

WALKS AROUND GIVONS GROVE

by Nick Holloway

Update on Walk 2 (Autumn 2018 edition)

Shortly after this walk was published, Surrey County Council closed the footbridge across the Mole alongside the railway bridge near Westhumble as the bridge was declared unsafe and needed repairs. These have now been done and the bridge is open again.

Secondly, the section of this walk leading away from Juniper Hall is now inaccessible, as described, as the landowner has closed off the paths on the eastern side of the Stane Street bridleway. You now have to follow this main bridleway back up on top the Mickleham Downs gallops to pick up either of the two alternative routes back to Givons Grove.

Introduction

Walk 4.

This walk makes almost a complete circuit of the Norbury Park estate and is about 6.5 miles in length. Allow about 2 ½ to 3 hrs for the walk depending on your speed. It takes in quite a variety of scenery from the river valley to woodland, chalk grassland and some farmland. There are views across Westhumble towards Denbies and Box Hill in the latter part of the walk. The walk also passes the King William IV where you can stop for a well-earned meal.

As always, I recommend that you also use the OS Explorer Series (1:25,000 scale) Sheet 146 to support the walk description. Point numbers refer to the numbers on the map excerpts in this article.

Walk 4 detail

Exit Givons Grove from The Downs via the footpath which leads down between Beech Fell and Seven Gables (A). Reach the A24 dual carriageway 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 cross 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 (B) 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 (C) 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 (D), find a narrow footpath which enters the woods and joins with a footpath coming up from the right. Turn left here. 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 1/3 of a mile. As you do so, bear left at a junction which you ignore and also ignore another path forking off to the right a little further on. Keep going until you come to a second right turn at point E. Take this turning and follow it through recent forestry works, some of it related to Ash dieback. The track emerges onto an open area of delightful chalk grassland (F). where you keep straight ahead towards a red brick cottage.

As you pass the cottage, cross a track in a slight dip and keep straight ahead up into the woods where you immediately pass through a kissing gate on the right-hand side of a (usually closed) five-bar gate. Very shortly after this gate, take a left turn and continue through the woods keeping left until you reach point G (about ¼ mile). At G*, take a right turn and very soon after, go left onto a path that descends to the edge of the wood. Cross the junction where two tracks meet and turn right onto the second track. Follow this track for about 100 yds (H), then turn left onto a track which rises gently with a field on your left and Bookham Wood to your right. At the southern end of the wood, bear to the left as another path joins from the right. Continue south along this path and, as you crest the hill, you will get a fine view of Ranmore Church. Continue to point J, a junction with a wooden signpost, where you turn left. Follow this path until you reach point K at Crabtree Cottages. Here you have a lovely view looking towards Denbies and Box Hill.

From point K you continue along a surfaced lane which, after a few hundred yds, starts descending towards Westhumble. Keep on until you reach point L where another narrow lane doubles back to the left. Take this lane but almost immediately turn right onto a footpath leading downhill. Follow this path for nearly a mile (overlooking first Lodge Farm then Swanworth Farm) until you reach point M. At this point, the track you are on begins to climb but you turn down a path to the right between a set of wooden "horse stoppers". Follow this path through the beech woods and cross the southern end of the Norbury railway tunnel. Continue for another few hundred yds and you will eventually descend to the lane which passes point B and Norbury Park Farm. Turn right onto the lane and continue over the river bridge and onto the A24 dual carriageway. Pick a safe point to cross this to reach the lane (beside Frascati's restaurant) leading up to the King William IV pub. If not stopping (or after stopping) here to eat/drink, continue up the lane to reach Mickleham Drive and return to Givons Grove via Cherkley Hill – a bit of a killer by now!

* At point G the route can be shortened somewhat by keeping left and, shortly afterwards, reaching the track marked in blue on the map. Follow this track to Crabtree Cottages (K) and re-join the main route.