

6 - Newark, Pyrford, Old Woking, Broad Mead & Papercourt Meadows

This is an 8 kilometre local walk that starts and finishes at the Newark Lane car park next to the Wey Navigation. You will pass historic landmarks, including two of our local churches, take in fine views, maybe see some wildlife and perhaps try out a nearby pub! It's advisable to wear sturdy footwear and carry a pair of binoculars. Take care when crossing roads.

Start: OS Explorer Map 145 grid ref: 039574.

We begin by turning left out of the car park onto Newark Lane, crossing three bridges in quick succession including the old Newark mill race. To your right, are the ruins of Newark Priory, a 12th century Augustinian priory founded during the reign of Richard I. Walk along Newark Lane, crossing to the left hand side of the road before the Bourne Stream Bridge. Continue until the road bends sharply to the right. Take the footpath directly ahead and climb the steep path to emerge next to St Nicholas's Church, Pyrford, built around 1140 AD.

On leaving the church, cross the road carefully and enter the churchyard extension following the pathway to the double stile. You will pass Lady Place Farm on the left and then through a kissing gate. Continue for 150 m and at the field boundary (powerlines overhead) turn sharp left taking the footpath up the slope to join Church Hill at the junction with Sandy Lane bridleway.

Just before you reach this point take a moment to enjoy the fine panoramic views to the south and east. If the weather is clear (and you have binoculars...) on the eastern horizon you may spot the gothic tower at Painshill Park, a folly built in the 1750's, or perhaps the semaphore mast atop Chatley Heath Tower. This was part of the Admiralty's semaphore chain linking London and Portsmouth during the early 19th century. 13 km to the south-east, high up on the North Downs, is the lofty spire of St Barnabas Church at Ranmore Common. Built in 1859, the church sits at 185 m above sea level.

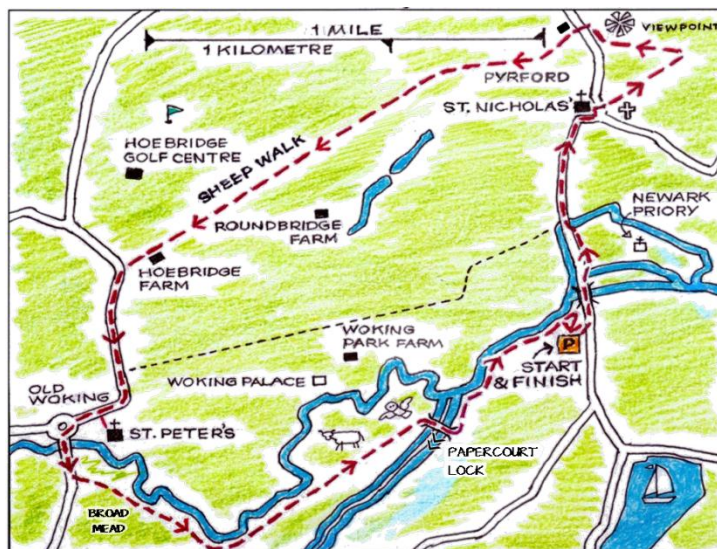


St Peter's Church, Old Woking

Cross Church Hill and join the bridleway to the left of Stone Farm. This bridleway is known as The Sheep Walk, an old drovers road. After about 300 m you will pass under a derelict wooden footbridge that once linked Pyrford Court with St Nicholas's Church. This tree lined bridleway eventually crosses Hoebridge Golf course so beware of 'low flying golf balls!' Continue along The Sheep Walk, passing Hoebridge Farm to the left, until you reach the Old Woking Road. Cross with care and turn left towards Old Woking crossing over the

Hoe Stream bridge. At the sharp right-hand bend you turn into the High Street taking the first turning on the left into Church Street. Here you will find St Peter's Church, an impressive Grade 1 listed building dating from the 11th century. Please note that you can only view the interior between 2-4pm on Saturdays (April - mid October).

Return to the High Street and continue to the mini roundabout. Turn left and proceed for 200 m crossing over the River Wey at Broadmead Bridge. Just beyond the houses turn left at the five-bar gate onto Broad Mead, an area of wetland originally part of the Royal Manor of Woking. Keep the WW2 pillbox to your right and stay on the path close to the River Wey. After about 800 m the path forks – take the left hand path, keeping the powerline to



your right. After a further 500 m, you will reach a double fence and two stiles.

Pause at this point to get your bearings. Straight ahead will be the lockkeeper's cottage at Papercourt and to the left you'll catch sight of Woking Palace, a popular haunt of Henry VIII during the early 16th century. This is a fascinating historic site to explore, but note that there are limited public open days each year.

Crossing the stiles, you will enter the 19 hectare Papercourt Meadow, a Site of Special Scientific Interest managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust. BE WARNED – this section can be very wet underfoot. This important habitat is home to a wide variety of birds including stone chats, marsh harriers and short-eared owls. You may also see the Trust's herd of belted galloway cattle, recently re-introduced to graze the meadow. Continue on to Papercourt Lock and cross two bridges, firstly Broadmead Cut and then the Wey Navigation itself. This is a fine spot from which to admire a waterway built over 350 years ago. Construction of the 15-mile route between Guildford and the Thames began in 1651 and only took 2-3 years to complete. Today the navigation is owned by the National Trust.



Papercourt Lock, Wey Navigation

To complete the walk, turn left and follow the towpath across the water meadows back to Newark Mill and the car park. If you need refreshments after your efforts try nearby Ripley or, the Seven Stars PH about 350 m along Newark Lane.

Phil Wilson – Footpath Group

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