



Lovelace Bridges Shorter Trail

Walk created by Horsley Countryside Preservation Society

Length
3.2 Miles

Elevation Gain
420 ft

Route Type
Circular



This shorter walk within the Surrey Hills, an area of outstanding natural beauty is just over 3 miles and passes 6 of the Lovelace Bridge/Arch sites. This route involves some gradual climbs and descents and can be muddy after wet weather.

Start and finish location: Sheepleas Green Dene Car Park

Postcode KT24 5TA Map Ref: TQ091509 what3words: sheep.defend.still

Description

The 15 Lovelace bridges were built in the 1860s on the orders of Lord Lovelace who owned the East Horsley estate and who was the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey.

The bridges were to make possible the extraction of timber from the woods on the North Downs creating smooth gradients and going above existing roads and paths. The timber was brought out using horses.

Ten of the bridges still exist and the sites of the others can be identified by the embankments leading to them and remnants of masonry, flint and bricks.

The bridges were built of local flint and bricks probably from the Earl's own brickworks. They vary in size with the most elaborate being the Dorking Arch over the Crocknorth road ornamented with arrow slits. The others are simpler, working bridges with the narrowest being Meadow Platt.

Horsley Countryside Preservation Society won an award from the Surrey Archaeological Society for its conservation work on Stony Dene Bridge.

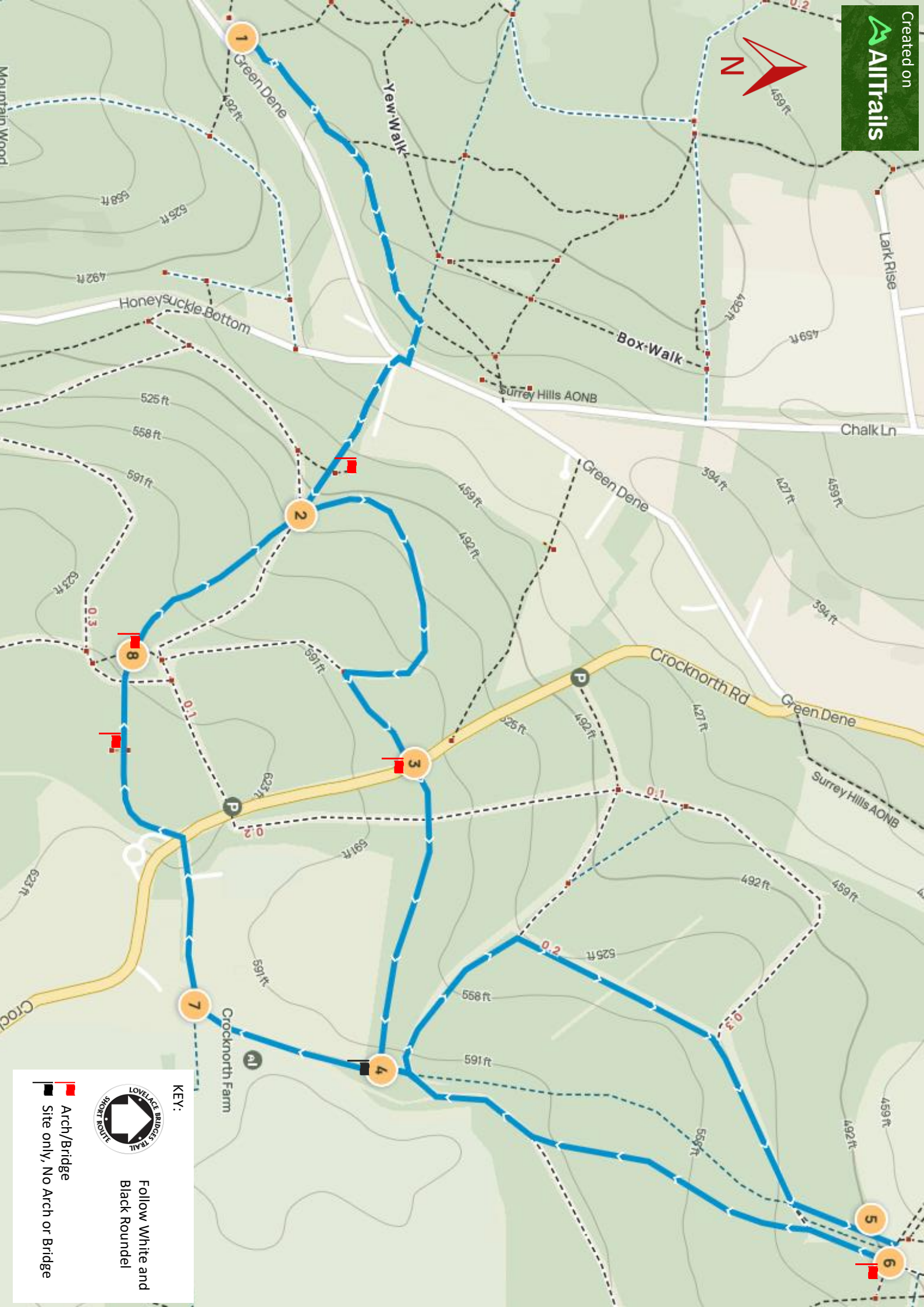
Two trails have been created using existing paths and bridleways, a short route and a long route.

Both routes start from Green Dene car park and follow the same path as far as Stony Dene





Bridge where the short route goes uphill through the yew tree bridleway while the long route carries on further southeast to the site of Horse Close Bridge and Meadow Platt Bridge.

The routes join again between Crocknorth Farm and Briary Hill East Bridge, then the long route goes to the left while the short route continues down Briary Hill.

All walkers of the Lovelace Bridge Trails do so at their own risk.



KEY:

-  Arch/Bridge
-  Site only, No Arch or Bridge
-  **LOVELACE BRIDGES TRAIL**
SURREY HILLS AONB
-  Follow White and Black Roundel

1. Start Point: Green Dene Car Park

From the car park take the path in the Northeast corner, roughly parallel to the road, turning right at the first cross path.

At the junction with the bridleway turn right down the slope to the junction of Green Dene and Honeysuckle Bottom. Cross the road with care. Take the narrow bridleway to the left of Honeysuckle Bottom uphill to Raven Arch.

2. Raven Arch and 5 Paths Junction

Go under Raven Arch, at the 5 paths crossing go first left on the Forestry track. Follow this as it bends uphill then take the first path to the left. Follow this until you reach Dorking Arch which goes over the Crocknorth Road.

3. Dorking Arch

The most elaborate of the bridges is Dorking Arch over the Crocknorth Road which is ornamented with arrow slits. Walk over the arch and keep on this main path ignoring crossing paths. Go straight on and follow the path.

4. Oakhanger Bridge Site (No bridge)

Go straight on and follow the path this leads you to the site of Oakhanger Bridge, no longer in existence but you can see the raised embankments. The site of the bridge is on your left just before a steep but short slope down. Descend the slope to the sunken path/bridleway and turn left. Walk about 100 yards (Oldlands sign) and turn left and follow the broad path. It then bends round to the right. Follow this steadily uphill, then it flattens out and bear right where a small path joins from the left and continue till you come to a fork. Turn left downhill for about 100 yards.

5. Jubilee Trail Viewpoint (Optional)

At this point there is an optional short path on your left leading to the Jubilee Trail viewpoint. Alternatively, a little further up as you come to Stony Dene Bridge, you can go through the kissing gate on your left into the field for more views.

6. Stony Dene Bridge

Go under Stony Dene Bridge and immediately take the first path to the right up the bank of the bridge to the bridleway at the top. Turn left onto this bridleway flanked by yew trees. Follow this track up the hill ignoring the crossing path till you come to a T junction with a crossing bridleway at the top. Turn right. When you come to a fork go left. After 100 yards, you will see again the site of Oakhanger Bridge on your right up the steep bank. Continue straight on and you will emerge at The Old Barn. Parts of this whole section can be muddy in winter.

7. The Old Barn (private home)

At the Old Barn, turn right and follow the path/driveway to the road. Cross the road with care to the bridleway opposite. Follow the footpath round to the right then down the hill under Briary Hill East. Follow straight on across a crossing path.

8. Briary Hill West

Go down under Briary Hill West Bridge and continue following the path to the 5 ways junction you have been to near the beginning of the walk. Take the second left/straight on downhill down to Raven Arch. Go under Raven Arch down to the road. Cross the road to the path opposite. Go up the hill and first left to follow a path that goes parallel to the road. Turn left at the crossing path and this leads back to the car park.