A slightly more challenging walk which crosses the Downside water meadows and ends at the Chatley Heath Semaphore Tower. The path crosses the flood meadows for the River Mole – beautiful in summer, but best avoided in the winter months when the river can flood the fields. The walk includes five stiles, one of which does not have a dog gate (small dogs can get through, but larger dogs such as retrievers etc. would need to be able to jump or be lifted over one high stile).

**How to get there:** Start from the Holly Hedge car park in Cobham opposite the Leg O’Mutton Field.

**Parking:** Parking is available at Holly Hedge car park on Downside Bridge Road opposite the Leg O’Mutton playing fields.

**Length of the walk:** Approx. 1¾ hrs. (return). Distance – 2 miles/3.2 km one-way, approx. 4 miles/6.4 km return.

**The Map**

**The Walk**

**How to Get There:** If you start from the Holly Hedge car park, walk south along Downside Bridge Road for 5 minutes, passing St Andrews Church dating from the 12th century on your left, and following the road over Downside Bridge. Just after the bridge look out for the signed footpath on the right side of the road, just before a row of terraced cottages, and the entrance to Plough Lane.
1. Cross this stile into the field following the path, which takes you through the first two water meadows. The path goes straight across the centre of these fields beside many beautiful and ancient oak trees; where you will often hear woodpeckers in the trees, buzzards wheeling overhead and occasionally see large passing migrant flocks of geese and swans.

Cross a small wooden footbridge with a high stile, which larger dogs will need to navigate over. In the third meadow, follow the same direction, passing through a metal hand-gate into a fourth meadow. Walking slowly across these meadows or stopping occasionally you will hear the ever-evocative summer sound of meadow grasshoppers.

The River Mole can be glimpsed here on the right-hand side through the hedging, which is mainly blackthorn (sloe). This hedgerow gives a wonderful display of white blossom every spring.

Here too, you will see signs making you aware there may be adders in this area. Adders are rare within the M25 due to habitat loss, therefore it is even more important to help protect them. If you are incredibly lucky and see one, pass quietly and do not disturb it in any way. Adders are protected by Law (as are all amphibians and reptiles in the UK) and are a priority Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Species i.e. a species most threatened and requiring conservation.
2. Cross over a second wooden pedestrian bridge into a further field. Here change your
direction going 45 degrees diagonally across towards a horse field, aiming ultimately for a
metal barred gate in the distance, just left of a house in the final field. While there is no
distinct path to follow in these two fields, aim for a stile to cross through the middle fence,
about three quarters the way along, and then continue to the metal barred field gate with a
stile on its right, taking you onto Pyrford Road.

3. Turn right onto this lane for approximately five minutes (quarter mile) passing a pair of
ornate metal gates on your left.

4. Coming to a junction turn left at a
footpath sign to Old Lane. There is a
board here indicating you are entering
the ‘Chatley Heath Semaphore Tower
area’.

There will be some inevitable road
noise now as you cross the M25 via a
small bridge, but once across and into
the woods the noise soon dissipates.
Passing over the bridge, follow the
surfaced track, which bends gradually
to the right, going uphill for a short
distance passing many sweet chestnut
trees to the 60ft high Chatley Heath
Semaphore Tower. There are
occasionally open days for the public
during the summer, where you can
climb up narrow stairs to the rooftop
platform for excellent panoramic views
of the surrounding countryside.

Options: You can now either retrace your steps or continue enjoying a longer walk around the
wonderful heather and gorse landscape of Chatley Heath and Ockham Common, a Site of Special
Scientific Interest for its habitat and wildlife.

Refreshments: The Plough Inn and The Medicine Garden are both located just off Downside Bridge
Road a couple of minutes south of the start-point, or there are numerous options in central Cobham.

Photos: Jo Rutherford