# The Mole Gap

*Dorking West station - Westhumble - Norbury Park - Leatherhead station*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length:</th>
<th>5 ¾ miles (9.4 km)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Underfoot:</td>
<td>The route is mainly on field and woodland paths along the valley or its sides - put simply, after any sort of rain you will encounter some mud. Good shoes recommended.</td>
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<td>Terrain:</td>
<td>Mainly a gentle walk along the valley sides and floor, but with one reasonably steep climb and descent just beyond Westhumble.</td>
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<td>Maps:</td>
<td>1:50,000 Landranger 187 Dorking &amp; Reigate; 1:25,000 Explorer 146 Dorking, Box Hill &amp; Reigate.</td>
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<td>Useful websites:</td>
<td>The walk follows parts of the <a href="#">Mole Gap Trail</a>, passing through <a href="#">Denbies Wine Estate</a> and the <a href="#">Norbury Park</a> nature reserve.</td>
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<td>Getting there:</td>
<td>Gomshall is a minor station on the cross-country North Downs line with a First Great Western train every 2 hours in either direction, so it is necessary to plan your journey in advance. Redhill has 2 Southern services an hour from London Victoria (28 mins) via Clapham Junction 22 (22 mins) for connections from London Waterloo and 4 services an hour from London Bridge (36 mins) via Norwood Junction (23 mins) for London Overground connections. All 6 trains call at East Croydon (12-18 mins). From Redhill, First Great Western run a train every 2 hours to Gomshall (15 mins).</td>
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<td>Getting home:</td>
<td>Four South West Trains services per hour (2 per hour on Sundays) run from Leatherhead to London Waterloo (49 mins) via Wimbledon (27 mins) for London Underground connections and Clapham Junction (35 mins) for London Overground connections. Additionally, there are two Southern services per hour to London Victoria (52 mins) via Sutton (19 mins) for connections to London Blackfriars and Clapham Junction (43 mins) for London Overground connections.</td>
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<td>Fares:</td>
<td>An off-peak return to 'Dorking stations' for £10.80 (child £5.40, railcard £7.15) will cover both journeys.</td>
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Route description

- Arriving at Dorking West from Redhill, use the subway to cross to the opposite platform and exit through foot gate. Turn right along the station road and at the end turn left, passing a primary school.

- At the corner ahead, cross and take the second road on the right, Limeway Terrace, very soon turning right again on Chalkpit Terrace. At the end of the road swing left and at a junction just beyond, keep straight ahead on a narrow road (with a footpath sign to Westhumble).

- This soon becomes a chalky path climbing over a low rise. At the summit keep straight ahead and drop down into the vineyard ahead.

**Planting of the vineyard on the Denbies estate (named after 18th century owner John Denby) began in 1986. It now covers 265 acres, more than 10% of the UK’s total vines. The winery, in the large German-style building which also houses the visitor centre, produces white and red varieties, and the vineyard plantings include eight major grape types, including seyval blanc, pinot noir and chardonnay – the vines are labelled with their varieties as you walk through.**

- Following a broad path through the vines, climb another low rise. Here, cross a track and continue on the broad path ahead, still among the vines. Eventually you climb to a concrete track by a signpost.

- Cross the track and keep straight ahead on a grass swathe beside the edge of a wood to reach a kissing gate exiting the vineyard. Immediately beyond, you reach a path junction and take the footpath straight ahead, through the trees.

- Before long, the path joins a tarmac drive below Ashleigh Grange, with good views across the village of Westhumble and the valley below. After about 50m, ignore the little footpath waymarked straight ahead and keep to the drive, bending right and descending.

- Keep to the drive as it swings round towards the group of houses around Chapel Farm, nestling in a small side valley, soon reaching the scant remains of Westhumble chapel.

**Only the west wall and part of the gable of this little flint chapel, built in the 12th or 13th century, serving the village of Westhumble, just down the road. The chapel lasted only around 3 centuries until its desecration in the Dissolution. The ruins were transferred to the National Trust in 1937.**

- At the road junction beside the chapel head left for a few meters. Beside the sign marking the entrance to Westhumble head right at a footpath sign.

- The path climbs straight up hill beside the fence. Through a kissing gate, the path enters a small wood, continuing to climb. A stile leads you out into one more field and then to tiny Crabtree Lane.

- Head right along the lane, steadily descending. Pass a small car park and continue downhill through the wood. Where the road flattens out slightly, you reach a junction with a track.

- Head left, then very soon veer right on a broad path, following the Permissive Bridleway sign. Before long, the path is running along the edge of the wood, with views over the valley and to cream-painted Norbury Park house on the spur ahead.
The house you see ahead was built in 1774 by the Locke family, but the parkland of Norbury, which is a mixture of deciduous woodland and agricultural land, has a much longer history, possibly being part of the land of a Mickleham manor mentioned in the Domesday book. In 1931, Norbury Park was the first piece of land ever purchased by Surrey County Council to protect it from development, though today it is managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust and farmed by a number of tenant farmers. The cows you may see grazing the lush riverside meadows below you produce the milk that forms the basis of Norbury Blue cheese, one of the few vegetarian blue cheeses produced in Britain.

- Continue on this clear path, ignoring the various routes signed off it as it heads down the valley. Past a small picnic site, the path begins to gently climb through the trees.
- At the top of the rise you enter an open area and cross a small track, keeping to a grassy footpath straight ahead (signed to Leatherhead). This quickly descends to a tarmac drive where you turn left. From here there are fine views over the bend of the Mole and to Mickleham village on the far bank.
- After a stretch through a wood, the drive begins to swing left. Here take a footpath signed to the right, descending through the trees. The path takes you over the mouth of the railway tunnel and shortly afterwards you reach a crossing path.
- Turn right, dropping to a bridge under the railway. Beyond, through a gate, you reach a track junction.
- Turn left (again signed to Leatherhead) along the edge of the wood. The track climbs over a low rise next to a meander of the Mole then enters an open field.
- Keep to the path beside the high riverbank to reach the bottom of the rise, then strike left on a path heading across the field towards a car park. Once back beside the river, you pass through a kissing gate then follow the riverside path ahead under the Leatherhead by-pass.
- Eventually leaving the river, the path runs along the side of a hedge before emerging at a track junction by the entrance to a rifle range. Here turn right (following a bridleway sign to Gimcrack Hill). The road curves past some fine Georgian houses to reach a bridge over the Mole.
- Immediately before the bridge, turn left on the surfaced footpath (signed to Town Bridge). Stroll along this pleasant path past the midstream islands and weirs. Eventually, passing apartments, you reach Leatherhead’s fine brick Town Bridge.

The attractive 14-arch bridge you can see here dates from 1783, but the brick piers sit on much older, medieval foundations - this is a longstanding crossing point of the Mole, quite possibly dating back to Roman times. It was as a river crossing point that the town of Leatherhead grew up, with a large number of inns and hostelries. The Running Horse, on the far bank, dates from 1403 and is reputed to have been stayed in by Elizabeth I, delayed on a journey by floods on the Mole.

- Turn right over the bridge, crossing the confluence of 3 channels of the Mole, glancing left to see the fine railway viaduct. At a mini roundabout keep straight ahead past the Running Horse pub.
- Continue uphill to the centre of town, following the road round to the left, to the grand Lloyds TSB bank. In front of the bank, take Gravel Hill up the side of the war memorial, past cottages of a wide range of ages.

- At the top, across the road from the town hall, turn left then cross the series of traffic islands to the right to head down the main road past the council offices at Fairmount House.

- At the road junction just before a petrol station, swing left on Randalls Road. Cross at the pedestrian crossing by the railway bridge and take the road opposite which quickly brings you to the station.