

SURREY

Hydon's Ball to Winkworth Arboretum circular walk

Take a tranquil walk along old paths through woodland and fields with views over the south Surrey hills. Stop off at Winkworth Arboretum to stroll through the glades, wander around the lake and stop for a drink and a bite to eat at the tea-room before continuing back to Hydon's Ball.



Information

Address: National Trust car park, Salt Lane, Godalming, Surrey, GU8 4BB.

Activity: Walking

Moderate: Route along footpaths and bridle paths with gentle ascents and descents. For further details, please see Terrain section.

Dog friendly: Dogs welcome under close control along the route of the trail. Dogs on short leads welcome in Winkworth Arboretum.

Full trail: Miles: 6 (km: 9.6)

Duration: 3 hours

Terrain

Mostly along firm paths and sandy soils which are marked as footpaths or bridle paths. Some paths are quite narrow and the route can be muddy in parts after rain. The walk has some gentle ascents and descents.

Total stages: 7

Start point: National Trust car park, Salt Lane, Godalming, Surrey, GU8 4BB. Grid ref: SU978402

1. Start in the car park at Hydon's Ball and Heath. Take the track that is at the back of the information board which leads to the road. Cross over the road and take the track turning down the hard core path. You'll be walking through tall conifers and birches. At the point where the path bends round to the left bear right, leaving the track and taking the straight bridle path on your right up through the trees along Juniper Valley. The path bends to the right and then left and you descend to reach a secret valley in the wood.
2. Cross the valley and follow the sandy path up the hill. This is a holloway with steep banks and hazel trees on either side, which open out to fields as you approach South Munstead Farm. At the farm you come out onto a track. Go straight ahead and in about 30 yards (27 metres) you'll come to a T-junction by some houses. Turn right and follow the short road to meet the main road opposite Winkworth Arboretum.
3. If you wish to explore Winkworth Arboretum, follow the paths through the car park to the visitor centre. Alternatively, continue along a public footpath from the car park south beside a panelled fence and along the edge of the arboretum. There are views to your left through the trees to the landscape beyond. The path ends at a T-junction with the road. Cross the road to the right and walk to the bend. Here turn left and take the bridle path immediately to your left along a straight tarmac track.
4. Follow the road all the way along, ignoring a bridle path to your left. The houses give way to countryside and you will get some lovely views to your right. At the house called Deer's Leap the tarmac becomes an earthy footpath which descends to a road. Cross over the lane and follow the bridleway up to your left alongside fields to your right and woodland to your left. From here you can see the towering conifers planted on the top of Hydon's Ball to your right. The path will go into managed woodland. Ignore any tracks until you reach a broad track with footpath markers and open gates indicating the Greensand Way. Take a minute to admire the views to the North Downs. Turn right here.

5. At a clearing the path bears towards the left and becomes a narrow gully, with firm rock underfoot. Continue through the woodland until you come out at a road. Turn left along the road and then right at the fingerpost to continue along the Greensand Way. The path follows the edge of the hill bending round to the right and ascending. Listen out for birds such as buzzards, woodpeckers, blackbirds and song thrushes. At the top you come out near a path and you can again see the tops of the conifer at Hydon's Ball across the fields. Continue along the narrow sandy path, following the ridge and then dropping down to a sunken road. Turn right and walk for 30 yards (27 metres) to a clearing where paths cross.
6. Cross the Greensand Way to follow a sandy bridleway through hazel trees. There are lovely views over the farm fields to your left and you gradually descend into a wood. Go past the Thames Water pumping station and come to a crossroads of paths. You have reached Hydon's Ball and Heath. Go straight ahead and up the small hill through the woods and you will come to the Robertson Memorial on your left. From here turn sharp right and follow the track up the steep hill bending to your left, coming out at the top.
7. Stop here for a while to enjoy the views and maybe have a snack and a drink. When you're ready, take the path behind the seat to the left and go straight down the slopes through the woodland. You will come to the T-junction with a broad bridle path. Turn left and walk back to the car park.

End point: National Trust car park, Salt Lane, Godalming, Surrey, GU8 4BB. Grid ref: SU978402
