

# Horsell Common Waymarked Walk

not to scale



## Waymarked circular walk, Heather Farm to McLaren Park

DISTANCE: 7 km (approx. 4.3 miles). Allow 90 minutes to 2 hours

Start and finish at Heather Farm car park, GU21 4XY. Refreshments at Heather Farm café.

The walk takes you through open meadows alongside the river Bourne, through woodland and past the Sand Pit. There are benches in McLaren Park and by the Sand Pit. Do give yourself time to stop and stare and listen to the different birds. Some parts of the walk are wet and muddy after heavy rain.

1. Start by the information board next to Heather Farm car park and the Wetland area. The path leads through an avenue of pink hawthorn trees, planted in November 2022 to commemorate Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee. Cross the River Bourne into Mimbridge Meadows and turn right. In summer look out for yellow toadflax and purple loosestrife near the river.
2. Cross the bridge leading into Bourne Fields and follow the boardwalk. In July 2023, the banks of the river were reinforced following serious erosion. The grass in Bourne Field is cut and used for animal fodder so please keep to the path. Amongst the grasses you can spot vetch, clover and other wildflowers. The blackcap often sings in the willows.
3. Follow the way marker arrows taking a sharp right then left as you enter the next section of Bourne Fields, making towards the very end of the field, where dogs enjoy swimming in the ford. The three-way finger post indicates Fair Oaks Airport left across the big wooden bridge, and Horsell Common right. Follow Horsell Common direction along a wide shady track.
4. You will pass one of the many hidden-away houses on your left and soon reach a "crossroads" with the perimeter track. Turn left, along the old perimeter track, passing the track to Scotcher's farm. This section of the walk offers welcome shade on a hot summer's day.
5. After about 800m, follow the arrows going left, on to a boardwalk which leads to the edge of McLaren Park. Follow the path ahead mown in the meadow grass straight up to the small copse of trees above. You can spot many meadow flowers, including geranium, tansy, vetch and comfrey. The butterflies love all these varied flowers and grasses. Keeping to the right of the copse (though there are benches where you can rest just off the path) turn right, looking out carefully for the green waymarker arrows. Skylarks abound in these meadows so please keep your dog on the path.
6. As you descend the gentle slope, you will see the main track ahead where you turn right, soon passing a seasonal pond and benches on your right.
7. Follow the path keeping gently left to the exit of McLaren Park and meet the perimeter track once more, keeping ahead a short distance but don't miss the arrow on the right

leading into the woodland. This is the trickiest bit of the walk but just walk straight ahead. On your right you can see heather at the edge of the heathland. Soon you come to Sandy Track, a wide straight track which leads from Anthony's to Shores Road. Turn right.

8. Walking down the broad Sandy Track, you will soon come to the Sand Pit on your left. Sand was excavated from here for construction work. This is a lovely spot to explore and marvel at the iconic Scots pines with their network of roots. It is very close to the site where the Martians landed in H. G. Wells' *"The War of the Worlds"*. The exposed sandy banks are the ideal habitat for solitary wasps and bees.

9. Continue along Sandy Track passing Danewell Gutter Pond on your left, a favourite haunt of many species of dragonfly.

10. At Sandy Track car park, continue straight across onto a cycle track which emerges at Heather Farm. Turn right into Heather Farm. There is a "posh wash" if your dog is muddy and fantastic refreshments at Heather Farm café.

Horsell Common is the largest recreational space in Woking with its heathland, woodland and meadows. The heathland is a Special Protection Area because of the rare and endangered ground-nesting species, including the nightjar and Dartford Warbler. From March to September, you are kindly requested to keep to the paths in the grasslands and heather area, and to keep your dog on a lead.

HCPS works throughout the year to balance the needs for recreation and conservation. For more information, check out Horsell Common Preservation Society website <https://horsellcommon.org.uk/>. By becoming a member, you are helping to preserve this special place for now and the future.

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