

## Gomshall to Dorking Rail (or bus) to Trail

This delightful walk can be enjoyed any time of year and has many points of interest. There is a bus service available should you prefer that to using the train (and it saves a mile of walking but misses the coffee shops and pubs!)

1. Park at Gomshall station (free parking). Leave the station at platform two and follow the footpath down to the main road. Turn left and cross the road when convenient.
2. After you reach Tillingbourne Farm and Smokery look for a Byway on your left, cross and enter the lane. As you rise up the gentle slope look for a footpath sign to the right leading up to a National Trust sign for Piney Copse. Here it's worth reading the words of E M. Forster on the signpost. They are food for thought!
3. Climb the slope, and the path will split with a sharp left turn before the top of the hill. Take this sharp left turn because there are fallen trees ahead on the other path. Either path will eventually get you to the gate onto the open land at the end of the small wood. Go through the gate and start enjoying views of the North Downs over to your left. Here, in September, I started enjoying many blackberries along the edge of the path, walk to the lane.
4. Cross the lane onto the signposted public bridleway. On the left, for my visits, the field was covered with mare's tail, poppies, daisies and smooth hawk's beard flowers, attracting many butterflies. Continue through another gate on the rough track leading up another slope. Here a countryside myth was exploded by seeing some Banded Galloway cattle in a field full of ragwort. Ragwort is at its most dangerous when it is cut with the hay and allowed to dry. Normally it is not a high risk although any liver damage does not show immediately and is cumulative. The animals seem to know what to eat! This track enters some nice mixed woodland and a rough meadow with large logs to sit upon before entering more woodland.
5. Continue on the track soon passing through the new wooden gates. This area may be affected by flooding at very wet times but a great deal of work is underway to stop this and continuous access is guaranteed by the National Trust. Continue through more Gates, keeping to the left-hand side of the woodland. Up on the right-hand side, you may see a wide path with a signboard at the top. This is for the witches broom tree, a beech, which is believed to be 2 to 300 years old. It's worth a and you can return to the bottom path and continue in your previous direction. Along this path you will find a monument to a Bishop of Winchester, the third son of abolitionist William Wilberforce. Continue until you reach a lane.
6. Cross straight over onto the path opposite. Here, in the hedgerow, I found lots of arum lily or 'lords and ladies', little leaved bellflower and red campion. The path swings up to the right and turns left. Lovely views of the North Downs continue with the likelihood of buzzards and red kites in the air and occasional kestrels. You will reach two black barns and a residence.
7. Continue past both and turn right onto the track, a public bridleway, in your normal direction. Pass a cottage on your right and enter more woodland. At the junction, keep left on the now tarmac bridleway. Keep right on the lane at the next junction. When this lane bends sharply to the right, take the narrow public footpath on the left. (Alternatively, you can stay on the lane and turn left at the T-junction. This will put you in the same place.)

8. Follow the lane to the left passing Mead House on your right. Stay on the lane and pass a house called Stowe Maries. This property was once the home of Trevor Howard, a famous film actor (Brief Encounter). A plaque is on the wall. Continuing, take the little footbridge on the right and continue on the lane to the junction on the left, called Westcott Street. Follow this keeping left past a new housing estate. After the last house look for a tarmac path on the right.

9. On this path, pass a small reed strewn pond surrounded by purple loosestrife later in the summer. When the path turns towards the housing, turn left through a gate onto a path through the marsh. Go through another gate and continue on the bridleway along the side of the marsh. Keep going beyond the marsh and eventually you meet a T-junction with a lane.

10. Follow the bridleway sign pointing to your right along the lane. This leads you up over a bridge with a pond on your right hand side, home for ducks and moorhens. This has many yellow water lilies in summer. On your left is an old mill house. Shortly after there is the gateway to the grand Milton Court, now clearly a commercial enterprise. Reach the T-junction. Turn left and take the bridleway angled off on the right hand side. This lovely tree and hedge-lined path leads all the way down to the A25 in Dorking.

11. Turn left and walk into Dorking. (If you want to return by bus, cross the road and turn left to the bus stop on the other side for the Number 32 bus.)

For Dorking West station turn left at the Star pub and follow the signs. For Dorking Deepdene station continue on through the town centre, passing many places to eat and drink. Turn left into London Road and at the end you will see Dorking Deepdene station to your left.