



Farnham to Blackwater Walk

Farnham Park, Caesar's Camp, Beacon Hill, Bourley Reservoirs, Gelvert Stream, Fleet Pond, Foxlease Meadows and Hawley Common



Length 23.0 km (14.3 mi), with 270/286m ascent/descent. For an Alternative Start and Longer or Shorter Walks, check below Walk Options.

Toughness 4 out of 10 (3 out of 10 if ending at Fleet Station), with 5 1/4 hours net walking time. For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow 8 1/2 hours.

Walk Notes The walk crosses Farnham Park to Upper Hale then enters remote MOD land (careful navigation needed) including a steep climb to Caesar's Camp and an equally demanding descent from Beacon Hill, overlooking a network of water channels and reservoirs. You broadly follow the Gelvert Stream to lunch at The Foresters, then on to Fleet Pond, cross the often water-logged Foxlease Meadows, dry out over a cuppa watching cricket at the Crown and Cushion and view the boats from the sandy shores of Hawley Lake, before crossing Hawley Common to Blackwater Station.

After Upper Hale the walk is largely within or close to the MOD land of the Aldershot and Minley Training Area until you reach the outskirts of Blackwater. All of this MOD land is designated on the OS maps by clear rather than red triangles, signifying Managed Access subject to the displayed by-laws, as opposed to danger areas. The areas are used for dry training exercises only, meaning no use of live ammunition, but possibly pyrotechnics, blank ammunition, smoke grenades and thunder flashes. In

practice this means that you are free to roam and the paths are clear on the ground, but there are very few footpath or bridleway signs.

Some of the area is prone to be closed to the public due to driver training on heavy machinery: Area B4 Long Valley (north of Bourley Road, east of the Gelvert Stream).

[!] Check closure times for the Aldershot Training Area before entertaining this walk [here](#) [!] .

An Alternative Start from Aldershot, while saving no distance or height gain, starts from an earlier train station and leads through several urban parks and up through Rowhill Copse, the source of the River Blackwater. Some of the stretches through Farnham Park at the beginning of the walk can be very muddy and the section through Foxlease Meadows in the afternoon is usually 'spongy' underfoot, while also not being waymarked. Drier and easier-to-follow alternatives are described.

Walk Options

An Alternative Start from Aldershot Station (via Rowhill Nature Reserve) leads to Windy Gap Hill, just before Caesar's Camp. It leads through several urban parks and up through Rowhill Copse, the source of the River Blackwater. This also gives the possibility of walking from Farnham to Aldershot via Farnham Park, Caesar's Camp and Rowhill, a distance of about 11 km. Local buses can cut some of the suburban parts of the route.

An Alternative Dry Route through Farnham Park avoids some mud-prone sections and leads initially through the town centre, then passing close to **Farnham Castle**.

A Loop via Ewshot enables an early lunch at The Windmill. This adds only 0.8 km to the distance and also avoids the section of the main route parallel to the busy Beacon Hill Road and the steep descent from Beacon Hill itself. A good option if intending to end the walk at Fleet Station!

An Extension Loop within Fleet Pond Nature Reserve, running close to reedbeds and marshes, increases the distance by 1.6 km.

An Alternate Ending at Fleet Station, is possible either via the start of the Fleet Extension Loop or from its end. From 15.9 km distance.

Bus Lines 10 and 410 take you from Ancells Farm/Bramshott Bridge on the A3013 to Fleet Station or Farnborough Main Station (Monday to Saturday only).

An Alternative Dry Route avoiding the often water-logged Foxlease Meadows Wildlife Reserve adds 1.7 km to the distance.

Maps

OS Explorer: 145 (Guildford & Farnham).

OS Landranger: 186 (Aldershot & Guildford).

Travel

Farnham Station, map reference SU 844 465, is 15 km west of Guildford, 76m above sea level and in **Surrey**. Blackwater Station, map reference SU 853 598, is 13 km north of Farnham, 60m above sea level and in **Hampshire**. Farnham is on the Alton Line from Waterloo via Woking and Aldershot (half-hourly service), with a journey time of 74 minutes (shorter if changing at Woking). Farnham is also served by trains from Guildford via Ash. Blackwater is on the North Downs Line from Reading to Gatwick Airport (via Ash) with mostly 2 trains per hour (journey time from 59 minutes via Reading to Paddington, or from 72 minutes via Guildford to Waterloo). Buy a return to Farnham and a single from Blackwater to Ash (or to Brookwood if returning from Fleet). If intending to travel back via Reading to Paddington, buy a Blackwater return supplemented by a single from Woking to Farnham.

Saturday Walker's Club: Take the train nearest to 9.15.

Lunch

The Windmill Inn Church Lane, Ewshot, GU10 5BJ. Tel: (01252) 850 439. This is a possible early lunch option, reached by a detour after 8.4 km. Large beer garden which doubles as a putting green!

The Foresters Aldershot Road, Church Crookham, Fleet, Hampshire, GU52 9EP. Tel: (01252) 616 503. Located 11.3 km into the walk.

Tea**Main Walk**

The Crown and Cushion Minley Road, Blackwater, Camberley, Surrey, GU17 9UA. Tel: (01252) 545253. This pub dates back to 1594 and is full of character and rustic charm. It has a tenuous connection with Captain Blood's attempt to steal the Crown Jewels during the reign of Charles I. An early tea option after 17.3 km.

In Blackwater: Mr Bumble pub and **The Royal Swan** (Stonegate). There are also takeaways in White Hart Parade.

Fleet Ending

The Station 1-3 Fleet Road, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 3QL. Cross the station car park and the main road; the pub car park is to your right. Tel: (01252) 614 839.

Café Destino at Fleet station is open until 3.30pm on Saturdays and 2.30pm on Sundays.

Points of interest**Farnham Park**

Farnham Park is a 130 hectare (320 acres) medieval deer park close to Farnham town centre. It has an impressive tree avenue over 1km long (crossed on this walk) and is managed both for its wildlife and for its amenity value. The northern end consists of the more typical open

landscape associated with deer parks, whilst much of the southern end is more formal with a café and the usual facilities for play and recreation.

Caesar's Camp

Caesar's Camp is an Iron Age hill fort thought to date from about 500 BC. King Alfred allegedly camped here when driving the Danes towards the Thames.

Aldershot and Minley Training Area

The two Training Areas cover an area of approximately 2000 hectares of lowland heathland habitat which supports a wide range of associated fauna and flora. They comprise heathland, conifer woodland, broadleaved woodland, mire, scrub, acid grassland and grass meadows. The majority of the areas are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and form part of the European designated Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Open access on foot is allowed in areas within the Managed Access symbol on the OS Explorer maps, subject to the bye-laws which are displayed at the principal access points. The training areas are used for dry training exercises only, which may include the use of pyrotechnics, blank ammunition and other battle simulators such as smoke grenades and thunder flashes. Be prepared for sudden noises!

Brenda Parker Way

This waymarked path runs for 49 kilometres from Aldershot to Andover and was set up in memory of Brenda Parker, a member of Hampshire Ramblers. The Eastern section passes stations at Fleet, Winchfield and Bramley.

www.brendaparkerway.northhampshiredownsrabblers.org.uk/

Fleet Pond Nature Reserve

Fleet Pond was probably created by the deliberate damming of natural watercourses in the 12th century, draining a wide area of heath and woodland. It is known to have been a thriving fishery by 1324. The Reserve's reedbeds, marshes, heathland and woodland provide sanctuary for a rich community of animal and plant life. Over 2,000 species of plants and animals live in or visit the Reserve, including most of the common mammals, amphibians and reptiles and many species of birds, fish, flowering plant and fungi. The total area of the Reserve is 57 hectares (141 acres) most of which is designated as an SSSI. However due to the silt carried by the Gelvert and Brookly streams, the depth of water is less than a metre and the pond is shrinking, so the management of the Pond is a major conservation challenge.

Foxlease Meadows

This site is jointly owned by the Ministry of Defence and the RSPB and leased to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust to manage the

conservation of its important habitats and species. The field system dates back to c1600. Today it is a mosaic of meadows with a range of wet grassland, fen, acid grassland, heathland mire and woodland habitats, grazed by Highland cattle. Designated as an SSSI for its flowers and insects, the oak trees dating back up to 500 years are also an ideal home for bats.

Help Us! After the walk, please leave a [comment](#), it really helps. Thanks!

You can also upload photos to the [SWC Group on Flickr](#) ([upload your photos](#)) and [videos to YouTube](#). This walk's tags are:

By Car **Start** **Finish**

Help National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Traveline (bus times): 0871 200 22 33 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

Version Nov-24 [Mike Powell](#) [Thomas G](#)

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Walk Directions

Directions last checked: 01/11/2024

Farnham to Caesar's Camp (5.2 km)

1. From platform 2 at Farnham station, turn left across the railway line either via the overbridge or the level crossing. Walk down the B3001 (Station Hill), in 70 metres passing **The Mulberry Bar & Kitchen** and in 50 metres cross the A31 by some traffic lights and continue in the same direction. Pass Emmanuel Church on your left, cross the main road at a convenient point and in 80 metres, immediately before a bridge over the **River Wey (North Branch)**, turn right on to **Borelli Walk**, the tarmac riverside path. **(But see the Dry Alternative Route through Farnham Park below)**
2. In 240 metres cross the river on the wooden bridge and turn right, with the river now on your right. In 200 metres you pass a couple of bridges on your right, then a car park on your left and an information board for the **Jubilee Walk**. In 150 metres the path turns away from the river and in 80 metres you continue up **Kimbers Lane** to reach the A325 (Guildford Road) in 100 metres. Cross the road and turn left along the opposite pavement. In 90 metres, just after **The Albion Tavern**, you

cross Hale Road (the B3007) by a set of lights a little to the right and continue up St James' Avenue.

3. In 200 metres you enter **Farnham Park** and in 15 metres turn left at a children's playground, then in 10 metres at a fence corner turn right uphill. Past the playground, cross the open grassland ahead (**Southern Slope**), heading directly for an impressive tree-lined avenue. In 130 metres turn right on **The Avenue** and in 60 metres turn left and go through a wooden kissing gate into a sloping meadow (**White Bottom**, permissive access). Take the grass path ahead (340°) and in 100 metres turn right along a grass path, just before **College Copse**. In 90 metres, at a crosspaths, turn left up a grassy slope, with another copse on your right. In 100 metres go through a wooden kissing gate to the right of a metal field gate, and continue with a fence to your left. The mud-prone path ends in 100 metres at the corner of the fence with **Yoyo Pond** just ahead, so named because of the fluctuating water levels.
4. Turn left, still following the fence. In 30 metres the path turns to the right and you ignore a stile. The fence turns left and right and in 10 metres crosses a ditch on a plank. Ignore a wooden gate on the left and cross another plank over a ditch. In 100 metres ignore a wooden gate on the left and in 80 metres cross a stream and emerge in a large meadow.
5. In 30 metres you pass the fenced **Royal Pond** on your right and veer left with a grass path across the meadow towards an HV pylon, staying somewhat to the left of the wooded boundary [Alternatively, you can follow the right-hand boundary, roughly along the course of the **Nadder Stream** below on the right (Nadder meant 'winding one' in old English).] In any case, in 230 metres (more if following the boundary), at a T-junction with a tarmac path (an unmarked public footpath), you turn right along it (5°).

6. **Dry Alternative Route through Farnham Park.** Do not turn right across the road but instead follow the main road across the Wey into town. You pass the imposing **Town Hall** on the right, ignore a main road turning left, then pass various churches, shops and cafes and pubs along **South Street**. At a set of lights at a major four-way junction (East Street to the right, The Borough to the left), continue ahead (**Bear Lane**) and in 50 metres stay ahead with the quiet Bear Lane, where the main traffic turns to the right along Woolmead Road. In 120 metres cross Park Row/High Park Road and continue along a part cobbled and paved path between houses (signed 'Farnham Park'). In 50 metres you enter **Farnham Park** and ignore a right turn (signed 'Adventure Playground') to continue uphill along a tarmac path (signed 'The Castle' and 'Cafe & Toilets'). **Farnham Castle** starts coming into view up on the left (foliage permitting), as you climb up a steep rise ('Southern Slope'), coming to a couple of benches at the top. In another 100 metres you go through **The Avenue**, a long tree-lined avenue, and then pass some sports fields on either side. The **Park Cafe** and a toilet block are away on the left at the end of the

sports fields. You go through **Queen Mother's Hedge** and descend into a green valley.

In 90 metres, at the bottom of the drop, cross an often dry ditch on a bridge and re-ascend - in 70 metres with a fenced wood on the right. In 40 metres pass the also fenced **Swallow Hole** on the left and in 160 metres at the top of the rise, you cross the tarmac drive to the **Ranger's House** on the right and in 20 metres pass a bench. You go over the grassy plateau on the path, ignore a faint path on the left to the **Deer Pond** (hidden by trees) and in 100 metres from the bench pass **Chorley Wood** on your right, then start a gentle descent into the valley of the **Nadder Stream**. In 300 metres, just before going under an HV pylon line, you cross an earthen path. The Main Walk route joins from the right out of a meadow. Continue ahead and pick up the text in the next paragraph just below.

7. In 70 metres and in another 30 metres you cross bridges over the Nadder and a tributary and then follow the path uphill to leave Farnham Park in another 230 metres. Cross a road (Parkside) in 25 metres and walk up Nutshell Lane ahead to in 120 metre reach **Hale Recreation Ground** on your left. Walk up the drive to the right of the grass (The Green), past Hale Methodist Church in 100 metres. Cross **Upper Hale Road** (A3016) in 50 metres and turn right along the opposite pavement but **[!]** in 20 metres turn up to the left along **Vicarage Lane**. In 200 metres turn right with the lane, ignoring Yolland Close to the left. In 35 metres turn left at a T-junction with **Heath Lane** and in 70 metres, at a T-junction with the B3005, cross the road and continue a little to the left through bike barriers and up along a tarmac path. In 75 metres you continue with a road on your left, still uphill along a left hand pavement. In 120 metres turn left with the road, now with **Aldershot and Minley Training Area** on your right behind a fence.
8. In 30 metres turn right into the MOD area through a fence gap and a subsequent metal kissing gate and turn left along a gravel track. In 50 metres turn hard right down a sunken path, gradually descending into **Long Bottom**. In 250 metres you cross a track and in 65 metres meet a staggered five-way junction of tracks. Turn left (but not hard left) on a bearing of 320°.
9. You pass a shallow pond on the left and cross a track and begin to climb out of Long Bottom. In 30 metres ignore a right fork and in 100 metres cross a track where you continue on the level. In 60 metres cross a grass track and in 40 metres take the right fork, again uphill. In 80 metres you merge with a stony path on the crest of **Windy Gap Hill**, Caesar's Camp can be see to the half left. **(Point 1 - the route from Aldershot has joined you here from the right behind)**
10. Turn left along the track and in 60 metres fork right uphill along a steep enclosed path. In 130 metres (fork either way en route), the path levels out as you merge with a broad path from your left and by a regimental bench and a fine viewpoint on the right. Continue ahead into **Caesar's Camp** to in 150 metres reach **Jubilee Clump** (planted in honour of Queen Victoria in 1887) by a touching memorial a little down to the right. You continue along the scarp past some more regimental and

memorial benches. From the top of this Iron Age hill fort (182 metres above sea level) the view to the North is dominated by **Farnborough Airport**.

Caesar's Camp to The Foresters (6.4 km)

1. Turn left (West) along the scarp of the plateau, with steep drops to your right. The futuristic round structure visible ahead and below to the right is a covered reservoir. In 250 metres, as you pass this, the path curves to the left (210°). Ignore a path branching to the left in 60 metres. In 160 metres the track turns further to the left and you **[!]** turn right through a gap (210°), immediately walking through two sets of **banks-and-ditches** and then passing an open area on your left. In 150 metres turn right along a wide path (240°) by a lake on your left (you are on **Bricksbury Hill**). At the end of the lake in 250 metres, ignore tracks to the right and left.
2. Continue along this wide track, and ignore another track to the left in 120 metres. In 40 metres there is a conifer plantation on your right, with gorse and heathland on your left. In another 350 metres turn right through a metal gate or over a cattle grid onto a wide track heading downhill (North) through a birch and conifer wood. In 300 metres the path levels out at the corner of a green metal fence with danger signs on your right. You cross a drainage channel on the track and in another 70 metres turn left along a wide gravel track. [The intricate network of drainage channels in this area was built to carry the water down to the various reservoirs.]
3. After 200 metres you start a steady climb on the track and in 100 metres cross a path running along a drainage channel. In 200 metres turn right with the gravel track, where a grass track joins from the left, still uphill. In 70 metres, at a T-junction of gravel tracks and with the busy **Beacon Hill Road** just ahead, **(Point 2 - see the Alternative Route via Ewshot below if you intend to have lunch at The Windmill)**, you turn right on to a wide level path. In 50 metres ignore a track forking downhill to the right. In 450 metres take the right fork and in 120 metres pass a transmission mast on your right. In 60 metres you pass the triangulation pillar for **Beacon Hill** (177 metres above sea level) among the trees to your right (GR 823503).
4. **[!]** In 50 metres, at the end of a clearing, you are facing a very steep drop.
For the most direct descent, take one of several steep paths down, some way to the left. These soon turn right then left again at the bottom of the steep part of the descent and pick up mountain bike tracks that lead across a water channel and eventually to a wide gravel track. Turn right to a four-way track junction and turn left there.
For the easiest descent, turn right down along a broad gravel path, steeply but not scarily so. In 100 metres cross a path along a drainage channel, with a wide gravel track visible ahead at the bottom of the drop. In 90 metres turn left along the track and in 130 metres cross a wide gravel track.
5. This is **Bourley Bottom** and in 250 metres you pass the **Reservoir No. 1** away on the left, one of a group of reservoirs which were constructed in the 1860s to supply

the water for Aldershot Camp. Veer left with the main track, ignoring a narrower track ahead and up. In 200 metres, with a meadow visible ahead through the trees, turn left at a T-junction and in 40 metres turn right at a crossing of tracks.

6. **(Point 3 - the route from Ewshot re-joins here)**. In 30 metres you go through a metal gate to the right of a cattle grid and in 20 metres turn right along a wide track and in 30 metres turn left off the track to cross the meadow diagonally (40 degrees), aiming for a metal gate to the left of a metal car barrier in its far corner. In 300 metres cross **Bourley Road** and the embryonic **Gelvert Stream**, and enter the **Long Valley Military Training Area** through a metal gate to the left of a military vehicle pick-up and drop-off area (GR 831511). [Should this area be closed for Military Training with heavy vehicles, you will have to turn left (from the previous direction) along Bourley Road for 1.3 km, mostly without a walkable margin, past Tweseldown Racecourse and turn right through the car park shown on the OS map and find your way back onto route through the usually open parts of the MOD estate.]
7. Turn left along a wide track. In 150 metres you reach the end of the meadow on your right, marked on the map as a (Military) Camping Ground. You have the Gelvert Stream alongside on your left and ignore a bridge over the stream in 80 metres and a crossing track in another 100 metres. Continue on the straight shaded path heading due North. In 300 metres turn left at a T-junction along a wide gravel track. In 200 metres you pass a metal barrier by a warning sign about a **High-speed Test Track** and in 40 metres fork left along the test track. To the left you should be able to glimpse **Tweseldown Racecourse** (one of Britain's premier horse trials venues). In 320 metres go through a metal gate to the right of a cattle grid.
8. In 40 metres, **[!]** turn left through a kissing gate to the right of a metal field gate, heading North-West. In 100 metres the track bends left and in 30 metres you cross the **Gelvert Stream** on the track, then pass a small pond on your right. In another 100 metres turn right at a three-way junction along a wide grass path and in 40 metres continue ahead along a minor grass path where a sandy path turns up to the left. You have **Brock's Hill** on your left while heading towards some pinewoods and towards the sound of traffic through brambles and gorse. In 100m continue a little to the left along a narrow earthen path through gorse bushes, where the more prominent path turns left. In 100 metres continue through trees for another 30 metres and go through a wooden kissing gate into a linear grassy clearing (the route of several pipelines).
9. Cross the clearing and in 20 metres follow a clear path through a wooded belt towards the road noise. In 80 metres the path leads up a bank into a car park opposite **The Foresters** pub on the far side of the busy **Aldershot Road**.
10. **Alternative Route via Ewshot**. [Directions for this section last checked: **16/11/2024**
Turn left at the T-junction at the top of the climb **(Point 2)** and in 60 metres go

through a metal gate to the left of a cattle grid. In 20 metres turn right to cross Beacon Hill Road a little to the left and take the signposted bridleway along a car wide track. This takes you gently downhill with fenced off woods to your right and residential gardens on your left. In 300 metres you pass Oakwood House on the left. In 100 metres continue ahead on an unmade road, ignoring a private drive to your left. In 100 metres turn right along Church Lane by the **Windmill Inn**.

Continue downhill and in 200 metres turn right up along Tadpole Lane, signed 'Church Crookham' and 'Fleet'. You could now follow the road all the way to its junction with Beacon Hill Road, but to avoid some of the narrow stretches: in 40 metres turn left into the car park of the **Queen Elizabeth II Field** and turn right through the grassy field, parallel to the road. In 120 metres leave it through a wooden kissing gate in the far right hand corner near the road. In 60 metres go through a wooden kissing gate and over a boardwalk. In 40m turn right along a gravel track back to Tadpole Lane in 20 metres by a bridleway signpost backwards. Turn left uphill along the lane. Ignore a public footpath to the left in 170 metres and another one to the right in 20 metres. The lane descends and gently re-ascends to in 300 metres meet **Beacon Hill Road**.

Cross the road and follow the track a little to the right past a car barrier and yellow danger notices. In 30 metres cross a track and in 140 metres turn right through a metal kissing gate to the right of a cattle grid. In 100 metres turn left with the track and in 100m turn left at a three-way junction of forest tracks. This is **Bourley Bottom** and in 200 metres a path on the right leads to a picturesque pond away on your right. This is the **Reservoir No. 1**, one of a group of reservoirs constructed in the 1860s to supply Aldershot Camp. In 130 metres, at a four-way track junction with a grassy meadow visible ahead through the trees, cross a track and **re-join the main route at Point 3 above**.

The Foresters to Fleet Pond (3.5 km)

1. From The Foresters, turn right from the main entrance (ie NOT back to the road) and walk diagonally across the car park and then through an outside seating area under a large tarpaulin to pick up a short engineered path in its far-left corner. In 15 metres go through a metal kissing gate and turn right along the fence on the right initially. In 160 metres bear right towards a metal gate to the right of a cattle grid and a car park beyond it. Turn left immediately and in 40 metres cross a cattle grid (with a metal kissing gate to the right) and continue in the same direction (35°) along a straight gravel path, ignoring a left turn.
2. In 190 metres go through a metal gate to the right of a cattle grid and follow the woodland path, avoiding several minor crossing paths, and gradually moving away from the road on your right. In 150m you cross the **Gelvert Stream** and in 120 metres curve to the left and start to gently ascend through the wood. In 250 metres the path levels out and in 70 metres you continue through a wide clearing towards

the audible A323, 140 metres away. Turn left on the pavement and in 30 metres turn right across the road, to the left of the large roundabout. In 30 metres you cross the **Basingstoke Canal** far beneath and continue ahead along a shared cycle and footpath along **Ively Road**, signposted to Farnborough.

3. In 90 metres, just after the end of the crash barrier on the left, turn left into a wood through a fence gap and immediately turn right, parallel with the road. In 75 metres turn right along a wider path joining from the left. In 30 metres fork left, on a path which gradually veers left, away from the road. Later the path veers right, descends and turns left. In 250 metres the first of a couple of paths joins from the left. In another 50 metres turn left (North West) at a cross paths along to a wide track (you are now following the **Brenda Parker Way** (BPW) along an unmarked public bridleway) (GR 832541). In 330 metres veer left with the track, where a grass path joins from the right. In another 320 metres you reach a complex track junction and a wooden bridge, with a yellow danger sign on the left.
4. Cross the wide bridge over the **Gelvert Stream** (GR 825546) and immediately turn right through a fence gap to enter **Fleet Pond Nature Reserve** along an engineered path with a BPW marker. Follow the Blue Route (marked by low marker posts with coloured markings) with the stream to your right, passing four benches over the next 350 metres and then ignore a bridge to your right and a path on the left. In another 60 metres you reach a path T-junction (**Point 4**) and **you have a choice**, the Main Route or an Alternative Ending at Fleet Station as part of an Extension around Fleet Pond (adds 1.6 km).
5. **Main Route:** Turn right along a raised sandy path, now following both Blue and Yellow routes. In 160 metres turn right across the Gelvert Stream on a wooden bridge leading to **Sandy Bay**. There are some wooden benches with swan carvings and also good views of **Fleet Pond** 40 metres ahead. Turn sharply to the right, away from the pond and in 40 metres continue along a boardwalk. In 120 metres turn left at a path T-junction by a bench and a marker post for the Blue and Yellow routes. In 100 metres cross a ditch and veer left. In 100 metres, at a **Sandy Hill Copse** information board, take the path to the right up some low steps.

6. **Fleet Station Ending and Fleet Pond Extension** [Directions for this section last checked: **16/11/2024**]
Turn left at **Point 4** following the Yellow route. Ignore an unmarked path to the left in 40 metres and continue along an engineered path through a **wet woodland** section. In 140 metres, just after an info panel, turn right at a T-junction, now following both the Blue Route and the Yellow Route, with a road and some houses to the left. In 160 metres turn left across a small bridge and turn right (North) immediately. In 100 metres you pass a jetty and in 30 metres an info panel and some benches. In 190 metres the path swings to the right. In 80 metres cross **Brookly Stream**, where the Blue Route turns left, to re-join in 90 metres across a bridge. In 50 metres you follow a long section of boardwalk with Fleet Pond close by on the right, and in 60m continue a little to the left by

an info panel and a slipway. In 220 metres you pass more benches on the right and in another 30 metres an info panel. In 80 metres turn right by some steps up to the station car park (with **Fleet Station** 100 metres away).

In 200 metres pass another set of steps to the station car park and continue with the South West Main Line to the left. In 130 metres you pass another slipway and a bench. In 30 metres fork right, away from the railway line and the BPW, on to the Red Route. This is a pleasant woodland stretch, close to the shore and with higher ground on the left. In 500 metres a path joins from the left and in another 60 metres by an information board for **Sandy Hill Copse**, you turn left up some low steps, leaving the Fleet Pond Nature Reserve (GR 825550) **and follow the main walk directions just below.**

Fleet Pond to Minley Road (Crown and Cushion) (2.8 km)

1. You climb away from the pond with low wooden railings on both sides, to the left then down to the right. In another 30 metres continue along a path alongside the woods on your left (60°). In 220 metres as you near the end of the trees, take a wide gravel track half left (15°) in to the woods, (the path continues to your right in a straight line across the meadow). In 300 metres go round a car barrier and turn right along a tarmac lane (back on the BPW). In 100 metres turn left to cross the South West Main Line on **Bramshot Bridge** (GR 830555).
2. In 30 metres cross the busy A3013 Fleet Road, opposite Lower Bramshot Farm, and turn right along the opposite grassy verge (or turn left for a bus stop for services to Farnborough (Line 10)). In 70 metres, turn left along a narrow signposted footpath. Follow this with a wooden fence on your right at first, then a wire mesh fence (you have re-entered the **Aldershot and Minley Training Area**). In 150 metres you emerge from the wood through a wooden gate onto a wide track.
3. **Here you have a choice**, the **Main Route** (which will lead through the potentially water-logged Foxlease Meadows), or a longer **Alternative Dry Route**.
4. **Main Route:** Continue in the same direction along a clear wide grassy path, leaving the BPW. In 220 metres you go through a wooden gate and in 20 metres turn left on Bramshot Lane, opposite the timber-framed **Great Bramshot Farmhouse**. In 250 metres **[!]** turn left through a wooden kissing gate to the left of wooden field gate into **Foxlease Meadows** (Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust - Permissive Access). Curve to the right along a clear grass path, aiming for a metal cattle trough in the far field corner. In 180 metres go through a wooden kissing gate to the left of a field gate into a nother meadow and in 70 metres leave it through a metal field gate, still keeping the fence to your right. Follow the rising track over the M3 in 120 metres (GR 832565), with views of **Minley Manor** ahead to the left. In 130 metres go through a metal gate to the left of a metal field gate.

5. You emerge near the right hand edge of a large meadow. Be warned that the going underfoot is very uneven over the next section. Turn right over a ditch (passing to the right of a short section of wooden fence) and then left **this side of a metal cattle trough** to follow the edge of the next meadow, with the ditch now to your left, heading roughly North-East. In 100 metres you cross another ditch and continue ahead. In 90 metres ignore a plank bridge and metal gate to your left. In 15 metres go through or over a metal gate and continue in to the next meadow, now with a wire fence beyond the ditch. You pass under mini-pylons in 170 metres and under HV pylons in another 40 metres. In 30 metres ignore a bridge and metal gate to the left of a metal field gate to your left, with views of a pub and cricket ground ahead. Continue ahead and go through a metal gate on your left in 30 metres, then through a wooden field gate in another 20 metres. Continue along a wire fence on your right initially and in 40 metres veer right across the meadow along a clear path. In 90 metres go through a wooden kissing gate and continue to the left of the cricket field and through the car park to **The Crown and Cushion** pub and its main entrance on **Minley Road**.

6. **Alternative Dry Route** [Directions for this section last checked: **16/11/2024**]
 Turn left on the wide track with the BPW and in 100 metres go past **Little Bramshot Farm**. In 270 metres and in another 230 metres go through wooden gates to the right of cattle grids and turn left with the track at the edge of **Ancels Copse**. In 450 metres turn right at a T-junction and in 100 metres cross the M3. In 450 metres cross a stream and go under mini pylons.
 In 170 metres, just before an HV pylon line, turn right with a bridleway marker on a fence post to continue to the right of a line of trees (with a pasture beyond). You have left the BPW. In 320 metres go under the electricity line and in 140 metres turn left with a marker post at a path junction. In 80 metres turn right in a meadow with another marker post, along its right hand edge. In 270 metres where a track joins from the right, **[!]** go through a wooden gate to the left of a wooden field gate into a pasture, ignoring both the track from the right and the continuation ahead.
 In 40 metres fork left to continue along the left hand field boundary and in 220 metres go through a tree line (a field boundary). In 160m ignore a wide gap on the left into a neighbouring pasture and in 170 metres curve to the left with the clear grass path. In 130 metres turn left to a wooden kissing gate and continue through trees for 35 metres to the car park of **The Crown & Cushion** pub. Walk through the car park to the left of the pub to **Minley Road** (the A327) and **resume the main walk directions just below**.

Minley Road to Blackwater (5.1 km)

1. Cross Minley Road and enter some woods through a gap (a little to the left if you have come from the pub entrance). Turn left along a tarmac path running parallel with the road. In 210 metres turn right along a public bridleway, signposted on the

- left by the road and now with an earth bank on the left. The **Alternative Dry Route has joined** from across the road. In 200 metres, at a four-way junction, turn right with a bridleway marker post. In 50 metres ignore a path forking right and in 180 metres a track turning to the right.
2. In 110 metres turn left with a bridleway marker post. In 70 metres, at a three-way junction, turn right. In 250 metres (just after a path joins from the right), you emerge from the trees on the shores of **Hawley Lake** opposite some boat houses and continue ahead on a sandy stretch. In 250 metres you re-enter the woods and in 230 metres turn left along a tarmac drive at a bend and go over a brick bridge across the lake outflow (Hawley Lake Stream).
 3. Follow the tarmac lane, with houses close by on your right and in 110 metres with fine views across the lake. In 30 metres you pass a sign prohibiting swimming and boating. In 70 metres, fork left off the lane along a clear gravel path through the woods. In 30 metres fork right (gravel) and in 50 metres you emerge in a sandy area by the lake on the left. Follow its right hand edge and in 40 metres re-enter trees to **[!]** bear left along a narrow path which curves to the left and in 70 metres passes the top end of the lake. In 80 metres turn right along a broad forest track which in 30 metres bears left. In 65 metres turn right along a car wide gravel lane (20°).
 4. In 150 metres turn left along a tarmac lane, an unmarked public bridleway. In 300 metres turn right (60°) at a junction with a tarmac lane in the centre of **Hawley Common**.
 5. In 100 metres fork right along an earthen path uphill, where the lane bears left. In 210 metres cross a track and continue uphill. In 350 metres the path turns a little to the right and in 80 metres you ignore a path from the left and in 20 metres pass a marker post on the right. In another 20 metres at a multi-path junction, **[!]** you turn second left downhill (35°). In 220 metres cross a wide clearing and in 40 metres cross a track and continue along a wide stony path (10°) through **The Wood**.
 6. In 430 metres ignore a broad track sharply to your left, with houses visible up a rise nearby. In 50 metres, within sight of a brick house ahead, turn right across a ditch with a low footpath marker post and ascend gently out of the wood. In 140 metres go through a gap and in 20 metres cross a drive and enter **Hawley Green**, with some play facilities and Holy Trinity Church in the opposite corner.
 7. Stay on the left hand edge of the green and in 70 metres go through a gap in the bushes ahead. In 20 metres cross **Hawley Road** (the B3272) with care. Continue ahead through trees for 15 metres and emerge in **The Glebe** (road) and continue in the same direction. In 60 metres ignore a turning on the left and in 50 metres turn left with The Glebe at a T-junction. In 50 metres continue around to the right with the road (now New Road) and in 160 metres turn left along Vicarage Road, to reach London Road (A30) in 110 metres. The **Mr Bumble** pub is on your left, **The Royal Swan** opposite.

8. Cross the A30 at the traffic lights and turn right as follows:
 - for trains to Reading from platform 2 follow the left forking approach road (White Hart Parade) for 110 metres past a parade of shops and takeaways;
 - for trains to Guildford and Gatwick Airport from platform 1, follow the elevated A30 across the railway line in 120 metres and in 30 metres turn left down a flight of steps to reach Blackwater station in 50 metres.

If you have time to kill until the next train, follow the main road further and explore the River Blackwater and Shepherd Meadows to the left.

Option : Alternative start from Aldershot Station (5.2 km to Windy Gap Hill/Caesar's Camp)

Directions for this section last checked: 05/11/2024

1. Arriving at Aldershot Station on platform 2, walk through a subway or via an overbridge across to platform 1 and leave through the station building onto the forecourt. Turn right immediately and in 50 metres turn right again over a footbridge crossing railway line and platforms. Bear left down the short East Station Road. In 50m at a four-way road junction, turn left along **St George's Road**, signposted 'Football Ground'. In 200 metres cross over St Michael's Road into St George's Road East and follow it around to the A323 (High Street) 130 metres away.
2. Turn hard right back on yourself to enter **Aldershot Manor Park** through some ornamental metal gates. In 30 metres take the middle path, leading up through the middle of the park and in 270 metres pass to the right of the red-brick **Aldershot Manor**. Continue uphill and in 50 metres turn left away from the main path, soon passing to the right of the **Heroes' Shrine and Garden** (including a memorial to various towns which were bombed during the blitz and a statue of Christ calming the waves), which is worth a short detour. This is the start of the **Brenda Parker Way** (BPW), marked by purple roundels which you now follow all the way to Rowhill Copse.
3. Leave the park in 90 metres and turn right up Church Hill, passing **St Michael's the Archangel Church** on your right. Cross Church Lane East and turn right along it and in 40 metres turn left along Croft Road. In 120 metres fork left past a half-hearted car barrier and continue along a narrower tarmac path between wooden garden fences. In 190 metres turn left along the wider of two paths, heading gently downhill along gravel and past a low BPW marker post.
4. In 40 metres you enter **Brickfields Country Park** by a map and an info panel. This tiny country park was reclaimed from the remains of a Victorian brickworks and clay diggings. In 40 metres fork left towards a black litter bin 30 metres away. Follow the path past a lake on the left and on to a grassy area with some large boulders in 50 metres. Curve to the right with the path and in 60 metres turn right at a BPW marker post. The path is tarmacked in 30 metres and continues a little to the right to emerge in Laurel Gardens (cul-de-sac) in 30 metres.

5. Follow the road to the left and in 60 metres turn right into Walnut Close, continuing ahead in 40 metres along a tarmac path leading to **Highfield Avenue** in 50 metres. Cross the road and turn right along it and in 30 metres turn left along a fenced tarmac path. In 180 metres this continues to the left of Boxalls Grove (road). In 50 metres turn right along Boxalls Lane at a T-junction to go under the railway line. At a subsequent main road junction at a bend, continue ahead along **Weybourne Road** (the B3007) on its right-hand side, now following the **Blackwater Valley Path** (BVP), marked by navy blue roundels. In 30 metres you enter 'Surrey' by a boundary sign on the left and 120 metres pass the Duke of York pub on the right at the junction with Ayling Lane. In another 75 metres cross over the difficult-to-spot infant **River Blackwater** (by a lamp-post and behind a low brick wall).
6. Ignore an immediate right turn (an unnamed private road) and in 50 metres turn right into **Parkland Grove**, an unmade road. In 100 metres at the end of the road you enter **Rowhill Copse** along the left of two paths, past a car barrier, ignoring the path to the right through a wooden gate. A tributary to the Blackwater trickles alongside on your right at first but you cross it in 80 metres. Continue uphill and in 70 metres cross a track and in 40 metres another tributary. In 100m you pass to the left of a large meadow and in 160 metres keep left at a path junction at the end of the meadow.
7. In 80 metres ignore a left turn and in 90 metres turn right with the path. In 60 metres turn left with a BVP marker post and in 110 metres pass to the right of a small pond. In 90 metres you reach the **source of the River Blackwater** with an information board (on your right, but currently missing from its frame). The streamlet here typically holds much less water than any of the tributaries crossed en route, but it is the furthest source of the river.
8. Continue to the right along the path on the level (there used to be steps to the left leading higher up Hallimore Hill, but they have deteriorated and are of no use). In 50 metres you pass a footpath and **Rowhill Nature Trail** marker post by some steps coming up on the right. Continue ahead towards some houses and in 20m metres you pass a concrete county boundary marker to go **back into Hampshire**. In 20 metres ignore a left turn uphill.
9. In 80 metres by Rowhill Cottage on the right and a BVP signpost on the left and just short of a main road, turn left through a car park and in 50 metres continue along the road (Cranmore Lane, the B3008) to pass to the right of the **Rowhill Nature Reserve Conservation and Field Centre**. Continue past a bus stop to a mini-roundabout 40 metres away at the junction with Farnborough Road (the A325). Turn right across Cranmore Lane and then left across Farnborough Road and continue to the right of a wooden fence corner and in 25 metres go through the metal kissing gate into a wood, part of the MOD **Aldershot and Minley Training Area**, which has public access subject to the by-laws.
10. In 40 metres the path veers right away from the wooden fence and ascends steeply. In 70 metres you cross a path in a dip and continue in the same direction (North-

West) uphill between earth banks. At the top of the rise in 50 metres, you emerge from the wood and turn left (you leave the BPW here) on a wide path with a wood of silver birch on your left and open views across the plain on your right, including the high ground around **Caesar's Camp**.

11. In 150 metres cross a track and in another 100 metres at a multi-track junction and continue ahead through trees. In 60 metres veer right with the narrow track and in 15 metres you join a wider one (you have crossed it 80 metres ago). In 90 metres at another multi-track junction, take the second track on your right (downhill and heading North West), in 40 metres passing the **Horse Swimming Pond** on your left.
12. In 90 metres at the end of the pond, the track starts to gently rise again, and in 20 metres you cross a track. In 80 metres cross a track in a dip and in 190m reach the top of the climb at a multi-track junction on the ridge of **Windy Gap Hill**, where the Main Walk route joins up from the left behind. **Follow the main walk directions from Point 1.**

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