

Out and about

We step over the Borough boundary in this issue to visit one of the county's hidden gems – Chatley Heath Semaphore Tower – before going on through some pretty local villages, heath and woodland.



Key facts

Start/finish: Pond Car Park*, Old Lane, Ockham Common – just off the A3 (south side of Junction 10 M25), signposted Effingham.

* Refreshments and toilets are available at Boldermere Car Park (100 metres back towards the A3 on Old Lane).

Distance: Approximately five kilometres (three miles).

Time: Allow three hours. More, if visiting the Semaphore Tower or stopping for refreshment.

Type of walk: Easy and generally flat with some narrow pathways and several stiles along the route. The walk is suitable during any season, but boots are recommended if walking after rainfall.

Please note: this route is not suitable for buggies or wheelchair users. The walk mainly follows public bridleways and footpaths, but some of the land you will cross is private. Please ensure you follow the Country Code and respect the privacy of local residents. Expect to encounter horse-riders, dog-walkers, and farm livestock in the fields.

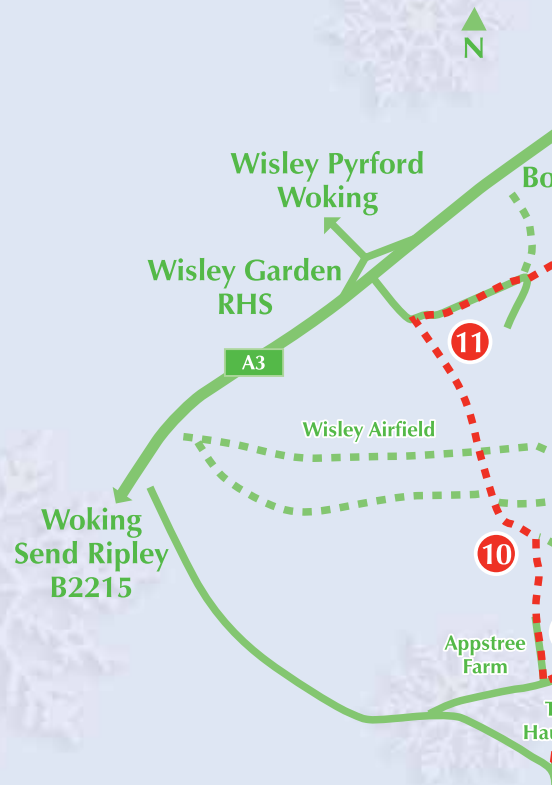
Wisley Common, Ockham and Chatley Heath have all been designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by English Nature in recognition of their importance for nature conservation. They are also part of a European Special Protection Area.

The route

1. Leave the car park on the main path (the opposite side of the car park to where you entered). Walk through the common on this path and continue straight on at a crossroads (after 200 metres). After the track bends left, take the second path to the right through the heath, alongside the wooden fence and up to the tower (a).
2. Pass the tower on your left, follow the tarmac path to the left-hand bend (after 100 metres) and continue straight on into the woods. Continue on this main track as it gradually bends right, which will bring you to the Samuelson family monument.
3. Stay on the path, which bends to your right and goes down-hill. When you come out at a main track (after 300 metres), turn left onto it towards the houses.
4. Go left on the drive for 500 metres to join Ockham Lane. Turn right here and follow the road with care to the Black Swan, where you can stop for refreshment. (Please note: muddy boots are not welcome indoors.)
5. Go straight over the crossroads into Ockham and immediately take the first lane on your left marked Blackmoor Farm. Follow this lane as it goes between the fields and continue on it to the right at the farmhouse (about 900 metres).
6. When the drive bends left, go straight on, over the footbridge and into the wood ahead. After 100 metres, take the right-hand footpath at the marker, which leads to the main track at the end.

Key

- Roads
- - - Footpaths
- - - Route on footpath
- P Parking





7. Go over the stile and turn right. Take the next footpath on the left and continue through the private woodland opposite for another 300 metres. At the end of the path, go over another stile, cross the field bearing right to the middle of the far side. Go over another stile and continue

diagonally on the track through a smaller field to the house at the bottom right corner (500 metres).

8. Go left on tarmac drive and continue between houses to the road. With the triangle in front of you, turn right past the Post House and continue along the lane to The Hautboy (b).

9. Pass The Hautboy on your left, cross the road and take the marked footpath opposite (slightly to your left). Follow the drive beside the barns at Appstree Farm, go over the stile half way up the slope, to the top (250 metres). Go through the wooden gate to your right and continue straight on, on a grassy path beside fields.

10. With the pond on your right, bear left to re-enter the woods and go over a footbridge. Take the path left and go straight on to Wisley Airfield runway (c).

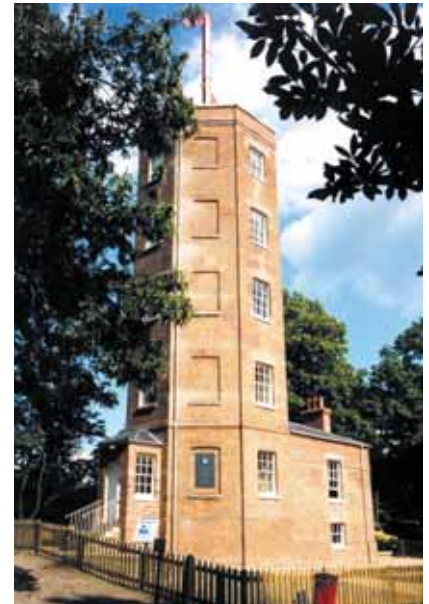
11. Cross the runway and continue through the slightly overgrown airfield towards the road. Turn right along the lane for a short distance, past several houses and cottages, and continue on the main path ahead when the road bends sharp right (400 metres).

12. Remain on this path through Ockham Common and return to Old Lane. Turn left and walk the last 100 metres with care back to Pond Car Park, and the start of the walk.



Additional information

(a) **Chatley Heath Semaphore Tower** was one of 13 semaphore stations which passed messages between the Admiralty in London and the Naval Dockyard at Portsmouth from 1822 until 1847. Out of the 13 stations, four of which needed to be towers because of sight line requirements, Chatley is the only surviving tower. For opening times and more information, phone **01372 458822** or visit www.surreywildlifetrust.co.uk



(b) **The Hautboy Inn** at Ockham was built in 1864 by William 1st Earl of Lovelace, Lord Lieutenant of Surrey and owner of Ockham Park. The Inn was built using the famous Ockham bricks, baked in the brickyards off Long Reach, and can be seen on other properties on the Ockham 'Estate'.

(c) **Wisley Airfield** was acquired by Vickers-Armstrong in 1943 and was used for military purposes during World War Two. The concrete runway was laid in 1952 to accommodate larger aeroplanes and was used for final assembly and test flying of new aircraft and airliners. Many prototypes were tested here before it closed in 1973.