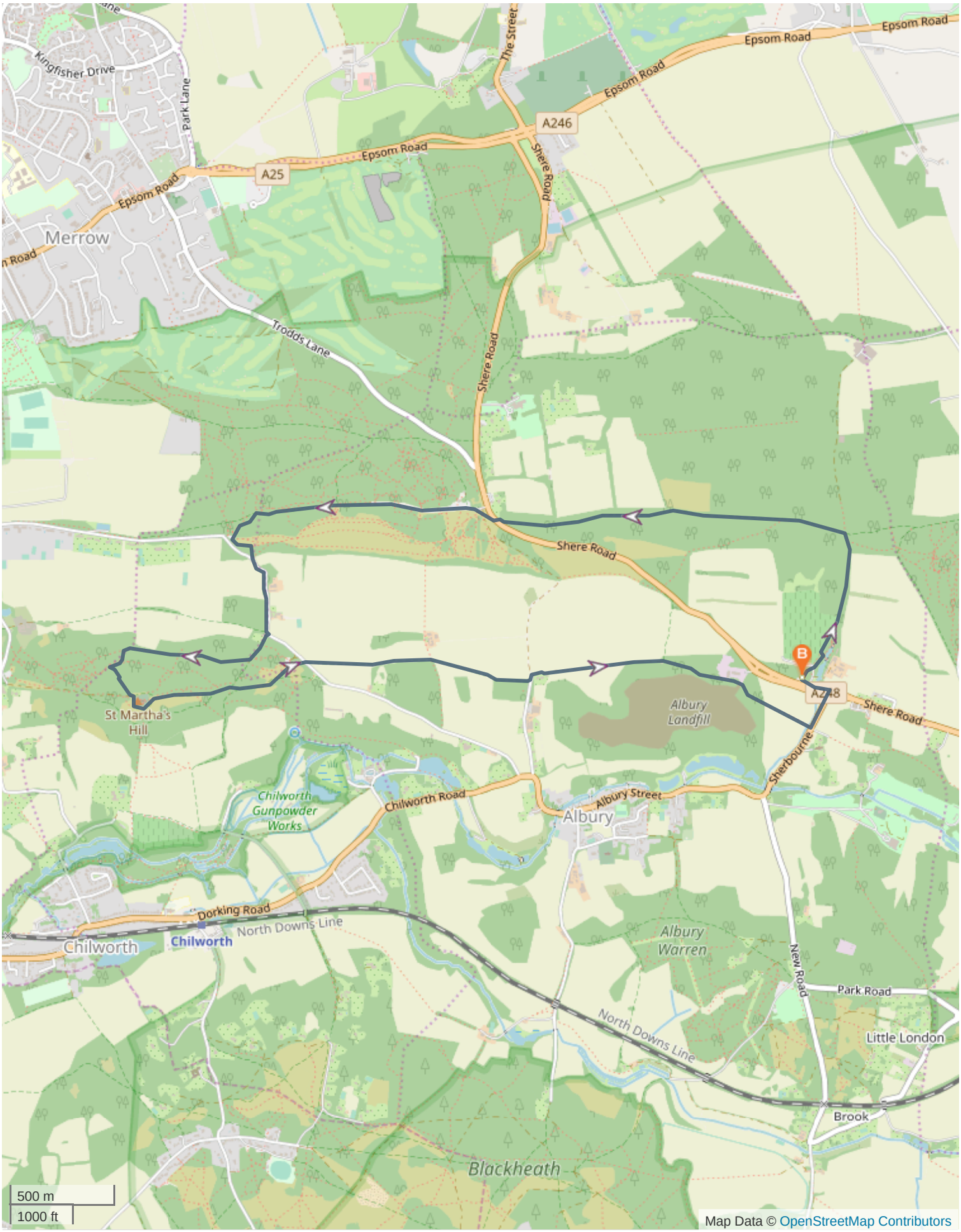
Silent Pool, Newland's Corner & St. Martha's Hill



surreywalks

Silent Pool, Newland's Corner & St. Martha's Hill - 9.2km

Source: All Trails

Start to North Downs Way

From the Silent Pool car park, take the path which starts between two noticeboards, about halfway along the car park's length. Follow this path heading away from the road and then swinging right to reach a junction with a vehicle track (with the entrance for Albury Vineyard to your left). Go straight ahead to reach the viewing platform at Sherbourne Pond, the newer of the two pools here. It was dug out in the 1600s to provide water to power fountains, grind animal feed and irrigate the vineyard that served Albury village. When you have finished on the viewing platform, come back to the stone path and turn right along this, following the line of a fence on your right. NOTE: On the off-chance this permissive path is closed for maintenance, there is a footpath running parallel about 10 metres to your left (accessible just by the vineyard entrance). Stay with the fence on your right as the path leads you past Sherbourne Pond and you will be able to see the cascading waterfalls at the far side. At a junction in the path you will come to Silent Pool ahead, with a handy bench to sit and drink in the atmosphere. Sherbourne Pond and Silent Pool are fed by springs and are known for the eerie blue hue to the water. It is a site of mystery and ancient legend. Silent Pool has always been a popular place to visit and many feel an eerie stillness looking over the still water surrounded by the evergreen box trees. Turn left up the flight of wooden steps to reach a T-junction with the higher parallel footpath. Turn right along this, with the vineyard running on your left. Stay with this path as it begins the steep climb up the North Downs (take care as the path can be very slippery). Underfoot and in the right-hand banks you will see the white chalk bedrock of the downs. Stay with this path all the way to the top of the hill where it meets a crossroads with the North Downs Way, marked with a fingerpost.

North Downs Way to Newlands Corner

Turn left to join the North Downs Way heading west. You will pass a waymarker post with a purple arrow and this Purple Ox Trail route is the one you will be following throughout. For this stretch, the North Downs Way follows a fairly level wide track, once a Drove Road which would have been used by farmers to move their livestock. The woodland verges are thick with bluebells in the late spring. The whole North Downs Way runs for a total of 153 miles, from Farnham to Dover! Simply stay ahead on the North Downs Way, following it for some distance until you emerge alongside a vehicle barrier to reach a junction with the A25. Cross over with care (taking care to both listen and look for traffic as this can be a busy road). At the far side you will be greeted with the spectacular views for which Newlands Corner is famous. In the spring and summer the open grassland is covered in wildflowers and the woodland is alive with birdsong. The famous novelist Agatha Christie staged her disappearance from here in 1926, causing a huge search of the Downs. Turn right along the stone path and follow it up into the car park at Newlands Corner. Bear left, to walk along the length of the car park, passing the toilets and visitor centre across to the right.

Newlands Corner to Keepers Cottage

Continue through the Newlands Corner car park, heading away from the road, all the way to its end. At the far end, pass alongside the vehicle barrier and continue directly ahead on the obvious path running along an avenue within the woodland. Pass alongside the next vehicle barrier and continue on the woodland track. Ignore any small paths into the clearings on the left, although these do make a nice detour to enjoy the views should you wish.

Further along, (within an often muddy stretch) keep a look out for a fingerpost on the right which marks a permissive horse ride on your right. Do NOT take this, instead keep ahead for 10 metres to reach a small waymarker post on your left (with the purple arrow). Turn left and follow this path into the trees. The path swings right leading you under the branches of several large yew trees. Immediately after these you will pick up the next waymarker. Follow the arrow which directs you onto the path swinging steadily left, heading downhill, and you will emerge into a parking area. Cross over and take the continuing purple path directly ahead. The stone path swings left and then levels off. At the next waymarker post turn sharp right onto a stone path heading downhill through the trees. Keep left at the fork (Note: keep children and dogs close at this point as you are heading for a road). Pass through the staggered barrier to reach a junction with a quiet lane. Cross over and take the steps directly ahead. At the top, the path swings left to run parallel with the road on your left. Stay with this roadside path as it leads you steadily downhill until you reach a T-junction with a half-timbered black and white cottage directly ahead, Keepers Cottage

Keepers Cottage to St Martha's Church

Turn left (alongside the gate) and then immediately right onto the stone track signed as the North Downs Way, passing the cottage on your right. Soon after the fence ends on your right, you will pick up the next purple waymarker which confirms you are on the right path. Stay with this path which leads you to a major junction, marked with a couple of waymarker posts. Turn right here to join the permissive horse ride, also marked with the purple arrow.

Follow the main obvious path which winds and undulates along the northern edge of St Martha's Hill, passing between several tall coniferous trees. As you pick up the next waymarker post, stay with the purple trail which bears left heading uphill to reach a T-junction. Turn right and you will pass a stone boundary marker dating from 1933. 20 metres later, turn left onto a sandy path leading you uphill once again. At the top of the hill you will come to St Martha's Church directly ahead. Part of the church dates back to the Norman period. Several circular earthworks nearby suggest a much longer history of occupation.

St Martha's Church to Water Lane

Turn left immediately before the church, joining the North Downs Way once again and passing the church immediately on your right. Beyond the churchyard, keep ahead on the most obvious path which bears right leading you to the southern edge of the hilltop. Take time to enjoy the superb views here which stretch for miles. The two villages in the valley below are Chilworth (ahead) and Albury (to the left). An obvious landmark is the red brick tower of St Peter and St Paul's Church in Albury. Turn left to join the wide sandy path with the fence and views running on your right. Just as the fence ends you will come to a fork, keep right and follow this path fairly steeply downhill. Stay with the main path (following the purple arrows) heading gently downhill, ignoring all the side paths. Towards the bottom you will pass a brick pillbox on your left and, soon afterwards, the path leads you directly into the St Martha's Hill car park on Guildford Lane. Leave the St Martha's Hill car park through the vehicle entrance. Turn right along Guildford Lane for 50 metres and then turn left to join the signed public bridleway.

Stay with the left-hand fence line and, further along, the path leads you past a woodland on your right (which is filled with bluebells in the late spring). Beyond the woodland you will come to a crossroads with a grass track. Go straight ahead through the gap in the hedge and walk diagonally right across the field (at about 1 o'clock). As your path reaches the right-hand fence line, fork right between the old gate posts to join a narrower path into the trees and scrub. Stay with the path as it leads you steadily downhill and then makes a steeper descent to reach a junction with a sunken lane, Water Lane.

Water Lane to End

Turn left and then immediately right to join the stone access track, a public bridleway. After passing a house on the right, keep directly ahead alongside a gate and follow the path between fields. Simply follow this path climbing steadily and eventually you will reach a property on your right, Timbercroft. Continue ahead, follow the vehicle track and at the fork bear right to join a smaller path leading you through the trees. Further along you will come to a junction with the concrete access track for a waste facility site, so take care of any lorries. Cross over and continue ahead on the woodland path. This stretch of path will lead you to a stile. Cross the stile into the field (which may be holding livestock) and walk straight ahead following the left-hand fence line. At the far side cross the stile and then go through the kissing gate to reach the A248. Cross over with care and turn left along the pavement (which is separated from the road with a hedge). You will come to the junction with the A25 dual carriageway. Use the designated crossing point to cross the dual carriageway, taking particular care as the traffic is quite fast moving. At the far side turn left along the pavement and you will come to the Silent Pool car park on your right where the walk began.