



Ripley and the River Wey Send Marsh, Newark Priory

Distance: 8 km=5 miles

easy walking

Region: Surrey

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Refreshments: Ripley

Map: Explorer 145 (Guildford) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: feedback@fancyfreewalks.org

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Village, lake, heath, water meadows, river, locks, boats

In Brief

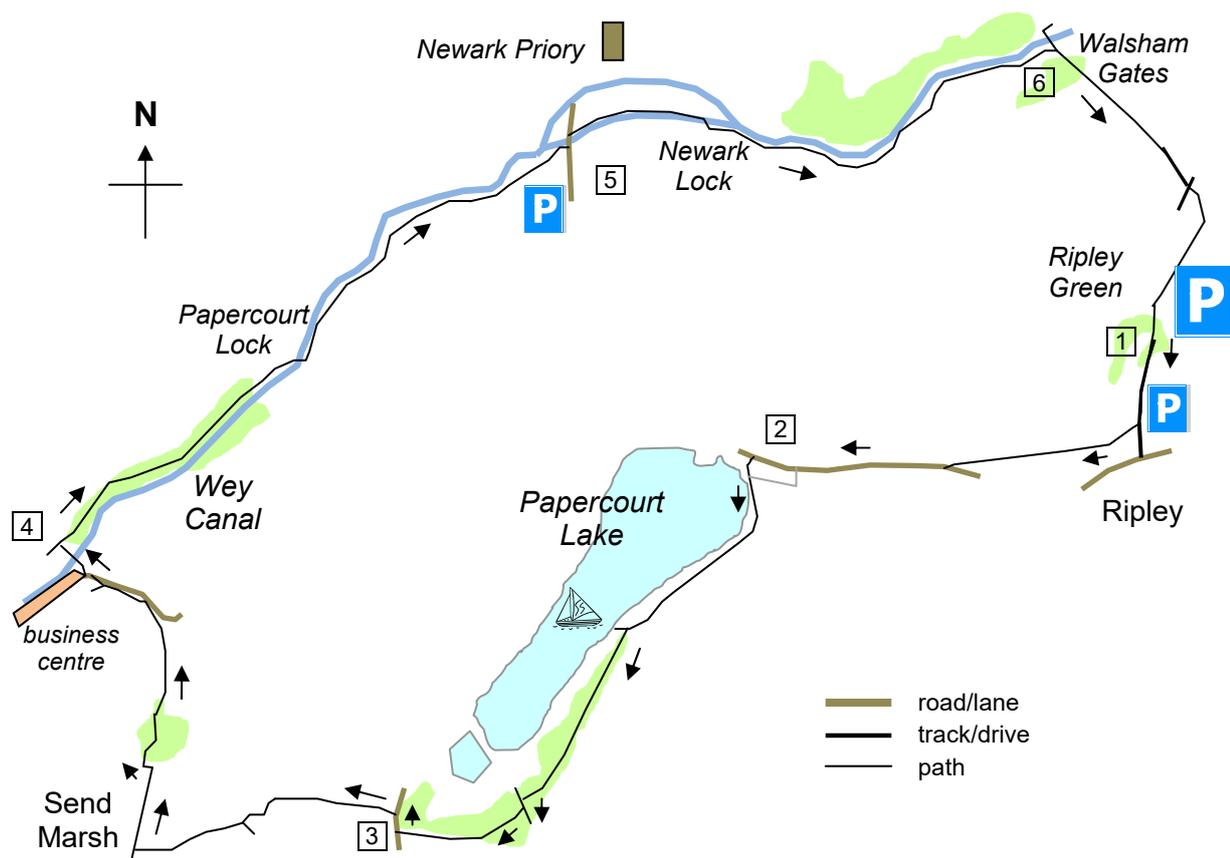
The author did this classic walk several decades ago, in reverse direction, and pined for the Surrey Hills, because this area is entirely flat. Researching the walk recently, in deep winter, led to a total change of opinion. The river meadows and distant views have a wonderful calming effect.



If you do this walk in high summer, there will be some nettly or brambly fringes along the field sides, especially in Section 3, making shorts uncomfortable, and sometimes requiring you to “divert” through the crop; otherwise, bare legs are fine. In the comparatively dry January of 2019, there were some muddy patches by the riverside near Newark Priory but there is also plenty of grass to step on. This walk is fine for your dog too.

The walk begins at **Ripley Green**, Surrey, www.w3w.co/jazz.menu.slip, postcode **GU23 6AN**. If coming from the London direction, the entrance is in the middle of the village on the right, at the end of a patch of green, where you see the ornate Ripley village sign. Follow the tarmac past the cricket green into the centre of the green to find a long car parking strip. This will be the notional starting point for this walk. But there is also a small car park immediately on your right as you enter the green. Sometimes parking on the green is a problem because of a summer fête or a garden tour. There are no loos (currently) on Ripley Green - a subject of fruitless debate by the council. Another good starting point is the **Newark Lane** car park, nearest postcode **GU23 6DP**. This is a mile outside Ripley in the direction *Pyrford, Byfleet*, just before the River Wey bridge, on the left. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



- 1 Starting in the car park in the centre of the green, walk back along the tarmac towards the village. As you approach houses, you will see a tall brazier. Turn **right** here, either along a gravel drive next to houses on your left or, better, along a wide strip of green grass, with the main road parallel on your left. The gravel drive ends and the grass continues, passing some large new or restored redbrick houses on your left. Finally, the green ends at the Newark Road. Turn **right** on the road, using the footway on the right, passing the Tudor-style entrance to Dunsborough Park.

The Tudor-style gatehouse you see here was built for the owner of Dunsborough Park, aircraft engineer Oliver Simmonds in the 1930s. He also added an octagonal pump house and a picturesque bridge overlooking the lake. In 1948 this 100-acre park was sold to "daredevil aviator, champion ballroom dancer" Charles Hughesdon, who died aged 104, having married film star Florence Desmond and boasted of affairs with Shirley Bassey and Margot Fonteyn. Dunsborough House, a modest-sized mansion in the Park, has fallen several times into disrepair and has recently been redeveloped as a luxury dwelling. The remarkable gardens are open every year for the Festival of Tulips and on certain days in the summer, but the entrance is from Ripley Green.

- 2 Continue straight ahead for 350m to pass the entrance to Homewood Farm. In a further 50m, cross the road to go through a gap at the end of a fence. (This way, you have saved climbing the two stiles on the other side of the road.) Turn sharp **left** on a wide path that runs along the left-hand shore of the Papercourt Lake, a lake popular for sailing and occasional swimming, covering about 20 ha. In 500m or so, the path forks. Take the **left** fork into trees, thus abandoning the waterside for the forest. Keep straight on along this woodland path for nearly 500m where it suddenly

emerges into the light and meets another path at a T-junction. Turn **left** and, in 5m, fork **right** on a narrow path across the heath, thus ignoring the yellow arrow. Your path shortly meets a fence at a crossroads – keep straight on with the fence on your left. After a few metres you will come out to a metal gateway [2023: the original gate is lying to the right of the gateway] to a road in the village of Send Marsh.

- 3 Turn **right** on the road for just 30m and then **left**, by an unused stile, under a height-restrictor, on a driveway, signed as a footpath. Keep **left** on a narrow path beside allotments on your right. Your path continues beside a crop field, zigzagging past an old shed and over a bridge. At the next corner, ignore a path and a small bridge on your left and stay beside the field. At the far end, turn **right** on a path which runs beside a stream, between lines of trees with fields beyond. When you reach a farm track, turn **left** over a robust flat bridge and *immediately* **right** on a narrow path, heading for a yellow arrow. Follow this path, passing a pond on your left, ignoring a path on your right, and going over a bridge with rails. Next, the path runs between crop fields. Where you see a tarmac lane, a large wooden gate and a signpost on your right, ignore them, keep left, and stay beside the field, parallel to the lane. Ignore another exit to the lane shortly after. As you approach the big Send Business Centre built around the older *Tannery House*, **leave** the footpath and keep straight ahead past a small parking area to meet the lane.

- 4 Immediately leave the lane as it bends left and head straight on, to the immediate **right** of *Tannery House*, passing a NT sign. Cross the Tanyard footbridge over the River Wey Navigation. Your route is **right** along the towpath. *First, however, just to your left you will find a walkway leading to a little garden with picnic tables.* The going from here is very straightforward (if that's the right word for a meandering river path): you will be following the Wey Navigation as far as Walsham Gates. The path goes under trees for a while and reaches Papercourt Lock with its small cottage and usually a bevy of swans.



Papercourt Lock, built in 1653 has a fall of 2.44m, contributing to a total fall of 27m from Godalming to the Thames. The lock was rebuilt in a new position in 1922 (with some meddling from the lockkeeper) and again by the NT. The cascade or “tumbling bay” regulates the water flow.

Cross the river by a sturdy bridge and turn **left** on the other side, shortly going through a small gate. The path follows the wide river in an open floodplain. Finally, you come through a small wooden gate and over a plank bridge and up to a road, Newark Lane. *The Newark Lane car park is a short distance right.*

- 5 Turn **left** over the bridge and immediately **right** onto the towpath on the other side. Soon, on your left, you can see the ruins of Newark Priory.

Newark Priory lies between side streams of the River Wey. The Rev. Clement Cruttwell in “A Tour of the Whole Island of Great Britain” (echoing Daniel Defoe) wrote “Three miles beyond Ripley, on the right hand, are the remains of Newark priory, or Aldbury abbey, a priory of black canons, founded in the reign (1189-1199) of Richard I (“Lionheart”) by Rauld de Calva, and Beatrix de Sandes his wife. At the dissolution it was granted to Sir Antony Brown, by whose descendant, Lord Montague, it was sold, about the year 1711, to Sir Richard Onslow. Part of the church remains, but the other buildings have, from time to time, been pulled down and carried away.”

Shortly after the ruins you reach Newark Lock (a drop of 1.60m) and your path crosses to the other side. After a small metal gate and an area of tufty grass, another small metal gate leads to a narrower section. Finally, your sojourn on the Wey ends at Walsham Gates.

Walsham Gates is the name of the old floodgates, now a weir across the main river, and a lock on the canal that date back to 1653. The lock is the last remaining turf-sided lock on the river. The L-shaped cottage dates from before 1826. There is a lovely picture on flickr.

Your route is **right** here on a path away from the river. (But first it is worth crossing the weir to enjoy the matchless scene with the cottage and the lock.) [You can combine this walk from this point with the *Pyrford Lock and Anchor Pub* walk in this series, returning that way to Ripley.](#) *Until early 2019, work in progress on the canal wall caused closure of the weir, but at the time of writing the path over the weir is now open.*

- 6 Having turned **right** before the weir, follow the path, over a bridge with rails, between pastures. After another bridge and a house, your path becomes a drive leading over a brick bridge. At the end of the drive, cross straight over a tarmac drive, onto Ripley Green. In 20m, fork **right** and shortly veer right where you meet a path that runs the length of the green towards the village. As you approach trees, your path re-joins the tarmac drive and quickly reaches the car park where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: Ripley is on the old A3 road, before the Ripley bypass was built. If coming from the London direction, after the M25, filter left as for *Ockham Ripley Send*, and go right on the B2215 in the direction *Ripley*. If coming from the Guildford direction, fork left after 3 miles in the direction *Ripley* and go straight over the next roundabout.

By bus/train: there are several bus routes from Guildford or Woking stations. Check the web and the timetables.

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