

ENGLEFIELD GREEN AND COOPER'S HILL

THIS WALK TAKES IN SEVERAL HISTORICAL LANDMARKS, DESCENDING ONTO RUNNYMEDE FIELDS FROM COOPER'S HILL AND BACK UP TO ENGLEFIELD GREEN. THE START IS IN COOPER'S HILL LANE PUBLIC CAR PARK. THERE ARE PUBLIC TOILETS HERE. MAP REF. SU995719. NEAREST POSTCODE TW20 0LB. 4 MILES MODERATE.

Turn right out of Cooper's Hill Car Park into Cooper's Hill Lane. On your left hand side, before reaching the bend in Cooper's Hill Lane, is the Commonwealth Air Forces Memorial. This is open all year round and is well worth a visit. The building was designed by Sir Edward Maufe and consists of a shrine enclosed by cloisters. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II unveiled the memorial in 1953 as a fitting tribute to the 20,000 servicemen and women of the Air Forces who died during the Second World War and have no known graves. For a commanding view of the River Thames and its surrounding area climb the stairs to the roof area. On a clear day one can see for several miles.

Leave the memorial turning left out of the gates to continue along Cooper's Hill Lane past Kingswood, a hall residence for the Royal Holloway College.

At the lookout point the road bears off to the right and a public footpath marked by a sign bears off to the left. Follow this footpath, first passing through the gate and then descending the steps through the woods to the bottom of Cooper's Hill. Walkers must be careful to stick to the steps as there are several other tracks that lead off the main path. Egham Urban District Council donated Cooper's Hill Woods to the National Trust in 1963. The 87 acres of broad-leaved deciduous woodland are home to various plant and animal life including bluebells, green woodpeckers and noctule bats. For more information, stop to read the notice board at the bottom of the steps on the left hand side. Immediately after the board, turn left through a kissing gate and follow the path downhill alongside a row of fine oaks to the bottom right hand corner of the field. Cross over the stile into this next field and turn left walking towards the Magna Carta Memorial, also designed by Sir Edward Maufe. This was erected by the American Bar Association in 1957 to commemorate the sealing of Magna Carta by King John in 1215.

Leaving the memorial enclosure turn left and walk for about 100 yards to a gated footpath on the left hand side, which leads back up Cooper's Hill by way of the John F. Kennedy Memorial. There is a possible short diversion for a refreshment break at the National Trust café, or alternatively, continue straight up the path to the simple JFK memorial of inscribed Portland Stone, erected in 1965 by public subscription and dedicated to the American President, a much respected world statesman.

Continue up the pathway into Oak Lane and then on until you reach Priest Hill. Cross the road and turn left. Turn right down Castle Hill Road, taking care as there is no pavement on this road, cross Bishopsgate Road and continue down Ham Lane.

On reaching the red brick house at the end of the Lane you will find a kissing gate at the end of the hedge on the left hand side. Go through the kissing gate and follow the edge of the field downhill to the next kissing gate.

The footpath veers slightly to the right leading to a small footbridge crossing the stream and back up the other side to the gap in the rustic fencing. Keep to the path which runs behind private gardens, until you meet Northcroft Road. Take a left turn and follow the road round to Englefield Green. The Green itself is Crown Land and has been leased to the Borough Council for many years. Most weekends during the summer, cricket is played on the Green overlooked by 'The Barley Mow', an old pub, about 250 years old, which was once a coaching hostelry.

Pass the Barley Mow, crossing over St. Judes Road into Barley Mow Road. At the Middle Hill junction cross the road up the public footpath which is to your left. This leads to Tite Hill and another public footpath almost immediately opposite. Follow this path between the hedgerows up to Cooper's Hill Lane. The footpath emerges onto Cooper's Hill Lane near the Air Forces Memorial. Turn left to return the car park.

