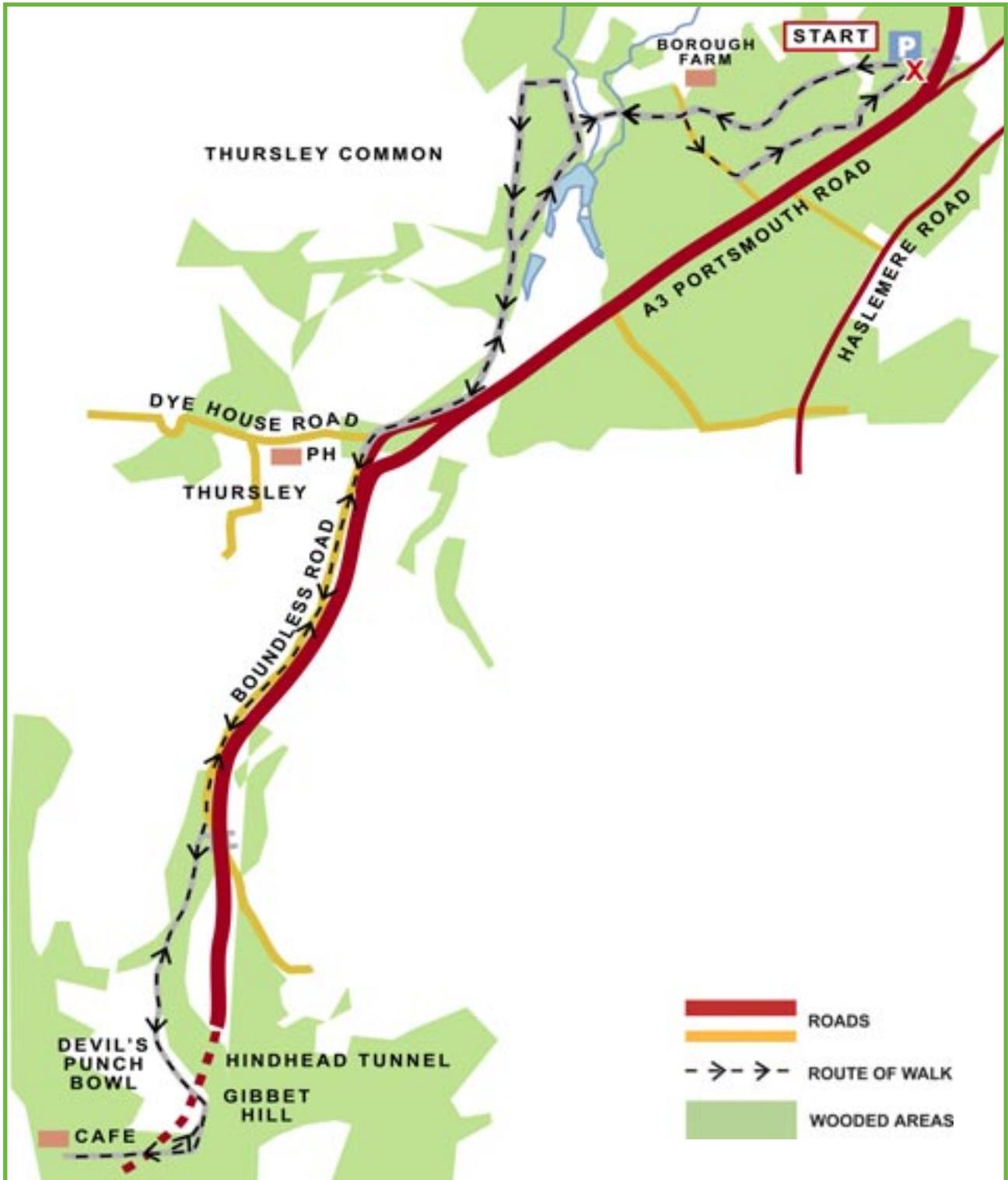




Rodborough Common to Hindhead Cafe

This walk has been designed for Trampers, off road cyclists and walkers





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Maps: OS Explorer 145 Guildford & Farnham,
OS Explorer 133 Haslemere & Petersfield

Start: Rodborough Common car park.
Alternatively National Trust car park at Hindhead.

Grid Ref: SU938419

Distance: 12 miles

Refreshments: The National Trust café, Hindhead

Rodborough Common is managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust. It is home to many reptiles including Common Lizards, Slow Worms, Grass Snakes and Adders. Butterflies include the Silver Studded Blue.

Directions

Leave the car park at the far end on a wide track going downhill. At the bottom turn left onto the track coming in from the right and pass, on the left, the driveway to Moushill Corner. Continue on this bridleway, soon passing another house, Burchetts, and reach a gateway across the bridleway (BW) and pass it on the right.

After some distance arrive at another barrier (again there is room to pass on the right) and soon the BW reaches the road to Borough Farm. Cross the road and continue on the BW past a house, Little Borough, on the right and through a gate. (This doesn't have a latch and can be nudged open to pass through) The path passes a farm gate on the right goes over a stream, then passes a farm gate on the left, narrows and arrives at another gate. (Once more there is no latch).

This is part of an earth bank marking the parish boundary between Witley and Thursley.

Turn right and when the path forks keep right following the parish boundary and continue until you reach a MOD board and turn left. On reaching a T junction at another MOD board turn left onto a wide sandy track. Continue on the track for about 0.5 mile to arrive at a crossroads by a 'Welcome to Thursley Common' board. (Take a note of this junction for the return trip.)

The best time to visit the Thursley National Nature reserve is between May and September. Butterflies include large populations of grayling and purple emperor and also the silver studded blue. Birds include woodlark, Dartford warbler, nightjar, stonechat and curlew. Reptiles include the rare sand lizard and smooth snake. On the Northern side of the common there is a wetland area with a boardwalk which is noted for dragonflies and is popular with birdwatchers.

Turn left towards some cottages and then right by a 'A3 gap closed ahead' sign and follow a broken down fence to a junction of paths with another 'A3 gap closed ahead' sign on the left.

To the left is the site of the Upper Hammer Pond. Over two hundred years ago there was an ironworks sited here. The dam collapsed in early 2014 and all that remains is a stream running through. There is no intention to reinstate the dam.

Cross over the junction of paths and continue with the pond site on your left. On reaching a grassy path going left to a gate on the A3 keep right up the slope and then immediately left. Continue on this path until your reach another welcome board on the right. Here you turn left on a narrow path out to the slip road that goes north onto the A3 and arrive at a dropped curb. The route now goes right towards Thursley and then left down the Old Portsmouth Road. (The safest option, for all-terrain mobility scooters, is to continue on the pavement round towards Thursley and use the dropped curb shortly before the pub and come back on the road. If you use the slip road dropped curb do take great care negotiating across the junction with the bridge.)

On the left of the Old Portsmouth road you pass semi-detached cottages.

These cottages were originally the Red Lion pub. On 24 September 1786 a sailor stopped at the White Lion Moushill where he bought drinks for three local men. They befriended him and offered to accompany him on his

journey to Portsmouth to find a ship. He bought them drinks again when they stopped at the Red Lion, Thursley. When they reached Hindhead and the sailor stopped to admire the view he was hit from behind, robbed and his body hidden in the Devils Punch Bowl. The murderers were caught the same day and later convicted of murder.

A short distance after the cottages turn right onto Boundless Road. Continue up this quiet road for just over one mile and as it starts to descend fork right into a small carpark with a National Trust noticeboard. Go through the car park and continue ahead slowly uphill, passing a milestone on the left, for approximately half mile to reach an open gate. (There is room to pass to the right of the gate if it has been locked).

Pass through the stumps ahead and keep on this well-made track uphill to a further three stumps across the path. Ignoring all paths off continue around the upper rim of the punch bowl for approximately 0.75 mile. On the way look out, on your right, firstly for the old milestone with an explanatory board and then for the memorial stone to the murdered sailor. At a crossroads of paths turn right through three posts waymarked 'Sailors Stroll' and 'Hidden Hindhead Trail' shortly passing a signboard 'Road to Restoration', and arrive at the carpark and the NT café.

The café is very popular with seating inside and out. There are also tables beyond the café area for picnics. The commons and Punch Bowl are home to an abundance of wildlife and the area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). For further information visit the National Trust website for the area.

For the return journey go over to the notice board and follow the path you arrived on. Shortly, when you reach the wide grassy crossing path, that was the old A3, by the board 'Road to Restoration', turn left. (See note below).

This wonderful scenic route goes around the Punch Bowl but for a very short distance there is a camber which may not be safe for off-road mobility scooters. Take care and if in doubt retrace your steps along the top path. There is reason for optimism that the camber will be rectified in the near future.

After approximately half a mile arrive at a T junction. Turn right here uphill to posts and another T junction. Turn left here re-joining the upper track of the outward journey and immediately fork left past the three stumps. Retrace your steps back down to the little carpark on the Boundless Road and on again to Thursley. At top of the Old Portsmouth Road turn right on the road and left at the dropped curb to re-enter Thursley Nature Reserve. Turn right and keep on until the path divides and then go five yards right and then left to continue on the lower path.

Pass the site of the drained former pond and keep ahead at the crossroads on the path by the fence to reach the cottages and, to the left, a junction of paths encountered on the outward journey.

The suggested return route below is bumpy over tree roots and needs a bit of care if using an all-terrain mobility scooter but takes you past the attractive, particularly when the water lilies are out, Forked Pond. The alternative is to now retrace your steps to the Parish Boundary gate. Turn left to the notice board and then right. Continue straight on until you reach the MOD notice board. Turn right, keep left as the path forks, and reach another MOD board. Turn right following the parish boundary watching out for the gate on the left.

For the suggested route keep ahead at the cottages on the right passing a bank with a deer fence on top.

In this area, Sir Robert Moore of Loseley and Henry Bell of Rake, Witley set up a rabbit warren in 1618 and built a house for the warrener.

Keep straight on this main path, through the wood, taking the left fork after a short distance, and later on pausing to look at the pond when it comes into view. A small path comes in from the pond when you are level with a green barn visible in the trees. Shortly afterwards reach the gate at the parish boundary on the right. Go through the gate and retrace your steps to Borough Farm.

Now turn right up the hill on the road and when the road has levelled out look for a small path on the left with five wooden stumps and turn left. Pass a small sign Rodborough Common local nature reserve and keep ahead at a crossing path. When the path forks go left and arrive at a seat. After admiring it, walk towards the view and turn right on the path going downhill and up again, with the small wood to your right, and then at a fork keep right.

Over to the left is a clear rectangular grassy patch space. It is here that there is a colony of the rare Silver Studded Blue Butterfly which emerges in June/July. The male is blue and the female a less spectacular brown.

After passing this patch the path goes downhill and swings left. When the path swings right uphill there is a very rough patch unsuitable for cycles and a mobility scooter. It is possible to ascend by keeping to the right of the track. Continue ahead on this path, keeping the sound of the A3 on your right, to arrive back at the carpark.

