

# THE CROWN AND CUSHION AND HAWLEY COMMON, BLACKWATER, SURREY



Moderate Terrain

5.5 miles  
Circular  
2 to 2.5 hours

090614



## Access Notes



1. The shorter version of the walk is almost entirely flat, the longer loop having a few long but very gentle gradients.
2. There are no stiles or gates on either route, just a few gaps alongside vehicle barriers to negotiate. The paths are a mixture of tarmac/stone firm tracks and softer woodland paths, the latter of which are uneven and can get very muddy after rain and in winter.
3. One section of the route follows the tarmac access lane for Hawley Lake so take care of any traffic for this stretch.
4. Hawley Common is part of the Minley MOD Training Area. This walk follows the public rights of way which are always open to the public, but make sure you pay attention to any safety notices, don't allow children or dogs to stray too far and be prepared for sudden noises!

The Crown and Cushion is an historic gem, steeped in history and even includes a medieval-style banqueting hall.

A 5.5 mile (can be shortened to 3 miles) circular pub walk from the Crown and Cushion in Minley near Blackwater, Surrey. The walking route explores the adjacent Hawley Common, taking in miles of the pretty woodland tracks with a chance to see the wildlife within the forest and the wildfowl on Hawley Lake.

## Getting there

The walk starts and finishes at the Crown and Cushion pub in Minley near Blackwater in Surrey. The pub is just 2 minutes from Junction 4a of the M3. From the M3 head north along the A327 (Minley Road) and you'll come to the Crown and Cushion on the left.

Approximate post code **GU17 9UA**.

## Walk Sections



### Start to Hawley Hard



Leave the pub car park via the vehicle entrance and turn right along the paved area in front of the pub. After just a few paces, cross over the main road (with extreme care) and pass alongside the small barrier to reach a T-junction with a tarmac path. In front of you, you will see MOD Training Area warning signs.

NOTE: This walking route will follow public rights of way within the MOD Training Area and these are open to the public at all times. The other paths and tracks may be closed during training so make sure you stick to the route

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described. The area is used by the military for dry exercises involving blank ammunition, pyrotechnics and other battle simulators so be prepared for sudden noises and don't allow children and dogs to stray too far.

Turn left along the tarmac path which runs parallel with the road to the left. Continue until you reach a vehicle access point on the left. Turn right here to join the wide stone track, a bridleway, heading away from the road into the centre of the woodland.

At the T-junction within the track, turn left continuing on the bridleway. A little way along the path will lead you alongside a metal vehicle barrier to reach a quiet tarmac access road. Turn right along this, taking care of any occasional vehicles.

Military training areas create valuable wildlife habitats as well as vital environments for the military to carry out training exercises. The Aldershot and Minley Training Areas cover an area of approximately 2000 hectares of lowland heathland habitat which supports a wide range of associated fauna and flora. They are made up of a diverse mosaic of heathland, conifer woodland, areas of mature and semi-mature broadleaved woodland, mire, scrub, acid grassland and grass meadows. The majority of the areas are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Some way along the road you will pass the gatehouse entrance for the military facility, Hawley Hard, on the right.

## 1 → 2 Hawley Hard to Woodside



Keep straight ahead following the fence on the right. Across to the right you'll have your first views of Hawley Lake and you will pass the entrance to the sailing centre. Beyond the sailing centre, keep ahead past the vehicle barrier to join the narrower road between trees. At the first minor crossroads keep straight ahead, following the lane as it bends right. Immediately after this bend you'll come to the next crossroads of tracks. Here you have two choices:

For the shorter (3 mile) walk, turn right here and then pick up the instructions in the section called 'Crossroads Junction to Lake Beach'. For the full (5.5 mile) walk, turn left here and then continue reading the instructions in this section.

Follow this main stone track which follows the fence line on the left. The track swings gradually right to reach a junction of multiple paths. Turn left (marked with the blue arrow for the bridleway) and, after just a few paces, take the first track off to the right. Keep ahead on this track, ignoring options off left and right, and follow it as it gently climbs through the trees.

At the top of the hill you'll emerge to a T-junction. Turn left and follow the lane as it swings round to the right to reach another junction (marked with blue arrows). Keep right here on the main tarmac access lane, Woodside.

## 2 → 3 Woodside to Fir Drive



Stay on this main tarmac lane which passes under power lines and leads you out of the woodland alongside a vehicle barrier. Keep ahead on the quiet lane, passing a number of cottages and houses on the right. Beyond the houses, follow the quiet woodland lane for some distance further. You will emerge around a right-hand bend to reach a small roundabout.

Keep straight ahead, crossing over the side road called Bloomsbury Way, to take the next exit, Waldore Heights. Follow the road as it bends right and climbs steadily. Before the top of the slope, fork left onto the small path into trees, passing a large holly bush on the right. Take the first path on the left (passing an old gatepost on the left) and you will pass a row of properties on the left (the first of these being Kazungula).

You'll emerge out to Birch Drive, keep straight ahead along this. At the end you'll come to a T-junction with Fir Drive.

## 3 → 4 Fir Drive to Crossroads Junction



Turn right and, where the road swings right, you will see the entrance drive for Hawley Hill House directly ahead. Take two paces onto this stone driveway and then turn left onto the woodland footpath (passing more MOD Training Area warning signs). This path winds down through the woodland to reach a junction of tracks.

You should be able to see one track to the left, and two tracks which lead off to the right. Take the second track on the right. Eventually this track will lead you down to a junction with the woodland clearing which houses the power lines. Walk straight ahead towards the telegraph pole in front of you and on this you will see a yellow footpath arrow which confirms you are in the

right place.

Keep straight ahead onto the smaller dirt/stone track into trees (leaving the main stone track which swings away to the left). As you reach a staggered T-junction, swing right and then left continuing on the footpath marked with the yellow arrow. Follow this for some distance, ignoring any options off left and right.

At the first major crossroads keep straight ahead and you will emerge to a T-junction with a tarmac track. Turn left along this and after just a few yards you will reach the next crossroads, the one you passed through earlier. Turn left here.



## 4 → 5 Crossroads Junction to Lake Beach



Follow this tarmac lane. Keep straight ahead at the first crossroads and at the second crossroads turn right, staying on the main tarmac lane. Through the trees to the right you'll have more glimpses of Hawley Lake. The path will lead you past a pretty small sandy beach-like slope into the lake on the right. Take a moment here to enjoy the views across the lake.

Hawley Lake and its surrounding area are used by the Royal Engineers for training. Lake training includes the use of amphibious vehicles and bridge building, whilst woodland training includes orienteering, map reading and fitness. The lake is also popular with fishermen and home to a civilian sail training centre which teaches dinghy sailing, power-boating and windsurfing. You will probably see lots of wildfowl that make the lake their home, including swans, geese and a range of duck breeds.

## 5 → 6 Lake Beach to End

Follow the lane as it swings right, crossing over the water outlet for the lake. Immediately afterwards, where the main lane swings left, fork right onto the stone track signed with a blue arrow. Follow this bridleway which winds along with the lake still visible on the right. You will pass through a long golden sandy section, with several fishing spots on the lake edge down to the right.

At the end of the sandy section, follow the path as it swings left and then right. Stay on this main path and further along it will swing left to reach a T-junction with a wider track. Turn right along this. Ignore the first stone track off to the left, and a smaller grass track also off to the left. A few yards later take the next (third) track off to the left (marked with a blue arrow). This is the track you followed into the woodland at the start of your walk.

Follow the track back out towards Minley Road. Immediately before the road, turn left along the tarmac path. Follow this for just a short distance and then turn right (past the barrier) and cross the road with care to reach the Crown and Cushion for some well-earned hospitality.

### Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

### Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and an Ordnance Survey map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.

