward VII to commemorate the death of his mother, Queen Victoria. The central arch is used for ceremonial purposes (when the road is restricted to the ceremonial parade), with the outer arches carrying pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Keep to the right-hand footway of Whitehall past the Whitehall Theatre and the Admiralty building as far as Horse Guards. Turn right through the arch (between the sentry horses if they are on duty) and cross the arena of Horse Guards Parade to reach the Guards' Memorial on Horse Guards Road.

If your arrival should coincide with a ceremonial event (such as the processions to and from the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace or the Trooping of the Colour) or the, simply continue along the right-hand footway of Whitehall past the Cenotaph, and turn right onto King Charles Street, continuing to Horse Guards Road down the steps from the Clive statue to re-join the route by turning left.

Turn left at the Guards Memorial to pass the statue of Earl Mountbatten of Burma (1900-79) on your left, St James's Park, with its quaint Duck Island Cottage and its pelicans, is on your right.

Duck Island Cottage was built for the Ornithological Society of London as an official acknowledgement of the Society's work in maintaining the waterfowl in St James's Park (amongst other

*Duck Island Cottage,
St James's Park*



works) on the island which was restored by John Nash in the 1820s. Almost inevitably, the sponsor was Prince Albert. The cottage now holds the offices of the London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust, leased from the Crown at a peppercorn rent.

Continue along the left-hand footway of Horse Guards Road: on your left, you will come to the statue of Robert Clive

(1725-74), followed by your arrival at the Churchill War Rooms. At the far end of Horse Guards Road, you will come out onto Great George Street.

Turn left here, and follow the left-hand footway as far as the north-western corner of Parliament Square, where two old telephone boxes may just be glimpsed ahead, behind the inevitable hordes of tourists.

It is at and around Parliament Square that the worst excesses of overtourism will be found — as advised above, get here early and get through and out before the biped sheep have managed to raise themselves from their slumbers.

Turn right to cross Great George Street by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing and follow the right-hand footway ahead, passing the statue of Abraham Lincoln (1809-65) in front of the Supreme Court. Cross Broad Sanctuary ahead using the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing, with Westminster Abbey ahead, and turn left along the right-hand footway, passing St Margaret's church with the Palace of Westminster now ahead of you, to reach the south-eastern corner of Parliament Square at Abingdon Street.

Many people assume that Westminster Abbey is the headquarters (or at least the London headquarters) of the Church of England, but this is not so — the Bishop of London's "home ground" is St Paul's Cathedral. Westminster Abbey is a Royal peculiar, reporting directly to the monarch.

The Palace of Westminster, which contains the Houses of Parliament), was founded in the tenth century CE, and rebuilt after fires in 1512 and 1834. The building we see today was designed by Charles Barry, with Augustus Pugin as his assistant, though both died before the reconstruction was complete. On the left-hand side as you view the Palace from Parliament Square is the iconic clock tower, the Elizabeth Tower, with the Victoria Tower on the right. The Elizabeth Tower contains at its top the famous clock. Part of the workings of the clock are its bells, the largest of which is known as Big Ben.

- Repeat after me — the building across the road is not Big Ben, it is the Palace of Westminster.
- Repeat after me — the left-hand tower is not Big Ben, it is the Elizabeth Tower.
- Repeat after me — the clock is not Big Ben, it is in fact the Great Clock of Westminster.
- Repeat after me — the chimes are not Big Ben, they are the Westminster carillon.
- Repeat after me — Big Ben is only the largest of the bells which ring out the Westminster carillon attached to the Great Clock of Westminster in the Elizabeth Tower of the Palace of Westminster.



Sundial, Old Palace Yard

It really is very simple.

Turn right along the right-hand footway of Abingdon Street, with the Palace of Westminster across the road on your left. Pass the east end of Westminster Abbey and the statue of King George V on the right. In front of the statue, a sundial is laid into the footway of Old Palace Yard: you must provide your own gnomon.

Victoria Tower, Palace of Westminster, and Rodin's *Burghers of Calais*

Cross Abingdon Street by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing to reach the Peers' Entrance of the Palace of Westminster, and turn right to continue along the left-hand footway, past the Victoria Tower. Turn left to enter Victoria Tower Gardens and reach the celebrated *Burghers of Calais* bronze by Auguste Rodin (1840-1917).

Rodin's *Burghers of Calais* bronze was originally cast for the town of that name: it references the six burghers who offered, in 1347, to be executed if the besieging English army would spare the lives of its citizens. After an intercession by Queen Philippa, the six burghers' lives were also spared, and the citizenry were left to get on with their lives. A further three casts were made, one of which was specifically for London. Rodin was invited to assist in the choice of location.

Continue to the riverside, where turn right and, passing the Buxton Memorial Fountain, exit the gardens onto Lambeth Bridge.

The Buxton fountain was designed by Samuel Sanders Teulon (1812-73) to honour the abolitionist MP, Thomas Fowell Buxton (1786-1845). It was originally placed in the corner of Parliament Square, and was moved to its current location in 1957. Teulon was known for his complex designs and the use





of polychrome brick in a career which spanned different types of structure, but he is best known (if at all) for his Church of England work in urban and rural locations.

Lambeth Bridge, with the IMO headquarters prominent on the far side of the river

1.3 Cross the road using the divided pedestrian crossing and turn left to take the right-hand (that is, the upstream) footway while crossing Lambeth Bridge, and then turn right onto the right-hand footway of Albert Embankment.

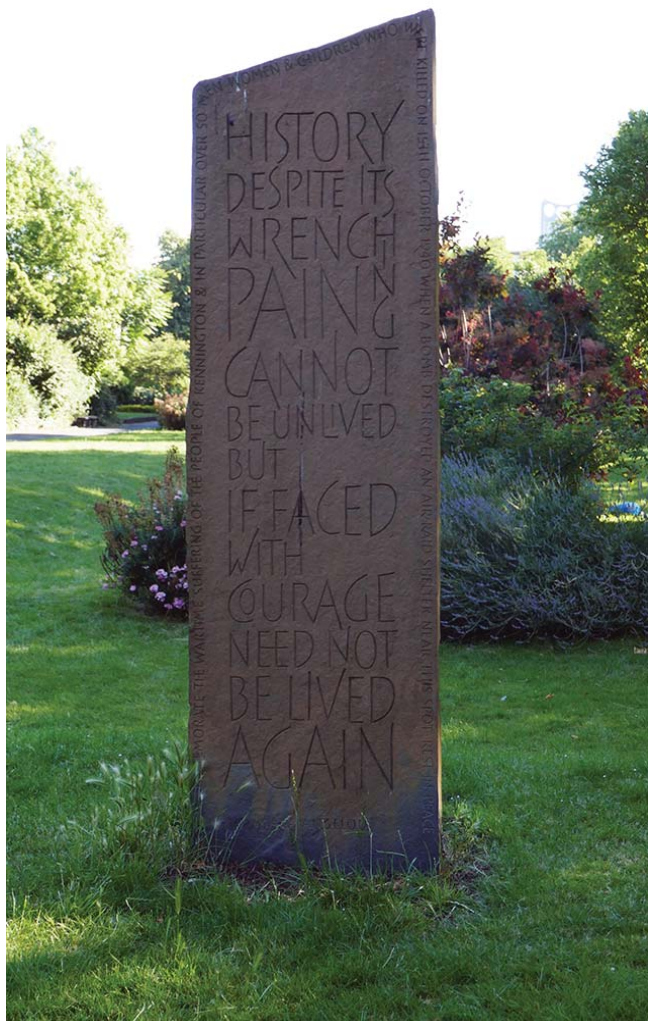
London Fire Brigade headquarters (detail)

Pass the headquarters of the International Maritime Organisation, followed by the London Fire Brigade headquarters, then cross Albert Embankment at the divided light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Turn right alongside the Fire Brigade building, then cross Black Prince Road and turn left along the right-hand footway. Follow this street all the way to Kennington Road, passing beneath the railway (out of Waterloo).

Just beyond the railway tunnel, at the junction with Vauxhall Walk, there is a traditional breakfast café (formerly the Queen's Head pub) which keeps a non-traditionally late opening time of 0830. The café is closed on Sundays.

Turn right along the right-hand footway of Kennington Road to Sancroft Street. Cross Kennington Road and then Kennington Lane by light-controlled pedestrian crossings. Continue ahead along the left-hand footway of Cleaver Street and through Cleaver Square (where there are convenient benches), to emerge through the traffic barrier onto Kennington Park Road.





*Air raid memorial,
Kennington Park*

*Christ Church,
Brixton Road*



Kennington station (Northern Line) lies about 170m to your left, along Kennington Park Road.

Turn right, and follow the right-hand footway of Kennington Park Road. Using the crossing beyond the junction with Kennington Park Place, cross the road to enter Kennington Park by the gate on the corner.

1.4 Bear right within the park, and follow the path parallel to Kennington Park Road. Part-way along, look for a stone memorial on the right.

This memorial commemorates more than 100 civilians who were killed by a direct hit on the air raid shelter in which they were sheltering during the London Blitz. On the face of the stone is carved words by Maya Angelou:

*History, despite its wrenching pain,
cannot be unlived,
but if faced with courage
need not be lived again.*

Continue to the far end of the park, reached by a point where the path curls left (to take the corner) and reaches some tennis courts, then bears right to exit the park onto Camberwell New Road.

Oval station (Northern Line) is over to your right.

Turn left along camberwell New Road for a few metres, and turn right to cross the road using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Follow the left-hand footway of Brixton Road ahead to the junction with Mowll Street.

At the corner of Mowll Street, the bulk of Christ Church takes the eye. It was rebuilt at the turn of the twentieth century to serve the growing population, the architecture being a mix of Art Nouveau and Byzantine Revival, all executed in London brick (with echoes of Westminster Cathedral in its use of red and yellow brick).

The architect, Arthur Beresford Pike, was the brother-in-law of the vicar, William Mowll, whose evangelical churchmanship placed demands for different architecture from the prevailing traditional Gothic. There had been a chapel on the site since 1820, first independent, then absorbed as a chapel of St Mark's church at the foot of the hill (now opposite Oval station). The exterior pulpit, again demanded by Mowll

for his evangelical leanings, destroys the symmetry of the building and caused a family rift with the architect. The building is Grade II* listed.

On Mowll Street (formerly Chapel Street, until it was decided that the vicar's name needed perpetuation), across the road from the church, there is a blue plaque to Max Wall, music-hall entertainer and the inspiration for John Cleese's Ministry of Silly Walks in *Monty Python's Flying Circus*.

Continue the ascent of Brixton Road on its left-hand footway to reach and cross Mostyn Road. Continue on Brixton Road.

After you cross Loughborough Road on the left, you will find Max Roach Park (named after the American jazz drummer). The park has recently been revamped with fake castle ruins as part of its children's play area. Beyond the park, the right-hand side of the road is populated with more shops: beyond the police station, you are in the commercial centre of Brixton.

Pass beneath the rail bridges: Brixton station (Victoria Line) is then on your left-hand side.

Brixton rail station (Southeastern services) is signposted along Atlantic Road (between the rail bridges).

1.6 Continue southwards on the left-hand footway of Brixton Road — turning left if you are exiting the station — until you reach Windrush Square on the left, just beyond the library. Keep to the left side of the road to take Effra Road (A204), rather than Brixton Hill.

Over to your right, on the far side of Brixton Hill, is the red-brick Edwardian Gothic Lambeth Town Hall, opened in 1908 by the Prince and Princess of Wales (later King George V and Queen Mary). It is Grade II listed (a step lower in status than Grade II*, which is held by Christ Church, passed on Brixton Road, and St Matthew's church, which is situated immediately on your right, filling the gap between Brixton Hill and Effra Road as they bifurcate.

Built in 1822-24 to serve the fast-growing local population, St Matthew's church has a massive Doric frontage as seen when ascending Brixton Road. The congregation now inhabits only part of the building, other businesses having taken over the rest. John and Norma Major were married in this church in 1970.

Continue along the left-hand footway of Effra Road to the junction with Brixton Water Lane (there is a large supermarket across the road). Cross the road head using the light-controlled

Windrush Square, Brixton





Brockwell Park

Below — Brockwell House

*Bottom — Rebirth,
Brockwell Park*

pedestrian crossing (there is no entry for wheeled traffic) and turn left along the right-hand footway. After 130m, you will find on the right your entrance into Brockwell Park.

If Brockwell Park is sealed off for one of its many paid-for events, just continue on Brixton Water Lane and turn right along Dulwich Road to reach the Herne Hill gate.



About 120m after entering the park, take the path to the left, which contours the hill and leads eventually to Brockwell Lido, an Art Deco open-air pool which has survived the threat of closure.

There is a café at the lido.

Bear left beyond the lido, and descend towards the park gate. Before reaching the gate, though, take a path on the right. This leads past the miniature railway to reach the gate at Herne Hill.

For Herne Hill station (Southeastern and Thameslink services), exit the park, cross Dulwich Road by the crossing just to the left of the gates, and walk along Railton Road (no entry for wheeled traffic).

Brockwell Park surrounds Brockwell House, and was purchased for the public good in 1891. It offers fine views across London, and boasts two



cafés, one at the lido (an Art Deco masterpiece) and the other at the House. There is also, among other entertainments, a miniature railway, though the track, which is on the left of the path, and looks very vulnerable to damage.

1.7 Walk away from the gate up the central of three paths. At the summit, you will see Brockwell House over to your left: continue to the clock tower.

There is a café in the house, with a separate toilet block, at the far end, near the clock tower. However, there are often reports that the toilets are “temporarily” closed.

At the clock tower, turn left, and turn left again, as if to pass the other side of Brockwell House. Just beyond the outdoor tables of the café, though, turn right down a path which leads to the park’s perimeter path, where turn left. Take a right turn to reach a gate, and exit the park.

Cross Norwood Road by the pedestrian crossing, and continue ahead along Rosendale Road, keeping to its left-hand footway. Pass beneath the railway to reach some shops.

There is a café at the corner of Guernsey Grove.

Across on the right-hand side of Rosendale Road, there is a large group of red-brick buildings. This is one of the estates of philanthropic social housing maintained by the Peabody Estate. George Peabody was an American philanthropist and social reformer who was on a par with Lord Shaftesbury, Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts and Charles Dickens.

Having first pursued the concept of affordable education in the southern states of the USA after the Civil War, he turned to the betterment of the poor in his adopted home of London, and built estates of sustainable and affordable housing. His work continues today in the operation of the housing trust which bears his name.

1.8 Cross the end of Guernsey Grove, and continue to the end of the row of shops on your left. Here, cross Hawarden Grove and turn left to follow the right-hand footway to its far end at Croxted Road. Turn right, and take the right-hand footway beneath the railway. At the junction with Turney Road, use two light-controlled pedestrian crossings to cross Croxted Road and then Turney Road, and turn left along the right-hand footway to pass beneath another railway. Pass an entrance to Dulwich Sports Ground on your right, and continue to the junction with Burbage Road. Turn right onto Burbage Road, and follow it to a roundabout, keeping to its right-hand footway.

1.9 Turn right onto the right-hand footway of Gallery Road at the roundabout. Cross the road at a pedestrian crossing, and take a path ahead, which leads to the war memorial. Beyond the memorial, turn right onto the right-hand footway of College Road to reach, on the left, the entrance to Dulwich Park. Use the



*Edward Alleyn, founder of
Dulwich College*

nearby pedestrian crossing to reach the entrance to the park.

As you cross Gallery Road, Dulwich Picture Gallery is on your right. The Gallery was designed by Sir John Soane, and holds a large collection of Old Masters from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It showcases more modern works in a wide-ranging programme of exhibitions. There is a café on site.

From the park gates, North Dulwich station (Southern services) is 900m to the north, via Dulwich Village's shops, cafés, restaurants, and the Crown and Greyhound pub, which has been a magnet for

poets and poetry readings for many years.

Throughout the park, you will be following the Green Chain Walk: the signposts should be of assistance to you in navigation.

Enter the park, and follow the main carriageway until it forks at a pair of traffic barriers. Take the left fork, but do not swing to the north-east. Instead, follow the Lake signpost to take a right fork off the main path. This continues ahead to reach and pass a small lake on your right. At the head of the lake, bear right to follow its eastern edge. Before the path bends to follow the lake's southern edge, turn left, then turn right at the next junction, to reach the main southern carriageway. Turn left, and follow the carriageway out to exit the park through the Rosebery gate.

*Rosebery Lodge,
Dulwich Park*



1.10 Turn left along the busy road (it is, in fact, the South Circular Road), crossing to the right-hand footway at a refuge. Follow the road past a cricket club until you are a few paces from the junction with Lordship Lane: here, you will turn right on Cox's Walk (still following the Green Chain Walk signs).

Lordship Lane contains many opportunities for refreshment, and replenishment.

There are several bus routes which serve the stops in the vicinity.

1.11 Ascend Cox's Walk. Where the path bends to the right, you will have a former railway cutting on your left.

You are approximately at the site of Lordship Lane station on the line between Nunhead and Crystal Palace. This station was made famous by its appearance in one of Camille Pissarro's finest small paintings of this part of London. Pissarro (1830-1903) was born in the Danish West Indies (now the US Virgin Islands), and was one of the foremost Impressionist painters. His Danish nationality forced him to leave France at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, and he settled in Norwood. He painted scenes of other parts of the metropolis in later years, but his London paintings, and his London reputation, are centred around the areas of Sydenham, Norwood and Dulwich.

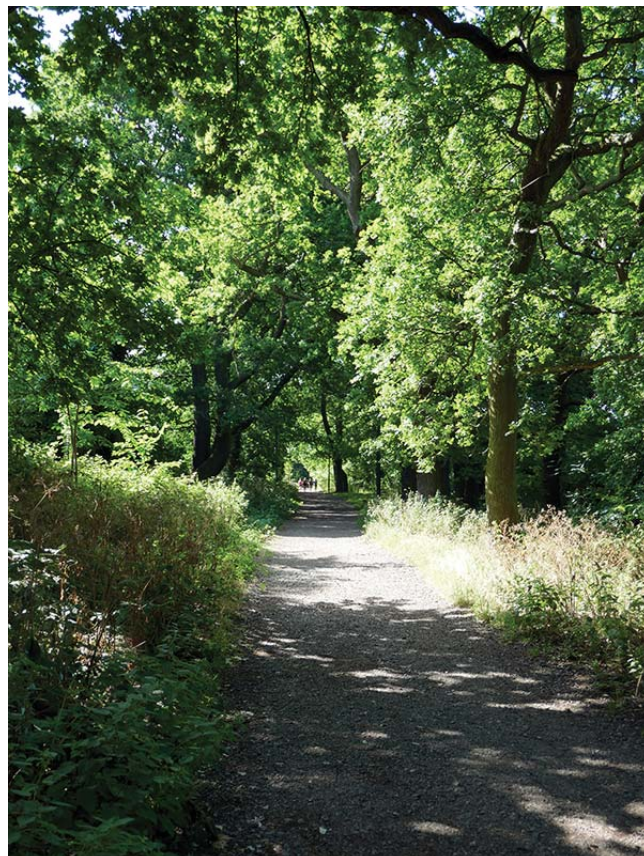
The line ran from Nunhead to "Crystal Palace High Level and Upper Norwood" station, making the station name almost as long as its tenure on the network. It closed in 1954.

After a short time, you will see a signpost which points you down to the left, then right onto the trackbed of the old railway. Follow this almost as far as the blocked-up tunnel portal, where you leave the trackbed by a path to the right. This path turns left and ascends with zigzags to reach Crescent Wood Road. When you reach the road, turn right, keeping to the right-hand footway, until you reach the Wood House pub on your left.

Here, on the right, a path leads down to Sydenham Hill station (Southeastern services), but this facility cannot be recommended to create a break-point on the route: the steep climb to start the next day's walking would be just too soul-destroying for words.

1.12 At the junction by the pub, turn right, then immediately turn left across a pedestrian crossing to reach the junction with Wells Park Road. Cross Wells Park Road and turn left to follow its right-hand footway, past the access to another part of the railway walk towards Crystal Palace, as far as Longton Avenue. Just beyond Longton Avenue, take the gate on your right to enter Sydenham Wells Park.

Bear right within the park to follow a perimeter path parallel to Longton Avenue, but bear left before the gate at the far end which leads onto



Ascending Cox's Walk

*Sydenham Wells Park:
the current route keeps
to the right of this view*



Longton Avenue, advancing in a descent towards the centre of the park. Once on this southerly trajectory, do not swing left towards a play area, but descend past a formal garden on your left to reach a lake on your left. Bend left with the lakeside, then take a path on your right (if you reach a tennis court up on your right, you have gone too far), out onto Longton Avenue at the southern end of the park.

Cross Longton Avenue, and walk up the right-hand footway of Ormanton Road, continuing ahead on a path to reach Westwood Hill. Cross Westwood Hill, and take the right-hand footway of Charleville Circus ahead, following the central circle round to the right, then turning right to come out onto Crystal Palace Park Road.

1.13 Cross the road and turn left down the right-hand footway. After 100m, where there are some metal bollards on the right, turn right to enter Crystal Palace Park.

The key attraction of the park is, of course, the site of the Crystal Palace (see below), but the vicinity was home to both Marie Stopes and Émile Zola (who fled here after the firestorm in France which followed publication of his open letter about the Dreyfus case, *J'accuse*).

The Crystal Palace was rebuilt at the summit of the park in 1854 after being dismantled at its first (and deliberately temporary) home in Hyde Park as part of the Great Exhibition of 1851. It was 564m long and 39m high, made of cast iron and plate glass. It was designed by Joseph Paxton, the head gardener of the Duke of Devonshire's home at Chatsworth House, near Bakewell in the Peak District of Derbyshire. Amongst its features were the first major incorporation of public toilets into such a project, and water towers designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, to hold reservoirs of water to power the fountains below. Curiously, one of several possible redesigns of the Palace (on its relocation from South Kensington) was to build it upwards, rather like a proto-Shard. The first high wind would have soon destroyed it in that design, given the constraints of the

*Remains of the Terrace,
Crystal Palace Park
(off-route)*



technology of the era (think, for example, of the Tay Bridge Disaster some 25 years later).

After the Great Exhibition, the Crystal Palace was redesigned for its new home at Penge Place, but using the original materials. The new Crystal Palace was used for many and varied exhibitions and events, including a Shakespeare tercentenary festival and a series of Handel music festivals which included, for the centenary of his death, a performance of *Messiah* for 2765 singers and an orchestra of 460. There were (separate) receptions for Garibaldi and the Shah of Persia, and even Charles Blondin walked and somersaulted on his tightrope inside the building, 20m off the floor. It was the site of the Festival of Empire in 1911, was requisitioned for Navy use during the Great War (and was jocularly called HMS Crystal Palace), and after the Great War, it became the first location of the Imperial War Museum.

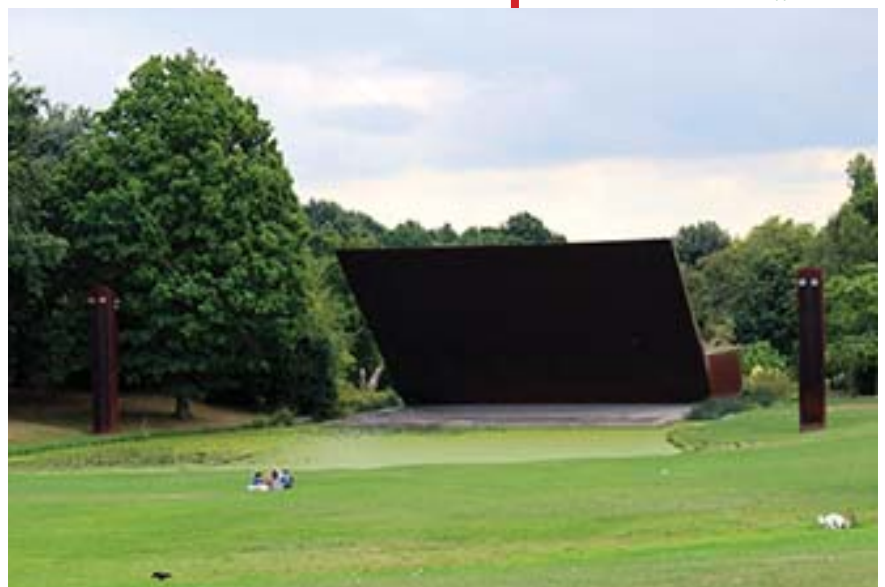
On the night of 30 November 1936, the building was comprehensively destroyed by fire, lighting up a fair proportion of the Home Counties in the process. It was underinsured (as were so many buildings of its era), and so could not economically be rebuilt. Sporadic pipe-dreams of rebuilding the Palace have surfaced, but none has ever managed to reach a serious drawing-board, let alone make a start on the reconstruction. All that remains is the building's footprint, with a few of the bases for the columns, and minor (generally vandalised) statuary in the immediate surroundings.

Today, Crystal Palace Park is a major green lung for London and for Londoners' recreation: its east-facing slope offers different views from other parks in the area.

Before the building of Wembley Stadium, the FA Cup Final was held at a stadium in the park between 1895 and 1914, on the ground now covered by the National Sports Centre. The athletics track at the Sports Centre was used to film the scene in the original version of *The Italian Job* film, in which Sir Michael Caine uttered the immortal words, "You were only supposed to blow the bloody doors off!".

Crystal Palace Bowl hosted open-air concerts during the 1970s (Pink Floyd, Roxy Music and the Beach Boys were among the many successful artists to play the Bowl), but the idea fizzled out, probably for reasons connected with the vagaries of the weather and the increasing weight of safety requirements. At the lower end of the park, dinosaur models from 1854 still grace the lakeside below the Sports Centre.

*Crystal Palace Bowl
(off-route)*



Once in the park, turn left along a broad path. After 60m, take a smaller path which forks to the left. About 200m ahead, do not go towards the park exit on your left; keep to its perimeter path past a kindergarten.

Continue ahead to the end of the path, where turn left and exit the park at the gate. Cross over the end of Thicket Road at the refuge, and then take the right-hand footway of High Street towards the railway bridge. Pass beneath the railway (it is the spur of the Windrush Line of the Overground between Sydenham and Crystal Palace stations), and continue towards a second railway bridge (this carries the Overground and Southern services between Penge West and Sydenham. Just before this bridge, Anerley Park (a street) goes off to the right.

At the Bridge House pub, Penge West station (Overground and Southern services) may be reached by walking up Anerley Park to the right.

Penge West to Godstone Road

16.1km; 2hr 3hr 38min

267m ascent

Introduction

2.1 By a mixture of streets, parks and a railbed, the route makes its way through the suburbs of south London to reach the expanse of Lloyd Park in Croydon. There follows a similar alternation of streets and green space to Sanderstead, with much ascent and descent.

At this point, the footwear choice must change from trainers to lightweight walking boots (after rain, the change should be made at Lloyd Park) to tackle the fieldpaths and forestry which follow, all the way to the end of the route at Gatwick Airport. As far as this section is concerned, the route then crosses Riddlesdown to reach Godstone Road.

The map at <https://explore.osmaps.com/route/2193960> covers this section of the route.

Penge West station (Southern services and the Windrush Line of the Overground) is about 80m distant, on the road named Anerley Park.

Route

2.2 Start off by passing beneath the railway bridge on the right-hand footway of Penge High Street — if you are exiting the station, turn right along Anerley Park. You will soon reach the beginning of the shopping area. Pass the church on your left.

Beyond the church, and just before the little turning circle for buses, you will see some fine early-Victorian buildings.

These were the almshouses, the gift of a local landowner, for the watermen and lightermen (essentially, they were ferrymen and river pilots) in London: the residents moved to Hastings in 1973, and the buildings were sold off.

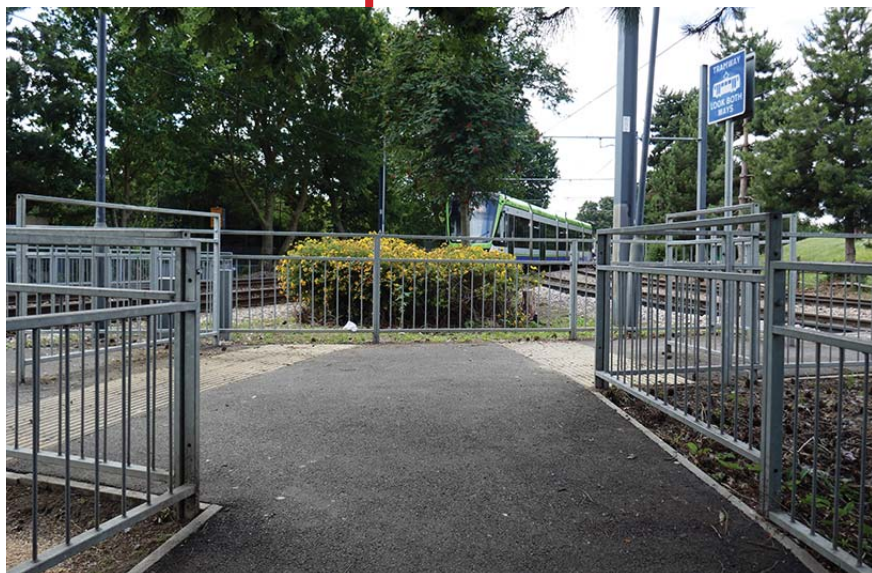
Continue all the way down High Street, taking its right bend, to the Pawleyne Arms, where cross Croydon Road ahead and turn right along the left-hand footway. Turn left at the blocky Travelodge onto Avenue Road.

2.3 Follow the right-hand footway of Avenue Road to the junction with Chesham Road, where turn right to follow the left-hand footway. Pass the two arms of Chesham Crescent on



Untamed land in South Norwood Country Park

The jaws of the junction, Arena tram stop



your right, then at the next crossroads, turn left onto the left-hand footway of Pelham Road. At the following crossroads, turn right onto Ravenscroft Road, taking the left-hand footway all the way to Elmers End Road.

This is the small commercial centre of Birkbeck: the opportunities include a café on the corner of Ravenscroft Road.

Turn left onto the left-hand footway of Elmers End Road, and cross to the other footway at the light-controlled pedestrian crossing just before the railway bridge.

Birkbeck tram stop and station are here, with their separate entrances: follow local signage.

2.4 Continue along the right-hand footway of Elmers End Road, past Beech Lane and Dorset Road over on your left. Just after passing Dorset Road, turn right to enter South Norwood Country Park through a small gate. Once in the park, turn left: there will be a lake on your right. Where a path comes in from another entrance on your left, turn right to follow the side of the (well-hidden) lake.

Ignore a path going off to the right along the next side of the lake, but carry on round a left-hand bend and then round a right-hand one. After 270m, turn right to follow the path, then bear left at a path junction, and follow this path towards a tramway crossing.

Before you reach the tracks, though, take a path to the left which descends to field level. Follow the right-hand side of the field to the junction of two tramlines at a set of crossings. Take the path right into the junction. Here, turn right to cross the tracks, then turn left to walk, with the tracks now on your left, to the far end of the Arena tram stop.

This stop is actually the junction point for the north-eastern termini at Elmers End and Beckenham Junction.

2.5 Bear half-right to follow a path which leads between houses and comes out onto Macclesfield Road. This is a street of archetypical suburban terraced housing. Turn left, and continue along the length of the street using its left-hand footway.

The street-name changes to Estcourt Road at the next junction: follow Estcourt Road, still on the left-hand footway, all the way to Elmers Road.

Cross Elmers Road at the pedestrian crossing and turn left along the right-hand footway. Cross over the tramline: the entry onto Woodside tram stop is just past the bridge.

2.6 Continue ahead on Spring Lane: at the next street-junction (with Longhurst Road), turn right off Spring Lane to enter Ashburton Park.

A convenience shop is on the corner of Longhurst Road.

About 30m after passing through the park's entrance gate, bear right to follow the path closest to the tramline, passing to the right of hard courts and a bowling green. The main part of this walk is alongside an avenue of fine trees. On exiting the park at Tenterden Road, do not continue ahead, but turn right to cross over the tracks, then turn left onto Elmers Road, staying on the left-hand footway.

Suddenly, the huge and multicoloured tower of Saffron Square rises up to dominate the horizon.

At the end of Elmers Road, turn left onto the left-hand footway of Blackhorse Lane and cross a railway bridge. Just beyond the bridge, at a pedestrian crossing, turn left onto a path. This is the access to Blackhorse Lane tram stop, but you should turn left down a flight of steps to the trackbed of a former railway before you reach the stop.

2.7 This is the Addiscombe Railway Park. Turn left and pass beneath Blackhorse Road. About 400m after joining the path, it crosses Dalmally Passage.

If you are forced into a diversionary exit from Elmers Road, look out for a large school on Morland Road. Walk along Morland Road with the school on your left. Beyond the school, the road bends slightly to the left. Cross the end of Gowland Close, and continue along Morland Road. Pass a bus stop on the left, then take the next passage on the left (Dalmally Passage).



*Avenue of trees,
Ashburton Park*



*Saffron Square tower,
seen from Elmers Road*



Addiscombe Railway Park path near East India Way

You may then pick up the Addiscombe Railway Park path on your right.

About 350m beyond Dalmally Passage, the railway path emerges onto East India Way, the modern housing replacing the railway sidings and other infrastructure which previously covered the land. Continue ahead on East India Way (round its bends) to

emerge, beneath some flats, onto Lower Addiscombe Road.

Use the pedestrian crossing on the left, and then turn right. Turn left onto Canning Road, and follow the left-hand footway all the way to its end on Addiscombe Road.

East Croydon station is about 800m to the right: across Addiscombe Road, you will see a bus stop which will take you there if you do not want to walk.

2.8 Turn left onto the left-hand footway of Addiscombe Road and pass behind the bus shelter. Turn right to join Chepstow Road, using the light-controlled pedestrian crossing. Follow its right-hand footway uphill to a pedestrian crossing. Cross here, and continue to Park Hill Rise.

Turn left onto Park Hill Rise, and follow the left-hand footway all the way to its end. Do not swing right with the main road onto Selborne Road, but continue ahead onto Deepdene Avenue. At the end of Deepdene Avenue, take the path ahead to the left of the gate of the allotment gardens.

Keep the allotment gardens close on your right-hand side as you enter Lloyd Park. Follow the path along the right-hand edge of the park, all the way down to a bowling green on the left. By this point, there are houses on your right on the other side of Lloyd Park Avenue.

At the far end of the bowling green, turn left to reach a car park. Keep the car park on your left and the tennis courts on your right to reach the access road to the car park by the pavilion.

Turn right along the park's access road to reach Lloyd Park tram stop. Trams run to New Addington and Croydon: there is a tram stop outside East Croydon station.

Lloyd Park takes its name from Frank Lloyd, whose father founded the Sunday News and Daily Chronicle newspapers: the family home was Coombe House (previously the home of the brothers of William Harvey, who demonstrated the process of blood circulation in the body). Before his death in 1927, Frank Lloyd had been in discussions with the local authority about donating some land for

playing fields; after his death, his daughter turned the land over to public ownership. The park covers 46ha and has a range of landscapes from the managed to the wild.

There is a café in the pavilion, and there are public toilets in the same building.

If the tram service is for any reason suspended (for example, weekend engineering works), the most convenient route to the start-point is to walk the Vanguard Way from East Croydon station.

Cross the road (and the tram tracks) from the station and bear left towards the bus station. Before reaching the bus station, bear right onto Altyre Road, following the signs for the Courts. Walk all the way down the right-hand footway of Altyre Road to the courts at the far end.

Cross Barclay Road by the light-controlled pedestrian crossing; on the other side of the crossing, pass the pillar box to enter Fairfield Path. Follow its left-hand footway, which soon becomes an enclosed path.

Cross The Avenue, and continue on the path ahead, which merges onto Cotelands, passing a school on the right. At the T-junction, turn right, then left into St Bernard's. At the end of this street, take the path straight ahead to reach Park Hill Road. Cross at the pedestrian crossing, and turn right. Take a path off to the left (just beyond the first lamp-post) to reach Reynolds Way, where turn right. After passing the first block of three-storey houses with integral ground-floor garages, turn right on a downhill path.

This path crosses Brownlow Road, then passes beneath the tram tracks, crosses Larcombe Close, and emerges onto Lloyd Park Avenue opposite a bowling green. Turn left, then right to follow the bowling green fence, then bear slightly right (that is, in a south-easterly direction) to reach the entrance to the car park and the pavilion café.

The tram stop is at the other end of the car park access road: if you are continuing with the route, continue across the front of the pavilion buildings.

2.9 From the tram stop, walk up the car park access road, passing the barrier on your left, to come out onto the playing fields at the pavilion.

Walk the length of the pavilion buildings (on the playing-fields side), then bear right, making for a gap in the trees near the tram tracks. Go through the gap, then pass to the right of a solitary tree where you have a clear view of the tracks on your right. Keep your eyes peeled for a little path which goes off to the right: you should see the barrier at the tram tracks. Cross the tracks, and turn left on a path: it eventually comes out onto Coombe Road. Climb the hill on the left-hand footway, crossing to the right-hand footway at a



*The path through
Coombe Woods*

refuge beyond the entrance to Coombe Lodge (on the right) and The Cedars school (on your left).

Turn right onto Conduit Lane: where it ends, go forward past the traffic barrier on a path through Coombe Woods. Do not bear right into the Central Nursery. Follow the path through the woods, which descends after a left-hand bend to a point where the Vanguard Way contours off to the left. Here, leave the Vanguard Way and descend the path ahead to reach Croham Valley Road.

Use the refuge to cross Croham Valley Road and take the access road for Croham Hurst golf club opposite; when you reach the main car park, take the path which squeezes to the right of a chain-link fence. This path climbs steadily, at first with the golf course on the left. Cross a bridleway and continue to climb until you reach the top of Breakneck Hill, with extensive views ahead.

2.10 At the top of the hill, turn left and follow the clear path along the ridge, passing the marker for a barrow on the left. The path continues past the open land into woodland, and begins to descend. Ignore a path off to the left, but descend steadily, trending right: your final descent will be in a south-westerly direction. Take the zigzag path at the bottom to reach Upper Selsdon Road at a bus stop.

Cross the road and turn left onto the right-hand footway, passing the bus stop's natural pair, to reach Arkwright Road on the right. Turn right onto Arkwright Road and follow it, using the left-hand footway. At a junction with flowers planted in the middle, keep to the left-hand footway on Arkwright Road, continuing ahead into Church Way.

*View to the south-east
from Breakneck Hill*



Just beyond 61 Church Way, turn left onto a narrow path signposted to Sanderstead Plantation. After it squeezes past the houses, the path makes its way through woodland: keep taking the higher option at any branching path, until you reach the summit.

This is the highest point in the London Borough of Croydon, 175m above sea level.

2.11 Set off from the summit in a southerly direction to reach Addington Road. Turn right onto the busy road, taking the right-hand footway down past the church.

Cross to the left-hand footway at the pedestrian crossing, then continue over the end of Onslow Gardens to the roundabout, turning left into Limpsfield Road.

There are shops and cafés on the left here.

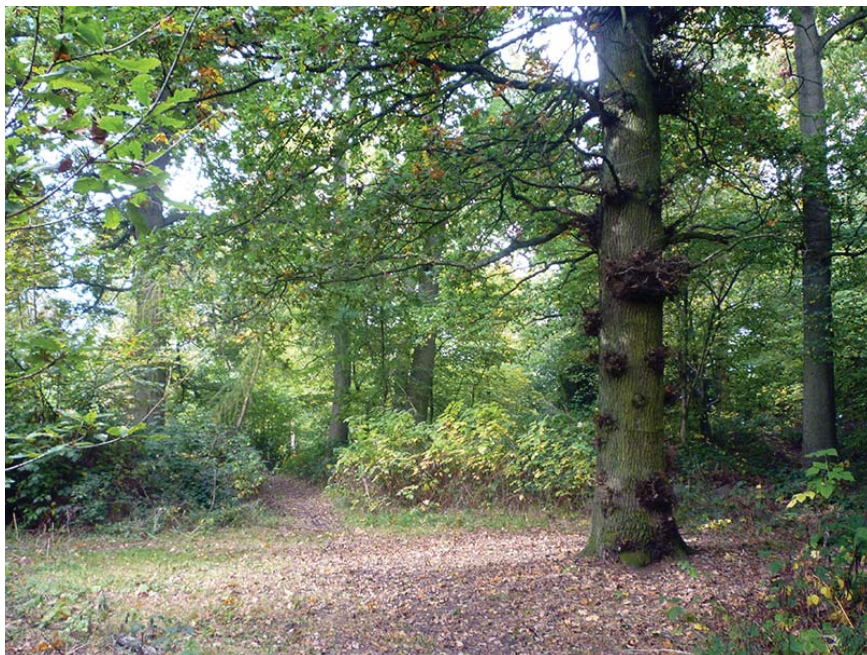
If you do not have a need of shops or other facilities, cross at the pedestrian crossing to take the right-hand footway of Limpsfield Road, otherwise go past the shops to a light-controlled pedestrian crossing at Gresham Primary School to continue on the right-hand footway.

The clear statement on the school sign underlines the fact that we are firmly within the London Borough of Croydon. This exposes the pathetic fantasy of the sign at the top of Limpsfield Road which tries to pretend that Sanderstead is not within Croydon (and thereby is not within London) but is somehow attached to a completely different county. It is collective wilful amnesia to attempt to airbrush sixty years of reality.

Continue along the right-hand footway of Limpsfield Road, passing a bus stop and a children's playground.

Just beyond the playground, turn right up a lane (between a hedge and the playground) which leads to a recreation ground at the far end.

Pass a sad brick building left over from the days when the tide went out for municipal



Summit of Sanderstead Plantation, and of Croydon



Sanderstead church



Mitchley Hill

park facilities such as cafés and changing rooms (though other areas manage to retain some of these facilities). Turn left at the far end of the building (a disused bowling green is on your right) and drop down to a scrubby little car park.

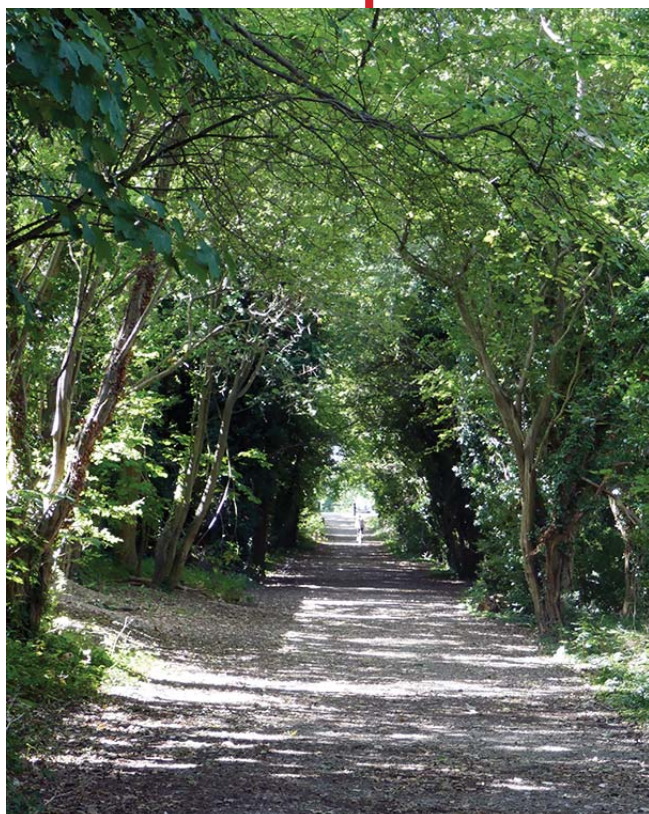
Make for the far right-hand corner, where a narrow footpath squeezes between a fence and a sign warning people not to park on the hatched area, which is announced as “part of Footpath 24”. In fact, the

hatchments seem to have vanished at the same time as the facilities in the brick pavilion.

Go down the narrow pathway, bearing right to go round a few straggly bushes: you are now on the left edge of some land which may or may not give the impression of being tilled. This path descends to bring you out onto Mitchley Hill opposite the rightmost house.

2.12 Cross the road and take the footpath which lies opposite, up the right-hand side of the house: for anyone with Lake District knowledge, the note on the sign that the path leads “to Dunmail Drive” (give or take a few letters which have fallen off) will foretell a serious climb ahead. The path certainly starts rising smartly, but when Mitchley Wood is reached, the path

Dunmail Drive



bears right to rise at a less challenging gradient. At the top of the rise, there is a field to the left, and you will see a stile leading into the field.

Yes, there is indeed a path which cuts the corner of the field, but crossing it requires clambering over a stile at each end, and the time-energy balance (you would save only 90m in length) is one for each walker to weigh up. To be honest, it's probably easier overall to stay out of the field.

The out-of-field path takes a left turn to meet up with the “hypotenuse” route; here, turn right to follow a woodland path for a few metres, then turn left at a T-junction onto a broad tree-lined earthen path.

2.13 This is Dunmail Drive, which leads straight out to Riddlesdown College, a secondary school. Take the track going off to the left immediately beyond the

college perimeter: you will soon pass the college's sports fields on your left-hand side.

Heralded by a stubby fingerpost (thumbpost?) with the familiar waymarks on the fingers, section 5 of the London Loop, running clockwise, approaches from ahead.

Turn right to join the London Loop and follow it downhill, ignoring a cross-path at the lower end of the first meadow. Continue ahead to descend steeply to a point where the main path seems to turn left at the corner of a fence. Ahead, tucked in amongst the trees, you will see a gate. Ignore the path to the left and go through the gate, and turn left.

A clear green track leads off, and soon there is a London Loop stump-post guiding you gently downhill. Eventually, you will meet the ancient Riddlesdown Road (a trackway). Ahead, the track becomes more established, crossing a railway and descending to a main road, the A22 Godstone Road.

Just before the main road is reached, you will pass a large black sign on the left: look on the other side, and you will learn that Riddlesdown is managed by the Corporation of London.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Corporation of the City of London began to purchase tracts of land beyond the City's "Square Mile" boundaries to be preserved as green spaces for the recreation and benefit of Londoners. Other common land was vested in the Corporation for safe keeping at around the same time.



Riddlesdown — descent, gate and City signboard

These green spaces range from wild land, through farmed and managed landscapes (Hampstead Heath is a good example of the latter) to smaller conventional “public parks” (such as Queen’s Park and West Ham Park). On the fringes of London to the south of Croydon, several commons have come into the remit of the Corporation, within which you will see information boards in the Corporation’s black format with the shield-and-sword emblazonment in the middle and the by-laws in small print on the reverse.

The Corporation’s website has a lot of information about the many green spaces which they manage beyond the bounds of the City. In particular, there are often local footpath maps on the Corporation’s website for particular areas, and you are advised to make use of these resources.

At the next road on the right, Old Barn Lane, at the end of the modern block, you will reach the end of this section.

Ahead, with a walk of about 800m, you may reach Whyteleafe station (Southern service: Caterham line). Upper Warlingham station (Southern service: East Grinstead line) is just as convenient, a short way beyond Whyteleafe station and up to the left. There are shops and eating opportunities in the vicinity of the stations.

Journey times are slightly less from Upper Warlingham, but you will need to consult the timetables to check which will give you an earlier arrival at East Croydon station.

There is a frequent bus service from the nearby bus stop (*i.e.*, running away from Whyteleafe) to Croydon, with stops for Southern rail services at Kenley station (turn left at the far end of the parade from the bus stop of that name) and Purley station. In the opposite direction, the bus will take you to either Whyteleafe or Upper Warlingham station.

Godstone Road to South Nutfield

15.4km; 3hr 33min
302m ascent

Introduction

3.1 From Godstone Road, the route ascends to Kenley Common, crosses Coulsdon Common, then grazes the edge of Farthing Downs (all of which green spaces are owned by the Corporation of the City of London).

More green space takes the route over the ridge of the North Downs and down into Merstham. Farmland follows as far as Nutfield, where a refuge route shields the walker from the traffic on Mid Street as far as South Nutfield.

The map at <https://explore.osmaps.com/route/2193963> covers this section of the route.

The route is quite hilly in places as you continue crossing the valleys which splay out south of Croydon. It deserves the respect of lightweight boots to cope with the gradients and the underfoot conditions (whether those are muddy or stony).

Access by rail to the start of this section is via Kenley station or Whyteleafe station on the Caterham line, or via Upper Warlingham station on the East Grinstead line. Kenley is a little farther away from the route than the others: the 407 bus serves Kenley and Purley stations to the north, and stations at Whyteleafe and Upper Warlingham stations (using the same bus stop) to the south.

From East Croydon station, take a train to Upper Warlingham for an earlier arrival, unless it is more than ten minutes behind a Caterham train. If you are taking the 407 bus, alight at the Old Barn Lane stop.

Peter Cushing was born in Kenley, and Sir Karl Popper lived there. Group Captain Douglas Bader was stationed at RAF Kenley.

Route

3.2 Take Old Barn Lane off the A21 (Godstone Road): it is signposted with all the tenants of Kenley Trade Park (and with London Loop signs). It is a short stubby little road which ends at a railway footbridge. Cross the railway to reach New Barn Lane (street-namers can be so imaginative at times!). Climb New Barn Lane using the righthand footway, passing a school on the



*Kenley Common
on two separate visits*

*Top — the left fork
off the main path*

*Above — the gate
without a role*

right. Keep on ahead until the road gives way to a footpath which climbs with steps to Kenley Common (heralded by a Corporation of London signboard).

Do not venture onto the open land, but keep to a footpath which continues ahead to its right, just inside the trees (still with the London Loop signage). Go straight over a crossing path and plunge on deeper into the woodland. In time (a little less than 400m after passing the signboard), the route veers half-left off the main path at a fork to come out at the corner of a rectangular field with a fenceless gate.

You should see, beyond the gate, a faint trod across the field towards a matching fenceless gate on the far side of the field. At this farther gate, you will see a path — again bearing London Loop signage — into the woodland.

If you should happen to stray too far to the left and reach the far corner of the field, there is no need to backtrack. Just turn right to regain the route at Golf Road).

Before you dive into the wood, though, look ahead to where Kenley Aerodrome sits on the top of the downs. RAF Kenley saw active service between 1917 and 1959, and is now a gliding facility of the Air Cadets. The film about the exploits of Group Captain Douglas Bader, *Reach for the Sky*, was filmed at RAF Kenley, where Bader was stationed in 1930. In the film, the air ace was played by Kenneth More.

At the far end of Golf Road, cross Hayes Lane and enter the wood opposite. A path soon turns left, then right. It then meanders about. By keeping to the most prominent path (not always particularly prominent!) and trying to keep to a generally westerly direction, you should come out onto a lane, where turn left. This will bring you out onto Old Lodge Lane with the Wattenden Arms over to your left.

The pub offers food and drinks during normal opening hours (in this instance from noon).

3.3 Turn right along Old Lodge Lane; where it begins to descend to the right, carry straight on for a few paces, then cross a stile on the left. Follow the line indicated by the signpost (this is part of the London Loop); when the Kenley Observatory (the property of the Croydon Astronomical Society) becomes visible, make for the path to its left.

Turn right where the path comes up against a residential gate, and descend steeply to reach Caterham Drive at the bottom. Cross Caterham Drive, and take Rydons Lane ahead.

You should be aware that the upper part of Rydons Lane does not have a footway: be sure to walk in single file along the right-hand side of this narrow road: it is good practice to hold something light-coloured (such as a map) in your left hand to help drivers see you.

Listening for traffic and gauging where you can stop to let traffic pass is a good practice.

At the top of Rydons Lane, cross over Stiles Hill Road and take the path opposite. This path crosses part of Coulsdon Common to reach Coulsdon Road at the end of Fox Lane.

3.4 Take Fox Lane ahead, with a grazed common on your right: you will soon come to the Fox Inn on your left.

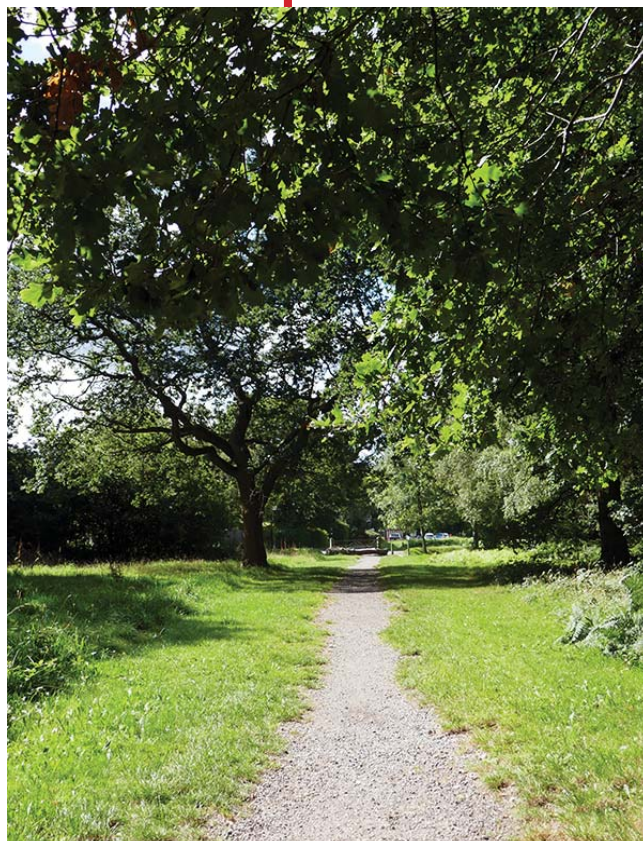
The pub offers food and drinks during normal opening hours (in this instance, from 1100).

Continue along Fox Lane beyond the pub, passing a small car park on the right, then a larger one on the left. The path takes the right-hand side of a field, then dips into trees. At the far end of the trees, it emerges onto open land: take a path down the slope on the left, with trees on your left. Continue up the opposing slope, going straight ahead through a belt of trees and across a field. Where the trees pinch in on left and right, bear slightly left and follow a clear path across the next field; beyond the crest, the path descends to reach a narrow road. Turn left onto the road, then turn right to reach the lychgate of Chaldon church.



Kenley Observatory

Path on Coulsdon Common approaching Coulsdon Road





Chaldon church

A church is first recorded here in 727; the present building was started in the tenth or eleventh century (pre-Conquest) and was largely completed during the thirteenth century. It was, like so many other historic buildings, Victorianised in 1869.

3.5 Beyond the church, bear left and take a footpath which begins on the right-hand edge of a field, but then trends right to cross the field diagonally in a south-south-westerly direction.

Go through the hedge, and continue ahead, now travelling west. This path takes a broad bend to the left to enter some woodland.

Take a left branch onto a clear path within the woodland, and turn left at a path crossing (where you can see a road ahead). This path leads into a field and takes a refuge route within the field and parallel to the road to your right.

3.6 At the end of the refuge path, turn right and cross Rook Lane, taking

the farm lane opposite. This lane takes you past residential and agricultural buildings and climbs to the top of a hill, bending to the left at the top. Advance for a few metres to the end of a field on your right, but do not continue towards the trig point visible ahead.

At this point, there are fine views of the Weald to the south. Back towards the north, the buildings of Croydon are clearly visible, with the masts at Crystal Palace and even the Docklands buildings visible beyond.

The path which passes the trig point is the North Downs Way.

Here, turn sharply to the right, and try to pick out a path in the field. This (the North Downs Way) descends diagonally, passing to

View from above Merstham, over Redhill to the Weald



the left of some trees, then a smaller outcrop of greenery on the right, and entering woodland below, part-way along the bottom of the field. Continue to descend gradually until you reach the M23, which you will cross by an underpass.

3.7 Turn left on emerging from the underpass, then turn left onto a track: this brings you out onto Rockshaw Road. Cross the road and turn right along the left-hand footway. Just beyond a house named Oakwood, take a narrow path to the left (there are signs here to deter North Downs Way walkers from doing so). This path descends to reach open land: keep to the left edge of the open land to reach the M25.

3.8 Cross the motorway by a footbridge, and follow the zigzag path to the left, then right, then left, then right. Where the path turns left to make for a street, carry on ahead across the greensward to the corner of the street, where there is an interpretation board.

Follow the sign ahead towards the railway station on a path which passes beneath one railway (the fast Brighton line) and bends left to a second railway (the slow Brighton line). Cross this second railway by a footbridge to reach the end of the route at the main entrance to Merstham station.

If you need to find the bus stop for the 405 (Oyster-valid) service between Croydon and Redhill, follow the signpost up Station Road (off Station Road North): at the top, turn right for Croydon-bound buses, crossing at the pedestrian crossing, or turn left for Redhill-bound buses.

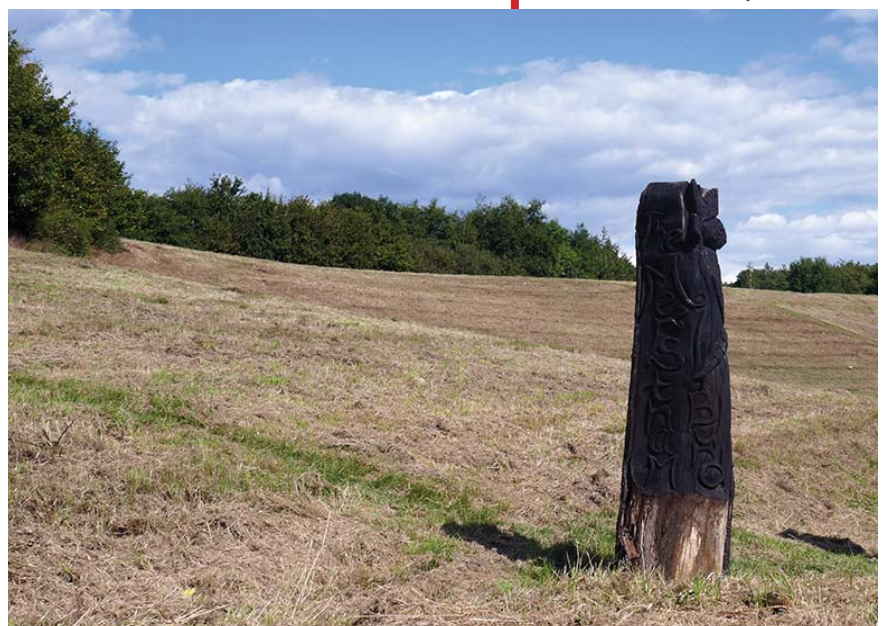
If you have need of a convenience shop, take the narrow road on the left (Station Road South) past the station car park to High Street: the bus stops are both to the right past the clock.

There are cafés on Station Road South and on High Street at the pedestrian crossing (the latter is closed on Sundays). Beyond the bus stop, the Feathers Inn will serve food and drinks during normal hours (in this instance from noon).

Merstham is touched by the North Downs Way. It would therefore be perfectly



M25 footbridge, Merstham



*Merstham Bund
with evidence of eco-arson*



Merstham station

acceptable to decide that Merstham is where the main national network is reached. However, given that the North Downs Way is also met on the routes to the south-west and to the south-east, it seems reasonable to extend the southern route to Gatwick Airport.

This gives more links with the Tandridge Border Path, with its excellent local links, but also reaches the Sussex Border Path, which runs from Emsworth to Rye, taking in some of the finest landscapes in the south-east of England (and surely a candidate for National Trail status?). The current route is concurrent with the Sussex Border Path for a short stretch just before reaching the airport: you may be assured that this path alongside the M23 spur is atypical of the route.

Finally, it is a fine conceit to finish at the airport, allowing dreams of continuing the walk from Bonn, or Biarritz, or ... anywhere, really.

<https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/north-downs-way>

https://www.walkingbooks.co.uk/acatalog/Tandridge_Border_Path.html

3.9 From Merstham station, take the left-hand footway of Station Road South, which runs past the station car park (over to the left as you arrive, whether over the footbridge or out of the station building). At the top of the street, you will reach the ornate village clock.

There is a café on the left as you approach the clock, and a convenience shop on the corner. Other shops, another café, and the Feathers Inn are off to the right.

Also off to the right, you will find the bus stops on the Oyster-valid 405 service between Croydon and Redhill

Turn left at the clock, and take School Hill, to the left of the main road. This descends, with the left-hand footway acting as a refuge

path, and passes beneath the first railway line (the one which serves Merstham station). The main road then swings to the right: here, carry on ahead beneath the second railway line (this is the fast Brighton line) on Bletchingley Road, crossing over Albury Road at a mini-roundabout.

Ahead, Bletchingley Road stretches out, with wide verges and mature trees. Follow this road for the full length of what was the Merstham estate, past the school on the right.

This is a prime example of inter-war town planning. Houses are set back from the road: on the south side, the access road even has its own name. Worsted Green may conjure up ideas of rough cloth, but in fact, the name is older than the estate, which was originally built as public housing, as shown on old maps.

Pass beyond the estate along Bletchingley Road: when you come to the 40mph sign, look for a footpath on the right.

3.10 Take this path, which runs all the way past Mercers Farm, with its nature reserve and its cluster of formerly agricultural housing.

Over to the left, the land has been examined for archaeological purposes, and has given up evidence of settlement in three periods from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age, early mediæval field systems, and interesting drainage technology from the early nineteenth century: altogether, a treasure trove of history as it marched through the millennia.



Merstham clock

South Merstham: inter-war town planning in action

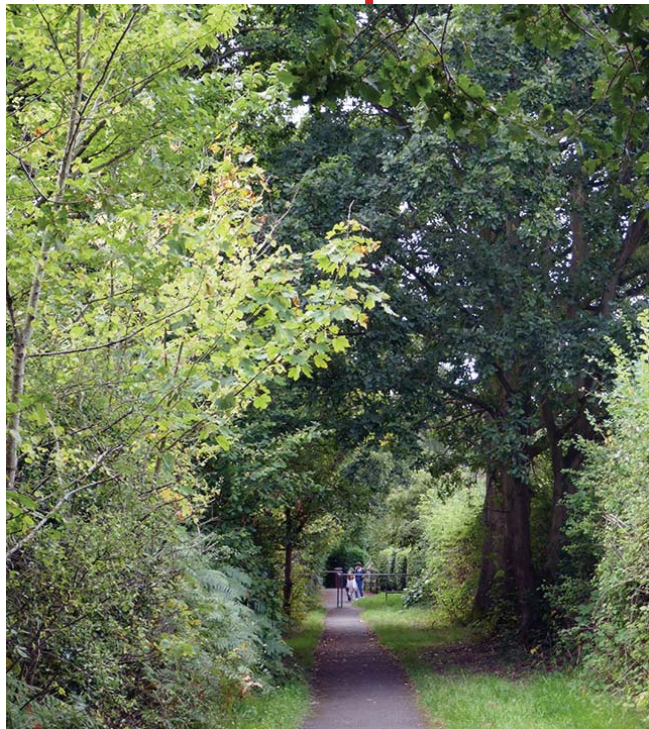




Top — Path leading south from Nutfield Marsh

Above — Looking back over the valley towards the North Downs Way and the descent to Merstham

Below — Descent to South Nutfield on refuge path adjacent to Mid Street



Eventually, you will reach Canal Cottage on the left, just before the road bends to the left. The exotic amateur typography may make the house nameplate a bit difficult to read, but just after you pass the house, take a footpath which bears off half-right across Nutfield Marsh to a road, Chilmead Lane.

3.11 Cross the road and aim to the right of a brick cricket pavilion. Pass the cricket pitch on your left, and make for the left-hand corner of the house ahead.

Go down the left side of the house, then take a path on the left. This path makes its way through woodland, and comes out onto open ground where

a footpath crosses. When you reach another footpath coming in from the right, take a south-easterly aim at the closest point of the woodland ahead

Follow the path into the woods, bearing right at a path junction. The path then begins to bend to the right, now on the edge of the woodland, to take a roughly south-eastern bearing, all the way out onto Nutfield Road.

Turn left onto Nutfield Road, and ascend the left-hand footway to a signposted road junction with Mid Street. Cross Nutfield Road by the refuge just beyond the junction, and return to Mid Street

3.12 Cross Mid Street and turn left, using the right-hand footway, which detaches itself from the road as a refuge path. Cross over the end of Sandy Lane and continue on the refuge path, with Mid Street below you on the left. The path will eventually come to the roadside: simply follow it all the way to South Nutfield: beyond the school and the village hall on the left, you will come to a junction with a corner shop.

Nutfield station is 350m from this point: continue on the right-hand footway, branching right on North Station Approach. Off-peak services are hourly to Redhill and Tonbridge.

South Nutfield to Gatwick Airport

13.0km; 2hr 41min
64m ascent

Introduction

4.1 This, the final section of the route, is almost entirely on farmland. There are no facilities *en route*, so you must carry all provisions with you (or else, just starve until you reach the neon-heavy delights of the landside part of the airport).

The map at <https://explore.osmaps.com/route/3900774> covers this section of the route.

Nutfield station is 350m to the south of this point: off-peak services are hourly from Redhill and Tonbridge.

Route

4.2 Start off southbound from the corner shop on Mid Street, crossing Mid Street to follow the left-hand footway (that is, across the road from the shop, on the same side of the road as the village hall). Just before Mid Street takes a bend to the right, take a path to the left (with a house-sign for Pippins). The sign for the public footpath is on the left of the lane, invisible from the north.

If you have arrived at Nutfield station, you should be sure to be on the right-hand footway of Mid Street after joining it from North Station Approach; the path will be the first entry after passing a BT building on the right.

Walk down the path, passing a Scout hut at the far end and entering Jubilee Fields. Pass through the metal kissing-gate on the right, then cross the field diagonally to the far corner. Pass through the gap, crossing a small bridge. Follow the path along the right-hand edge of the field to reach the railway embankment. Climb the fifty concrete steps, then stop.

Look both ways for trains, and listen for either the engine noise or the singing of the rails. Only if all of these checks prove negative, step up onto the track crossing, and walk swiftly over to the other side. If you are in a group, cross in groups of no more than two or three.

*Path across Jubilee Fields
towards the railway,
South Nutfield*





Henhaw Old Maltings

Descend the flight of steps on the far side of the track, and turn left, then turn right, now with trees on your right and open land on your left.

You are now in Philpote's Wood. Continue ahead to reach Kings Cross Lane, passing out of the wood by a kissing-gate. Turn left and then, where there is a postbox set into a brick pillar, turn right onto the road called Nutfield Park. Pass Redstone House on your left, then take two bends in the road, the first to the right and the second to the left, eventually arriving at Kings Lodge, a centre for complex care, on your left. Just beyond the building, turn left onto a path which leads you across the M23 on a bridge.

4.3 Continue on the path across the edge of two fields, then ahead on an enclosed path which bends left and then bends right at the end, to bring you out onto Coopers Hill Road.

Cross the road, and take the farm drive opposite, passing an imposing brick building

on your left: — this is in fact the former maltings for Henhaw Farm. Beyond a long building on the right, turn down to the right to pick up a path which descends with a paddock on the right, then down a field.

Pass through a hedge, then take the left edge of the field, down to the bottom corner. Pass left through the gap, and cut the corner of the field to a stile in the hedge. Cross the corner of the field ahead to a footbridge over Salfords Stream, then continue southbound with a hedge on your left through two fields, turning left at the far corner to go through the gap to a kissing-gate.

*Bridleway south of
Burstow Park Farm*



The official route crosses the next field diagonally, but at the time of writing, the kissing-gates at each end were padlocked with heavy chains whose rustiness seemed at odds with the "temporary" nature of the diversion, which continues in an easterly direction to the corner of the field, then turns right (southbound) and bends right to join a track. At the padlocked gate on the right, do not follow the track into the farmyard, but turn left (southbound again).

4.4 Walk past (on your right) the imposing farmhouse and out to reach another track, which you should follow to your right until you reach a sharp turn, with a fingerpost on the left.

Do not take the first footpath on the left, but pass through the gap to take the bridleway half left (taking a south-south-westerly direction) up the hill. The clear track bends gradually to the left, entering some woodland at the top.

Keep straight ahead (walking southwards) on a clear track: when panelled fencing appears on the left, follow it as the track bends to the left.

At a track crossing, turn right onto Church Walk (southbound again) to reach Brickfield Road with a church on the left.

If you stray right and reach Brickfield Road, just turn left to reach the church and regain the route.

4.5 Cross over Brickfield Road into Wasp Green Lane opposite; beyond the brick house on the right, turn right onto a track, then at the rear of the house, turn left onto a green path. This path makes for a much better approach to Outwood than Wasp Green Lane: follow it ahead all the way until, with a right-and-left turn, it emerges onto Miller's Lane.

Here, the pub marked on some maps has been closed in the past.

4.6 Turn left onto the left-hand footway of Miller's Lane, passing the pub. Just beyond a warning sign for a bend, take a gap in the hedge on the right-hand side of the road, cross the access road for the houses, and take a green path between the houses. At the back of the houses, cross a field; in the next field, keep to the right-hand edge as you descend, to enter a small wooded area. Negotiate your way round the crater - it is easier if you go



Path off Wasp Green Lane

Descending towards the copse near Rookery Farm



round to the left - and exit the copse along a path which takes you across two fields to the corner of a driveway. Turn left to come out onto Rookery Hill.

4.7 Turn left onto Rookery Hill and, just beyond a Slow sign painted on the road for oncoming traffic, turn right onto a bridle path. Follow this path, passing an incoming footpath from the right, until you can see a moat on the left. Continue until, with a hedge in front of you, there is a broader track on the left.

Take this track, then turn right to pass some industrial buildings on your left. Ahead at the end of the buildings, take an enclosed path which leads out eventually onto Weatherhill Road. Cross the road and turn right along the left-hand footway, passing across Woodside Crescent to reach the junction with Broadbridge Lane at a bus stop.

There are bus services here to and from Redhill and Crawley.

4.8 Turn left onto Broadbridge Road and follow the right-hand footway. After 500m (that is, after the housing on the right has given out), turn right onto Perrylands Lane. Pass beneath the M23 to reach a T-junction, where turn left onto Peeks Brook Lane. Follow the lane to some woodland on the right (The Roughs).

4.9 Continue along Peeks Brook Lane all the way to the junction (up to your left) for the M23 Gatwick spur, passing Peeks Rough Farm. Just before the lane passes beneath the motorway spur ahead, cross over the entry to a haulage yard on the right, then immediately turn right onto a footpath, keeping the metal yard fence close on your right.

This path is in fact the Sussex Border Path (Surrey ends at the motorway spur): it is fair to say that much of that route is decidedly more scenic than this link patch.

Follow the path alongside the motorway until it comes out onto Balcombe Road (which, to the left, runs beneath the motorway spur).

4.10 Cross the road and turn right along the left-hand footway. Pass firstly a bus stop, and then a commercial driveway on the left with a bungalow lodge. Immediately beyond the lodge's lawn, take a path on the left. This leads out onto a field; cross it, and pick up an enclosed path to the right.

This path keeps to the edge of a field on the left, separating the walkers from the pasture throughout, except for a short gap. The path comes to the edge of the railway line.

Here, the westbound Sussex Border Path crosses the tracks by a footbridge on the right.

Turn left to follow the trackside path beneath the main road (now deprived of motorway status, it is the A23), and continue ahead to

the road. Advance into the bus station, and follow the directions to the terminal and the railway station. The entrance to the railway station marks the end of the route.

The railway station has fast and stopping trains to stations between Brighton and London, and less frequent services to Guildford and Reading. The bus and coach station has many connections. Of course, there are also connections to Pisa, Porto, and many other destinations from the airport.

*Gatwick Airport station
from the north-east*

