

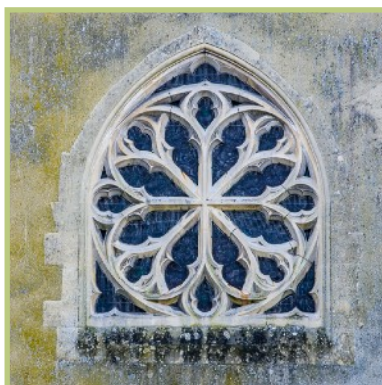
THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON AND SHEEPLEAS, SURREY



Moderate Terrain

3 miles
Circular
1.5 hours

311217



Access Notes

1. The walking route has several steady climbs and descents throughout and follows roadside pavements plus unmade paths through woodland and grassland (which are uneven in part and can get muddy).
2. Sheepleas is criss-crossed by many intersecting paths, so the live GPS-map on the iFootpath App will be the best tool for navigation.
3. There are no stiles, steps, kissing gates or livestock on route, but you will need to negotiate one simple swing gate and one staggered barrier. With this in mind, the route would be suitable for rugged pushchairs after periods of dry weather, assuming you can handle the slopes.
4. You will need to cross the A246 twice, so take care of traffic at these points.

The Duke of Wellington is an ancient country pub with stunning Lovelace architecture, making it the ideal setting for refreshments before or after your walk.

A 3 mile circular pub walk from the Duke of Wellington in East Horsley, Surrey. The walking route gives you chance to enjoy the fine architecture of Horsley Towers and West Horsley Place, before climbing onto the lower chalk slopes of the North Downs to enjoy the woodland and grassland of Sheepleas. This historic site has beautiful displays of bluebells and cowslips in the spring and gives stunning far-reaching views to the London skyline.

Getting there

The Duke of Wellington is situated in East Horsley, on the A246 between Leatherhead and Guildford. Set back from the Guildford Road, it is just across the road from the prominent former gatehouse to Horsley Towers, with its mock-medieval turrets. The pub has its own car park alongside. If this is full, there is nearby street parking along St Martins Close – turn onto the B2039 (signed to St Martin's Church) alongside the pub and then take the first left into St Martins Close. If you are coming by public transport, there are bus stops directly outside the pub on the A246 or Horsley rail station is a one mile walk away.

Approximate post code **KT24 6AA**.

Walk Sections



Start to St Mary's Church



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Leave the pub car park via the vehicle entrance. If you glance to your left here, you will see the prominent former gatehouse to Horsley Towers. The large Gothic mansion was designed by Sir Charles Barry, who also designed the Houses of Parliament. The mansion became the home of the First Earl of Lovelace in 1829, and in 1858 he replaced the Regency-style gatehouse lodge with this Italianate version. In 1864 he added the Lovelace treatment to The Duke of Wellington itself. He added two wings, one at each end, with brick and flint, metal windows and embellished friezes of terracotta tiles incorporating badges of various Surrey Regiments as well as shields showing his family's heraldic devices.

Turn right for a few paces to reach the A246 and turn right again to follow the pavement alongside the road (with the road running on your left). As you reach the village sign for West Horsley, you will notice a bridleway signed off to the left. Do NOT take this (this is the path along which we will return later), instead continue along the pavement for a further 400 metres.

Just before you reach St Mary's Church on your left, pause and look through a gap in the hedge to your right for a fine view of West Horsley Place. This mansion has a fascinating story. There has been a manor house here since soon after the Norman invasion, but the current building dates mainly from the 1400s. Henry VIII was invited to lunch here in 1536 and details of the 35-course meal still survive, with the range of birds served being quite startling – stewed sparrows, larded pheasants, ducks, gulls, stork, gannets, heron, pullets, quail and partridge.

At one time the house was owned by the son of Sir Walter Raleigh and the last private owner was the Duchess of Roxburghe who died in 2014 at the age of 99. Much to his surprise, the house was inherited by her nephew, Bamber Gascoigne (best known as a University Challenge quizmaster). He sold off his aunt's possessions (which included a Cartier diamond engagement ring), formed a charitable trust in her name and gave the sale proceeds and the entire estate to the Mary Roxburghe Trust. The trust manages the house and estate with three main aims; to restore the mansion, to promote arts and drama (through a resident opera company) and to be a centre for crafts of all kinds (through a pottery and crafts facility within the restored stables and barns).

Immediately before the church, cross over the A246 with care to take the tarmac access track (signed as a public bridleway), which leads you past St Mary's Church on your right.

1 → 2 St Mary's Church to Horse Ride



Immediately after the church wall, at a fork in the tarmac, keep ahead on the left-hand branch. 50 metres later, where the tarmac bears right into the car park, go ahead to join the stone public bridleway which leads you into the Sheepleas site. At the end of this first stretch of bridleway you will come to a vehicle barrier ahead, with a wooden gate alongside (which swings both

ways to improve accessibility).

Go through the gate and walk ahead for a few paces to a fork. Ignore the left fork into Cowslip Meadow, instead fork right heading towards another wooden vehicle barrier. Pass through the gap to the left of this and, 20 metres later, you will come to a staggered T-junction with a bridleway track. Turn left to join the track (signed with a green arrow for the self-guided trail).

Continue for about 300 metres to reach a junction of paths, with a wooden staggered barrier on your left and a tall fingerpost on your right. Turn right at this junction, marked with the green arrow (for the self-guided trail) and also a blue arrow for a permissive horse ride. (The blue arrow is actually on the back of the fingerpost).

2 → 3 Horse Ride to Millennium Viewpoint



Follow the permissive horse ride woodland path. This countryside site, known as The Sheepleas, lies on the lower chalk slopes of the North Downs and is a mosaic of woodland, scrub and open grassland. The open meadows are the Leas from which the site takes its name, and they were grazed by sheep for several centuries. They are rich in chalk-loving plants including marjoram, wild thyme and orchids whilst the woodland areas are filled with carpets of bluebells in the spring.

Further along, the horse ride leads you uphill and then swings left, still climbing steadily for a short distance, to reach a fork with a waymarker post on your left. Turn left here (following the green arrow), following the trail path which leads you straight across an open area of grassland. This area was once home to a number of large beech trees, but these were destroyed in the 1987 storm.

At the far side of the grass clearing, continue ahead on the obvious path. If you glance into the young trees on your left, you will see several large stumps where the old beech trees once stood. Follow the path climbing gently and you will reach a junction with a fingerpost on your left. Go straight ahead here and, after 20 metres, you will reach a T-junction. Turn left (following the green arrow), heading uphill.

Continue up the hill for some distance, until you reach a junction marked with a bridleway fingerpost on your left and a local trail fingerpost on your right (the path to the right here is signed to Shere Road car park). At this point, we take a quick detour to visit a viewpoint. Turn left (signed to St Mary's car park). The path leads you past the grass clearing known as the Picnic Area on your right. At the crossroads, go ahead for just a few paces to reach the brick platform of the Millennium Viewpoint on your right. The London skyline is clearly visible from this spot on a fine day, including London Eye, St Paul's Cathedral and Canary Wharf.

3 → 4 Millennium Viewpoint to Staggered Crossroads



When you have finished at the viewpoint, retrace your steps back past the picnic area (now on your left) to reach the bridleway junction with two fingerposts, which you passed through earlier. Turn left here to continue up the hill (signed as a bridleway and marked with a white arrow for the woodland trail).

Soon you will pass another signpost on your right. Keep straight ahead, signed to the Green Dene car park. At the top of the rise, you will reach a fork with a bench ahead. Take the left-hand branch (marked with the white arrow), passing the bench on your right. The path continues to climb gently and, just beyond the top of the rise, the path swings left for a few paces to reach the next fingerpost.

Do NOT follow the white arrow which points right, instead turn left for a few paces to reach a fork. Take the left-hand branch, a fairly straight path which leads you steadily downhill, passing a clearing on your left. Soon you will have beautiful far-reaching views to the north ahead of you. When you reach a fingerpost marking a staggered crossroads of bridleways, go straight ahead.

4 → 5 Staggered Crossroads to Bridleway Descent

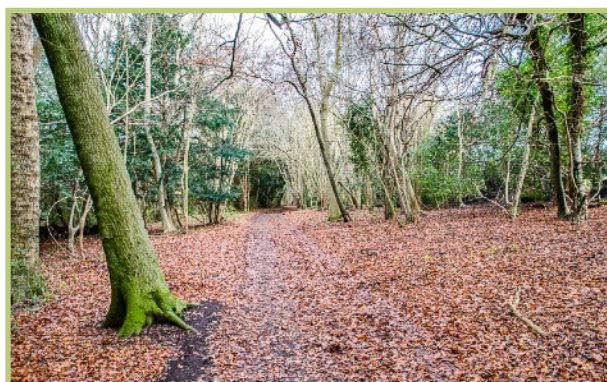


Continue steadily downhill on the stone and grass bridleway to reach a junction of multiple paths, with a five-way fingerpost on your right. Take the path at about 11 o'clock (a permissive horse ride), passing a wooden vehicle barrier and bench both on your left. The stony chalk track leads you gently downhill, soon passing through a pretty tunnel of coppiced trees.

At the end of this coppiced tunnel, ignore the path signed sharp left towards Shere Road car park. Instead, keep ahead for just 5 paces to reach a two-way fingerpost on your right (marking St Mary's car park and Green Dene car park). Here we leave the

main track, so turn right immediately after the fingerpost onto a narrow woodland path, passing a beautiful yew tree on your right. Pass through the staggered barrier and you will come to a crossroads. Turn left at this fingerpost to join the bridleway for our final descent.

5 → 6 Bridleway Descent to End



Follow the bridleway downhill to reach a major crossroads, with a fingerpost on your right. Turn right here, signed as a continuation of the bridleway. Simply stay on this bridleway winding through the woodland to reach a vehicle barrier.

Pass alongside this to emerge to the A246, alongside the West Horsley village sign that you passed on the outward leg. Taking good care, cross over to the far pavement and turn right along this. The pavement will lead you directly back to The Duke of Wellington on your left for some well-earned hospitality.

Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and an Ordnance Survey map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.

