



Walk 3

Moushill Down, Bagmoor Common, Borough Farm and Rodborough Common



-  ROADS
-  FOOTPATHS & TRACKS
-  ROUTE OF WALK
-  WOODED AREAS
-  BUILDINGS

Map: OS Explorer Map 145 – Guildford & Farnham

Start: Lower Moushill Lane.

Grid Ref: SU943423 **Distance:** 3.2 miles

Terrain: Short climb near start, then mainly flat. Marshy at Bagmoor. Several stiles. Boots recommended. Watch small children at top of sandpit.

Refreshments: None on route. Picnic spot on Moushill Down.



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Directions

Walk down Lower Moushill Lane passing Moushill Court on the left. The walled garden of the Manor is on your right.

Moushill (mouse infested hill) is one of the oldest known settlements in the area, dating from at least 1263. On the left is the lower part of Moushill Park in which nestles Moushill Court. This was the old house of Moushill Manor, a subsidiary manor of Witley. Robert Court, owner of Witley Mill at Rake and Thursley Mill at Cosford, lived here in the 13th century. During the Civil War Richard Smith lived here. He was responsible for coordinating Parliamentary support from the southern half of the Godalming Hundred, including Chiddingfold, Haslemere, Thursley and Witley. Down the lane off to the right is Amberley Farm, which served the manor. During the 18th Century, the Stilwell family owned the manor and many improvements were made. It would have been at this time that the gardens and Moushill Park were laid out on the hillside, now largely dug away for the A3.

Continue down the lane and up over the A3. After West Moushill, on your left, the metalled road ends. Turn left onto a narrow path uphill by a sign saying Footpath & Bridleway only. Keep to this path until you reach the top of the hill and the open grassland of Moushill Down known locally as Heavens Gate.

This is a good place for picnics.

Enter the oak thicket on the right and aim for the right hand bench with a view to the west. From the bench go right on the path till you join the way-marked path coming in from the left and turn right on to it. Shortly fork right into light mixed woodland and follow the path downhill. After a short distance divert a few steps to the left to reach the upper edge of an old sandpit.

Sand from the Lower Greensand was used for building and for domestic purposes, as a scourer and for sweeping up dirt from floors. Sand was delivered each week by the sandman. These are old sandpits, in use before 1872. Many new pits were opened at the end of the 19th century as the building demands increased and for the remodelling of Witley Park.

Return to the path and continue downhill to reach the bridleway opposite Dairy Farm. Turn left, passing the base of the sandpit, and after a few paces fork right at the footpath sign. Shortly reach a stile on the right, cross it and follow the path ahead to cross two stiles close together. Continue across the fir plantation to a fourth stile. The path now goes across the marsh, which at times can be very wet, to another stile and a bridge over a stream to reach a grass area with a house (Bagmoor Cottage) on the right.

This is Bagmoor Path, an old track to Bagmoor and Royal Commons and thence to Elstead. The stream drains from the ironwork ponds featured in walk 2 and flows downstream through Oxenford Farm to the River Wey. Bagmoor Cottage dates from the 17th century.

Do not take the first obvious track left but after a few paces take the second path left into the woods to reach a Surrey Wildlife Trust notice board..

This area was inhabited in Prehistoric Times. A bronze axe head was found here and can be seen at Haslemere Museum. Watch out for woodpeckers, damselflies and rare butterflies and notice tree-felling to remove Turkey oaks and silver birch, with a view to extending the areas of open heath.

Continue on this straight path till a junction is reached and bear left leaving the nature reserve. Follow this path with the stream to your left, ignoring the first bridge over it, and then cross on the second bridge. This section can be very wet at times.

The path is the parish boundary between Witley and Peper Harow. It is bordered on both sides by large alder, which was often planted in banks alongside streams as their dense root system provided protection from floodwater damage. This must have been important here when the sluice gates to the ponds upstream were opened. Freshwater mussels may be found in the stream.

Over the bridge follow the drive, past the half-timbered cottage on the right and Borough Farm on the left to the iron gate exit. Press the button on the right to open the gates. After passing through the gates turn left.

On the left of the track are some Robinia Pseudacacia trees, otherwise known as Locust tree, easily identified by their lovely bark. These were popularised by William Cobbett because their wood is very tough and hard and was considered ideal for providing wooden pins for shipbuilding.

Follow this bridleway through Rodborough Common for about half a mile, eventually passing a house on the left, Burchetts. A short way down the lane on the right is Moushill Corner.

At this point you can, alternatively, continue on the path round to the left for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to reach the start.

Take the path ahead uphill for about 200 yards to reach a car park.

On the right is open grassland where the Canadian Army Camp at Rodborough Hill was situated and which became the first site of Rodborough School.

Leave the car park at the far end by the track on the right going down under the A3. Emerge onto the A3 approach road and turn left. Continue on the pavement past Moushill Green and the site of the White Lion pub on the right.

This was where the sailor murdered at Hindhead in 1786 met his assailants, travelled with them along the turnpike road, now the A3, as far as Thursley, where they stopped again at the Red Lion before heading off to the top of Hindhead.

To return to the start, continue on the left hand pavement to reach Lower Moushill Lane on the left.

