

Chobham Water Meadows and Mill Bourne

A delightful route through open meadows, along a quiet wooded lane, through paddocks and along the flower rich banks of the Mill Bourne

Start your walk at the Chobham Village car park (free for one hour only, you may need two, but you must get a ticket). Nearest postcode GU24 8LZ. Exit the car park at the back end and turn right.

Follow the good path towards the cricket ground and turn left. Follow the same path past flower meadows on the left and horse paddocks on the right. Soon you enter a path with hedgerows both sides including a nice row of oaks on the right. A path crossroads with a post sign appears where you turn right across the meadow heading towards the corner of the garden of the house in the distance. You will pass wild flowers and butterflies. Take the path, sometimes a bit muddy, along the fence of the house garden and keep going when it meets a house driveway. You soon come to a road which is now a dead end so very quiet.

Turn left past a few nice young willow trees on the lawn and now follow this lane for about 700 yards/metres. The lane is wooded both sides with some lovely properties mainly on the left. After a good 500 yards/metres there is a small, pond on the left. It often has mallard ducks, pendulous sedge and water iris/flags in spring. On the right soon after is a dream house! Continue on the lane until it turns away to the right and a further lane (called Trotters Lane) goes off left. Right in front of you is a stile, to the left of the post box. Climb over the stile and walk along the hedgerow. There may be cattle in this field covered in field buttercups and common sorrel. There is a gate and you enter a narrow path with a wall on the right and hedgerow on the left. I found wood avens here amongst other flowers. Follow this path until it opens up and finally a stile lets you walk between some meadows and horse paddocks.

Walking through the paddocks watch for swallows flying over hawking insects in the summer. They will probably nest in nearby stables. I also saw red kites, mistle thrushes and a green woodpecker. There are a few more stiles and gates until you reach a short woodland path, exit via the gate and see a road ahead. Turn left along the grass edge and immediately after the property look for the path on your left and two footbridges. You are crossing the Mill Bourne.

We are going to follow this stream all the way back to where you are parked. This first stretch is in shade but it has abundant growth all of its length. I found plenty of Himalayan balsam which I sporadically removed as I went along, a slightly futile effort given how much there is! The path soon opens up on the left. Nettles and possibly some brambles may encroach here in summer so a stick might be useful! The stream bank has more comfrey in early summer than I can recall seeing anywhere. Comfrey is an important plant for insects and here that was obvious, I found a least three species of bees, hoverflies, demoiselles, butterflies and even spiders on the plants. Also, a nettle- tap moth, a very common little moth that is day flying. Part way along this stretch you will meet a slightly challenging path obstacle, a metal stile that is a bit too high so the path passes down close to the stream. Just hold on to the stile post as you pass it!

This lovely stretch ends at a lane where you cross straight over and climb another stile. The signpost says 'Chob Village'. Another short but very lush section where the stick may be useful soon ends in the open meadows. Although it would be hard to get lost here, keep to the

right of the meadows but do not turn right or cross the Mill Bourne on any of the bridges. If in doubt just take the path in the meadow keeping closest to the hedgerow between you and the stream. In summer, the hedgerow has blackcaps, whitethroats and dunnocks, blackbirds and song thrushes sing from the trees. You will pass through several meadows full of buttercups and sorrel, oxeye daises, vetch and other plants. I saw common blue butterflies, small copper butterflies and brimstones when I passed along.

Soon, houses will appear on your right across the stream. Just carry on and at the very end the path turns sharply left and within a few yards the car park will be on your right. I hope this short but beautiful walk has been enjoyable. There are plenty of eating and drinking options in the village.