

Abbotts Wood, Frithend and Straits Inclosure

A mainly deciduous woodland walk with nice countryside and bird-rich woodland edge. 5.2 miles, moderate.

1. Park at the free Abbotts Wood car park (postcode GU10 4HA) and walk back to the entrance. Just before reaching the gate turn right onto the track. Follow this track until you meet a crossroads. Look left and see a marker for the Shipwrights Way. (Note this for when you return).
2. Continue straight on across the crossroads in the direction you were going. There is mainly oak woodland to your right and mixed woodland with many conifers and birch to your left. Soon it opens out into a more scrub-like replanted area on your left, good for birdlife, as the track bends around to the left reaching a T-junction. Here across to your left, there is a small open patch of rushes.
3. Turn right down the hill and up the other side. Continue along this excellent wooded track until you meet a gate and a lane.
4. Cross straight over onto a narrow footpath. Step over the 'stile' and continue along the footpath. Angle right across the field and over the next 'stile' and over another stile just a few yards away on your right. Continue across the field bearing left towards a gate and gap in the hedge in the bottom corner. Continue across the next field in a straight line and exit to the left of the metal gate. Look for the footpath sign on a post in the middle of three exits in front of you and follow the footpath across this field, the route I follow is just to the left of the trees to the left of a big barn. Exit to the lane via the gate in front of the big house.
5. Turn right along the lane, passing the barns and two gates. Continue on this lane and now you have some nice houses on your right and some fields to your left. You may see some roe deer in the fields. After passing some more nice properties on your left and a couple of barns on your right continue until you meet the busy A325.
6. Turn right towards the tarmac footpath, cross the lane entrance and then cross the A325 into Frithend Road opposite. After a short way, at the postbox on the left turn left along the marked bridleway. Follow this now for a long way, approx. 1 mile (1.5kms). Just after the highest point of this bridleway there is a pond on the right-hand side. Worth a look but when last here in December it was frozen solid. Keep going ignoring all paths and tracks that cross your path. There may be some muddy patches after rain. At the end of this long straight path follow the sign to your left then around to the right and turn right again at a junction of several paths with a single oak tree right in the middle. The path now bends to the left but look for and take a turn off to the right immediately before a big open field.
7. After turning right, walk the short way along this footpath until you see, on your right, a small bridge over a stream. You'll pass many oak apple trees along this hedgerow, good for fieldfares and redwings and other thrushes in winter. Cross the bridge and stream and follow the path up to the edge of the woodland.
8. After about 40 yards into the trees follow the footpath sign to the left. This takes you through more deciduous woodland known as Straits Inclosure. You may occasionally be startled by pheasants or red-legged partridge anywhere in this area. They're imported for shooting! There is a small but deep ditch to cross here, but it is very

easy. You will soon see an open area and the path continues ahead through here. As you reach the next mature woodland enter it.

9. Just a few yards after entering the woodland, there is a footpath sign pointing you off at an angle to the left. Take this path (which will virtually take you all the way home). Continue straight on keeping on the left of a wooden observation tower. On the way you will emerge into an open area with a house and pond in front of you.
10. Continue on the path, keeping to the right of the car park area, out to the road. Cross with care directly over to the path opposite. Continue straight on.
11. At the busy A325 cross carefully straight over keeping left of the garden fence and continue straight on the path from there. Cross another easy stile over an open field and another stile back into the woods, all keeping in the same direction. You will meet a crossroads and, on the left corner opposite, you will see the marker stone for the Shipwrights Way.
2. All you need to do now is turn left and climb the hill back to the car park.