

Bourne Wood and Farnham Heath – 3 miles

A lovely wooded and heathland walk with great views and nature opportunities.

1. Park at the car park on the Tilford Road, Farnham GU10 2DL. This can get very busy, it's a popular place. (Alternatively, try the roadside parking on Old Frensham Road at GU10 3BP and start the guidance from step 6.) Walk up the track to the first crossroads and turn right along the path.
2. As you walk along this path, you will see on the left-hand side, large quantities of an invasive plant *Gaultheria* under the trees. This can look quite pretty in summer when the delicate flowers are out but it is invasive and has been cleared from parts of the area. There is still a lot to do. Continue along this path. The path soon splits and take the left hand fork. You are likely to hear goldcrests and coal tits in the Pines. At the next big path junction, take the left-hand option. Continuing through the woodland, you will see bilberry along the path edges. As you skirt the hill you'll meet a crossroads
3. Cross straight over bending to the right. You now have open heath covered in bracken on your right-hand side. Climb the hill until you meet a sandy path and turn left. This is the steepest part of the walk. Keep on this wide path bearing right. I often find chaffinches in the woodland here to the right as well as hearing coal tits, and goldcrests in the canopy. The path curves around the hill and soon turns down and turns upwards. Ignore the footpath sign pointing down a steep hill on the right. As you climb up, you will find information and barriers overlooking an area of woodland called Sable wood that has been cleared of gaultheria and scots pine and is now managed for native wildlife. Continue on up the hill. You emerge onto a wide path with grassy areas.
4. Continue straight on. Soon the path continues downhill on a fairly steep slope until you reach the bottom. Now brace yourself and climb up the hill directly opposite. You are now entering the RSPB Farnham Heath bird reserve.
5. At the top, find your breath for the treat to come. Turn right. On your left you'll see a shrine to those who helped shape the Surrey Hills. The view across Farnham Heath nature reserve is magnificent. Continue along the main track and there will be one or two other vantage points over the heath. Follow this lovely woodland track down the hill to the bottom and turn left. At the bottom of the slope, you will see a parking area and some gates with parking spaces, both sides of the road.
6. Turn left here through the gate along the wide track. Soon through the birch scrub you will see the open heath on your left and right. Here there is a good chance of finding all the main heathland birds such as Dartford warbler, woodlark and tree pipit in the summer. Stonechats should also be here most of the year. Roe deer can also be seen in the heather. Continue into the trees and turn left at the big junction. This area may have crossbills in the pines.

7. Follow this main track through trees and heath and it bends right. You will meet a gated exit here.
8. Cross straight over through another gate on to another beautiful open section of heath. Continue on this main path without taking any side turnings. Through the trees on your left, you may get sight of the car park and there is a shortcut back from here. However, I suggest continuing on this track for a bit further. As you walk along the ridge, you'll see the back of a rusty sign/ sculpture, a bird's wing I guess, ignore the path off to the right. Continue on as your path begins to bend to the left. Go down the hill, through the gate and turn left. Through the trees, you will see the main car park away to your right.
9. At the next T junction, turn right. At the crossroads continue straight on. The land to your right, has been cleared of the mature trees, and it is now hoped to attract and provide breeding places for the sand lizard. The main car park will now be found on the right hand side. (For those joining from Step 6 and the Old Frensham Road continue straight on following guidance from step 1).