

Southborough Common Circular Walks



WALK 1 • SECRETS CIRCULAR

1 Bridlepath

The western boundary to the Common is marked by a bridleway which leads from Modest Corner to the northern entrance at Birchwood Avenue. A former medieval droveway, where each autumn pigs or cattle were driven from manor farms to the Wealden Forests to feed on acorns and beech mast. This is the only public right of way on the Common although the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk route passes through the middle and is signposted.

2 Whortleberry Wood Bank

A substantial man-made bank built to enclose Whortleberry Wood from the adjacent wood pasture and prevent grazing animals from browsing coppiced woodland. The enclosure dates from the early Medieval period (AD 410-1066) and latterly formed part of the Bounds Estate. It was topped by an iron fence before the Second World War, the remnants of which can still be seen today in a few places.

Whortleberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) is another name for bilberry (or huckleberry) which grows well on the sandy sloping soils in the wood – a shrub whose berries are rich in Vitamin C and would have been picked as a dietary supplement. The wood is dominated by mature beech trees, planted for their wood product and is quite different in character from the remainder of the Common.

3 The Pineys

Notice the notable veteran multi-stemmed pine tree amongst others in “the Pineys”, a grove of Scots pine trees probably planted in the Victorian era as a visual feature.

4 The Windmill Site

The site of a post mill which was operational here from the 1790s and used to grind local farmers’ corn for flour. It would have been similar to the windmill at Nutley (East Sussex) which is still in working order today.

Evidence suggests the mill was moved to nearby Cade Street, Tonbridge in the 1820s when competition from local water mills became too strong.

The site is identified by a raised level platform on which the windmill would have stood. After it moved, the plot known as “Mill Platt” was retained in private ownership as an allotment until 1948 when it was sold to the then Southborough Urban District Council. It was marked by a hedge, parts of which can still be seen today as mature Ash, Yew and Sycamore trees growing on the plot boundary.

5 Charcoal Platform

A levelled platform was created here and possibly used for making charcoal from local woods. Other such sites may lie undiscovered on the Common, probably created in the post-medieval period (1540-1800) and another sign of the Common’s industrial past.

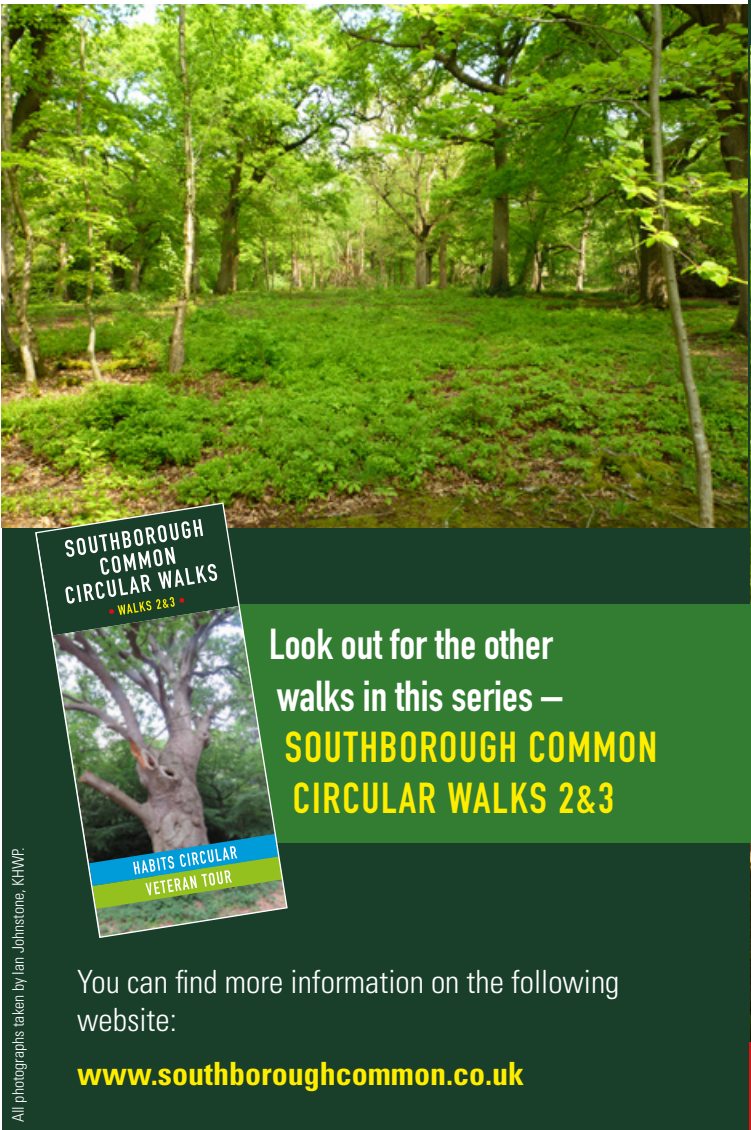
6 Veteran Beech

The veteran beech tree has been reduced for safety reasons and remains a great example of standing dead wood, so valuable for fungi, insects, invertebrates and probably bats. Dead wood is a vital component of any woodland ecosystem and is left on the Common where possible.

INFORMATION

Location

Free parking is available opposite the cricket ground on Church Road and by the side of St Peter’s Church, TN4 0RU. The walks begin and finish at the far end of the car park.



SOUTHBOROUGH COMMON CIRCULAR WALKS

• WALK 1 •



SECRETS CIRCULAR

SOUTHBOROUGH COMMON CIRCULAR WALKS

The highlighted trails cover the key features, but they are only suggestions – all the main paths are marked on the map, so it is easy to alter or combine the routes, pick your own starting point, or choose your own walk.

The trails use a variety of paths, including some unsurfaced ones.

Please cross the roads with great care.

FEATURES KEY

- 1 Bridlepath
- 2 Whortleberry Wood Bank
- 3 The Pineys
- 4 The Windmill Site
- 5 Charcoal Platform
- 6 Veteran Beech
- 7 The Horse Ring
- 8 Gravel Pit
- 9 Heathland
- 10 Veteran Oak



- Secrets Circular
- Path (unsurfaced)
- Gravel pit
- Pub/Bar/Eatery
- Parking

Please note: this map is not a legal record of the alignment or existence of a public right of way. No measurements should be taken from it. © Crown Copyright and database right 2018. Ordnance Survey 100019238