



A link with the

Special wildlife
Inspiring views
Rich in history



Explore and Enjoy



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09/04/09 (40K).

Waymarks for these walks have been installed by Downlands Project staff and volunteers. If you would like more information, or would like to help restore our countryside, contact us at: The Downlands Project, The Omnibus Building, Lebourne Road, Reigate, Surrey RH2 7JA. Tel: 01737 737700 or visit www.downlandspj.org.uk



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Restoring our beautiful chalk grassland
We restore our beautiful chalk grassland through practical management.
We raise awareness of the importance of chalk grassland as part of our natural heritage.
We encourage others to take part in discovering its past and securing its future.



This leaflet was produced for Reigate and Banstead Borough Council by the Old Surrey Downs Project.



The Town and Down Circular Walk is one of six distance footpaths that stretches from Banstead Downs to Horley. For further information, telephone Reigate and Banstead Borough Council on 01737 276000 or visit www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk

For up-to-date public transport information, contact Surrey Traveline on 0871 200 2233 or www.traveline.info

Nearest Railway Stations: Banstead and Epsom Downs. Bus route 166 stops near to Banstead Railway Station.
It starts and finishes at Nork Park car park, at the end of The Drive, Banstead.
Grid Ref: **TQ 241 589.**
This 5 mile, 8 km walk takes you across two of Surrey's most historic sites: Nork Park and Banstead Downs.



Some parts of the walk may be muddy – stout walking boots with good treads are recommended.
Much of this walk is level, although the ground is often uneven, which makes it unsuitable for wheelchairs and buggies.

Dog Walkers

Countryside Code by keeping your dogs on a lead when walking near livestock.

Footwear

Some parts of the walk may be muddy – stout walking boots with good treads are recommended.

Suitability

This leaflet is best used with OS map: 1:25000 Explorer 146 (Dorking, Box Hill & Reigate)

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This circular walk takes you from the former site of a mustard magnate's house and gardens, to Banstead Downs, subject of a long-running, fierce legal battle, fought to prevent it from being enclosed and developed by the Landowner.

Local residents won the battle for Banstead Downs in 1877, thus preserving our right to enjoy this beautiful area for the foreseeable future. The first meeting of the Banstead Commons Conservators was held in 1893 and they have been managing the land (which is owned by Reigate and Banstead Borough Council) for public access and landscape and wildlife conservation ever since.

Much of this walk takes you across chalk grassland – a rare and wildlife-rich habitat created by the early farmers, who removed the original woodland cover to create fields for their crops and livestock. Their grazing animals prevented the regrowth of trees and coarse vegetation, which allowed this special habitat to develop and thrive.

Chalk grassland has since depended on continued active management for its survival, which is why the grassy slopes and terraces at Nork Park are cut once a year to promote the growth of chalk-loving flowers, such as cowslips and pyramidal orchids. Sheep are grazed on Banstead Downs to control the growth of scrub and rough vegetation, which would otherwise overshadow the rarer, chalk-specific wildlife.



Welcome to the Town and Down Circular Walk – a journey from the grassy slopes of Nork Park to butterfly-rich Banstead Downs and back again.

1 This walk starts at Nork Park car park, at the end of The Drive, Banstead. (Follow the orange Circular Walk waymarks.) From the car park, go past the metal gate and along the track, with a sports field and extensive views towards London on the right. This is one of the highest points on the edge of the Thames basin: the large mound of earth nearby, (in a private garden - no entry please) known as the Tumble Beacon, was a link in a chain of beacons that stretched from London to the South coast. It was used to warn of the approaching Spanish Armada.

2 Go through the woodland and you will see a hedge on the right. Turn right past the corner of the hedge and then straight on downhill along the path between the avenues of trees until you pass another corner of the hedge on your right. Take the second path leading off to the right, across the field, with fenced areas of trees to the left.



Nork House may have gone, but its avenue of cherry and beech trees remains.

Cowslips bloom on the grassy terraces in April, when whitethroats are in full voice, singing from the tops of hawthorn bushes. Old hedgerows are farmland relics; the more unusual and exotic trees at the top of the hill are remnants of the arboretum that once surrounded Nork House. This was the home of the Colman family (of mustard fame), but it was damaged by fire and demolished in 1939. Banstead Council (now Reigate and Banstead Borough Council) purchased the land for recreation purposes in 1947.

Ignore all cross paths and carry straight on towards the corner of the field. Carry straight on past a children's play area, then bear left around it and out onto Nork Way.

3 Turn right and carry straight on along this road for about a mile. Where Nork Way bears sharply left, go straight on along Eastgate. Where Eastgate bears to the left, go straight on along a footpath. Cross the main road at the crossing and carry straight on until you reach another road. Turn left towards Banstead Station.

4 Cross the road and follow the brideway that runs to the right of the railway track. (Good views of the underlying chalk can be seen here, exposed by the creation of the railway cutting. The sea once covered this rock – it was formed from the shells of microscopic creatures, living in a warm shallow sea approximately 145-60 million years ago!)

At the end of the brideway, turn right and cross the A217 at the traffic lights. Turn left and walk along the pavement beside the A217. Shortly after going over the railway, turn right and follow the brideway onto the golf course. (This is also part of the London LOOP route.) Follow the waymarks across the golf course (beware of flying golf balls!) until you reach a bridge over the railway.

5 Cross the railway bridge and take the second path on the right. (This is part of the main Millennium Trail, so follow the blue waymarks.)

You are now walking through a Site of Special Scientific Interest – Banstead Downs is a nationally important area of woodland, chalk grassland and scrub that supports a wide range of wildlife, including some plants and insects now rare in Surrey.



Banstead Downs is an important site for the rare small blue butterfly.

6 At the first crossways, go straight on until you reach Winkworth Road. Cross with care and follow the path straight on. At the next main road (Sutton Lane) turn right and follow the road until you reach a roundabout. (The old village well can be seen nearby. It is 300ft deep and was still in use at the end of the 19th century.) Bear right, then cross the road and enter the Woolpack Pub car park. (There has been an inn here for hundreds of years and its name (first recorded in 1716) bears witness to the importance of the wool trade that once flourished in Banstead. The inn was also used as a venue for parish business and as a wigmakers workshop.)

The Woolpack Inn sign.



7 Walk between the white lines and follow the path out into Lady Neville Recreation Ground. (Named after the wife of a local High Court Judge who purchased the land in 1895, it was gifted to the Parish as a recreation ground by her daughter Edith in 1925.) Follow the path round to the right and walk through the recreation ground and then turn left along a road (De Burgh Park). Take the first footpath on the right that eventually leads through allotments and carry on until you reach Holly Lane. Cross Holly Lane with care and follow the footpath on the other side. Where the path forks, go left and continue downhill until you reach a track. Go straight on into the field and follow the path as it descends and then rises. At the corner of the field, follow the path round to the right and alongside the woodland. Follow the path straight on along the field edge and then back into a small area of woodland.

8 Go through two kissing gates. (You are now leaving the main Millennium Trail, so follow the orange Circular Walk waymarks from now on.) Follow the field edge straight on, and at the corner of the field, go straight on across another field towards a gap in the hedge. Carry straight on along another field with Canons Wood on your right, until you reach a kissing gate near some houses.



Canons Wood is ablaze with bluebells in the spring, indicating that it is ancient woodland. The name dates back to mediaeval times.

9 Turn right and walk along the road until you reach the A217. Cross this busy road with care and follow the footpath straight on into the woodland. At the cross paths, carry straight on along the footpath between fences. At the road, turn left and follow it round to the right. At the end of the road cross over and follow the footpath straight on between houses. At the next road (Waterer Gardens), cross over and follow the footpath to the left of the shops. At the end of the path, turn right and then shortly turn left onto a path into woodland. Bear left and carry straight on downhill until you reach a picnic area. You are now back in Nork Park. Turn right here and follow the track back to your start point in the car park.



There are four Saxon burial mounds here, known as the Gally Hills, because gallows were sited on them during the 15th century. The area was part of a 17th century racetrack that stretched for 4 miles to Epsom, and the Downs were also used as a muster-place for the Surrey Militia. Sheep have grazed here for centuries and were still grazed commercially up to the outbreak of the Second World War. Today, Banstead Downs is managed as common land, with a general right of public access, by the Banstead Commons Conservators.



Sheep are used to control the growth of scrub and rough vegetation on Banstead Downs.

	Busy Road		Cafe/Tea Shop
	Car Park		Public House/Bar
	View		Picnic area
	Toilets		Bus Stop

Town and Down Circular Walk (orange arrow) Millennium Trail (blue arrow)