

- Turn right at the post and then right again at the next to point 2. You are now facing the southern ramparts of the enigmatic earthwork called the Bee Garden (a Scheduled Ancient Monument), which may have been built by the prehistoric farmers whose woodland clearance created our ancient heaths. Return to the last post and walk on to point 3.
- You are standing in an area of wet heath. Note the cross-leaved heath and tussocks of sedge (deer grass and white beaked sedge) and look carefully for tiny insectivorous sundews in the track ruts. Continue to point 4.
- You are now crossing an area of dry heath. At first it may seem devoid of life, but walk slowly and look carefully and you'll realise you're passing through a miniature forest that teems with small creatures. Continue to point 5.
- Since the industrial revolution most of our heaths have disappeared and the few that remain are threatened. If left unchecked the birch and pine you can see would rapidly engulf the open landscape and rare heathland species would be lost. Uncontrolled fires that have swept across the slopes of Staple Hill have altered the delicate ecology of this area so that grasses and bracken now dominate areas that were once open heath.  
You may now choose to turn left and take the steeper short route back to the car park or continue on the longer gentler route, stopping at point 6 to look for dragonflies.

### Long Arm

Start at Roundabout car park (height restriction at entrance). This is a walk of about 3.5 km (1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> hrs) on sandy tracks with no stiles, but some narrow boardwalks and steep in places. Green arrows mark the route.

- The trail starts at the far end of the picnic area – follow the path to point 1. As you walk through the dense scrub notice small glades created by rabbits. In the past heathland was kept scrub-free by commoners grazing animals. When this ceased many heaths disappeared under a sea of scrub.
- Continue then turn left at the bridleway. Stop to look at the Victoria Monument when you reach the top of the hill, then follow bridleway 84 along the ridge to point 2.
- The mature heather to the right of the bridleway is an important wildlife habitat and if you're patient you may see Dartford warbler here. This area has been kept open by scrub clearance. On the left traditional practices are being revived, the valley has been grazed and you will see where heather, peat and turf cutting have taken place to create a mosaic of wildlife habitats. Continue to point 3.

- Heathland pools support a wide range of species including dragonflies and the bog bean that covers most of this pond. This is part of Long Arm Bog, which is now dominated by wet woodland. Tree and pond clearance is being carried out to create a wildlife-rich mixture of sphagnum bog, wet heath, open water, scrub and woodland. This will particularly benefit the rare water vole, in one of its last strongholds in Surrey. Carry on to the green post then follow the small path to the right to point 4.
- A number of wet heath plants grow on either side of the track, including cross-leaved heath and insect-eating sundews, and the ditches contain a small community of bog plants including sphagnum moss and bog asphodel. Walk on to point 5.
- The young heather here creates a very different habitat from the more mature stands near point 2. This is a good place to see rare silver-studded blue butterflies and open country birds like tree pipits and the rare woodlark (which can be distinguished from skylarks by its short tail and bat-like flight).
- Carry on to bridleway 84 where you can either turn left then right and climb to the top of Oystershell Hill for views across the Common, or you can take an easier more direct route by turning right. Then continue back to the car park.

*We hope you have enjoyed your visit. If you have any comments, the Countryside Ranger for this site can be contacted on 01276 858013.*

*Surrey Wildlife Trust's mission is to protect and regenerate Surrey's wildlife.*

*The Trust is a registered charity (No: 208123). In partnership with Surrey County Council we currently manage 80 sites covering over 4,000 hectares of land, for nature conservation and public enjoyment. This includes the Trust's own nature reserves, SCC's countryside estate and land managed under access agreements with private landowners. A further 3,200 hectares are managed under a grazing contract with the MOD, making Surrey Wildlife Trust, in terms of land managed, the largest Wildlife Trust in England.*

### **Surrey Wildlife Trust**

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Visit our website: [www.surreywildlifetrust.org](http://www.surreywildlifetrust.org)



# CHOBHAM COMMON

## NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE



## Visitor Guide and Self-guided Trails



**SURREY**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

# Chobham Common National Nature Reserve

*Chobham Common is one of the finest remaining examples of lowland heath, a globally rare and threatened habitat and as such it has been made a National Nature Reserve and given the highest European conservation designations. The Common extends over 585 hectares (1,450 acres) of north-west Surrey and is owned by Surrey County Council and managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust.*

*Heathlands were created by pre-historic farmers, making them one of our most ancient and characteristic British landscapes. These beautiful sweeps of open countryside were carefully managed by rural communities for over 200 generations, creating a wonderful wildlife-rich patchwork of mini-habitats which still survive in a few special places as a living link with our stone-age past.*

*Over 350 species of flowering plant can be seen, and in addition to great sweeps of purple-flowering heather and sweet-scented gorse there are orchids, insect-eating sundews and rare marsh gentians. This great variety of plant life supports many invertebrates and the Common is widely recognised as one of the best sites in Britain for spiders, ladybirds, bees and wasps. The rare silver-studded blue is one of the 29 species of butterfly regularly seen here and half of Britain's 44 dragonfly species hunt over the heathland pools.*

*With over 115 species of bird recorded here, the Common is of European importance for its bird-life. If you are lucky you may see rare Dartford warblers and that most dashing bird of prey, the hobby. On warm summer evenings the Common is a wonderful place to hear the eerie "churr" of the nightjar.*

*There are frogs, toads, newts, adders, grass snakes and three types of lizard. Some 25 species of mammal are found on the site, if you are quiet and tread softly you may see foxes and deer or even a rare water vole.*

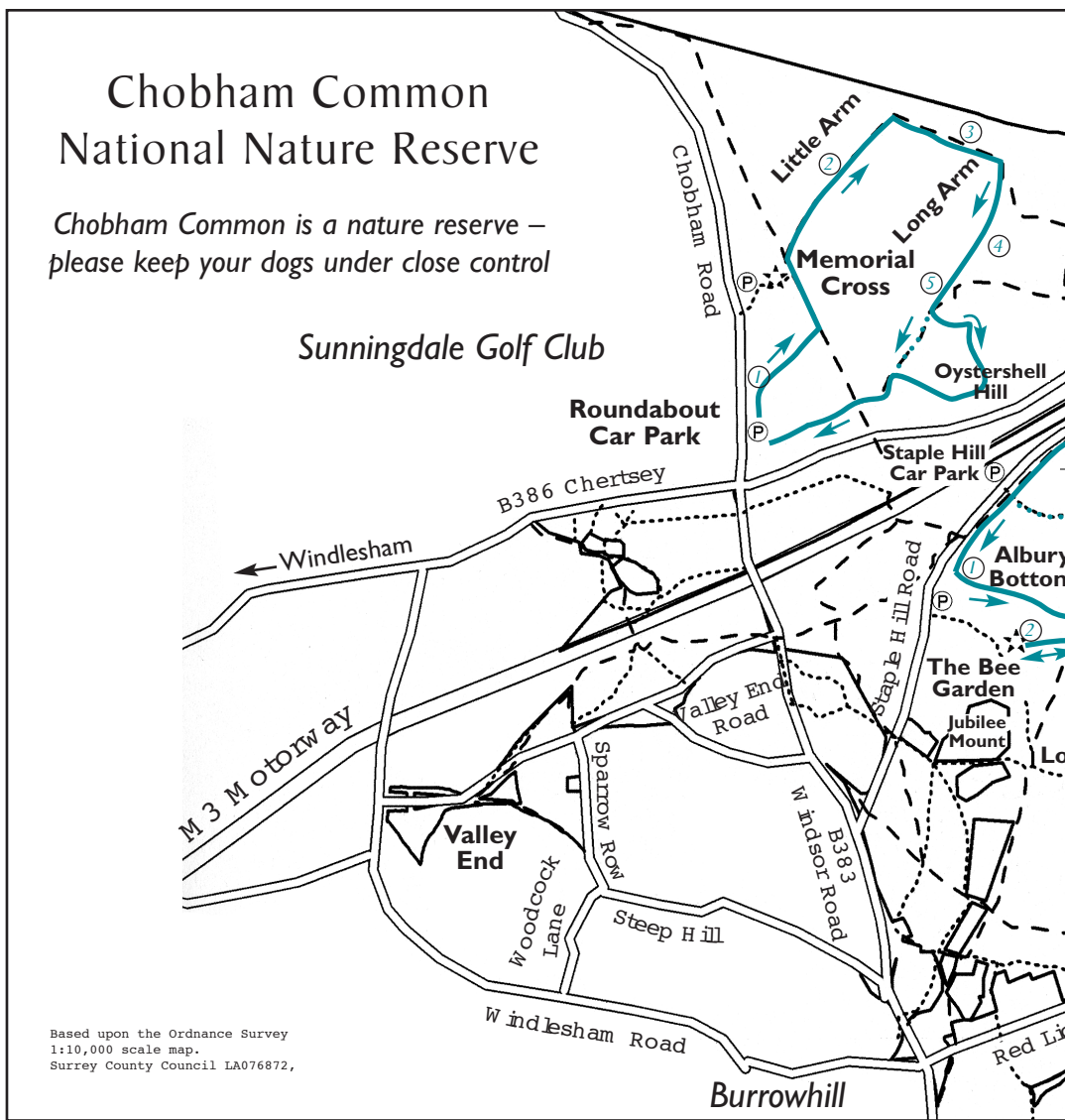
*Since the industrial revolution the careful stewardship of heathland has ended and most have been destroyed or lost to invading scrub leaving the few surviving fragments as the last refuges of our rare heathland wildlife.*

*Today SWT is working with volunteers and other organisations to protect and restore wildlife-rich heaths like Chobham Common for future generations, through active management and the re-introduction of the traditional practices that shaped our heaths. If you would like more information or would like to help with this vital work please contact the Ranger.*

## Self-guided Circular Trails

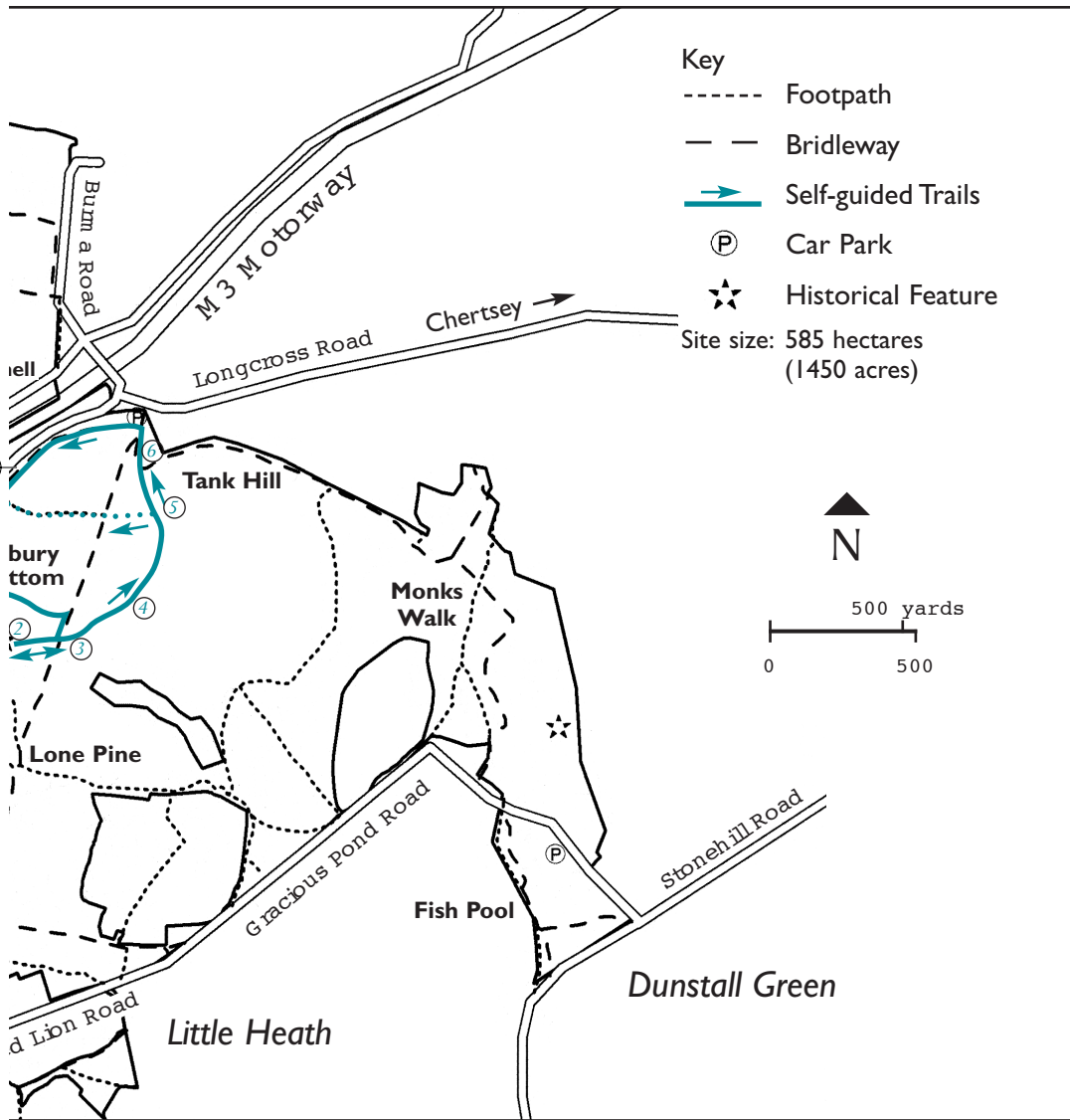
### Albury Bottom

Start from Staple Hill car park (height restriction at entrance). This is an easy walk of about 2 or 3 km (1¼hrs) on soft sandy surfaces with no stiles, but some steep slopes. The walk is waymarked with green arrows.



For details of public transport in Surrey call Traveline 0870 608 2608 [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

- Carefully cross the road and follow the green arrows and when you reach point 1 turn left. As you walk down the hill look and listen for birds: common species in the scrub like chaffinch, willow warbler and woodpeckers, scarce open country species such as yellowhammer, stonechat, linnet and skylark and heathland rarities like Dartford warbler and hobby.



Key

- Footpath
- — — — — Bridleway
- ➔ Self-guided Trails
- Ⓟ Car Park
- ★ Historical Feature

Site size: 585 hectares  
(1450 acres)

