

Chipstead to Kingswood walk

Ancient woodland, open downs and farmland in London's Green Belt

Length	<p>Main Walk: 15¼ km (9.5 miles). Four hours walking time. For the whole excursion including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 7½ hours.</p> <p>Circular Walk, returning to Chipstead: 13½ km (8.4 miles). Three hours 30 minutes walking time.</p> <p>Short Walk, omitting loop to Mugswell: 11 km (6.8 miles). Two hours 55 minutes walking time.</p> <p>Short Circular Walk, omitting Mugswell: 9¼ km (5.7 miles). Two hours 25 minutes walking time.</p>
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OS Map	Explorer 146. Chipstead, map reference TQ276583, is in Surrey, 6 km S of Sutton.
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Toughness	5 out of 10 (4 for the Circular Walk, 3 for the Short Walks).
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Features	<p>Just outside the London boundary, this undulating walk takes in a varied landscape of ancient woodland, open downs and farmland. You will have plenty of company in the popular recreational areas of Banstead Wood and Chipstead Downs, but few dog-walkers venture across the railway into the network of footpaths, horse rides and quiet lanes which make up the walk's middle section. Near the start the main route follows a substantial part of the Banstead Woods Nature Trail, with panels along the trail highlighting the diversity of species. This ancient woodland was an important source of compass timber until the mid-19thC: large curved or crooked pieces of oak artificially shaped to make specialised sections for the wooden naval ships of that era. More recently the trunks of felled trees have been utilised by a local tree artist to create a series of sculptures illustrating the CS Lewis Narnia books. On the other side of the railway a stretch along an open valley in Shabden Park and across a golf course takes you to an out-of-the-way pub for lunch.</p>
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The return route starts along a remote area of quiet country lanes and narrow paths (which can be overgrown in summer), followed by a woodland path through the Shabden Park's **Long Plantation**. After going back across the railway the final section is around the southern edge of Banstead Wood and across farmland, with the unexpected sight of an abandoned head office building on the way to Kingswood station.

Walk Options

After going back across Outwood Lane and the railway tracks you could switch to a **Circular Walk** by heading north along Chipstead Downs.

The walk route also crosses over itself in the Long Plantation, so you could omit the outer loop to Mugswell on both the Main and Circular Walks. These **Short Walks** are probably more suitable as half-day (morning or afternoon) walks, since their only refreshment places are near the finish.

The walk directions also point out where you could curtail the walk before reaching the railway crossing, but these very short variations would cut out the attractive loop around Shabden Park and are not recommended.

On all the walk options you could save 2 km near the start with a more direct route through Banstead Wood. This **morning short cut** would be worth considering if you missed a train and wanted to catch up a group which started half an hour earlier.

Additional Notes

The walk route originally made more use of the permissive horse ride in §H, which provides a useful off-road alternative to walking along Chipstead Lane. However, in 2019 it was blocked by a large fallen tree branch and appeared to be all-but-abandoned; it is not a public right of way so there is no legal obligation to maintain it. The revised walk route avoids the obstruction but if the ride becomes completely impassable there is no alternative to a short (150m) stretch along this narrow and fairly busy country lane.

Two other changes were made at the same time: the set of options was simplified and the direction of the loops around Shabden Park and Mugswell reversed, partly for aesthetic reasons and also to make the walk slightly more balanced. If following the route on a map you could of course to choose to do these loops in either direction.

Transport

Chipstead and Kingswood are adjacent stations on the Tattenham Corner line, which has a half-hourly service from London Bridge with journey times of around 45 minutes (1 hour on Sundays). All the stations on this branch line are in TfL Zone 6.

There are no bus routes in the area but the nature of the route means that you are never too far from one of these stations if you want to abandon the walk.

There is a small free car park at Chipstead station "for railway users only". Car drivers might prefer to start from the large free car park off Holly Lane, near where the walk route enters Banstead Wood.

Suggested Train

Take the train nearest to **09:45** from **London Bridge** to **Chipstead**.



Lunch

The suggested lunchtime stop is the **Well House Inn** (01737-830640) in **Mugswell**, after 8¼ km on the longer walks. This refurbished 16thC country pub and restaurant has a pleasant back garden on a grassy slope and serves lunch

until around 2.30pm Mon–Sat, all day Sun. The only alternative would be to have a late lunch at one of the tea stops (see below), and these are also the only choices on the short walks which bypass Mugswell.

Tea If you get there before it closes the suggested tea place in **Kingswood** is the **Waterhouse Café** (01737-350444; open to 3.30pm Mon–Fri, 4pm Sat, 3pm Sun) on Waterhouse Lane. The alternative is the **Kingswood Arms** (01737-354053), a country pub/restaurant with a large garden and patio area; it is directly opposite the station entrance and is normally open all day.

If you are returning to **Chipstead** the only convenient place is the **Ramblers Rest** (01737-552661) pub on Outwood Lane. It is 1 km to the station by the most direct route, so allow 15-20 minutes to catch a train.

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:



By Car **Start** CR3 3TD **Finish** KT20 6EN

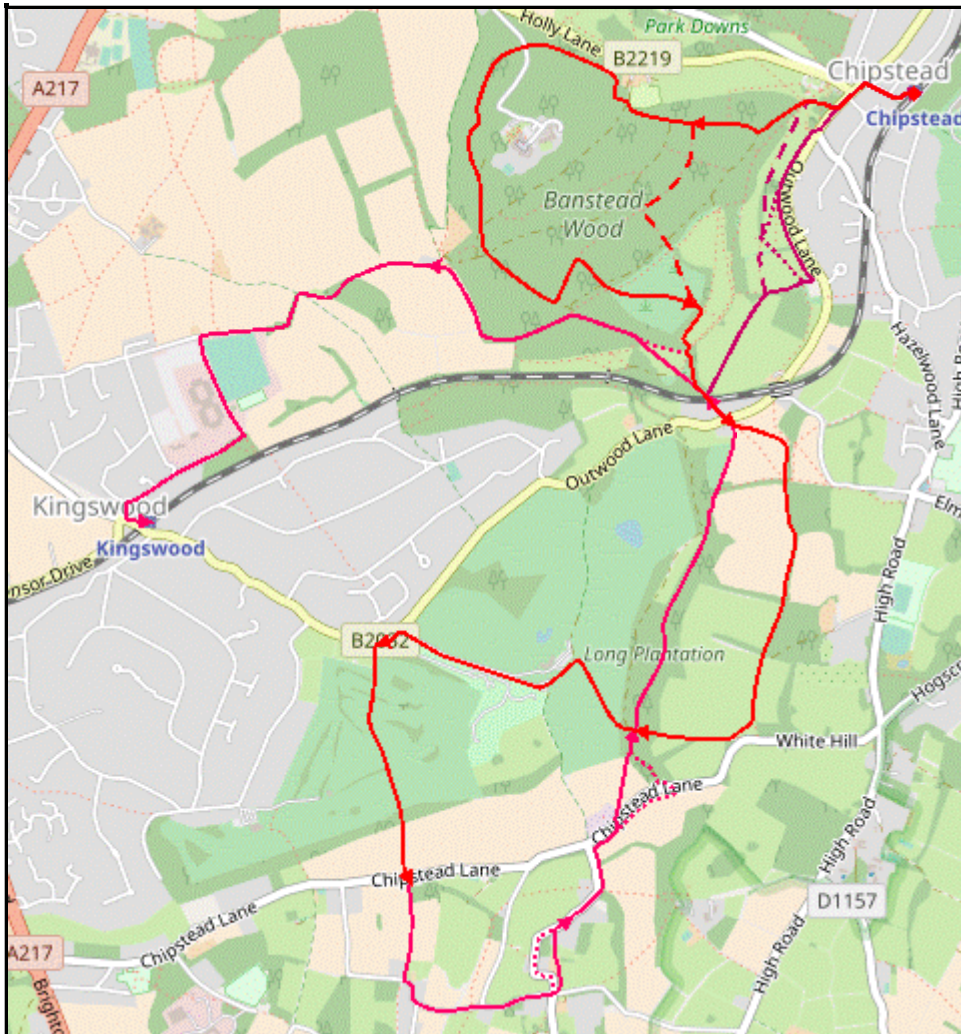
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Walk Directions

Walk Map



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Walk Options (Short)

M. Main Walk (15¼ km)

- a. Circular Walk, returning to Chipstead (13½ km)
- b. Short Walk, omitting loop to Mugswell (11 km)
- c. Short Circular Walk, omitting Mugswell (9¼ km)

Walk Directions

A. Chipstead Station to “The Wardrobe” in Banstead Wood (1 km)

1. Arriving from London, cross the footbridge and bear left out of the station. Go downhill past a parade of shops on Station Approach and turn left at the bottom onto the B2032 (Ourwood Lane), going past a mini-roundabout at its junction with the B2219.
2. Immediately after a side street on the left, cross Ourwood Lane carefully and go through a wooden side gate onto a permissive path. Shortly before reaching a corner of Holly Lane car park **veer left** through a wooden gate onto a surfaced path going uphill.
3. As you approach the trees you pass a hollow on your right containing a series of information panels about **Chipstead Downs SSSI**¹. You come to a footpath crossing where the first of the **Narnia** sculptures² is on the right, **Lucy Pevensie** (...waiting by a lamppost).

4. Keep ahead at this crossing (signposted to Perrotts Farm), through a short yew avenue. At the next path junction **fork right** onto a broad path into **Banstead Wood**, leaving the public footpath.

*Banstead Wood has many paths and to help with navigation both the main route and short cut follow part of a **Nature Trail**, marked with numbered posts ◦ (though a few are missing).*

5. Just inside the entrance ① you come to the second Narnia sculpture, **Aslan the Lion**. Follow the broad main path uphill for 200m to a junction in front of a plantation of larch ②.
6. At the junction **turn right** onto a path which swings left to head **W**. In 250m there are two more sculptures: **The Wardrobe** is on the left-hand side of the path but **The White Witch** is less obvious, about 50m away in the trees back on your right.

B. "The Wardrobe" to Stagbury Downs (2¾ or ¾ km)

The main route continues to follow the Nature Trail on its loop around Banstead Wood. For a more direct route, follow the directions in [8].

7. Main route (2¾ km)

- Continue along the main path for a further 250m, still following the Nature Trail and soon passing a hornbeam coppice stool ③.
- Stay on the main path as it veers right and then left through a slight dip, passing a large old hornbeam ④.
- Ignore a wide track off to a yard on the right but shortly afterwards **turn right** as indicated at a path crossing. Follow the path round to the left in front of an old orchard ⑤.
- Later you pass a line of horse chestnuts ⑥ and some beeches ⑦ felled by the 1987 Great Storm.
- The path crosses a driveway flanked by horse barriers and gradually curves round to the left to head **S**, passing a large beech ⑧.
- Continue past areas with invasive (but colourful) rhododendron ⑨ and a Scots pine ⑩ with an owl nesting box.
- Eventually the path merges with a wider path from the left by an ash □, then in 200m another path joins from the left. In a further 100m you come to a major path junction.
- Keep ahead** on a broad path heading **SE**, passing a rowan □ and a large sweet chestnut coppice stool □, to reach a fenced pond on the left by a sessile oak □.
- Turn left** at the pond onto a side path heading roughly **NE** for 200m. At the first path junction **turn right**.
- In 125m go straight across the wood's wide perimeter path and through a belt of trees, including an ancient sweet chestnut with a latticed bark pattern.
- You come out onto a semi-open area, **Stagbury Downs**³. Continue on a broad grassy path between shrubs and small trees.
- In 300m **bear right** at a path junction, joining the short cut from the left and leaving the Nature Trail at □.



8. Short cut (¾ km)

- Immediately after The Wardrobe **turn left** onto a path going steadily uphill, heading **S** and following (in reverse) the end of the Nature Trail.
- Follow the main path for 400m, with a few small turns to the right. About 75m after passing a stub oak coppice stool⁴ □ on the left-hand side of the path, **turn left** at a path crossing.
- In 150m go straight across across the wood's wide perimeter path to continue on a broad grassy path through a semi-open area, **Stagbury Downs**³.

- d. In 200m **keep ahead** at a path junction, joining the main route from the right and leaving the Nature Trail at □.

C. Stagbury Downs to Shabden Park (½ km)

9. Go through a wide gap in the trees to emerge into the top of a field, with a fine view across Chipstead valley. Do **not** take the broad grassy path ahead down the slope, but **turn right** to go along the top of the field and then down its right-hand side.
10. Leave through a gap in the bottom corner on a path which merges with another from the left. In 25m you come to a staggered path junction with public footpaths off to both sides.
The footpath signpost had disappeared when last checked.
 - If you want to curtail the walk and head directly for Kingswood, take the long straight fenced footpath off to the right. In 200m you can pick up the directions at [38] in §J, where the Main Walk joins from a path slanting up the semi-open area of downland on the left.
11. To continue the walk, **turn left** onto the other footpath. This immediately swings right and goes downhill through the trees, later merging with another path from the right. Just before reaching a wooden gate in front of a railway crossing, there is a side path leading back onto Chipstead Downs.
 - If you want to curtail the walk and head straight back to Chipstead, turn left onto this side path and continue the directions at §L.
12. To continue the walk, cross the railway tracks and go down a fenced path between houses. Veer left across a side road and the B2032 (Outwood Lane again), aiming to the left of the **Old School House**⁵ garden opposite. Go through a wooden gate into the bottom corner of a large field, where there is an information panel about **Shabden Park**⁶.

D. Shabden Park to the Long Plantation (1¼ km)

13. Take the left-hand of the two signposted footpaths, a grassy path going diagonally up across the field. At the top ignore a path into the trees and **veer right** to go along its top edge. In the next corner go through a gate onto a farm track, heading **S** with a belt of trees on the left and views across a large open field in the valley on the right.
14. In 200m the track veers left and right. In a further 300m ignore an opening into the field behind the trees on the left, but 200m later (where the track swings sharply left uphill) **go through a small wooden gate** next to a metal fieldgate onto a broad grassy path along the side of the valley.
15. The right of way goes up to the field corner where a signposted permissive footpath points downhill, but shortly before reaching it a faint grassy path veering down the slope suggests that most walkers cut off this corner. At the bottom the path merges with a public footpath (on the RBBC's **Shabden & Upper Gatton Walk**⁷) and continues up the other side of the valley.
16. Follow the grassy path to the left of a line of small trees, alongside a copse and up to the wood at the top of the valley. Go through a wooden kissing gate into the **Long Plantation** and follow the main path through the trees, ignoring some side paths off to the right. In 100m you come to a footpath crossing, shortly before wooden barriers across a horse ride.
*If you are doing a Short Walk (omitting Mugswell), **turn right** at the footpath crossing and continue the directions at §I.*

E. The Long Plantation to Eyhurst Park (1¼ km)

17. For the full walk keep ahead at both the footpath crossing and the horse ride. Follow the path up to the right and out of the woodland onto a broad grassy strip along the edge of Surrey Downs golf course. At the end of the line of trees on your left keep ahead across a fairway, looking out for golfers driving across your path from a nearby tee on the right.

18. Leave the golf course on a short grassy track between fences. At a T-junction with a bridleway by Ganton House **turn left** onto the house's driveway. Ignore turnings into the golf club's car park on the right to continue on a tarmac drive lined with some shaped holly trees, passing some converted farm buildings clustered around a pond.
19. Keep to the right of the pond and go all the way out along a long straight driveway between hedges, with the grounds of the Eyhurst Park development on your left and the golf course on your right. At the far end ignore a footpath opposite and **turn left** onto the broad grass verge of the B2032 (Outwood Lane again). On the left you soon pass a lodge at the gated entrance to Eyhurst Park.
 - If you want to abandon the walk, continuing along this road for 1 km would bring you to Kingswood station.

F. Eyhurst Park to the Well House Inn (1 km)

20. Between the lodge's garden and Warren Cottages **turn left** past metal barriers onto a signposted footpath, joining the RBBC's **Millennium Trail**⁷. In 100m the path comes out onto Kingswood golf course.

A line of marker posts every 50-100m indicate the onward route, and also the direction from which golfers are playing before you cross each fairway.
21. Go straight ahead across three fairways and into a plantation of young trees. The right of way turns slightly left here (a marker post might be missing) and after crossing another fairway continues alongside some mature trees with a driving range off to the right.
22. Keep ahead through a belt of trees and across two more fairways to reach the far side of the golf course. Follow a short woodland path through Smugglers Pit Plantation to come out into the top corner of a large field.
23. Go down the left-hand edge of this rough grassland to a stile at the bottom, leading directly onto Chipstead Lane. **Cross this road carefully** to the **Well House Inn**⁸ opposite, the suggested lunch stop.

G. The Well House Inn to Southernns Lane (1¼ km)

24. Take the continuation of the footpath you arrived on, a tree-lined path climbing away from the road at the side of the pub. At the top of the valley the narrow path continues beside paddocks, along the edge of a small field and past a few houses onto a lane in the hamlet of **Mugswell**.
25. Turn left onto the lane (leaving the two RBBC walks) and follow it round a right-hand bend. At a junction **turn left** and head **E** along Rectory Road for 600m, ignoring a couple of footpaths and Pigeonhouse Lane at the bottom of a shallow valley. You eventually come to a crossroads with a footpath signpost opposite.
 - If the field opposite is too muddy you could turn left onto Southernns Lane and follow it down the hill, continuing the directions at SH.
26. For the suggested route go over the stile by the signpost and turn left as indicated. Follow the footpath across two paddocks to the right of Southernns Farm, going through a wooden gate in the fence between them.
27. In the corner bear left onto a grassy strip, then go over a couple of stiles onto a rather gloomy path leading back to Southernns Lane. Turn right onto this quiet lane, soon passing the attractive Bakehouse Cottage on your right.

H. Southernns Lane to the Long Plantation (¾ km)

28. You could carry on along this lane to its T-junction with Chipstead Lane at the bottom of the hill, but where it bends left 200m beyond Bakehouse Cottage (with a footpath signpost pointing into a large field on the right) it is worth investigating a permissive horse ride parallel to the lane in the belt of trees on the right.
- There is no great advantage in taking this narrow and potentially overgrown horse ride here, but if its continuation alongside the bottom of the field is passable you can avoid walking along the much busier Chipstead Lane. You can switch between the ride and the lane at the T-junction and several places further on.*
29. Either way, make your way down to the T-junction at the bottom of the hill and **turn right**, ignoring a bridleway opposite. If the continuation of the horse ride parallel to Chipstead Lane is too awkward you will have to walk along this fairly busy road with no pavement for 150m, **taking care as traffic can be quite fast**.
30. The turning off this road is the second of two footpaths close together on the left. Do not take the prominently signposted footpath towards some dilapidated farm buildings after 125m, but 25m further on **veer left** at a less conspicuous signpost (you can exit onto the road from the horse ride at this point).
31. Go through a narrow gap in the hedge and then along a short fenced path into a large field. Continue along a faint grassy path in much the same direction, slanting up the field. On the far side go over a stile into the **Long Plantation**.
32. Inside the wood the footpath briefly merges with a horse ride coming up from the right (the continuation of the one from Chipstead Lane). In 50m **fork right** to stay on the public footpath. In a further 50m keep ahead at a path crossing, going over your outward route.

I. The Long Plantation to the Railway Crossing (1½ km)

33. Follow the footpath for around 1 km as it heads **N** through this long strip of woodland, ignoring a few link paths to the parallel horse ride on the left.
34. The path eventually veers right down a short slope to the edge of the wood. Follow a narrow fenced path as it briefly zig-zags along the side of the valley and into a belt of trees. Go through a gate and keep ahead along the left-hand side of a large field, gently downhill to the bottom corner.
35. Go out through the gate where you entered Shabden Park on the outward route. Veer left to retrace your steps across the B2032 and go up the signposted footpath to the left of Rosemere Cottage. On the other side of the railway tracks the main path climbs gently through a strip of woodland, with a side path branching up to the right.
- If you are doing a Circular Walk back to Chipstead, go to SL.*

J. The Railway Crossing to Perrotts Farm (1½ km)

36. To head for Kingswood continue along the main path. In 75m **fork left** where it splits, leaving your outward route. Keep ahead at the next path crossing, going through a wooden kissing gate into a semi-open area.
37. Follow a chalky path slanting up this area, dotted with shrubs and small trees. In the top corner go through another kissing gate and climb a short slope to merge with a footpath from the right.
38. Continue along a clear woodland path above **Fames Rough**, now heading **WNW** on the **Banstead Countryside Walk**⁹ (BCW). In 250m you come to a T-junction with a three-way signpost and **turn left**, still following the BCW.
39. Continue on the woodland path for 400m, along the way leaving the BCW which drops down a side path into Fames Rough. The path eventually goes up a short slope to emerge into the corner of a large field.

40. Keep ahead near the right-hand field edge, alongside Banstead Wood. Up ahead you can see the buildings of Perrotts Farm and just before reaching them, **veer left** on a grassy path to pass to the left of a barn. Go through a wooden kissing gate and turn left onto the farm drive, a public bridleway.

K. Perrotts Farm to Kingswood Station (2 km)

41. Follow the farm drive for 600m, initially heading **W** and later curving left and right as it winds its way downhill. At the bottom of the slope a bridleway joins from the left. Almost immediately afterwards **turn left** through a metal gate onto another signposted bridleway.
42. Go up the right-hand edge of a field and follow the path round to the right at the top. Go through more gates as you head **W** along another field edge and then a fenced path, soon with a sports ground behind trees on your left. Ignore a track on the right and continue to a surfaced area by a couple of cottages.
43. **Turn left** off the track onto a signposted footpath, which goes through a belt of trees and comes out into a semi-open area between the sports ground and a large car park. Carry straight on, either along a path or the edge of the sports ground.
At the time of writing the official right of way was not clear but occasional marker posts suggest that it runs a little way to the left of the large abandoned office building up ahead.
44. Towards the far end of **Kingswood House**¹⁰ cross a tarmac path and take the signposted footpath going downhill through trees. In 100m **turn right** at a three-way footpath junction and follow this path through woodland and then alongside another car park.
45. Continue along a residential street and keep ahead where it joins St Monica's Road. At the end the road swings left and comes to a crossroads, with the mock-Tudor **Kingswood Arms** on your right and the **Waterhouse Café** 50m further along Waterhouse Lane. The station is on your left; trains to London leave from Platform 1, on the near side.

L. The Railway Crossing to Chipstead Station (1¾ km)

46. To return to Chipstead **turn right** up this short side path and go through a wooden kissing gate onto **Chipstead Downs**. Keep ahead briefly on a grassy path with a fence on your right, then in 25m **fork left** onto a path gradually diverging from the fence. In 400m several paths merge and you go through a wooden kissing gate into the next meadow.
The main route goes down to the bottom of the valley, but if you are not stopping at the Ramblers Rest (the only refreshment place before the station) you can take the alternative route in [48], higher up the valley.

47. Main route

- a. To go via the suggested tea place **turn right** onto a grassy path going downhill, with a belt of trees on your right. The path becomes a rough track which leads to a wooden gate into the **Ramblers Rest** car park. Bear right to come to the pub's back entrance.
After visiting the pub any northwards route along the side of the downs will lead to the car park on Holly Lane or back onto Outwood Lane; for example, another grassy path leading away from the pub's car park intercepts the alternative route after 250m, in front of a hedge.
- b. For a straightforward route take the raised tarmac path running alongside Outwood Lane, with the road (later screened by a hedge) on your right. The path gradually curves round to the right and in 600m there is a gate leading out onto the road by a mini-roundabout.
- c. Unless you want to return to the car park by staying on the downs, go out onto the road and continue along the pavement on the right-hand side of Outwood Lane, eventually passing the gate onto Chipstead Downs near the start of the walk.
- d. Go past the mini-roundabout with the B2219 and turn right up Station Approach. At the top veer left to come to the station; trains to London leave from Platform 1, on the near side.

48. Alternative route

- a. To bypass the pub take the left-hand of the two grassy paths ahead. Unless you want to switch to the lower route, keep left where the path splits. The higher path briefly goes through a copse and then slants up to continue alongside the bottom edge of Banstead Wood.
- b. Eventually you come to the surfaced path sloping down to the right in front of the hollow with the information panels, near the start of the walk. Bear right onto this path and retrace your outward route down to Outwood Lane. Cross the road carefully and turn left.
- c. Go past the mini-roundabout with the B2219 and turn right up Station Approach. At the top veer left to come to the station; trains to London leave from Platform 1, on the near side.

Walk Notes

1. **Chipstead Downs** is an important area of chalk downland which (with Banstead Wood) has been designated as a Local Nature Reserve and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The information panels at Holly Lane car park describe its natural history and the impact of human settlement.
2. The **Narnia** sculptures – **Lucy Pevensie**, **Aslan the Lion**, **The Wardrobe** and **The White Witch** – from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* were carved from standing deadwood by a local artist, Ella Fielding from The Tree Pirates.
3. **Stagbury Downs** was originally wooded but the area was cleared to grow crops in WWI. It has been replanted with trees so that it can revert to woodland.
4. A **stub coppice** is halfway between a coppice (cut at ground level) and a pollard (cut above head height). A strip of oak trees down the centre of Banstead Wood was cut like this to produce **compass timber**, artificially bending and staking the new shoots at 45°, 90° & 135° angles to make strong joining pieces for wooden ships.
5. The 17thC **Old School House** was acquired by a trust foundation to teach six poor boys and girls of the parish. It continued as a school until 1874 and the charitable trust still provides assistance to local parents.
6. **Shabden Park Estate** is managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust. In the 1960s and 70s its rich wildflower grassland was severely damaged by intensive agriculture, but these farming methods were stopped in the 1980s and it is gradually returning to a wildlife-friendly habitat.
7. The **Shabden & Upper Gatton Walk** is one of six circular walks linked to a 28 km **Millennium Trail** between Banstead Downs and Horley, all created by Reigate and Banstead Borough Council to mark the new century.
8. The **Well House Inn** claims to have in its garden the medieval **St Margaret's Well**, from which the village name **Mugswell** is derived.
9. The **Banstead Countryside Walk** skirts around Banstead Wood on a 5-mile circular route through the downs and farmland. It is an initiative of the Downlands Countryside Management Project.
10. **Kingswood House** was the head office of **Legal & General** until the financial services company relocated back to the City of London in 2017. There is a proposal to redevelop the building as a Continuing Care Retirement Community.

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