





Tom's Down

This trail centres around The Cadland Estate with links into Fawley and Blackfield.




Key:

-  Trail Starting Point
-  Trail
-  Extended Trail
-  Point of Interest
-  Trail Steps

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Tom's Down

This historic trail covers areas used for D-Day preparations, sites of old farmsteads, a Roman road, brickworks, mills and gravel pits. The paths are thought to have been used for a variety of activities, including smuggling or 'free trading' as it was commonly known.

This trail has a central circular section with connective 'branches' to Langley, Blackfield, Fawley, Exbury and Lepe. Many of these routes (now Rights of Way) can be seen on maps dating from the mid to late 1700s. They cross parts of Cadland and Exbury Estates, revealing a historic and modern working landscape. The rights of way are mostly surfaced but muddy patches are likely.

During recent years efforts to regenerate dwindling and rare habitats have been successful, and we are slowly beginning to see threatened species like migratory Nightjar and resident Dartford warblers return, as well as Grayling and Silver-studded blue butterflies. To help look after this rich but delicate habitat and the species that rely on it please keep to the rights of way particularly during the ground nesting bird season 1 March and 31 July and please keep all dogs on a lead or under very close control.



Trail Overview

Start/finish: There is no singular starting point. However, Fawley or Langley are good options.

Grid reference SU 448 017

what3words.com/advancing.debater.hazy

Ordnance Survey map: Explorer OL 22 New Forest.

Distance: 3 miles (5km) circular section. 8 miles (13km) total – 3.5 hours.

Local facilities: There is no formal car parking for this trail. There is very limited on-street parking. Our suggested locations are Fawley, Chapel Lane and in Walker's Lane South.

Accessibility: Fairly flat. Gravel tracks and some muddy patches.



Directions

1 Tom's Down

From Blackfield Recreation Ground go to the end of Walker's Lane South head through the metal kissing gate onto Tom's Down and the Manor of Cadland. Keep going straight ahead following the main track down hill then up onto Fields Heath heading towards the pylons and the crossroads beneath them. Turn right at the crossroads



2 Fawley

From Fawley head past the pub and down a little lane which comes out on Fawley Bypass. Cross the road and follow the footpath straight on, going through a metal gate and finishing at the crossroads under the pylons. Turn left at the crossroads

3 Sprat's Down

Walk along a gravel track for a fair distance enjoying views over the estate. At the wooden signpost head left following signs for Sprats Down. In 100m the path forks. Keep walking straight on ignoring the track to the left. Follow the wide track down towards Stanswood Road. In another 100m, as the path bends round to the left, take the footpath on the right heading out across fields. The track then heads into woods before reaching the road

4 Stanswood Road

Head right onto Stanswood Road and follow it down past Stanswood Mill then Bournehill Lodge. Just after Little Stanswood Cottage turn right onto the public bridleway and keep straight ahead passing over the floating island then walking up an old drovers lane

5 Badminton Plantation

The bridleway leads onto Badminton Plantation before finally ending at the wooden signpost passed before. This time head left following signs for Dean's Bridge. Follow the wide rack round with lovely views over Badminton Common. If you fancy a short side track then about halfway round look out for a lefthand turning down a short track which leads to Dean's Bridge. The walking route keeps going round Badminton



6 Mopley Pond

Keep following the edge of Badminton Common before reaching a gathering of ways. Turn left then left again heading towards Mopley Pond. Pass by the quietly patient fishers and follow the path up towards the riding school. Take the right hand path opposite the riding school up onto Tom's Down. Turn right after the gate and follow the path back to Walker's Lane South.

