

Pirbright & Hodge Brook Circular - 6.7km



200 m
500 ft

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Source: All Trails

Start to School Lane

To begin, make your way to the bus shelter on the southern corner of Pirbright Green, alongside the White Hart pub. Cross the main road and go along the side road (signed as leading to Church Lane) heading away from the green, signed for parish church. At the junction, keep left onto Church Lane and follow this (taking care of any traffic) to reach the parish church on your right. Saint Michael and All Angels Church was rebuilt in 1784 and is one of the few examples of a Georgian church to be found in Surrey. Sir Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904) is buried in the churchyard. Born a Welshman, John Rowlands, he ran away from a workhouse at the age of 15 and went to America where he was adopted by a New Orleans family whose name he took. In 1869, he went to Africa as a journalist for the New York Herald to look for Livingstone whom he met near Lake Tanganyika and spoke those immortal words, "Dr. Livingstone I presume?". After many travels Stanley was knighted and he and his wife lived at Furze Hill, Pirbright for the last few years of his life. He had requested that his body be buried beside that of Livingstone in Westminster Abbey but this was refused. Go past the church and turn right onto the footpath over a stream and follow this for some distance to reach the road, School Lane.

School Lane to Church Lane

At the road, turn left along the pavement. After 160m, turn left opposite Causeway Farm along West Heath. Pass Thompsons Close and continue ahead to reach the road, Church Lane.

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Church Lane to Manor House

Turn left along the road for 110m, passing The Old School House, then turn right along the footpath between fields. Cross a bridge and go through a kissing gate then walk diagonally right across the field (heading back on yourself, at about 2 o'clock) up Hazelacre Hill, passing a clump of trees on your right. Go through a kissing gate, bear slightly right and keep ahead to a kissing gate in the field corner into woods. Much of the parish lies on poor, sandy soil. By 1911, the War office had acquired three-quarters of the land for military training purposes, and laid out extensive rifle ranges. Follow the path ahead along an old fence line to reach a track. Bear left at the track and keep left along the road to pass the entrance for Pirbright Lodge on the left. Opposite Pirbright Lodge is Admiral's Walk. Admiral John Byron (1723-1786), an explorer and the grandfather of the poet, lived at the Lodge and planted an avenue of Scots pines here, which have since been felled. Continue for 500m, passing the pond by the Manor House on your left. The present mill house on the left dates from the seventeenth century. The mill and adjacent manor house formed the nucleus of the settlement at Pirbright for more than 500 years. The Manor House (private) dates from the sixteenth century and was built on the site of a moated medieval manor. It formed part of the marriage settlement of Katharine of Aragon, Henry VIII's first wife.

Manor House to Rowe Lane

Just past Millcroft on your right, bear right through a kissing gate. Go across the fields (following the fence on the right) and through two kissing gates to join an enclosed path.

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At the end of this path, cross the main road to the left of the mini-roundabout and turn right along the pavement for Guildford Road (B3032). Burner's Heath (on the right) is named after the family who used to live in Burner's Farmhouse, and is managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust. Pass Burner's Farm on your left and continue to reach Rowe Lane (on the left).

Rowe Lane to Whites Lane

Bear left into Rowe Lane and follow this as it swings right (ignoring the footpath into Whites Lane on the left). After 110m turn left at a kissing gate to go up onto the footpath. Keep ahead to a T junction with a tarmac track. Turn left along the track then keep ahead at the signed crossroads on the tarmac track which becomes a path into woods. Some way in, cross the footbridge (via stiles at each end) then turn immediately left (caution: it can be very wet here). Keep ahead on the path beside the stream on the left. At the end of the holly bushes, swing right then left to join the path running beside Pirbright Common on the right. At the junction, pass to the left of the house. Keep ahead past Hogley's Farm and a house on your left, then keep ahead on a woodland path and then an access track for 100m to reach Whites Lane on the left (opposite Sandyburn).

Whites Lane to Pirbright Green

Turn left into Whites Lane. Pass between houses then keep ahead on the path to reach a farm access track. Turn left along the track and, after 65m, turn right onto a signed footpath (just before the property, White's Farm).

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Go through a gate and turn left across the field to reach a gate and footbridge near the field corner. Cross the footbridge and bear right through the woods and follow the long path ahead to pass through the woodland. Eventually, the path swings left to join a tarmac drive. Follow the drive, through a gate, and continue to reach the road (with the Cricketers pub on the left and Pirbright Green opposite).

Pirbright Green to End

Cross the road to enter the side road opposite, then turn left onto the tarmac path across the green, passing a pond on the left and Lord Pirbright's Hall on the right. The well-tended green is part of Pirbright Common. In 1953 the Parish Council made an island in the pond, planted the willow and introduced the ducks. Baron Henry de Worms lived at Henley Park nearby and was created Lord Pirbright by Queen Victoria. He and his wife presented the hall and recreation ground to the village to commemorate the accession of King Edward VII in 1901. Alongside the hall you will see the village sign. The wrought iron sign depicting a pear tree was erected by the villagers to commemorate the silver jubilee of Elizabeth II in 1977. The name Pirbright is derived from the Old English pyrige (pear tree) and fryth (wood). Pirbright was part of the Royal hunting forest of Windsor until 1694. Beyond Lord Pirbright's Hall, bear left along the main road to reach the bus stop where the walk began.

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