

North Downs Way

NATIONAL TRAIL 

explore
Surrey

A 2 mile (3.5km) circular walk between Abinger and Effingham on the White Downs through beautiful tranquil woodland and chalk grassland.

You will see many lovely views on this walk which goes through chalk grassland, along drove roads and passes the famous WWII pillboxes that provided a line of defence from German planes. Old Simm's Copse and Dunley Wood provide a wonderful display of bluebells in the spring.

THE WHITE DOWNS CIRCULAR ON THE NORTH DOWNS WAY

Allow 1 hour

This walk follows public footpaths and bridleways which cross private and public land. Please respect people's privacy, keep dogs under control and remember the Countryside Code. OS Map Explorer 146: Dorking, Box Hill and Reigate.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

START TO PUTTENHAM LANE

CAR PARK DIRECTIONS - If you are coming from the south, entrance for White Down Lane is on A25, just east of Abinger Hammer (approx postcode RH5 6PZ). From this point follow White Down Lane north (steeply uphill) for 1.5 miles, car park on left. If you are coming from the north, entrance for White Down Lane is at junction between Ranmore Common Road & Crocknorth Road (approx postcode RH5 6SL). From this point follow White Down Lane south for half a mile to car park on right.

START TO OLD SIMM'S JUNCTION

Walk to top of car park away from road where you will find a vehicle barrier. On right you will also see a waymarker post with a white arrow for self-guided trail that your walk will be following for its entire length. Pass alongside vehicle barrier and keep directly ahead on signed stone bridleway, heading steadily uphill. On your right you will see a bank running alongside path, topped with a line of beautiful old twisted beech trees. This is a good example of a boundary bank, probably dating from the 1700s, when parcels of land for timber production were separated from grazing areas and drove roads, this bridleway being one of the old drove roads. As path levels off you will come to a fingerpost marking a crossroads. Keep straight ahead and stay with this main path first meandering ahead and later, bearing left. On right is Old Simm's Copse, known as Bluebell Woods by locals, for good reason as you'll discover if you visit in the spring. Eventually path leads to a staggered crossroads marked with waymarker post.

1 OLD SIMM'S JUNCTION TO NORTH DOWNS WAY

Turn right here and follow wide bridleway with copse still on your right. Further along, path winds through section of heavily coppiced trees to reach next fingerpost marking junction with another bridleway. Turn left here and follow stone track as it goes downhill. This is an old coach road. After just a short distance you will come to a clearing between two lines of fencing and a fingerpost, marking junction with North Downs Way (NDW). Turn left, passing through kissing gate to enter National Trust (NT) site of Blatchford Downs.

2 NDW TO WHITE DOWN LEASE GATE

Follow obvious grass path leading you steadily downhill and passing a couple of handy benches on left, ideal spot for enjoying views down chalk grassland slopes and across valley.

The first farmers in this area removed much of the original woodland cover to create fields for their crops and livestock. Their grazing animals prevented regrowth of trees and coarse vegetation, which allowed the special wildlife habitat known as chalk grassland to develop and thrive as well as a diverse range of plants and butterflies.

The path swings left, entering a small belt of trees. Within woodland on left you will see remains of a brick pillbox. Most of the North Downs pillboxes still remain and today make important roosts for bats. Simply continue ahead on NDW, passing a second pillbox on your right, a third on your left and then a fourth across to your right once again. Eventually you will come to a kissing gate alongside an NT sign for White Down Lease.

3 WHITE DOWN LEASE GATE TO END

Pass through this gate and a few paces later you will come to a fingerpost, marking a staggered crossroads. Turn sharp left here, to join signed public footpath leading you steeply uphill and soon following line of a wire fence on your left. Stay with path as it swings left and levels off, still following fence line on your left. As you pass a large yew tree on your left, stay with path which veers right heading away from fence, passing a waymarker post and leading you uphill once again. A little way up, path swings left to merge with a wider track. 30

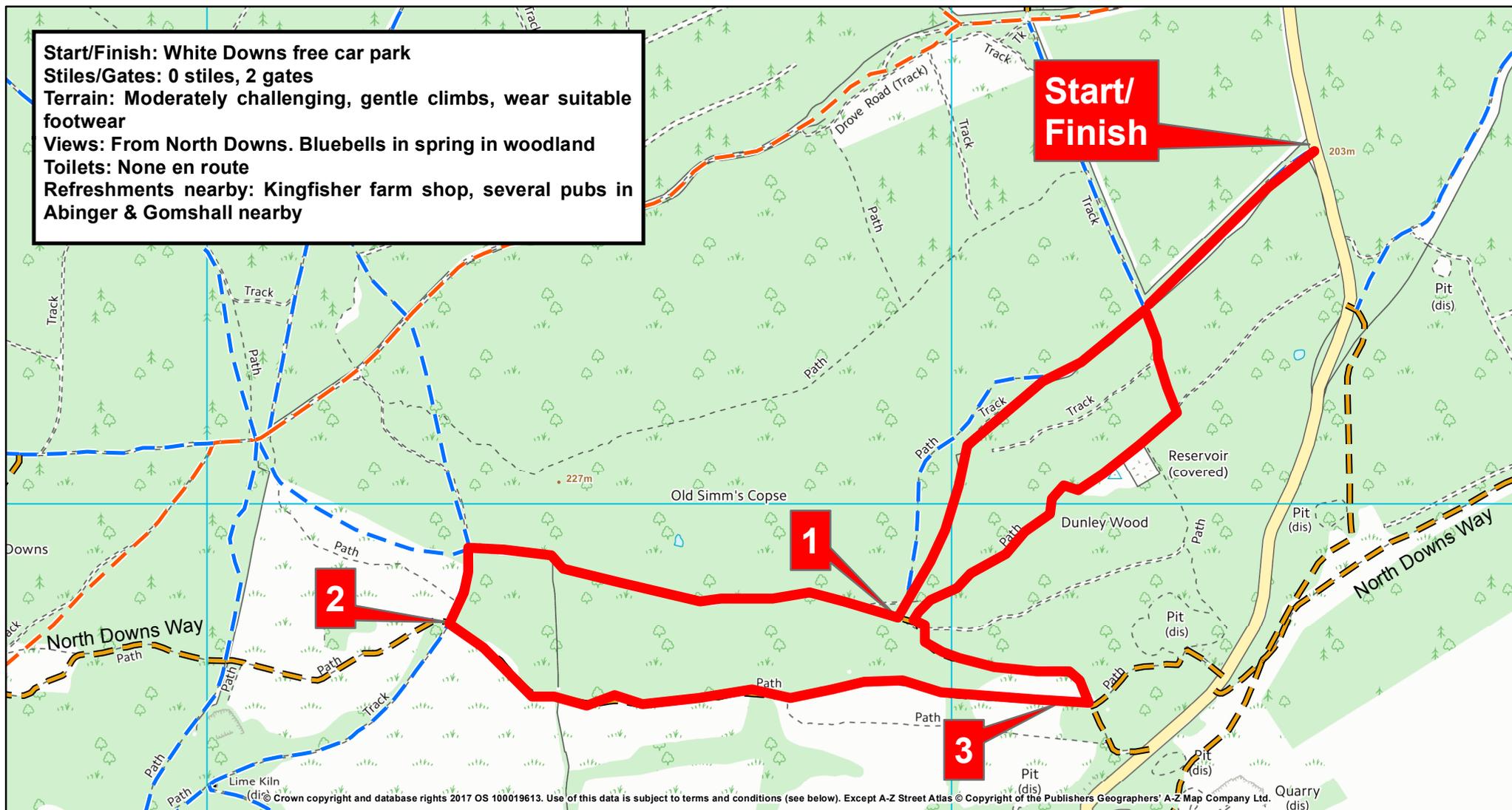
metres later, you will see a waymarker post on your right. Turn right, leaving main track to join a narrow path which winds through a short section of trees to reach a staggered crossroads (which you may recognise from the outward leg).

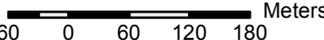
Turn right here and follow this track as it swings steadily left, leading you through Dunley Wood. Dunley Wood, part of the privately owned Wotton Estate, comprises a variety of trees including oak, ash, cherry, beech, larch and pine and also has a thriving bluebell population. Further along, path leads you past green railings and grass mounds of a water reservoir on your right, owned by the East Surrey Water Company. Immediately after reservoir you will reach a staggered crossroads, stay on main track (at about 11 o'clock). About 30 metres later as you reach a waymarker post, turn left to join narrower stone path winding through trees. You will emerge to crossroads of paths (marked with a fingerpost), that you passed through at start of walk.

Turn right to join bridleway and this will lead you directly back to car park where walk began. If you are looking for refreshments, Abinger Hammer and Gomshall are only a short drive away. Turn right out of car park, follow lane steeply downhill, turn right at T-junction and this road (the A25) will lead you through Abinger Hammer and on to Gomshall, both of which have plenty of options.

Fully illustrated walk directions to download at www.surreycc.gov.uk/selfguidedwalks or download the app at iFootpath.com

Start/Finish: White Downs free car park
Stiles/Gates: 0 stiles, 2 gates
Terrain: Moderately challenging, gentle climbs, wear suitable footwear
Views: From North Downs. Bluebells in spring in woodland
Toilets: None en route
Refreshments nearby: Kingfisher farm shop, several pubs in Abinger & Gomshall nearby



1:7,500  Meters



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HOW TO GET THERE - RH5 6PZ

By car: Free White Downs car park on White Down Lane (2m height restriction).

There is no public transport available for this walk.

RIGHTS OF WAY

-  Footpath
-  Bridleway
-  BOAT
-  Restricted byway