

The Parrot, Leith Hill and Jayes Park, Surrey



Challenging Terrain

6 miles
Circular
3 hours

051118



Access Notes



1. The walk begins with a long climb to reach Leith Hill (a total climb of about 200 metres) followed by a steep descent and then more gentle gradients for the rest of the route.
2. It follows a mix of woodland paths and tracks plus a few grass field paths, with some stretches that can be muddy after periods of rain.
3. There are a couple of short stretches along the edge of roads that need care.
4. The vast majority of the route is free from livestock, but you will cross one pasture that may be holding cattle.
5. You will need to negotiate a few gates, long flights of steps plus two stiles (both with very large dog gaps alongside).
6. If you would prefer to avoid the stiles and pasture, you could simply use the outward leg to follow a 'there and back to the tower' version of the route.

The Parrot sits proudly on the village green overlooking the cricket ground, the perfect position to fulfil its natural right as the heart of the local community.

A 6 mile circular (and fairly strenuous) pub walk from The Parrot in Forest Green, Surrey. The walking route is a rewarding journey in the Surrey Hills, initially climbing north through woodland and rhododendron gardens to reach Leith Hill Tower, the highest point in South East England. The panoramic views from the hill are truly breath-taking. After descending from Leith Hill, the route leads you through rolling leafy Surrey countryside, passing through Jayes Park along the way, a beautiful estate complete with mansion house and impressive walled gardens.

Getting there

The small village of Forest Green is located about 2 miles east of Ewhurst and 2 miles south of Holmbury St Mary, just to the south of the Surrey Hills AONB. The Parrot is situated at the northern end of the village, on Horsham Road and opposite the large green. The pub has its own large car park.

Approximate post code **RH5 5RZ**.

Walk Sections



Start to Dingwall Wood Pond



Standing at the car park entrance (facing the green opposite), turn right along the grass verge (with the road running on your left). Follow this wide grass verge leading you ahead to reach a right-hand bend in the main road. Bear right to stay on the same verge, now a narrow, raised grass bank. When the verge ends, carefully swap to the left-hand road edge and follow this for just a few metres to reach the



Get the iFootpath App for a smarter walking experience. Hundreds of walking guides in the palm of your hand with live maps that show your progress as you walk. Say goodbye to wrong turns!

get iFOOTPATH



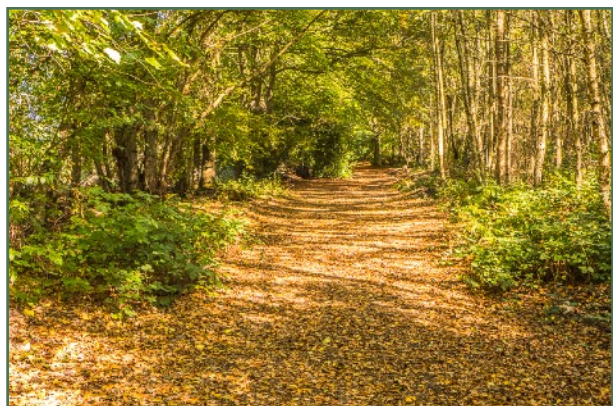
iFootpath.com

Etherley Copse National Trust car park.

Turn left into the car park, pass through it and join the main stone track which leads ahead and soon bends right, climbing steadily through the woodland. The track leads you to a T-junction (with a Dingwall Wood sign ahead). Turn right and follow this track as it soon swings left. Continue on the main track, climbing steadily and winding ahead.

You will reach Dingwall Wood Pond, with its woven bird hide, on your right. It is worth pausing to enjoy the view over the pond, which is teeming with water lilies and wildlife (including great crested newts).

1 → 2 Dingwall Wood Pond to Rhododendron Car Park



Continue on the main woodland track, climbing more steeply to reach the next junction (a fork). Take the left-hand branch, still on the main stone track which swings left and climbs to a T-junction (with a bench ahead). Turn left and follow the woodland track leading you ahead and then bending right, to continue uphill with an open field visible to your left.

At the next junction (where the main path bends left), fork right through a staggered wooden barrier (marked with an orange arrow). A few metres along, ignore the orange arrow which points right, instead go straight ahead. Follow the woodland path, pass a bench on your left and keep left at the fork here.

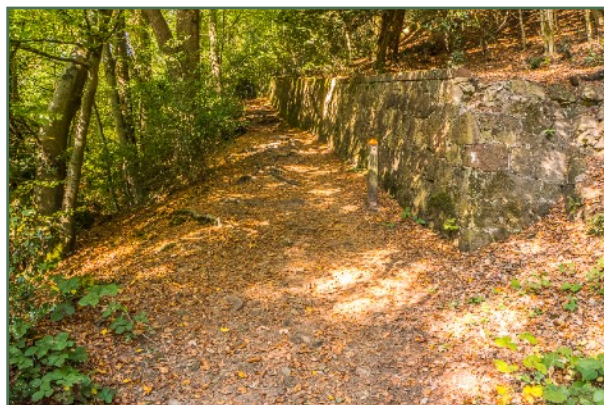
You will notice that the woodland paths are now surrounded by very tall and mature rhododendron bushes and these create a fantastic display of colour in the late spring. Rhododendron Wood was planted by Caroline, wife of Josiah Wedgwood of pottery fame, who moved here in 1847. They lived at nearby Leith Hill Place which was also home to their grandson, composer Ralph Vaughan Williams.

As you draw level with the next bench, stay with the main path which bears left. A few metres later, turn left at the crossroads and follow the path leading you into the Rhododendron Wood National Trust car park.

2 → 3 Rhododendron Car Park to Greensand Way

Go straight ahead to leave the car park via the vehicle entrance and, taking care of traffic, turn right along the lane. Just before you reach the road junction ahead, turn left at an orange-topped waymarker post. Head up the short flight of steps, cross over the road with care and go ahead to join the woodland path. Follow the orange arrows which direct you diagonally left on a path going steeply uphill (with a stone retaining wall running on your right).

Stay with this waymarked path, bending right at the end of the wall and continuing to climb through the woodland. At the top, you will emerge via a staggered barrier to reach a T-junction with a stone track. This track is the Greensand Way long distance path.



3 → 4 Greensand Way to Leith Hill Tower



Turn right to join the track. When you reach a fork, it is safest to take the right-hand branch (signed as the Footpath to the Tower) as this branch is not shared with cyclists. Your path soon rejoins the main track. Simply keep ahead and, before long, you will reach the summit of Leith Hill with the impressive Leith Hill Tower.

Leith Hill is the highest point in the south-east corner of England, 294 metres (965 feet) above sea level. The tower was built in 1766 as a dwelling by Richard Hull of Leith Hill Place, who is buried under the tower. It was measured so as to raise the height to the symbolic 1000 feet. The tower is managed by National Trust and you can climb the tower if you wish (a small entrance fee applies). Take time to enjoy the superb panoramic views, a just reward for your efforts during the climb.

4 → 5 Leith Hill Tower to Trust Boundary



When you are ready to continue, retrace your steps for a few metres to reach a large covered noticeboard. Turn left just before this, to join the path signed to the Windy Gap car park. Follow the path which swings right to reach an orange-topped post. Turn left here to join the flight of wooden steps leading you steeply downhill. After the first stretch of descent, turn left at the waymarker to continue down the next flight of steps.

You will emerge into the Windy Gap car park. Walk ahead to the road, turn left for about 30 metres and then turn right onto the signed public footpath. Follow this woodland track continuing downhill for about 400 metres. At this point it begins to swing right and a waymarker post (on your left) marks a subtle crossroads. (NOTE: Look carefully for this junction as it is easy to miss).

Turn left here (ignoring the orange arrow) to follow the narrow woodland path which leads you downhill, over a footbridge and on to reach a small wooden gate (at the National Trust boundary).

5 → 6 Trust Boundary to Forest Green Road



Pass through the gate to enter a large rough meadow. Follow the grass path which bears right, leading you downhill with the woodland on your right (and fine views ahead). Where the woodland swings away to your right, do not follow this, instead keep ahead (now with a crop margin on your right).

Pass just to the left of a large oak tree and then bear slightly left, passing under power lines to reach the far, bottom field corner. As you reach this corner, take a moment to turn around and look behind, for a perfectly-framed view of Leith Hill Tower. Bear left to join the grass and stone vehicle track, with a hedge running on your right.

Follow the stone track all the way to its end, with a barn on your right. Turn left and follow the access track, passing a beautiful timber-framed farmhouse (now a pair of cottages) on your left. Continue to reach a junction with Forest Green Road.

6 → 7 Forest Green Road to Jayes Park



NOTE: The next short stretch of walk follows the edge of this road, so take good care of traffic and use the grass verge as much as possible. Turn left along the road and follow it as it bends right. Take the first turning on the right (by the post box), the entrance drive for Jayes Park Courtyard (signed as a public footpath).

Follow the tarmac driveway, passing through or alongside a vehicle gate. At the first junction, ignore the left-hand branch (which leads to the manor house). Keep ahead to reach the courtyard complex. Take the middle of the three tracks and follow this leading you between the beautiful converted buildings. These buildings date from the 1800s and were originally stables and outbuildings, but now are home to a number of small businesses.

Beyond the courtyard buildings, follow the main track as it swings left, passing the estate's walled garden on your left. Again, it is worth looking behind you here, for the next perfectly-framed view of Leith Hill Tower.

This makes a good spot to pause and enjoy the history of Jayes Park. The Jayes Park Estate is home to the Lee Steere family. It is claimed that since the Norman Conquest, (aside from a short period in the 1930s when the manor was rented out) only members of the Steere family have ever lived at Jayes Park. This impressive claim is hard to prove or disprove, but Ockley Parish registers certainly confirm the local presence of Steeres in the early 1500s and that the property has not been sold since. The estate covers 2,700 acres including gardens, pleasure grounds and farmland. Be sure to look for the fanciful red brick turrets accentuating the garden walls.

7 → 8 Jayes Park to Mole Street



Continue on the concrete track, passing a cottage on your right, to reach a wide farm gate ahead. NOTE: This next pasture may sometimes be holding cattle. Pass through the gate to enter the pasture. Our exit from the field is actually to your right and the most direct way of getting there would be to turn right and follow the field boundary. However, this is NOT the line of the public right of way, so please only do this if you need to avoid grazing cattle.

To follow the public right of way we need to follow a V-shape within the field. Walk directly ahead through the pasture to reach a footbridge and fingerpost at the far side. Do NOT cross the bridge, instead turn sharp right to follow the second line of public footpath, heading partly back on yourself through the pasture (passing a circle of oak trees on your left and later passing to the left of the next trees within the field).

In the field corner, cross the stile-bridge-stile combination and continue ahead on the narrow woodland path. At the end of the woodland you will emerge out to Mole Street.

8 → 9 Mole Street to End

Turn right along the lane for about 300 metres, passing the entrance gates for Woodstock House on your left and continuing on to reach a tarmac lane on your left. Turn left to join this. Pass



Gosterwood Manor Farm Cottage on your left and then follow the lane as it bends right then left, to pass the farm buildings on your left.

With the farmhouse ahead, follow the main lane which again bends right then left to reach a pair of gates ahead. Pass through the gates and continue ahead on the tarmac and then stone track, passing a beautiful line of oak trees on your left. Beyond these trees, follow the track as it bends left. Ignore the footpath signed off to the right, simply keep ahead on the main track leading into woodland.

At the end of the track you will emerge to the road in Forest Green village. Turn right along the village road and follow this all the way through the village. The road leads you past the large green on your left, to reach The Parrot on your right 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.

