

- 9 Go back over the stile and head across the field towards Downe Court c.1690. Follow the waymarkers past the Court to Luxted Road and cross the next field to the kissing-gate. Turn right along the path, then left at the end onto West Hill.
- 10 This road leads you 400m through West Kent Golf Course, (please stay on the road). Four Ancient Woodlands surround the Course: Sow, Snotsdale, Ladies and Leasons Woods. Follow the road to the end, passing another coal post and the clubhouse, and take the footpath on the right.
- 11 Follow the path for 1.5km around the northern end of Biggin Hill Airfield. Biggin Hill is famous for its role in the Battle of Britain. It housed one of the largest fighter squadrons and in 1943 was the first station to destroy 1000 enemy aircraft.
- 12 Cross the concrete roadway on your left and walk straight on for 500m across a stile back to the common, admire the views across London. Follow the left path past the cottages. Little Stone House and Elm Cottage, c.1850, are constructed from brick and local flint that have been knapped and Jasmine, Green View and Ramblers' Rest House were all erected in 1731 at the charge of the parish as the Cudham Workhouse.
- 13 The Kings Arms pub, c.1700, is a weather-boarded building. A spitfire crash-landed here in 1949 and demolished part of the pub. From here return across the common to the start at the car park.



How to get there...

BUSES:

320 Biggin Hill to Catford
246 Bromley to Chartwell
R2 Petts Wood to Biggin Hill

TRAIN:

Nearest station: Hayes

CAR

Turn onto Ashmore Lane, off the main A233, in Leaves Green.

PARKING:

Ashmore Lane car park, Leaves Green.

Please check: www.tfl.gov.uk for further details or call Traveline on 0871 200 22 33.

All details correct at time of printing (2013).

Additional Information...

A 3 mile walk (extended to 6.5 miles linking to Downe Court) taking the walker through open farmland, wild flower-filled commons, past ancient woodland and villages to Biggin Hill Airfield famous for its role in the Battle of Britain.

Short cut from Point 5:

About 1/4 mile along Downe Road, take footpath 230 on the right beside a house called Tall Trees. At the end of the tarmac path by the house, it bears right. Follow the path as it ascends through farm fields, where flax produces a sea of blue in summer. There are panoramic views towards London. The path rejoins the extended route at point 11a on footpath 230.

In the 1500s Leaves Green was known as Leigh's Green. The Leighs were an important family owning estates at Addington and West Wickham.

Walks



around the Borough



Image © David Griffiths

Leaves Green

Life is better outdoors...

Starting point: Ashmore Lane car park, Leaves Green

Distance: 3 miles

Duration: 2 hours

Short cut route: Point 5 to Point 11a

Extended walk: 6.5 miles – 3½ - 4 hours.

Leaves Green

- 1 Start from the car park at Leaves Green Common off Ashmore Lane, taking the path past the houses to the right of the common (Leaves Green Crescent). Set back are old cottages. C. 1700s. The common has small areas managed as meadow. Look out for summer wildflowers and butterflies. The white post by the A233 is a Coal Post, one of 250 that circle London. The posts mark the point where coal duty became payable and ceased at the setting up of the London County Council in 1889. Continue along Leaves Green Crescent towards the hair salon.
- 2 Just before the salon, turn right into byway 234. Much of the surrounding pasture has become scrub and will return to woodland if left. At the end of the byway, take the path to the left of the gate at Ashmore Farm and continue along the track. Where the track turns left, cross a stile and walk diagonally across to the stile at the corner of the field. Admire the vista across the valley to Furze Bottom and Hoppers Hatch Wood.
- 3 Turn right at the bridleway and follow it to its end. Walk on past Keston Court Cottages and turn left at Blackness Lane and right onto Church Road. To the left of the road is Warbank, the site of an ancient Roman hillside settlement.
- 4 Continue along Church Road. On the right is Glebe Cottage. This cottage was once attached to the Rectory, which was destroyed by a bomb in the 1940s. Continue along Church Road to Keston Parish Church. Keston Parish Church is a flint and stone construction with a small bell tower. Records from 1050 show that a Saxon church stood on this site, and parts of the Nave and Chancel Arch are Norman. Originally the medieval village was situated around the church but after the Great Plague it moved to the end of Heathfield Road on Keston Common. From the church, cross the A233 and walk along Downe Road.
- 5 At Downe Road you can either take a short cut - see additional information - to complete the 3 mile walk, or continue on the route to complete the extended 6.5 mile walk.

6 Continue along Downe Road to the junction with Shire Lane (on the left). Admire the view across the valley towards Holwood House, once home of William Pitt, Prime Minister from 1785 to 1803. Just after the junction, Downe Road becomes New Road Hill. Turn right here and cross a stile into a field. Continue through a belt of broadleaved woodland, exit through the gate and continue across the next field.

7 Enter the next wood, and take the left fork of the path. Follow the footpath over a couple of stiles, through fields and follow the signs to Rookery Road. Turn right into Downe village along the High Street. This historic village has been a settlement since prehistoric times. Land at Downe was once granted to Elgin, great aunt of Harold I. The village contains listed buildings, a 13th century flint church and two Victorian pubs, The Queen's Head and The George & Dragon. Plaques commemorate Sir John Lubbock and Charles Darwin.

8 Walk down Luxted Road and look right to Petley's House c1850. Emma Wedgwood, who became Darwin's wife, lived here in the 1880s. Take the footpath opposite and follow the waymarkers across fields towards Down House. Cross over a stile to Luxted Road. The walk carries on around a field, but from the road you can see Down House, now owned by English Heritage.

