

Gomshall Mill and Netley Park, Guildford, Surrey



Challenging Terrain

3 miles
Circular
1.5 hours

070114



Access Notes



1. The walk follows a mixture of pavements plus woodland tracks, the latter of which are very uneven and can get fairly muddy after rain/in winter so good waterproof boots are recommended.
2. There is one fairly steep, long and strenuous climb into the North Downs plus an equivalent descent, but the paths are all reasonably wide and there are no gates or stiles to negotiate (just a handful of steps).

Gomshall Mill is a timber-framed mill dating back to Medieval times and has been lovingly converted to a wonderfully atmospheric pub.

A 3 mile circular pub walk from Gomshall Mill in Gomshall, Surrey. The walking route follows an old lane to the adjacent village of Shere before climbing high into the North Downs to explore Netley Park, an old estate now managed by the National Trust. There's plenty of wildlife to enjoy along the way plus spectacular views once you're up on the North Downs.

Getting there

Gomshall is located on the A25, between Guildford and Dorking. The walk starts and finishes at Gomshall Mill, which is on the main A25 in the centre of the village. The pub has its own large car park just behind the mill.

Approximate post code **GU5 9LB**.

Walk Sections



Start to Gravelpits Lane



The walk begins in the small courtyard directly in front of Gomshall Mill. It is worth pausing a moment here to appreciate the history of the building.

Situated on the River Tillingbourne, the pretty shallow river flowing just behind you, Gomshall village grew around the development of industries which depended on the river's plentiful and constant water supply. Many of these industries survived into the twentieth century, including leather tanning, watercress growing and corn milling. Although the current Gomshall Mill is not the original building listed in the Domesday Book, it is believed the current building may well have been built on the existing Domesday site. Parts of the current mill date back to the 17th century and its function was to mill corn to make flour for bread, as well as some malt milling. Gomshall Mill continued to function as a mill until



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1953, after which time it was an antiques shop and then became the much-loved village pub.

From the courtyard, with your back to the pub, turn left down the side access road, passing over the River Tillingbourne. Follow the this lane, Goose Green, keeping close to the pub buildings on the left and passing the pub car park on the right and then passing between the village greens and properties. Follow the road as it swings right (becoming High View), ignoring the left fork which passes under the railway arch. At the end of this road you'll come to a T-junction. Cross over with care to take the bridleway opposite, a small lane called Gravelpits Lane.

1 → 2 Gravelpits Lane to Shere Lane



Follow the lane as it swings left and then, immediately before Gravel Pits Farmhouse, turn right down the wooded bridleway (also marked as Cycleway 22). A few paces in keep right at the fork. Soon the views to your right open up, across the Tillingbourne Valley and over to the rising slopes of the North Downs. The large stone house visible on the hillside opposite is Netley House. Your return leg takes you behind this private home and through its estate woodland which is now managed by the National Trust.

Follow the narrow track between fenced fields for some distance. Look out for the spire of Shere Church which will soon become visible to the right. Ignore the fork off to the right, simply keep straight ahead and you will emerge to a tarmac residential lane (Spinning Walk). Keep ahead passing the Old Surgery and then the Rectory on the left, and then descend down to reach a T-junction with Shere Lane.

2 → 3 Shere Lane to Pilgrim's Way

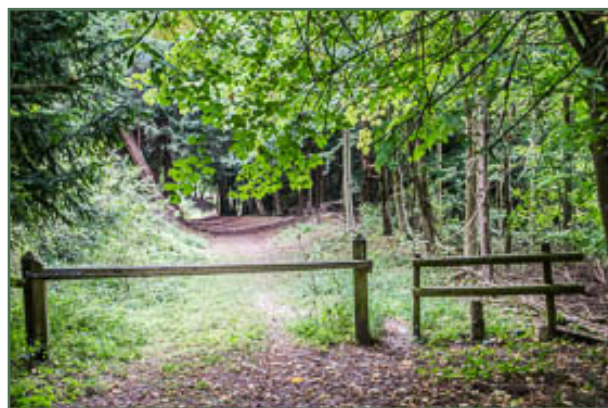


Cross over the road with care and turn right along the pavement. Follow the road descending down to the centre of Shere Village, crossing to stay on the pavement when necessary. You'll cross the bridge back over the River Tillingbourne. Here you'll see plenty of ducks, which enjoy their own private residence (a converted shed with hay bales). Keep ahead passing the many shops and the (aptly named!) Dabbling Duck deli and cafe.

At the top of the road, turn left at the T-junction (signed to Albury)

and then after just a few paces (before East Lodge), turn right onto the tarmac track signed with a blue parking symbol. Pass the car park on the right and keep ahead to join the public byway heading steadily uphill between trees. Keep right at the fork and follow the track passing under the main A25 road. Once the other side, follow the pretty sunken ancient track, climbing and swinging right, for some distance. Look out on the right for a major track turning off, heading slightly downhill towards a wooden fence/ barrier. This is Pilgrim's Way.

3 → 4 Pilgrim's Way to Robertson Memorial



Turn right into Pilgrim's Way and go through the gap in the wooden fence to join the wide sunken track heading steadily downhill. This prehistoric route follows the natural causeway, east to west, on the southern slopes of the North Downs, and is said to have been the route used by pilgrims between Winchester and Canterbury.

After just a short distance you'll come to a major fork in the track alongside an information board and a large brick pillbox. Take some time here to explore the pillbox should you wish. This section of the North Downs slopes is part of Netley Park, 211 acres of woodland once part of the estate belonging to Netley House and now managed by the National Trust. Netley House (built in 1798) was used as a hospital in the First World War and was occupied by Canadian troops in the Second World War. It was during the latter period that a series of pillboxes were erected. These were part of a line of defence for London (using the natural barrier of the North Downs as an ideal defence line) in case of a German invasion from the south coast.

Keep left at the fork, taking the wide grass track climbing steadily uphill. Soon you'll come to the concrete Robertson Memorial, with a bench alongside – the perfect place to catch your breath. The National Trust bought this land in 1940 using a bequest from W A Robertson to commemorate his two brothers who were killed in the First World War. This monument was erected in their names and the woodland clearing at this point is maintained to provide views right across the Tillingbourne Valley.

4 → 5 Robertson Memorial to End

Keep straight ahead on the wide grassy ride. You'll pass another pillbox on the left and from this point the paths become a little less obvious. Bear right on the track as it descends steeply and narrows. You'll reach a small junction with a fence line visible ahead. Swing left here following the track steeply uphill and then, after just a few yards, fork right. Beyond the line of trees running to your right you'll see a large fenced grass clearing.

Follow the path as it continues to climb beyond the clearing and you'll come to an obvious junction of small paths. Turn right down the first path on the right and follow the narrow path downhill and swinging left. You'll soon pass a yellow arrow confirming you are back on a public footpath.

The narrow path continues to descend through scrub and then



through a section of mainly coniferous woodland. Towards the bottom the path runs with a pretty hawthorn hedge on the right (and a large fenced pasture beyond). Soon afterwards you'll emerge down a few steps to the T-junction with the A25. Opposite is the impressive Tudor dark-red brick King John House, which was formerly known as the Old Tannery House and still has its own tanyard.

Turn left along the pavement passing a petrol station on the left. Follow the main village road and then cross over the road using the pelican crossing. Continue for just a few yards more to reach the Gomshall Mill for some well-earned hospitality.

Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and an Ordnance Survey map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.

