

# WINDLESHAM WALKS

## Walk No.4

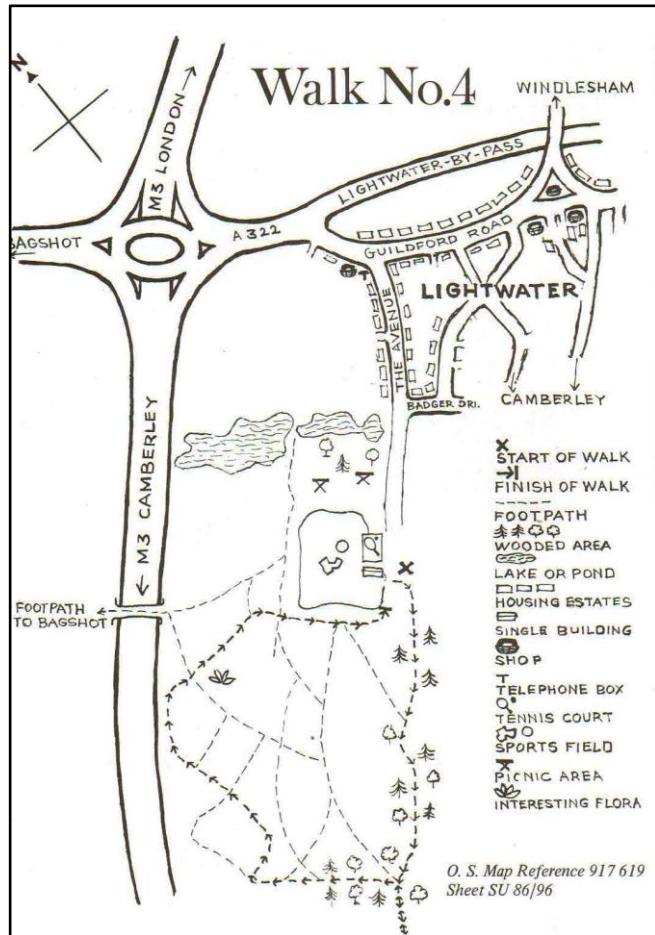
Start/Parking:	Car park by leisure centre, Lightwater Country Park
Distance:	2 km or 1¼ miles minimum
Type of walk:	Undulating, couple of hills, one steep climb (partly optional)

Lightwater Country Park lies at the end of The Avenue, off Guildford Road. It is signposted from the A322 and Guildford Road. The walk starts at the end of the tarmac entrance road in the wooded car park to the left of the Lifestyle Fitness leisure centre. The "Curley Climb" which follows is just one of many walks that can be enjoyed in the park and takes you to 129m (421ft) above sea level.

Take the track leading past some white-topped wooden posts and a purple and orange marker post, and where the track forks bear left, keeping the post and rail fence to your left. The track rises past a thicket of gorse and continues to follow the purple marker posts. It then descends, giving a welcome breather before climbing quite steeply to a junction of tracks. Continue ahead for a few yards and up a step to another crossroads with a "staircase" of steps ahead.

Now you have a choice: The more agile can tackle the staircase to the summit of High Curley; those who prefer a longer but gentler ascent should turn left on to a path which winds its way around the hill, climbing gradually through woodland which provides a panoply of colour in autumn. As the path ascends views open out through the trees on the left and the bank on the right gives an opportunity for the adventurous to take a short cut to the top of the hill. The path gets gradually steeper and passes through banks of gorse to emerge on the ridge along the top of High Curley, where the noise from the M3 suddenly becomes apparent.

Turn left and walk a few yards to the boundary with the military training area. To the left of the warning signs a track carves its way steeply downhill



towards Red Road: look slightly to the right of this track in the far distance and you should be able to see the outline and tower of Guildford Cathedral.



*The staircase leads to the top of High Curley, if you prefer a gentler ascent turn left on to the path pictured above right*

Retrace your steps along the ridge and continue past a large sarsen stone boulder which makes a convenient resting point. These stones are formed by the natural cementing of sand and have been used locally for building, notably in part of Windsor Castle and the waterfall at Virginia Water.

A little further on is a viewpoint giving a guide to the landmarks to look out for. The spire of St Anne's Church, Bagshot, is easy to see and to the right of it is Bagshot Park with its distinctive turret. The white buildings to the left are a row of cottages in London Road, Bagshot, opposite Notcutts. Beyond them on the skyline are office buildings in Bracknell. The prominent long building also on the skyline is the new grandstand at Ascot Racecourse. On some days it is possible to see the Post Office tower and buildings at Canary Wharf with the naked eye, certainly you can make them out with a good pair of binoculars.



When you have finished admiring the view, take the stepped track leading down to the left of the viewpoint, following the purple marker posts. Roe deer can sometimes be glimpsed in the thicket of willows to the left as the path levels out. Keep straight on at a crossroads of tracks where signs warn dog-walkers to keep their pets on leads during the nesting season (March-July) and up a slight rise to a bench. Here the view opens out over a bowl of heathland - lovely when the heather is in bloom. Turn right here (straight ahead if you are sitting on the bench) to once again follow the purple marker posts. When you reach the motorway boundary fence follow the track round to the right.

At the next crossroads of tracks go straight on, there is a fenced-off area to protect the heather and nesting birds on your right. In summer the heather's eye-catching splashes of colour contrast with the vivid green of the bracken and the graceful silver birches.



Another track enters from the left, this leads to a footbridge over the motorway and links the park to Whitmoor Road in Bagshot.

The track swings to the right and the sports field comes into view. Here we part company with the purple marker posts; go over a sleeper bridge and in front of you is an area of purple moorgrass, the only grass which dies away completely at the end of the year. It can be identified by its purple head in summer and dead leaves in winter. Follow the path around the back of the leisure centre to arrive at the car park.

There are also lovely walks around the three ponds near the entrance to the country park, picnic tables and an adventure playground to keep young children happy. Sadly the Heathland Visitor Centre, pictured below, is closed until further notice at the time of writing .



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