

Out and about

This is a pleasant circular walk offering a good view of the ultra modern McLaren Technology Centre and includes an optional half-way stop for refreshments at the Hanger Café.

Key facts

Start/finish: Shores Road car park (nearest the Six Crossroads roundabout), A245, Horsell, Woking.

Distance: 8km (5 miles).

Time: 1½ to 2 hours.

Type of walk: Suitable for walkers of all abilities.

The ground is flat, mainly following public footpaths, but can be muddy after rain. Bear in mind that some paths may also be rather overgrown following the wet summer we have had.

The route

1. From the car park, take the path opposite the entrance and follow the main path through the woods until you reach a short descent to a sandy bed.
2. Turn right and soon you will see a large sandy 'beach' area with a pond.
3. Follow the edge of the pond across the sand and turn right at the main path, before continuing to Anthony's.

Horsell Common is owned and managed by the Horsell Common Preservation Society. Comprising 830 acres, it has a diversity of habitat, including deciduous woods, ponds, pine plantations, heathland and open meadows which run alongside the River Bourne. Frogs, toads and newts all occur and breed in the ponds. The sunny banks of the sand-pit are one of the best sites in Surrey for solitary bees and wasps, and over 200 species have been recorded.

4. Turn left at the road, noting the sign at ground level to Bonseys Cottages. Keep on this rough road past some cottages to your right, and follow this through trees to Bonseys Cottages.

Just across the road stands the public house that is now called 'Sands' at Bleak House. Cricketing twins, Sir Alec and Eric Bedser, who played for Surrey and England, are rumoured to have first played cricket against the wall of the Bleak House pub!

5. Take the footpath to the right of the cottages and enter McLaren Park.



6. Have a good look at the notice board on the right and then keep to the worn track across the parkland. Eventually, the well-hidden building complex will come into view on the right.

The McLaren Technology Centre is an environmentally friendly building, with natural light used wherever possible and energy recycled throughout the site. The lake, one of the signature features of the building, is not simply there for the sake of appearances. Its 50,000 cubic metres of water form a vital part of the cooling infrastructure for the building.

7. Please keep to the footpath and exit the estate over a footbridge, quite soon passing under the flight path to Fairoaks Airport on your left (watch out for low-flying aircraft).

Fairoaks Airport is a private airfield on the edge of Chobham village. The airport is mostly operated by the Alan Mann Group, whose yellow and black shipping line corporate colours are used throughout the airfield. The facility is used as a maintenance base but also hosts many light aircraft, some of which are operated by its two training schools. Unsurprisingly, its business centre is substantially dedicated to aviation-related enterprises.



8. Keep on through the trees and soon the path becomes Bonsey Lane, which leads to the main Chertsey Road (A319).

9. Turn left and, for safety, please use the wide grass verge before turning left into the main entrance of Fairoaks Airport.

If you need some refreshment at this point, or simply fancy watching the comings and goings at this small airport, turn right in front of the buildings to find the Fairoaks Flight Centre and Hangar Café 200m along on the left. The café is open to the public until 4pm daily.

10. Leaving the café, turn left and follow the road past the emergency exit gate to the tarmac public bridleway.

11. Turn left and follow bridleway over a stream and pretty river.



12. At the junction with the roadway, go straight on, ignoring the turning to Willow Wood/ Norwood Farm etc., and continue along a road for some distance before turning left into the second car park on Shores Road.

13. Follow the main bridleway at the far end of the car park and continue for 1km, passing a large pond.

14. Turn right, returning over the sandy beach to retrace your steps to the car park and the start of the walk.



Key

-  Roads
-  Route
-  Waterway

