



Crockham Hill 2-mile circular walk

A short walk through ancient woods and across open heathland with opportunities to see mature trees, woodland birds and West Kent's lesser seen plant species. This peaceful walk is ideal for observing birds, including rooks, long-tailed tits, great tits, blue tits, various finches and Britain's tiniest bird, the goldcrest.

START LOCATION

Small car park off Hosey Common Road south of Westerham
Post code: TN16 1PS
National Grid reference: TQ 448 520
What3Words reference: drop.hangs.code

By public transport – take the 236 bus (Southdown Buses) from Westerham to the junction of Hosey Common Road and Mapleton Road, which is about 400m (¼ mile) from the car park along a narrow road with no pavements. Alternatively, take the 246 Bus from Bromley North to Chartwell (Summer Sundays and Bank Holidays only).

By car – see above.

Distance: 3.5Km (2 miles)

Difficulty: short but with some steep hills and can be muddy in wet weather.

Walking time: 40 minutes to 1 hour

ALTERNATIVE STARTS

Small layby opposite April Cottage off Hosey Common Road or Chartwell National Trust property.



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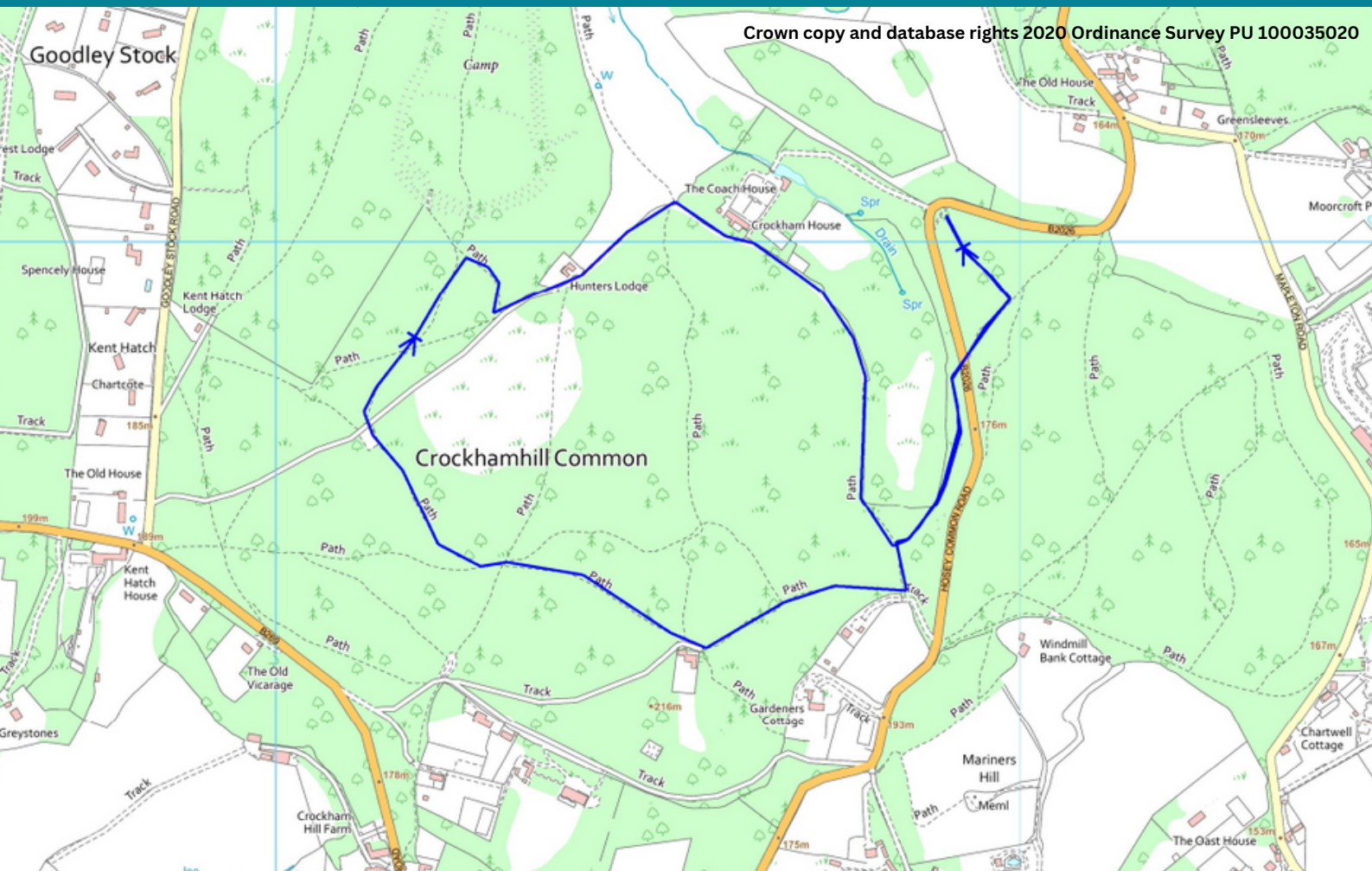
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DIRECTIONS

1. From the car park on Hosey Hill Road take the path through the gate, up the hill. At a cross junction of paths turn right, following the yellow way marker, down the hill back towards the road. Cross the road and follow the public footpath, left, downhill to join a well-established track on Crockham Hill Common.

Note: the boggy valley bottom, now behind you, is the source of the River Darent.

2. On joining the track turn left towards a house to join a path coming down from the road. Turn right up the steep hill with the road behind you and continue straight on to reach the top at a house in the woods known as The Warren. As you pass the front of the house go straight across the turning circle taking the 2nd exit, the path without a way marker.



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3. Continue straight on, ignoring side paths. On your left and right along this path you may see evidence of old ground excavations where stone (chert) was extracted for road making. There are also the remains of small slit trenches dug by trainee soldiers in WWII.

4. Continue along the path to a junction of paths at a large oak tree. The large oak tree here is typical of a pollarded tree often used to mark a boundary or, as here, a path junction. This tree is possibly 150-200 years old. Oaks trees may live for 1,000 years, although 600 years is the common life expectancy.



5. Continue straight on with the tree on your right until you come to a small clearing off a vehicle track to Hunters Lodge. Cross the track and take the right hand track past the large pine tree, follow this rough track across open heathland.

This area of the common has been restored to lowland heath by removing overgrown birch and invasive rhododendron. It is the mosaic of the Commons' heathland habitat which provides a home to some less common plants and animals.

For example, bilberry, wavy hair-grass, and ling can still be found on the Commons, but these plants, along with bird species such as nightjar, stonechat, woodlark, tree pipit and redstart have declined significantly as the more open habitats have been lost.

Visit www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/our-work/our-projects/sevenoaks-greensand-commons for further information.



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6. Continue along the path for about 300m then take a narrow path on the right and follow it down the hill bearing right to re-join the track to Hunters Lodge. Turn left along the track past the lodge and continue along the footpath down the hill.

7. At the bottom of the hill head right onto a surfaced path alongside the fence on your left and follow this up the hill.

Notice the remains of an old traditionally laid hedge and bank on your left. These beech and oak trees were once part of a hedge marking the boundary of the common which was used to keep grazing livestock within the common.

8. After about 600m turn left and retrace your steps back to the car park off Hosey Common Road.

Kent Wildlife Trust would like to say a special thank you to Adrian Wain, who kindly created these walks for local people to enjoy.



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