

Normandy and Merrist Wood

A walk on mainly good paths and lanes giving lovely countryside views and animal sightings

1. Park in the huge free car park and walk to the right of the café where you will see the gate to the Therapy Garden. Turn right and follow the path to the end of the field and turn right again following the hedgerow. Just after you pass a wooden bench, turn left through the gate onto the track and turn right. After passing a few houses you will soon see some rusty old barns appear in front of you. Take the path across the fields diagonally to the right. It is not very distinct but can easily be seen when you get to it. In the distance, you will see some new, more modern buildings. Head for these and when you reach the bramble hedgerow, follow it to the left to the lane.
2. Turn left and keep left around the side of the barns and workings. After the footbridge follow the arrow sign past the gate and through the next fence pieces. Cross another footbridge and continue on the path along the hedgerow. This is a world of horse paddocks. The path becomes a track at Cleygate Farm but stay on it, in the same direction. At the track junction cross straight over following the bridleway signpost going through the mainly birch and oak woodland. I suspect horses may make this a bit muddy after a lot of rain. On reaching a cinder track stay on it, passing under the power lines. This turns into a nice more open stretch up a gentle hill. Keep going following the same bridleway. Cross a track on the same path with Wood Street cricket pavilion on your right-hand side. Keep going in the same direction. cross another footbridge and reach a lane continuing in the same direction. The lane is now a tarmac road as well as a bridleway but just keep going. You finally reach Wood Street Village and White Cottage built in 1672 is on your left followed by the White Hart pub a popular place for walkers.
3. At the Green turn sharp left to the main road. Turn left at the postbox and look quickly for your next footpath on your right-hand side. About 50 yards along this track look to your right and you will see a wooden barn and a gate with the footpath sign on it. You come off the track here and join this narrow footpath. At the end of this path you reach an old footbridge in need of restoration and a fairly high stile. Cross into the field. The path now crosses diagonally across the field towards the end of the top row of trees on the left. Cattle were grazing here. On reaching the top left-hand corner of the field you reach another stile which is quite high, but some people would be able to bend under the rails. Keep going on the path which weaves around a bit but there is only one direction you can go in. The lower parts of the path can become wet in winter but now, in early October after a dry summer, it was perfect. You meet another path but keep left, then immediately right along the hedge line. There are unofficial paths across the field but our walk stays on the public footpath. It soon enters woodland. Keep to the left at the big oak tree in the clearing and the path is quite easy to follow. Pass some footpath signs and you will see your path signposted in front of you. Continue along the field edge which will lead you soon onto a lane. On your right is Littlefield Manor and a farm.
4. Walk along the lane. After the bungalows on your left, take the footpath on your right past a metal gate into the woodland. This path meanders a bit through some lovely woodland and you should pass a pond on your right-hand side but it has

almost totally dried out in October 2026. You will be hearing traffic on the main road as you pass the pond, cross a fairly substantial footbridge and turn sharp left. Eventually, you reached the road and turn right to the crossing point. After crossing, follow the footpath sign to the right. The path becomes a lane passing some houses and you emerge at the main road to Worplesdon. This is also the entrance to Merrist Wood College. Across the road is Rokers a place to buy your pet or bird food in bulk and where there is also a popular café.

5. If you stop to look around Rokers then you rejoin the walk turning into Merrist Wood College on the road through the big gates. Follow the main road path into the college towards the Reception and Advice Centre. There is a footpath on the right eventually switching to the left-hand side along the tree line.
6. When you reach the lane at the top with the Reception sign in front of you, turn left along the footpath keeping parallel with the lane as far as you can go passing Woody's Restaurant and finally reaching Merrist Wood house. Look for the footpath sign here that leads across the grass behind the parked cars. Take this path away from the college. There are some lovely distant views across open land here. The path goes to the right of the hedgerow not the open field. I heard Raven's calling. This path is part of the Fox Way. Just keep following it with its twists and turns until finally you reach a rough lane at Cobbett Hill Cottage, turning left to a road T junction.
7. At the road, cross straight over, still on the Fox Way. Cross a driveway and continue parallel to it, passing some posts into more woodland and some newly planted areas on the left, many having seemingly failed. Much of the woodland appears to have been sold off in plots. When you reach the West Wood sign you will see a footpath sign ahead. Take the angled left path and soon crossover the drive to Henley Park and reach the corner where you angle right following the public footpath sign. When you see the long brick wall on your left, keep right along the narrow-fenced path. Soon after dropping down a couple of steps and crossing a wooden footbridge, pass through another gate and stay on the fenced path. The area to your left is particularly good to see roe deer and as you walk along this path and go through another gate the next big open field has many birds in spring and summer. I saw a kestrel and a buzzard on my most recent walk. Keep along the top of the field and as you near the end look down to a gate diagonally across and follow the visible path towards it. Cattle often graze here. The stile is quite high.
8. Cross the track onto the marked path across the field that just touches the left-hand end of the woodland. The path continues but at a slightly greater left-hand angle. It is usually easily visible through the crop. I found linnets here. Another less challenging stile leads across another field. The fencing appears to be more about keeping people out than keeping animals in. Another stile leads past some stables and yet another stile where some gates are situated. Stay on the path to the lane.
9. On reaching the lane, turn right and look for the footpath sign on your left through the woodland. This keeps to the right-hand side of the house. Keep going ahead on the same footpath. You will emerge at the war memorial and bus stops, this side for Guildford, the other for Aldershot.
10. Cross the road into Glaziers Lane and continue to the big white signpost for Manor Fruit Farm, Therapy Garden and Village Hall and the start of the walk.

