

Finding your way around the Leith Hill Estate

Leith Hill is crossed by a number of footpaths and bridleways that allow you to explore the surrounding landscape. Ordnance survey map 'OS Explorers Map: 146 - Dorking, Box Hill & Reigate' and 'OS Landranger Map: 187 - Dorking, Reigate & Crawley' will show all the available routes in the area.

If you prefer, here are 4 waymarked nature trails that pass through or near several car parks:

— The Woodland Trail (orange)

The woodland trail offers a lovely walk at all times of year with autumn being particularly stunning due to the turning colours of the trees. Graded as 'easy' the 2.5 miles long route does have some steep parts and will take up to 2 hours. It is our longest trail and will take you through parts of the original estate and woodland.

— The Etherley Farm Loop (purple)

The loop will add an additional 1.5 miles to the woodland trail, taking you across a landscape of farmland and parkland. This hour long walk is graded as 'easy' but can become very muddy underfoot, if wet.

— The Heathland Trail (green)

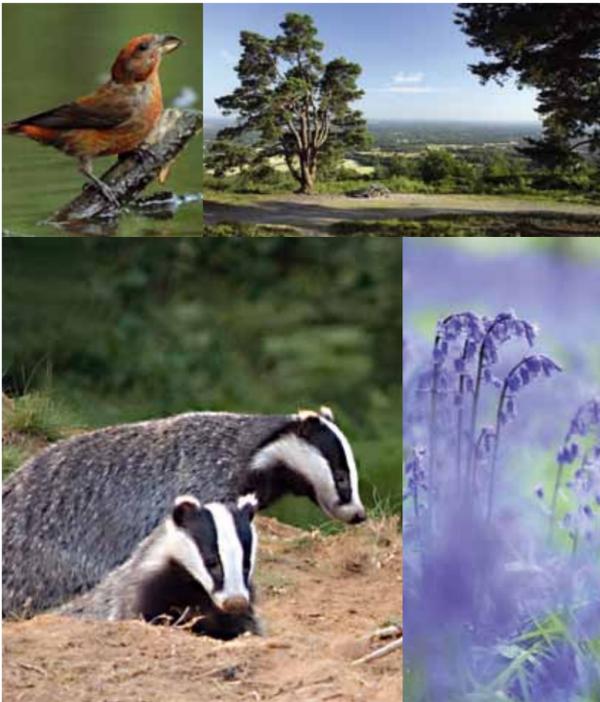
The heathland trail takes you on a journey through the high, sandy, open heath of Duke's Warren. Graded as 'easy' the 1.75 mile long route does have some steep parts and will take approximately an hour to complete. The trail will take you through a landscape of heather, bracken, bilberry, gorse, pine and birch.

— Frank's Walk (pink)

This walk guides you to the historic arboretum, through the conifer avenue and into Frank's Wood with its spectacular spring display of bluebells. Graded as 'easy' the walk is our shortest at 1 mile long and should take around half an hour to complete. There are some steep slopes, steps and muddy patches.

Greensand Way

The Greensand Way is a long distance walking route that starts in Haslemere, Surrey and ends at Hamstreet, Kent. It follows the Greensand Ridge along the Surrey Hills and crosses Leith Hill. If you would like to know more and download maps, please visit Surrey County Council's website.



What to look out for

A Lime Avenue & Walled Garden

An extensive formal garden was once a notable feature of the estate. A decorative Lime Avenue and a walled garden which provided a plentiful supply of fruit and vegetables for Leith Hill Place.

B Hazel coppice

As well as providing pea and bean sticks, the cut shoots of the hazel are split then woven into fencing panels known as hurdles. The hazel regrowth is cut on a six to seven year cycle, providing a diverse range of habitats for a variety of wildlife.

C Etherley Farm

Sympathetic management of the farmland provides a pastoral landscape that is rich in wildlife. Animals graze the fields, hedgerows have been replanted and hay meadows have been reinstated to encourage farmland birds such as Skylarks and Barn Owls.

D Parkland

Mature parkland trees provide a home for a rich variety of native wildlife, including Little Owls, bats, rare lichens and many dead wood insects such as Stag Beetles.

E Darwin's wormstone

Here lies one of Charles Darwin's worm stones. The famous naturalist made numerous trips to Leith Hill conducting research around the estate with his nieces. Darwin studied how worm casts will eventually bury stones that lie on the surface of the ground.

F Tillingbourne source

Natural springs rise to form the Tillingbourne Stream that flows west towards Abinger, on through Gomshall to Albury and joins the River Wey at Guildford. Its flow was harnessed in past centuries to power local industry such as Shalford Mill.

G Heathland

Duke's Warren was once part of the extensive woodland that surrounds the heath, but deforestation after the first world war changed the area to an open landscape of heather, bracken, bilberry and gorse with stands of pine and birch.

The Warren now supports communities of Nightjars, Woodlarks and other heathland specialists.

H Boundary banks

Layered beech hedges line many of the holloways in the surrounding landscape. Originally planted to protect plantations from deer and grazing livestock, they were abandoned for many decades and have since grown to an enormous size.

I Coldharbour Cricket Pitch

Located below the summit of Leith Hill, Coldharbour Cricket Pitch is thought to be the highest cricket pitch in south-east England. The curves that form the wicket were transplanted from the original pitch in the heart of Coldharbour during the 1940s.

J Stone pits

Sandstone was used in the area to build boundary walls and surface tracks. Quarrying sandstone until the early part of the last century has left the woodland around Leith Hill pitted with hollows and gullies.

K Dakota crash

In winter 1944, four US airforce Douglas Dakota aircraft crashed into the hillside above Mosses Wood, with no survivors. The first crash saw two aircraft hit the ridge whilst a third belly-flopped onto Duke's Warren. A few weeks later, tragedy struck again when another Dakota crashed in almost exactly the same place.

L Piggot-Brown gate

Mosses Wood was given to the National Trust by Lady Piggot-Brown in memory of her son who was killed in action on Christmas Day, 1942. A plaque attached to the gate commemorates his life.

M Frank's Wood

Named after National Trust woodsman, Frank Longhurst, the oak trees were planted in 1949. He planted three acorns for each hole. One for the mice. One to fail. And, one to grow into a beautiful oak. In spring the woodland floor is covered with bluebells.