

Walks Around Givons Grove

Walk 2, Norbury Park and Mickleham Downs (about 7.5 miles on Route A or 6 miles on Route B)

This is the second in the series of walks around Givons Grove recommended by Nick Holloway. This walk has 2 alternative finishes giving a choice of a walk of 7.5 miles or 6 miles. You are strongly recommended to use OS Explorer map series (1:25,000 scale) to support the walk description. You follow this walk entirely at your own risk. Neither GGEL nor Nick Holloway can accept any responsibility for injury or accident whilst following this walk.

Exit Givons Grove from The Downs via the footpath which leads down between Beech Fell and Seven Gables (1). Reach the A24 dual carriageway (2) which you now have to cross including climbing over the central reservation crash barrier. Take great care!(If you prefer to avoid this, go down to the roundabout and cross the dual carriageway there and head south about ½ a mile). On the other side take the lane leading into Norbury Park and the bridge over the River Mole. At this point you have the choice of following the lane another 150 yds and turning sharp right onto the track at point (3) or climbing over the style by the bridge and walking beside the river to reach the same track (mud alert here!). Now follow the track towards the red brick cottage at the foot of the hill. Pass through a kissing gate, head up the hill through the woods and go under the railway bridge. Less than 100 yds beyond the railway bridge, turn right (4) up a fairly steep track towards a gate which leads into Updown Field. Climb the style to the right of the gate and bear slightly left up a steep grassy path towards the top of the field. Dog walkers please take care as there are often cattle in this field. Just before reaching the gate at the top of this path, turn right and continue on the grassy path which skirts the top boundary of the field. A good view opens up here towards Leatherhead and back towards Givons Grove. As you approach the top corner of the field the whole Central London skyline comes into view on a clear day. To the right over the woods close to the ExxonMobil offices, you can make out the tops of the Canary Wharf skyscrapers.

From the top corner of the field (5), find a narrow footpath which enters the woods and joins with a footpath coming up from the right. During much of the year, when cattle are grazing, the exit from the field is protected by an electric fence. This is not difficult to climb over (with care!). The footpath very quickly meets a track onto which you turn right. Almost immediately is a viewpoint with a bench which overlooks Bocketts Farm. On a clear day you can see some of the Heathrow buildings from here. Continue to follow this track for about ½ a mile (the end section of the track is rather churned up at the moment following the woodland management work which has been carried out by the Surrey Wildlife Trust this winter – eventually, as spring advances, the work should provide great environmental benefits) until it brings you to a junction (6) of several tracks and the road which serves Norbury Park House and the Norbury Park sawmill. Go through the kissing gate here cross the road and follow the track which leads down the left hand side of the sawmill. On your left is a tall green fence which marks the boundary of the Norbury Park House grounds. Follow this track and, where the

fence bears away to the left, turn left onto a path following the fence. In less than 100 yds, this path brings you to a magnificent viewpoint (7) over the Mole Valley. Looking from left to right, the houses on The Downs are clearly visible, then Cherkley Court, Mickleham Downs and eventually round to Box Hill. There are benches and picnic tables here.

After a well-earned rest, turn to the right (south) and angle back towards the main track (now a partially surfaced lane). Having reached it, turn left and follow it as it begins to descend gently and bear gradually to the left. As you descend look out for a squat, wooden public footpath sign on the left (8 - quite easy to miss). Here turn down a flight of steps and reach another footpath at the bottom then turn right (left at the bottom takes you into Druids' Grove with some fine Yew trees, an optional diversion). Continuing to the right on the (rather slippery and narrow) path which slowly descends through the woods reaching a main bridleway at the bottom of the hill (9). Follow this for a short distance and, after less than 100 yds, leave the bridleway and turn down a path to the left. After about 100 yds, ignore paths to the left and right, and you will find yourself at the top of three flights of steps and a view over a sharp and scenic bend in the Mole. Go down these steps and follow the path along the riverside after reaching the bottom. In spring this section is pungent with the smell of wild garlic plants and a carpet of their white flowers spreads out before you. Occasionally bluebells intermingle with these. In the dappled spring sunshine, this is a magnificent sight!

After a few hundred yds you emerge through a gate onto a large riverside meadow (cattle often graze here). Ahead of you is the four arch railway bridge over the river. Follow a grassy path along the river bank to reach the bridge (10). If the river level is up too much you won't be able to cross the abandoned meander and you will have to make a short detour around it. From point 10 go through the gate onto the foot bridge across the river and about 100 yds further on, turn right under the railway bridge and then up a short hill to the A24. You have to cross the road here; again, take great care. Aim slightly to the left to a gap in the central reservation hedge. Once through, aim slightly to the left again to cross the carriageway and you will see a footpath signpost pointing up a few steps onto a footpath which climbs gently through the woods. Follow this until you emerge across a somewhat dilapidated stile onto a private estate road (11). Turn right and walk along the road until reaches the B2209. Turn left up some steps onto the path which runs parallel to the road towards Juniper Hall. After a short distance, turn right up a short flight of steps to the road by the bus stop. Cross the road here onto the Headley Road opposite (12). Immediately turn left and go through the gap in the wooden fence onto the bridleway. **Don't follow the bridleway up the hill** but turn immediately to the right, then left and take the path that runs parallel to the bridleway. About 200 yds up this path turn up to the right in front of a large log and head gently up a hill through some yew trees. Before long you have lovely views over Juniper Hall towards Denbies, Box Hill and Leith Hill in the distance. Keep following this path ignoring turnings to the left and right climbing gently all the time.

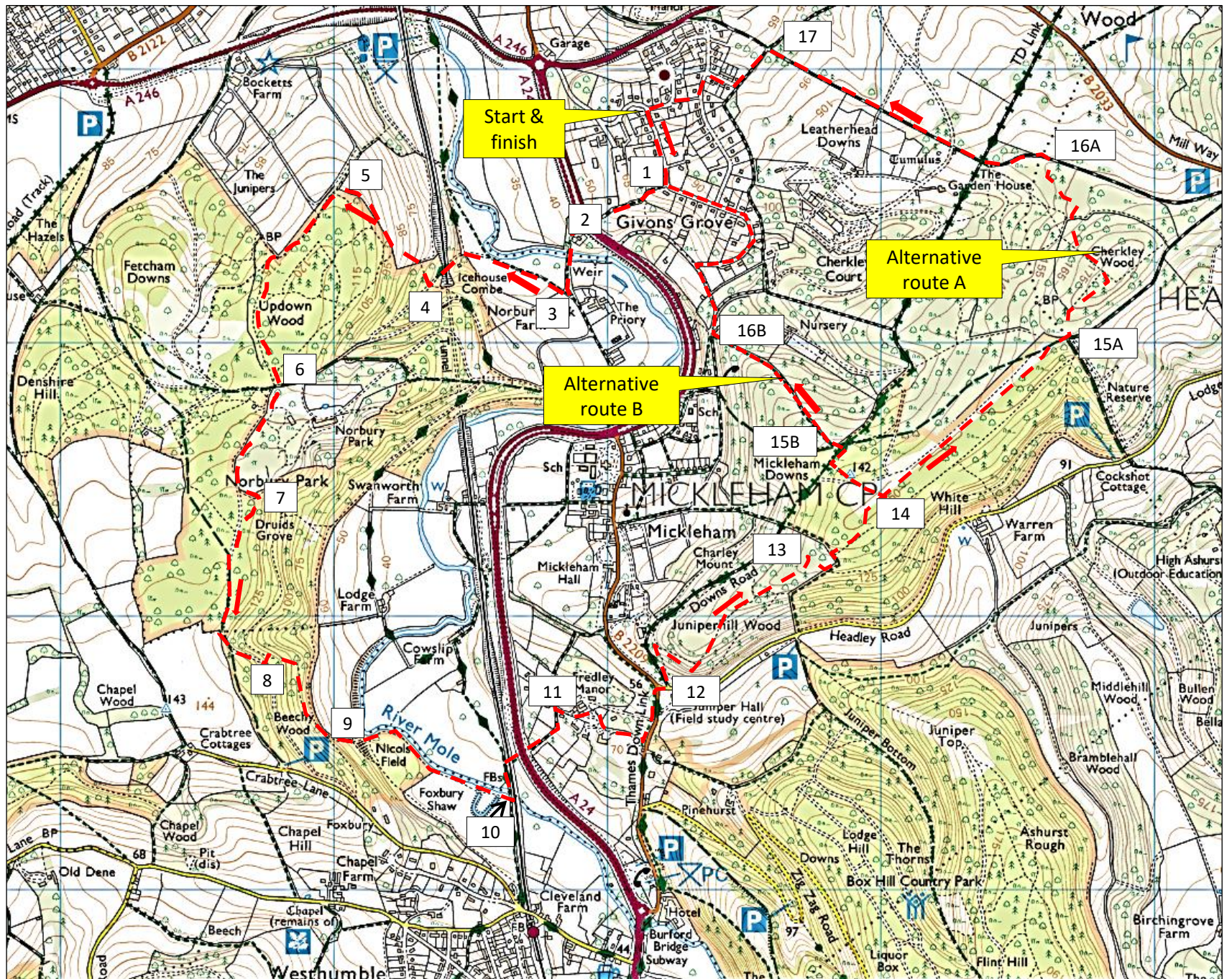
After a steepish rise through more yew trees you come to a turning on your left. Although you go straight on here, it's worth walking 50 or so yds to your left where you will come across a dilapidated, circular brick structure with a concrete base. What is it? Could it be an abandoned water cistern for Juniper Hall? Ideas to me on a postcard please!

Retrace your steps and continue along the original path. After about 5 minutes walking the path begins to curve steadily to the left. Just as you pass two large silver birch trees look for a small path that heads off to the right (13). Take this through the yew trees and emerge almost immediately onto a main path and a fine viewpoint (with a bench) looking towards Box Hill and Juniper Top. You can also see Denbies and Leith Hill from here. Good place for a pause!

Afterwards, take the main path up to the left. Shortly the path makes a right-angled left turn very soon after which you turn right onto another path. Follow this through the woods until you emerge onto the Mickleham Downs Ride (14). Here you have a choice. If you're still

feeling energetic, follow Route A which follows the first half of Walk 1 in reverse back to Givons Grove via Cherkley Wood. At point 15A turn left opposite where the Box Hill Hike is signposted descending to the right. Take care just after the crest of the hill in Cherkley Wood to keep left down the lesser path past a small yew tree and ignoring the better defined path on your right.

If you're feeling like a quicker route home from point (14), follow Route B which, after following a grassy path across the ride, follows Walk 1 back via points 15B and 16B re-entering Givons Grove via Cherkley Hill.



Walk 2, 7.5 miles using A, or 6 miles using B