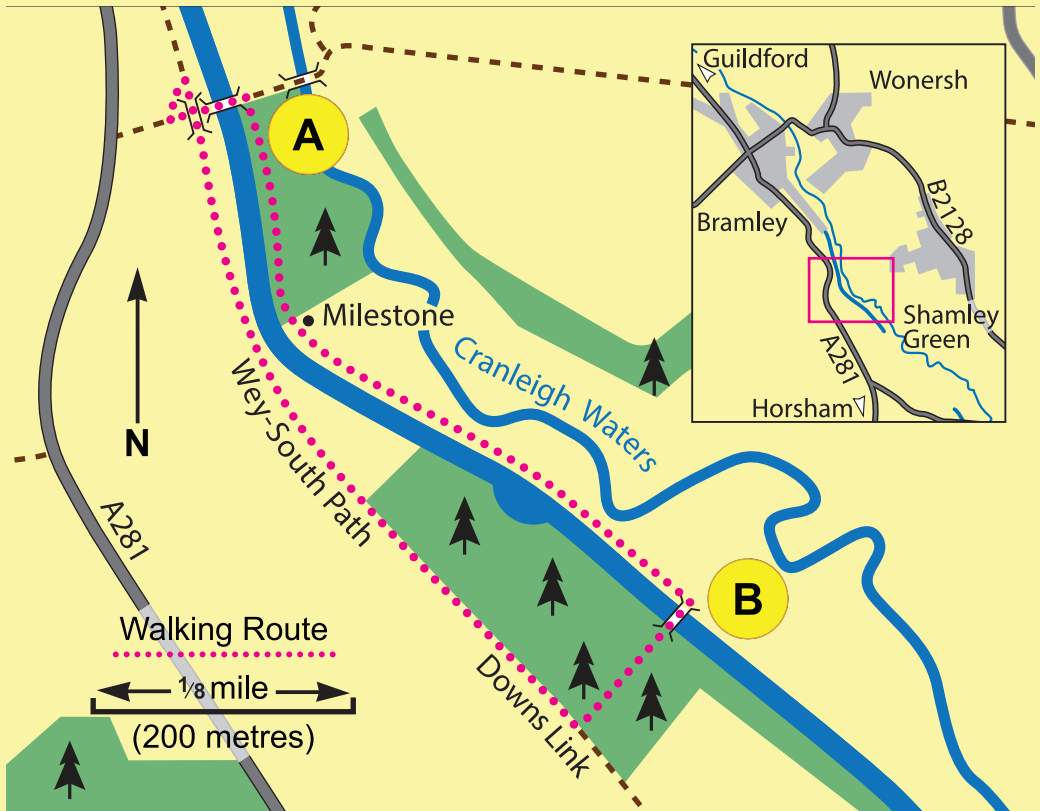


# Walks around the Wey & Arun Canal

## Birtley Circular Walk (1 mile)

This circular walk explores a section of the Wey & Arun Canal at Birtley, south of Bramley, Surrey, with two lifting bridges, and the Downs Link which follows the former Guildford-Horsham railway line.



To reach the start of the walk from the A281 south of Bramley, take the path next to the entrance to Singh Concrete (GU5 0LA). Note: there is no public car park next to the circular walk route. There are a few possible parking places along the A281 but please show consideration for residents. You may wish to park in central Bramley - either in the Library car park just off the High Street or at the site of the old railway station in Station Road. From Station Road you can walk along the Downs Link (the old railway line) to Birtley - start at the level crossing gates on the opposite site of Station Road from the old station. Another option would be to park in Lordshill Common and reach Birtley by one of two paths across the fields (one of these is surfaced as part of the National Cycle Network).

The walk description starts at the site of the original Birtley canal bridge (A). If you arrive via the Downs Link you will need to follow the signs to National Cycle Network Route 22 to leave the old railway route and go down a steep slope to a track that crosses the canal route. If you have arrived from Lordshill you will cross the Cranleigh Waters river and then go slightly uphill to the canal.

When the Wey & Arun Canal was in operation (between 1816 and 1871), Birtley Bridge was a swing bridge built to plans prepared by Josias Jessop, the engineer who designed the canal and its structures. At some time after the canal was officially abandoned in 1871, a causeway replaced the bridge and blocked the canal route. In 2023, the Wey & Arun Canal Trust installed a new lifting bridge here. The bridge is counterbalanced with concrete beams and does not use any electric power - one person can easily raise and lower it. Next to the lifting bridge you can see a bench made from timbers from the original swing bridge.

With the canal behind you, turn right (south) along the canal bank. You will see that here the canal route is tightly squeezed between the railway on one side and the Cranleigh Waters on the other. The railway only opened in 1865; construction brought extra traffic to the canal but in the end the railway took away all the canal's business. Along this section you will see new hedgerow trees planted by the Canal Trust.

Just after a bend in the canal you will see one of the new milestones installed by the Canal Trust in 2022. We know that the canal had milestones every half-mile along its route; some of them are marked on old maps. In 1949 an iron milestone (originally from Loxwood in Sussex) was discovered in a garden in Bramley. In the 1990s the Canal Trust began to replace the milestones with a new concrete design, where this was possible. The milestones were cast at the Trust's workshops and financed by sponsors.

Continue following the canal as the route goes back into woodland. In this section the winding course of the Cranleigh Waters comes very close to the canal. In the 1970s, when the canal was used by a fishing club, part of the bank collapsed and the canal water emptied into the river. The Canal Trust repaired the breach in a major engineering operation in 1976. Also in this section you will see a wider section of canal. This was a 'winding hole' where boats could turn.

Shortly afterwards you will reach the new lifting bridge (**B**) installed by the Canal Trust in 2023. Its design is the same as the bridge further north. Cross the bridge and follow the footpath to the Downs Link. When you reach the old railway route, turn right to return to your starting point.

The Horsham-Guildford railway connected with the London-Guildford-Portsmouth line at Peasmarsh Junction, just south of Guildford and with the Arun Valley line near Christ's Hospital. It closed in 1965, just before its 100th anniversary, as part of cuts recommended by the Beeching Report. It was the only significant section of railway to be closed in Surrey. The line was constructed to allow two tracks but remained as a single track throughout its life, with passing loops in some of the stations, including Cranleigh and Bramley & Wonersh.

**If you have enjoyed this canal walk, why not try another?  
Please pick up a leaflet from our Loxwood Canal Centre or Shalford  
Information Point. The routes are also available on our website.**

Shalford Walk 1 (3¾ miles) combines part of the canal route in Shalford and Bramley with a scenic loop towards the east.

Shalford Walk 2 (1 mile) is a short exploration of the area around The Gun's Mouth.

Shalford Walk 3 (2 miles) explores part of the original route of the Wey & Arun Canal in Shalford.

Loxwood Walk 1 (1 mile) explores the area around Brewhurst Mill.

Loxwood Walk 2 (2¾ miles) explores the section northwards to Gennets Bridge Lock.

Loxwood Walk 3 (3½ miles) includes Drungewick Aqueduct.

Loxwood Walk 4 (4½ miles) visits the start of the Sidney Wood lock flight.

Loxwood Walk 5 (5 miles) includes the countryside north of Loxwood as well as sections of the canal.

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