

The Pheasant and Reigate Heath, Buckland, Surrey



Moderate Terrain

3 miles
Circular
1 to 1.5
hours

091215



Access Notes



1. The walking route includes just a few climbs and descents.
2. There are no stiles, steps or gates on route, but the path surfaces can be very sandy, deeply rutted or muddy in parts and they are also very narrow at times.
3. The heath is home to a golf course and the route crosses fairways a few times so please show respect for the golfers by allowing them to play their shots before you cross and also look out for any stray flying golf balls.

The Pheasant is a classic old coaching inn, providing relaxed comfortable surroundings for refreshments before or after your walk.

A 3 mile circular pub walk from the Pheasant at Buckland, near Reigate in Surrey. The walking route explores the adjoining Reigate Heath, a wonderful section of mixed woodland and heath, taking in a windmill and a stream which is home to a monstrous creature of legend.

Getting there

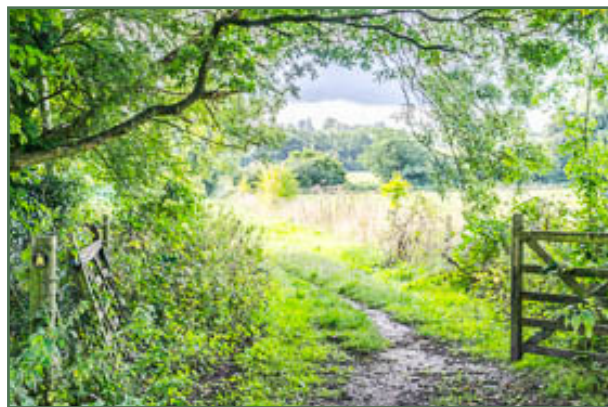
The Pheasant is located on the main A25 road, between Buckland and Reigate in Surrey. The pub has its own large car park or, if you are coming by bus, there is a bus stop directly outside the pub. For help planning your journey by public transport visit <http://journeys.travelsmartsurrey.info>.

Approximate post code **RH3 7BG**

Walk Sections



Start to Reigate Heath



Leave the car park via the vehicle entrance and turn right along the A25 pavement, passing in front of The Pheasant. Continue past two further properties and then fork right down the tarmac access lane, signed as a public footpath. Follow the lane past a handful of cottages on your right and, immediately before Yaverland Cottage, turn right to join a grass footpath.

Continue through an old gateway and keep ahead along the right-hand edge of an open meadow. In the far corner, follow the path over a stream to reach a fingerpost marking a junction of footpaths at the edge of the next large meadow. Take the path diagonally left (at about 11 o'clock) and continue on this path as it leads you alongside a fence and hedge boundary on the left. After about 150 yards, the path dog-legs left (out of the meadow) and then right,

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to become a fenced track along the edge of woodland.

Follow this pretty path with a beautiful section of old estate land on the right, now used as horse paddocks. The path skirts alongside the A25 (on your left) and then reaches a crossroads with a stone access lane. Go straight ahead on the narrow path through a section of scrub, the beginnings of Reigate Heath.

1 → 2 Reigate Heath to Flanchford Road



Follow the narrow path winding ahead, going straight ahead at the crossroads with the next sandy access track. The path begins to climb and leads you to a hillock topped with two large pine trees. Skirt around the right-hand edge of the hillock and then turn left along the obvious heath path. Follow this path ahead to reach a waymarker post at a junction of paths.

Reigate Heath forms part of the manorial waste of the Manor of Reigate, and was bequeathed to the people of the town by Lady Henry Somerset when she died in 1921. The heath is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest. It is the largest heath in East Surrey, and is a rare and valuable habitat. The heath is home to seven Bronze Age barrows, or burial grounds, providing the earliest evidence of man's occupation of the area, around 3,000 years ago.

Go straight ahead and just a few yards later, at the next minor crossroads, turn left. Follow this path back towards the A25 (ignoring any smaller paths to the sides). Within a section of oak trees, the path swings right to run parallel with the A25 across to your left. Eventually you will emerge out to the edge of the large open green sports field within the heath.

Walk at about 2 o'clock across the field, heading for the only small detached house within the row of terraced cottages ahead. As you reach the road, Flanchford Road, cross over with care to reach the pavement directly in front of the cottages.

2 → 3 Flanchford Road to Windmill



Turn right along the pavement, with the colourful row of cottages running on your left. Where the pavement ends, ignore the track to the church on the left. Instead, keep ahead along the grass verge for 30 yards and then fork left onto the signed public bridleway. This sandy path leads you past a car park on your right and on through this southern section of Reigate Heath.

As you emerge from the trees you will come to the edge of a golf fairway. NOTE: Please show respect for the golfers by allowing them to play their shots before you cross and watch out for any stray flying golf balls. Stay on the sandy track across the fairway and then bear right along the access track to reach a T-junction opposite a pretty brick and flint house, The Old School House.

Turn right for a few paces and, immediately after the house, turn left. Follow this sandy path through a section of trees and you will emerge to a junction with the access lane for The White House (you will see this property on your left). Turn right along the access lane (which crosses another golf fairway so follow the same advice) and you will emerge to a junction with Flanchford Road.

Cross straight over but do NOT take the obvious sandy track ahead. Instead take the narrower grass path at about 2 o'clock (signed as a public footpath and the Greensand Way). Follow this path steadily uphill through the bracken, back into the northern section of Reigate Heath. At the top, you will emerge to a junction with a tarmac access lane. Turn left to reach the golf club car park, with the club house to the right and the windmill directly behind this.

3 → 4 Windmill to Shag Brook



The existing windmill dates from 1765 and is built on Galley Hill, so called because it was the site of a gallows where highwaymen and other convicted criminals were hanged. The mill worked for about 100 years, and in 1880 was converted to a chapel. Services are still held here regularly and it is said to be the only windmill in the world which is a consecrated church.

Walk forward to a point just beyond the buildings on your right. Take time to enjoy the views here, which on a clear day stretch for miles. NOTE: The next few hundred yards of the route lead you across more golf fairways so please keep your eyes peeled to keep yourself safe. Keep ahead along the access track for a few more paces. Immediately after the grass island within the parking area, turn right to reach the next waymarker post, set within the gorse bushes.

Follow this path downhill between the gorse and heather. At the bottom of the slope you'll emerge to the edge of a wide fairway. When it is safe to do so, cross over heading for the cream cottage opposite. Once you reach the access lane in front of the cottage, it's worth turning back to enjoy the view of the pretty windmill sitting high on the heather-clad hill.

Take the track running along the left-hand side of the cream cottage. Pass by the single metal bollard and continue ahead between hedgerows (ignoring the path off to the right) with a large open meadow across the fence to your right. Pass through an old gateway and continue on the obvious grass track through the field. At the far side you will come to a T-junction with a small stream, Shag Brook, ahead.



Shag Brook rises from a spring at the foot of the North Downs and usually runs crystal clear. It is also home to a famous legendary horse, the Buckland Shag. The Buckland Shag was a monstrous horse which lived in the stream. Actually, some writers say the Shag was a gorilla, but a horse is the commonly accepted version. This beast would drag travellers from the nearby coaching road and devour them on the Shag Stone, a large boulder in the brook with a vein of blood running through it. The vein was in fact a harmless seam of iron ore – but let's not spoil the tale! The local parson, Willoughby Bertie, had the Shag Stone removed from the brook in 1757 and it was transported and thrown from a cliff in Devon. The Buckland Shag then disappeared from local folklore. In the 1980s the legend was reborn through the Buckland Shag Morris Men, a troop of Morris dancers that perform locally.

Turn right along the rocky track and follow it through the belt of trees and out (past a disused kissing gate) to reach the corner of a large rough meadow. Turn left and follow the path running alongside the left-hand tree line. After about 500 yards you will come to a fingerpost on your left, which you should recognise from the outward leg.

From this point you will be retracing your steps back to the pub. To do this, turn left over the stream and follow the path along the left-hand edge of the smaller meadow. At the far side, continue ahead on the grass path to reach the T-junction alongside Yaverland Cottage. Turn left along the access lane and follow it out to the junction with the A25. Keep left and continue for just a short distance to reach The Pheasant 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.

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