

Explore and Enjoy

EAST HORLEY CIRCULAR WALK



This lovely circular walk takes you on a journey through time where new meets old and built up areas merge with farmland, streams and woodland. Your route passes through the newest housing developments slowly moving outwards into the Surrey countryside, indicating how the South East of England continues to thrive.

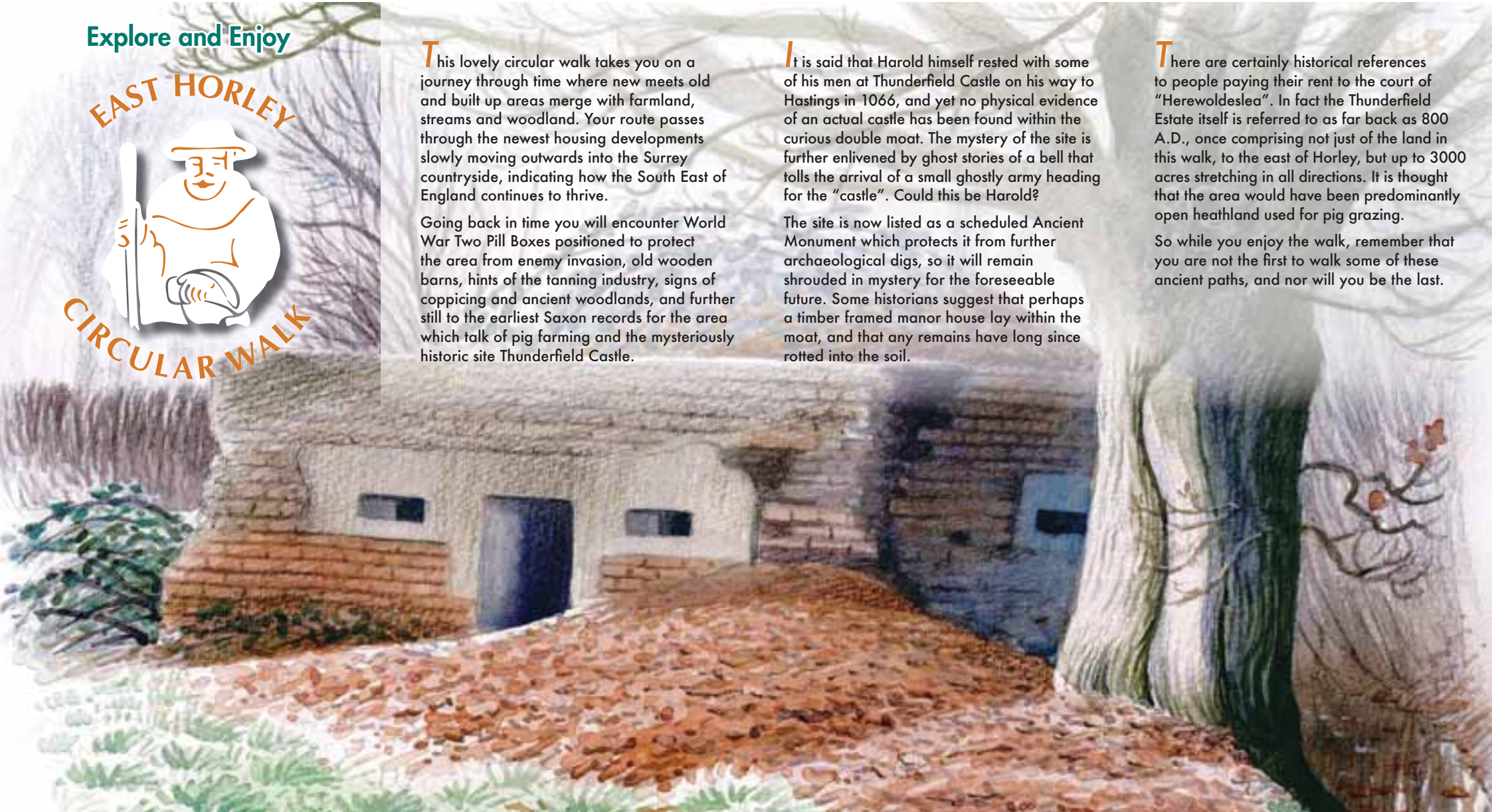
Going back in time you will encounter World War Two Pill Boxes positioned to protect the area from enemy invasion, old wooden barns, hints of the tanning industry, signs of coppicing and ancient woodlands, and further still to the earliest Saxon records for the area which talk of pig farming and the mysteriously historic site Thunderfield Castle.

It is said that Harold himself rested with some of his men at Thunderfield Castle on his way to Hastings in 1066, and yet no physical evidence of an actual castle has been found within the curious double moat. The mystery of the site is further enlivened by ghost stories of a bell that tolls the arrival of a small ghostly army heading for the "castle". Could this be Harold?

The site is now listed as a scheduled Ancient Monument which protects it from further archaeological digs, so it will remain shrouded in mystery for the foreseeable future. Some historians suggest that perhaps a timber framed manor house lay within the moat, and that any remains have long since rotted into the soil.

There are certainly historical references to people paying their rent to the court of "Herewoldeslea". In fact the Thunderfield Estate itself is referred to as far back as 800 A.D., once comprising not just of the land in this walk, to the east of Horley, but up to 3000 acres stretching in all directions. It is thought that the area would have been predominantly open heathland used for pig grazing.

So while you enjoy the walk, remember that you are not the first to walk some of these ancient paths, and nor will you be the last.





WWII pillboxes held the line against invasion

1 Turn left as you leave the pub and walk along Langshott for around 200 metres until you come to a crossing of the Surrey Cycleway. Turn left to head up Lake Lane and begin your journey through time.

The Surrey Cycleway is a series of routes for bikes, mainly on tracks and quiet roads that allows cyclists to travel all over the county with a minimum of traffic. The Surrey routes link with similar schemes in adjacent counties.

Lake Lane is also one of the north-south droveways for Saxon swine herds which were driven from the parishes in the north of Surrey to feed on the plentiful acorns in the oak woods to the south.

2 After about 400m you will pass Great Lake Farm and then cross over Burstow Stream.

Keep an eye out for a 17th Century Barn at the farm. You'll also notice that although you are walking on "Lake Lane" there are no lakes, only streams. Another Saxon mystery! This is because of the track's Saxon origins, a Saxon word for stream, pool and pond was "lacu", which here seems to have been translated into lake.

3 Shortly after the pylons cross the lane, take the kissing gate on your right. Go through it and follow the footpath through two fields. Cross the stile and short footbridge leading through the hedge and into the third field. Head directly for the gate straight ahead, where you will find a kissing gate buried in the hedge. As you pass through the kissing gate you can see a pill box immediately to your left.

Head straight across this field in the direction of the house and telegraph pole opposite, keeping your eyes peeled for a gap in the hedge on your right, where you will find another gate and stile.

If you are lucky you may spot a Little Owl perched in one of the large Oak trees in the hedgerows that line the edge of the field. High overhead you may hear the song of the Skylark.

4 Go over the stile and walk diagonally across the field. Heading across the field bearing right, cross the first stile, then continue straight across the second field to the next stile in the hedge, noting the Pill Boxes on the way. The second stile takes you over a small footbridge into a narrow copse. Cross through the copse, over a second small footbridge and into another field.

Scotchman's Copse, to your right, holds a tanning pond where leather was treated in the 16th Century. This rare feature is now listed as an Ancient Monument. Nearby there used to be a farm called "Tanyard Farm", again a link to the tanning industry.

5 Now just across the field you can see a metal handled bridge at the base of a large Ash tree and the Burstow stream to your right. Walk to, but

Little Owls become active when dusk falls, hunting for beetles, worms and small mammals.

do not cross this footbridge. Turn to your left and walk directly across the field keeping the brook on your right. At the next hedge there is a gate with a small bridge, cross this and from here simply keep Burstow Stream to your right and follow it all the way to the Sewage Works.

Kingfishers patrol Burstow Stream, so keep an eye out for a flash of colour skimming over the water.

6 Keep the sewage works on your left and the brook on your right and continue to follow the stream to another bridge. Pass over the bridge and move into open heath land criss-crossed with paths.

Notice how at first the trees lining the track are predominantly Willow, often an indicator of damp ground. Slowly they give way to Oak, Hazel, Elder and Hawthorn which prefer drier spots. Hazel was widely coppiced even into the 20th Century and often grown interspersed with "standards" of Oaks - two woods used for very different purposes.

See how many species of tree, bird and mammal you can find and hear on this long straight stretch - you might be surprised that diverse woodlands, a haven for wildlife, can be found this close to a major motorway!

8 Keep going until you see a signpost for "Balcombe Road 3/4"



Turn left, away from Burstow Stream, and walk towards the nearest pylon, and proceed keeping it and an old wooden fence to your right. After about 250m you will come to a well made up brideway, where you turn left and follow it a short distance to Smallfield Road.

7 Cross the road and follow the signposted "byway". This long stretch eventually becomes Peeks Brook Lane as you head towards Gatwick and move ever closer to the M23 on your left.

just after a goods yard and just before the lane passes under the M23's Gatwick Spur Road. Turn right and follow the small path as it creeps around the goods yard, parallel to the spur road. You soon see a signpost for "Horley 1/2", heading to your right, which you should follow all the way to Haroldslea Drive.

9 When you reach Haroldslea Drive, stop a moment and consider that this may have been the very path taken by King Harold on his way to the Battle of Hastings. It is rumoured that



Kingfisher, a speeding streak of brilliant blue

his ghostly army can still be seen walking to rest for the night at Thundersfield Castle, just to your right.

With this in mind, turn right along the road, crossing over Burstow stream again, until the road bends to go around the double moat of the castle itself. But where is the castle?

The name "Thundersfield Castle" originates from the Saxon "Thor", god of thunder. The unusual double moat dates from the 12th Century and is an Ancient Monument, however of the castle, there is no trace. Due to the moat's designation it is not possible to excavate the site to look for evidence of a castle, and so the mystery of Thundersfield continues, but if you feel the presence of a ghostly exhausted army, maybe you can decide for yourself!

10 Continue to follow the road around the moat until you meet a public brideway crossing your track. Turn left between three garages and a fence.

11 After 100m ignore the lure of the footbridges and turn right and walk until you get to Harrowsley Green Farm.

As you zigzag through the farm look out for a 17th century barn.

12 Leaving the farm you will see Smallfield Road ahead. Once at the road you will see a brideway opposite you, but you don't want this path, look instead to your left for a much wider track.

Carefully cross Smallfield Road, and head to your left for the start of your final stretch!

13 The track here is lined by oak, hazel, holly and rhododendrons with big houses either side. Take care here because some local traffic uses this route. After a short while your brideway becomes a tarmac byway. The open woodland of Brook Wood is now on your right as the route bears to the left.

Look out for Langshott Manor to your left, another old building with a moat. A Roman Road ran past this site (Roman coins have been found recently) and it is possible a much earlier Roman building once stood here. The current building, however, dates from the early 17th Century. The building is now a luxury hotel, restaurant and spa.

14 The road eventually leads you back to Lake Lane, and back along Langshott to The Farmhouse Pub where your journey began.



Coppice woodlands offer a wonderful spectacle of bluebells and wood anemones in Spring



This leaflet is best used with
OS map: 1:25000
Explorer 146
(Dorking, Box Hill and Reigate).

Suitability

This walk is almost entirely flat, however rough ground and many stiles make it unsuitable for wheelchairs and buggies. In very wet periods some of the clay soils on the route become quite waterlogged and muddy.

Footwear

Stout walking boots with thick soles are ideal.

Dog Walkers

There are a number of grazing fields to cross on this walk and dogs should be kept on a lead when walking near livestock.
Please respect the Countryside Code.

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East Horley Circular Walk

This 5.7 mile (9.1km) walk begins and ends at the Farmhouse Pub, Ladbroke Road, Langshott, Horley, RH6 8PB. Grid Reference: TQ 290 441

It is a short walk from the pub to the start of the circular walk, which leads you through many historical sites from the region's long and interesting past.

Arriving by train

Leave Horley station Station Approach, which changes to Station Road, and eventually meets the Balcombe Road after about 300 metres. Turn Left onto the Balcombe Road for 400 metres until you come to Ladbroke Road on your right. After 200 metres you will come to the Farmhouse Pub from where we start the walk.

Arriving by Bus

Metrobus Number 20 stops close to Langshott. Either alight at The Acres and walk back down Orchard Drive back to Langshott, where you turn left to the Farmhouse Pub, or get off along Wheatfield Way just before Langshott, where you will turn right for the pub.

Horley has many bus services and it is worth checking the Surrey County Council Website for details: www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/buses-and-trains/bus-timetables/

Arriving by Road

Sat Nav – RH6 8PB

From Crawley: Follow the Balcombe Road into Horley, just as you join the A23 turn right along Ladbroke Road. Continue for 200 metres until you find the Farmhouse Pub.

From Redhill: Follow the A23 from Redhill towards Horley. Turn left along Ladbroke Road just before you reach the Petrol station on the "roundabout". Continue for 200 metres until you find the Farmhouse Pub.

The East Horley Circular Walk is one of six walks that link with the Millenium Trail, a long distance path that stretches from Banstead Downs to Horley. For further information about these walks, telephone Reigate and Banstead Borough Council on 01737 276000 or visit www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk.



This leaflet was produced for Reigate and Banstead Borough Council by Gatwick Greenspace Partnership



**Working for people
and wildlife in the
local area**

We offer conservation volunteering opportunities, wildlife events, environmental education, health walks, and advice for landowners.

For more information
Telephone: **01293 550 730**

Website: www.gatwickgreenspace.org.uk

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Gatwick Greenspace Partnership is a Living Landscape project that works to benefit people, wildlife and the countryside between Horsham, Crawley, Horley, Reigate and Dorking. The project is supported by all the local councils and London Gatwick Airport, and is managed by Sussex Wildlife Trust



Explore and Enjoy



A link with the
Special wildlife Inspiring views
Rich in history

