

# Elmbridge's countryside sites

## 1 Molesey: Molesey Heath

**Designation:** Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)  
**Accessed from:** Approach Road and Field Common Lane  
**What to look out for:** Molesey Heath is a reclaimed landfill site which was originally a gravel pit. It has never been landscaped and so from Approach Road you enter into a large flat area of predominately rough grassland and scrub which rises into a large mound characterised by a distinct open plateau. The site is rich in bird life and is a popular site with local bird watchers.

## 2 Thames Ditton: Ditton Common

**Designation:** SNCI  
**Accessed from:** Portsmouth Road, Hampton Court Way, Weston Green Road  
 Ditton Common is characterised by areas of high quality acid grassland enclosed by deciduous woodland. A large area of the common is leased to Thames Ditton and Esher Golf Club which maintains the common as both a golf course and area of grassland which provides a habitat for many endangered invertebrates, notably burrowing wasps and bees. Also on site are two attractive village ponds, Marneys and Milbourne.

## 3 Esher: Littleworth Common

**Designation:** SNCI  
**Accessed from:** Littleworth Road, Littleworth Common Road, Portsmouth Road  
 Formerly known as Ditton Marsh this area was originally a more open wet meadow that supported a rich diversity of flora and fauna. Recent restoration has created a large pond on the edge of Littleworth Common adjacent to the Portsmouth Road which is surrounded by rough grassland. The remainder of the site is mostly secondary woodland which supports a rich variety of wildlife and is notably used by Roe Deer. The River Rythe also crosses this site and supports an interesting array of bird life. Permissive horse rides are located on the Common.

## 12 Walton-on-Thames: Desborough Island

**Designation:** SNCI  
**Accessed from:** Walton Lane  
**What to look out for:** Desborough Island is an area of unimproved and semi-improved grassland, with part of the site,

Point Meadow, being owned and managed by Surrey County Council. The area is popular with walkers and dog walkers and is a good site for wildflowers and birds. The area is managed as a hay meadow being cut once a year. This site has been grazed in the past and it is hoped that this practice could be reintroduced to help maintain the hay meadow. The site is also an excellent habitat for butterflies, particularly in the north-east corner of the island, where Large White, Meadow Brown, Small Heath, Common Blue and Small Copper have been found.

## 11 Hershams: Hershams Riverside Park

**Accessed from:** New Berry Lane, Conyers Close and Rittain Road  
**What to look out for:** The park consists of a number of interlinked

meadows together with a small play area alongside the River Mole. This peaceful site is well used by local dog walkers and provides valuable habitats for birds, invertebrates and wildflowers.

## 10 Weybridge: Weybridge Heath

**Designation:** SNCI  
**Accessed from:** Heath Road, St George's Avenue and Brooklands Road  
**What to look out for:** A diverse area of common land around Weybridge Station. Well used by local residents and particularly dog walkers the site underwent heathland restoration between Cobbetts Hill and St George's Avenue in 2002. The remainder of the site is covered with secondary woodland which provides a useful habitat for the local bird populations and is characterised by Oak with Holly understorey.

## 9 Cobham: Old Common

**Designation:** SNCI  
**Accessed from:** Portsmouth Road, Tartar Hill and Old Common Road  
**What to look out for:** Old Common was once an open grazed site, it is now covered mostly by secondary woodland with some open grassland and ponds adjacent to Old Common Road. The top of the site supports acid grassland and scrub which provides an important habitat for invertebrates.



## 4 Long Ditton: Stokes Field

**Designation:** LNR and SNCI  
**Accessed from:** Bankside Drive, Goat Lane off Rectory Lane  
**What to look out for:** Stokes Field boasts its wildflower meadows and a network of ponds and drainage ditches. Within the young deciduous woodland there is a line of ancient oak trees that used to form an old boundary. In spring and summer the meadows are awash with colour and the air is filled with the sweet scent from the many wildflowers that grow there.

## 5 Claygate: Telegraph Hill

**Designation:** SNCI  
**Accessed from:** Telegraph Lane and Manor Road South  
**What to look out for:** Telegraph Hill is so called because it was the site of one of the telegraph stations which, from the mid 1820s to 1847, linked the Admiralty in Whitehall with Portsmouth. Today the site consists of ancient and secondary semi-natural woodland with an area of open grassland and has fine views of Claygate.

## 6 Claygate: Claygate Common

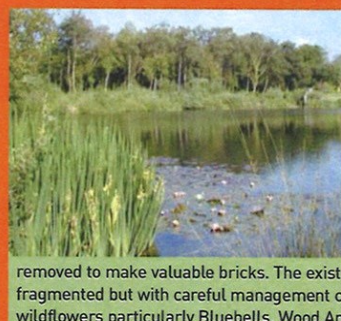
**Designation:** LNR and SNCI  
**Accessed from:** Common Lane, Holroyd Road and Woodlands Close  
**What to look out for:** Up to the end of the nineteenth century Claygate Common was open grazed common with a number of mature trees. The site is now an area of secondary woodland, which provides great local conservation interest while retaining an urban location and supporting a number of ancient woodland plants. It also provides an important area for woodland birds and invertebrates. From 1885 until just after the First World War the site was used as a small golf course, following this it was taken over by a local Cricket Club, The Claygate Comrades until 1935.

## 8 Cobham: Downside Common

**Accessed from:** Downside Common Road  
**What to look out for:** Essentially Downside Common is the village green providing a valuable open space for local residents to relax and enjoy the peace and quiet associated with village life. It boasts an excellent wildlife point which is alive with invertebrates and amphibians during the spring and summer months. Permissive horse rides are located on the Common.

## 7 Oxshott: Littleheath Common

**Designation:** SNCI  
**Accessed from:** Heathfield and Hawkhurst  
**What to look out for:** Littleheath is a wooded site surrounding a large lake, this is the result of brick production whereby the extensive clay deposits were removed to make valuable bricks. The existing woodland is small and fragmented but with careful management can still provide valuable habitat for wildflowers particularly Bluebells, Wood Anemone, Wood Sorrel, Wild Garlic.



Map not to scale  
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