North Downs Way: Caterham to Knockholt walk

The North Downs Way through woods with fine views - and within Zone 6 - but does suffer from road noise.

2 shorter return-by-bus options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length</th>
<th>26.2 km (16.3 miles) with shorter options of 13.0, 15.5, 22.0 km (about 7, 10, 14 miles)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Toughness</td>
<td>9 out of 10. Well waymarked paths, but several steep climbs in the morning. Parts can be slippery after prolonged rain.</td>
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<td>Features</td>
<td>This walk follows a section of the North Downs Way (NDW) south east of London, along the edge of the North Downs Escapement. The walk is very rural despite starting and finishing in “Zone 6”. It has fine views to the south, and some pretty woods. However, the early part of the walk suffers from some noise from the M25. There are several ways to cut the walk short, returning by bus (covered by Oyster). The walk starts in Caterham (a commuter town on the edge of Zone 6) and heads south along a ridge to join the North Downs Way (NDW). The main part of this walk then follows the NDW along the edge of the North Downs escarpment, through pretty woods carpeted with wild garlic and bluebells and clearings with nice views to the south. There is a slight diversion from the NDW through the Titsey Plantation. The morning of the walk is quite strenuous as the path meanders up and down the side of the North Downs escarpment. After passing Titsey, the M25 is left behind, and the walk is quiet. Lunch is at a pub on the summit of Botley Hill (268m), a Marilyn and the highest point on the North Downs. Note the true summit is by a water tower/radio mast, about 1 km west of the trig point. The afternoon section continues along the NDW, through more open land and field, with views to the south Finally, leaving the NDW, it heads north to the village of Knockholt Pound (and its nice pubs) and on towards Knockholt Station. The start and end of the walk are inside Zone 6 - so you can use a 1 day Travelcard. There are also places where you can cut the walk short by using regular buses on which you take Oyster cards / 1 day Travelcards, making this walk suitable for both summer and winter. On Sunday, buses are less frequent, but the lunchtime pub (a music venue) often has free live music, and it's only a few km further to Westerham Hill Road's bus stop.</td>
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Walk Options: After following the NDW as far as Botley Hill, there are some shorter options:

1. Finish in Tatsfield - 13 km / 7 miles. Just after Botley Hill, leave the NDW, and head north to Tatsfield. Hourly bus to New Addington, then tram to East Croydon station
2. Finish at Westerham Hill Road or Hawley's Corner - 15.5 km / 10 miles. A little further on. Both places have 2 buses an hour (1/hour on Sunday) to Hayes (for London Bridge) and Bromley South (for Victoria) stations. Westerham Hill Road, while on the NDW, is just a bus stop on a country road, so best to take the path mentioned below to Hawley's Corner, a km or so north along the same road.
3. Finish in Knockholt - not Sundays! - only 1 bus an hour, so best to continue for 1.5 km to Knockholt Pound which has more buses and a couple of pubs to wait in.
4. Finish at Knockholt Pound - 22 km / 14 miles. Continue further along the NDW to Knockholt Pound (hourly bus to Knockholt Station), a village with a good pub to wait for your bus in.
5. Finish at Knockholt Station - 26.2 km / 16.3 miles - Leave the NDW at Knockholt Pound, and head north to Knockholt station. Nothing near by. Closest pub is in Halstead, about 30 mins back and slightly off the route.

**Travel**

All these options are covered by an Oystercard/Zone 1-6 Travelcard (bus details updated Mar-12)

- **Caterham**: Trains from London Bridge take 40 mins
- **Tatsfield** - #464 bus to New Addington (every 30 mins Mon-Sat, hourly on Sun) to New Addington, then tram to East Croydon
- **Westerham Hill Road / Hawley's Corner** - #246 bus (every 30 mins till late / hourly on Sundays) to Hayes (takes 15 mins, then 4 trains/hour to London Bridge, takes 40 mins) and Bromley South (takes 25 mins, then frequent trains to Victoria, 15 mins)
- **Knockholt** - # R5/R10 bus (25 mins, **No Sunday Service**), its a circular bus route, so catch the bus in either direction, so effectively hourly) to Orpington (frequent trains to Victoria and Charing Cross). Its better to carry on to Knockholt Pound.
- **Knockholt Pound** - # R5/R10 bus as above, and # 402 bus to Knockholt Station (takes 10 mins, hourly, 7 days a week - note this bus takes Oyster Travelcards, but not Oyster pay-as-you-go, costs £1.35)
- **Knockholt Station** - 2 trains/hour - 35 mins to London Bridge, then Waterloo East and Charing Cross

**History**

- **Titsey Place** - country house (guided tours, summer Sundays only) and estate with nice tea room
- **North Downs Way** - national long distance path, which this walk is a part of
- **Botley Hill** - a "Marilyn", and the highest point on the North Downs. The actual summit is not on the route - its on private land (by the radio masts) and doesn't have a view.

**Lunch and tea**

- **Godstone Vineyards** RH9 8DQ. Shop and Cafeteria. Open Weekends: 10.30am - 4.30pm, and (not Jan, Feb) Thur, Fri: 11.00am - 4.00pm. 3 km from the start. Just after the A22 crossing, head south on Quarry Road for 200m, then along the Vineyard's access road for 200m. Marked on the OS map. Walker friendly. No direct access from the NDW.
- **Botley Hill Farmhouse** - 10.2 km/6.3 miles into the walk. Pub open all day often with free lunchtime music on Sunday. Mon-Sat: food 12-3. Sundays: food all day.
- **The Three Horseshoes**, Knockholt Pound, 01959 532 102
- **The Harrow Inn**, Knockholt Pound, 01959 928 734
- **The Cock Inn**, Halstead, 01959 928 734

**Help Us!**

After the walk, we would love to get your feedback

You can upload photos to the SWC Group on Flickr, and videos to Youtube. This walk's tags are:

[swcwels](#) [swcwalk111](#)

**By Car**

**Start** CR3 6LB **Finish** TN14 7HR

**Map Walk**

This walk **requires** an OS map and a compass or GPS for navigation. You can print out OS maps using the link above.

**Help**

National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline SE (bus times): 0871 200 2233 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

**Version**

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**Walk Directions**

OpenStreetMap (not OS) mapping is used in the PDF for licence reasons.
Caterham to the NDW (3.4 km)

1. **Turn left** out of Caterham Station, and walk past some shops (Waitrose, Morrisons etc.) for 50m.

2. **Turn right at the T-Junction, and then after 10m turn left** along Timber Hill Road.

3. At the end of the road, go straight on, along a footpath which climbs steeply.

4. Cross a busy "A" road - there is a median, and carry on uphill, and veer left on a farm track.

5. Turn right at a T-junction by Tillingdown Farm and head south, with fences/hedgerows on either side.

6. After 1 km, the path turns left along a car wide farm track around some scruffy buildings before continuing south now over open land.

7. The path enters woods over a stile in a barbed wire fence on a bearing of 135 degrees (ignore a wider track to the right), and starts to descend.

8. In 90m turn right **just inside the wood** at a T-junction of footpaths by a marker post. In 35m veer left by another marker post to exit from the wood onto the border of a large sloping field. The onwards route of the NDW is visible at the bottom of it, but there is no right-of-way over the field.

9. Continue in the previous direction (230°) to cut across a field corner and in 100m re-enter the wood and go over a stile. In 100m you start to descend along a stepped path which eventually turns left and joins the NDW on a car wide concrete farm track by a three-way signpost, where you turn left (east).
10. After 400m pass a building which you saw from the top of the sloping field, turn right on a small road, then immediately left on a signposted footpath. Continue through woods carpeted with wild garlic in season.

11. Continue along the well signposted NDW. In 750m you cross a lane and continue through a wood with the M25 down below on the right. The path then gently descends through the wood and at the bottom you turn left through a metal kissing gate at a junction with a tarmac lane and follow the path uphill parallel to the lane. In 470m join the lane, just before a T-junction with a road, and turn right along the road.

12. In 80m veer right along a grassy path through a wood (i.e. ignore the hard right turn as well as a left turn). In 330m the path turns to the right and then to the left again. In another 270m, at the end of Gangers Hill, the path turns steeply downhill towards the M25 motorway along a stepped path (good views ahead of the Oxted line emerging from a tunnel) to turn left by a viewpoint.

13. In 570m turn down to the right along a fenced quarry and in 250m turn left with the fence and a field on the right. 50m before the end of the field go through a metal kissing gate and along a fenced path. In 50m turn right along a tarmac lane.

14. In 40m turn left up some steps and bear left uphill and in 30m walk through a metal kissing gate into a grassy slope. Continue uphill with the left hand boundary and in about 100m turn right at a three-way signpost.

15. About 400m further on, 30m before a field corner with a metal kissing gate leading to the Titsey Plantation, the recommended route briefly leaves the NDW: turn left steeply uphill along a clear permissive path up the grassy slope. (If you take the NDW route: Titsey Place has a nice tea room [open Wed and Weekends in summer], but it is 1.5 km off-route).

16. In 120m turn right over a stile into the plantation, in 20m a railed stepped path joins from the right below. Turn left uphill, immediately forking left by a bench on the left along the upper of two wide tracks (60°).

17. The permissive route and the official NDW merge on the way up to the summit of Botley Hill (a Marilyn). At the summit, there is a road junction, and a small car park.

18. Head NW for 300m along a shared cycle- and footpath to the side of the A269 to Botley Hill Farm (the lunchtime pub), then return to this point.
NDW: Botley Hill to Tatsfield, Westerham Hill Road or Hawley's Corner (4.6 km)

18. From the road junction, take the lower road (signed ‘Limpsfield, Edenbridge’), and then a path on the left (which parallels the road for a while). In 650m turn up left away from the road up some steps and turn right at the top of the steps.

19. In 200m cross White Lane and in another 250m emerge from the wood to follow a clear path through a sloping pasture, veering up to the left. In 370m the path reaches the top of a field, just below a road, where the NDW continues east.

20. To finish at Tatsfield, cross the road (leaving the NDW), and continue north for 1 km to Tatsfield (pub, bus to New Addington).

21. Carry on along the NDW. You turn left through a wooden kissing gate and up a stepped path to then cross a road at a four-way junction. Turn right and follow a lane (Chestnut Avenue), soon with some large houses on either side. In 1.0 km you come to a T-junction.

22. Head north (leaving the NDW), then east along a track towards Hawley's Corner, if you wish to cut the walk short.

23. Continue south then east along the signposted NDW, in 1.5 km reaching Westerham Hill road. To your right is a bus stop 100m away.
NDW: Westerham Hill Road to Knockholt Pound (7.0 km)

24. Carry on along the NDW. Cross the road and walk through a hedge gap to turn up left along a field boundary. In the field corner in 250m walk through a metal kissing gate to continue in the same direction through trees. In 100m turn right with the path which emerges from the trees in 230m.

25. In 150m turn left up a stepped path through trees and in 70m walk through a metal kissing gate to continue in the same direction through a field, from which you enter trees again in another 120m. Follow the NDW bypassing Knockholt village (its pub has long closed).

26. Eventually you walk through a metal kissing gate onto a tarmac lane at a T-junction. **Leave the NDW**, by heading north along the lane, signposted Knockholt Pound 1/4 mile (two pubs, bus stop).

27. In the village find The Three Horseshoes on your left at a main junction and The Harrow Inn 250m to your right along the road.
Knockholt Pound to Knockholt Station (3.8 km)

28. Head north east along a lane towards Halstead. After 1 km, either continue into Halstead (with its nice pub, The Cock Inn), or take a signposted footpath on your left. Head left on along a road before turning right on a path to continue your northerly direction.

29. Go through a gate into a (former) golf course. Continue in the same direction along a newly fenced path. Eventually you pass the ex-golf club car park on your left. Go through a hedge gap and turn left with the fenced path, then turn right (north again) with it to descend a hill and reach a road. You can see the train station approach 60m away to your left.