

NO. 1 – ST CATHERINE'S HILL

St Catherine's Hill forms part of the Town Common SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and is a highly protected area of heath land and coniferous woodland. There is a rifle range in the area, the route does not pass through it but shots can be heard occasionally.

To find the start of this walk, look for the Dudsmoor Farm Golf Course sign, visible from Fairmile Road. From the car parking area at the entrance to Marsh Lane and St Catherine's Hill Lane (1), head left along the small grassy path. Whenever the track opens up slightly, keep left. When you reach the gravel track (2), cross it and follow the pathway through the trees and over a hump. On reaching a larger path, turn right on to the path and walk up the hill.

You'll then come to a more open area of trees. Instead of taking the path on the right which heads to the top of St Catherine's Hill, keep left (3) and join the path which takes you along the bottom edge of the hill. The next section of the route is relatively flat, so you might like to walk briskly for a bit. For points (4) and (5), see the shortcut section at the end.

You will then reach a small hill, but it's quite short and the path soon flattens out again. The route carries on along this path and although there are a few undulations, there are no more hills. Where the path opens up and forks (6), keep left and head towards the noticeboard. When you reach the noticeboard and crossroads, turn left and walk down the narrow sandy track (7). The track becomes more gravelly and uneven as you near the road, so watch your footing.

Go through the gate (8). If you are in need of a drink at this point, cross the road and walk down Marlow Drive to the shops by the roundabout. You can then either return to the gate and pick up the walk again or head back to the start along Hurn Road. If you can wait for refreshments, turn left out of the gate and walk down Hillside Road. Follow the road round to the right, past the grassy area. This is where you'd come out of you'd taken the shortcut (5).

When you reach Hurn Road, turn left (9). Carry on along this road, past Sandy Lane and the Old Post Office (by roundabout) on your left. At the roundabout, keep going straight on along Fairmile Road, until you return to the car park at Marsh Lane.

Well done, you have completed the walk! Why not try improving your time when you walk here next? Try walking more briskly along the pavement as you return to the start of the walk. If you need a drink, there is a parade of shops just a few more steps up the road.

Shortcut

Having walked along the flat section and under a BT line (see paragraph 5), you will see a clearing and pathway in the rhododendron bushes on your left (4). If you ever want to take a shortcut and finish your walk early, take the pathway down through the rhododendron and walk over a series of footbridges. You will come out onto Hillside Drive and can pick up the last bit of the walk at this point (5).

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GRADING: 2
TIME: 25 - 40 minutes
DISTANCE: 1.3 miles (shortcut route: 0.8 m)
SURFACES: Dirt Track/Tarmac/1 Gate/Gentle Hills
REFRESHMENTS: 2 sets of Shops

This is a medium distance health walk that takes you on dirt tracks along the bottom edge of St. Catherine's Hill and back along pavements.

There are a couple of gentle slopes and one gate. Walkers should watch their footing on St. Catherine's Hill as there are many tree roots. The shortcut option requires walking on small footbridges.

