

# 27 SURREY GIBBET HILL & THE DEVIL'S PUNCH BOWL



Distance: 6½ miles/10.3km Time: 3 hours Grade: Moderate

## NATURE'S THEATRE



CHOSEN BY...  
**BEN GILES**

Formed by erosion caused by spring water, the Devil's Punch Bowl is a striking natural amphitheatre of open heathland that's home to wild ponies, deer and the likes of nightjars and stonechats. This walk meets a section of the old A3 that was replaced when the

Hindhead Tunnel was opened in 2011. It has since been turned into a trail that helps take you to the top of Gibbet Hill, from where there are views across the Weald and as far as London. The walk starts and finishes at the village of Thursley, which was the childhood home of Surrey's most famous architect, Edwin Lutyens. He lived at what is now called

Street House, by The Clump (a grassy triangle with benches). He is just as well known for his country house designs, many in Arts and Crafts style, as he is for his international commissions and for his war memorials, notably the Cenotaph in Whitehall. A number of Lutyens family graves are to be seen in the churchyard of St Michael & All Angels.

The Devil's Punch Bowl was created by erosion caused by spring water.



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/STERLING IMAGES



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OS Explorer map OL33 Buy maps at: [ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop](http://ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop)

## 1 Start

From The Clump in the middle of the village head along The Street and turn R into Highfield Lane up past the church for just over 1km to the top of the lane. Time looking round the church is well spent and in the churchyard is the famous Sailor's Grave. This is the grave of an unnamed man who was murdered in 1786 in Hindhead by three men whom he had met in a pub in the village. The three men were later arrested, convicted of murder and hanged in Guildford. Their corpses were hung in chains above the village on Gibbet Hill.

## 2 ¾ mile/1.2km

Continue ahead onto the byway steadily uphill on the Greensand Way. This takes you up a holloway, over a byway

## DON'T MISS...



**The Church of St Michael & All Angels.** It has a sundial on its shingled timber bell turret with the Latin inscription *hora pars vitae, an hour is part of life*. Available also is a short guide to the churchyard, where the poet and essayist John Freeman is buried.

crossroads, then up through heath scrub and woodland and past where a bridleway joins from the left. Continue uphill with good views across the Punch Bowl. As the track curves R you pass a restored turnpike milestone and you can

detour L to the top of Gibbet Hill, with its triangulation pillar and Celtic cross.

## 3 2½ miles/3.7km

The byway now levels out and sweeps round past the Sailor Stone memorial. Here you are also passing above the Hindhead Tunnel through which the modern A3 now passes, but until this opened in 2011 the road passed over the top of the hill. In another 400m reach a bridleway junction and turn R over the line of the 1822 coach road, which later became the A3, to the viewpoint overlooking the Punch Bowl. Here, there is a picnic area and National Trust café with toilets by the car park.

## 4 2½ miles/4.3km

Continue along the bridleway (SP Highcombe) into woodland and down to a gate into the National Trust area of Highcombe Edge. Keep along the broad crest and after 400m, at a fork in the bridleway, keep R and descend for another 800m to reach a bridleway cross-paths. Head straight over and descend through a gate and then more steeply down a holloway to Hyde Lane.

## 5 4½ miles/7.4km

Turn R up the narrow lane past Ridgeway Farm, beyond which the lane becomes a byway and descends steeply to a footbridge across a brook. Climb steeply up the far side past cottages to Highfield Lane once again. Here, turn L and retrace steps back down to Thursley. [CW](#)

Mature trees and woodland line parts of this route.



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/STERLING IMAGES



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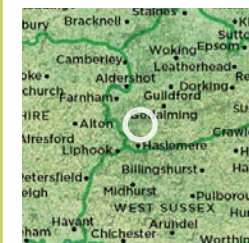


The views on this walk stretch across the Weald.

## GRADIENT PROFILE



## PLAN YOUR WALK



## ROUTE

**Start/parking** Thursley village car park on Dyehouse Road by the cricket ground or roadside in village, postcode GU8 6QD, grid ref SU901397  
**Is it for me?** Mostly field, woodland and heathland tracks, gradual ups/downs  
**Stiles** None

## PLANNING

**Nearest town** Godalming  
**Refreshments** The Three Horseshoes (01252 703900), National Trust café at The Devil's Punch Bowl car park (01428 681050)  
**Public toilets** None  
**Public transport** Bus 23 and 504 from Hindhead and Haslemere stops on A287 close to Devil's Punch Bowl NT car park  
**Maps** OS Explorer OL33; Landranger 186

## OPEN IN OS MAPS

OR VISIT  
[walk1000miles.co.uk/cwroutes](http://walk1000miles.co.uk/cwroutes)



CLASSIC WALK

DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING