

DISCOVER THE Croydon, Merstham and Godstone IRON RAILWAY



History Exploration Routes - Merstham, Surrey



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Introduction

The Surrey Iron Railway which ran from Wandsworth to Croydon was the first public railway started in 1801. There were railways in mines but this was the first railway that needed an Act of Parliament to go over public land. Originally a canal was considered but this would have taken up even more land and would have taken water from the working mills along the proposed canals course.

This was such a pioneering project even the Russians in St Petersburg took interest in the horse drawn iron railway and was considered one of the wonders of the age.

The Croydon, Merstham & Godstone Iron Railway (CM&GIR) was an extension of the Surrey Iron Railway and ran to Merstham. The directors and investors of this line were local residents and brothers namely; Colonel Hylton Jolliffe and Reverend William Jolliffe who were the local landowners of the quarries in this area. Work started quickly and the railway opened to Merstham on 24 July 1805. Despite the name of the company, it never extended to Godstone.

Information Board and Replica Rails, opposite the Feathers Pub, Merstham



Start of the Iron Railway Walk

**Please look after yourself and look out for others.
Though we have taken every care in the preparation of
this walk, you undertake it entirely at your own risk.**

The start of the walk is opposite the Feathers Pub in Merstham, RH1 3EA where there is an information board on the horse drawn iron railway and some replica rails. The original rails were stolen! There is a railway station at Merstham and regular buses from Redhill to Mertsam on route 405. The bus stop is just before the iron railway display.

Once you have read the noticeboard go left into historic Quality Street, named after J M Barrie's play and starred the actors; Mary Ellaline Terriss and Seymour Hicks who lived in the Old Forge at the end of this street.

If you walk down to the Old Forge, which is on the right hand side of the street you will see a footpath straight in front of you, which takes you over the M25 and past a pond on the left (the site of a former watermill). The path ends at a road. Cross this road with extreme care and climb the steps to St Katharine's Church, Merstham. The church was built in the Thirteenth Century of flint and Merstham Stone. The church is usually open, so please try the door and take a look around. The bells date from the Fourteenth Century.



St Katharine's Church, Merstham

If you are interested in railway history there is a gravestone dedicated to one of the contractors who built the Merstham Railway tunnel for the London to Brighton line. To see the gravestone, come out of the church and turn right, and follow the path around the back of the church. Where the path forks, carry on straight ahead and the contractors gravestone is the tall 'rusty' coloured gravestone on the left. Dedicated to Henry Hoof, brother of William Hoof, contractors of the London and Brighton Railway 19th March 1840.



Leave the churchyard and with care cross the A23 at the traffic island and walk back towards Merstham. When you reach Rockshaw Road cross the road to walk up the pavement side to a railway bridge. Stop on the railway bridge, this is the original London to Brighton line opened in 1841. Look north towards the tunnel and you will notice that there used to be tracks to the right of the present line rising gently and turning right before the tunnel. This was the former Greystone Lime Works line of which more later. Walk on ahead to the second railway bridge, this is the Quarry Line which bypasses Redhill, and was opened in 1899.

Looking north from Merstham Station, the Greystone Lime Works line turns off to the right before the brick over-bridge (Jolliffe Road)



Continue to walk ahead, approximately 600 yards along Rockshaw Road, until you see a bungalow on the left hand side, there is a footpath finger post next to the bungalow. Carefully cross the road and walk down the footpath. The footpath is on the North Downs Way. There are many caverns and workings on the land surrounding you. You will reach an underpass under the M23 which is where the CM&GIR ended.

The following tariff from the Science Museum shows what was being transported on the horse drawn iron railway e.g. sand, brick, stone, flints and Fullers Earth.

SURREY Iron Railway.	
The COMMITTEE of the SURREY IRON RAILWAY COMPANY,	
HEREBY GIVE NOTICE, That the BASON at <i>Wandsworth</i> , and the Railway therefrom up to <i>Crofton</i> and <i>Caythorpe</i> , is now open for the Use of the Public, on Payment of the following Tolls, viz.	
For all Coals entering into or going out of their Basins at <i>Wandsworth</i> ,	<i>per Chaldron</i> , 3d.
For all other Goods entering into or going out of their Basins at <i>Wandsworth</i>	<i>per Ton</i> , 2d.
For all GOODS carried on the said RAILWAY, as follows, viz.	
For Dung,	<i>per Ton, per Mile</i> , 1d.
For Lime, and all Manures, (except Dung,) Lime-stone, Chalk, Clay, Bricks, Tiles, Sand, Blocks, Stones, Flints, and Fuller's Earth,	<i>per Ton, per Mile</i> , 1d.
For Coals,	<i>per Chaldron, per Mile</i> , 2d.
And, For all other Goods,	<i>per Ton, per Mile</i> , 2d.
By ORDER of the COMMITTEE, W. B. LUTTLY, Clerk of the Company.	
<small>Wandsworth, Jan 1, 1864.</small>	

Ignore the underpass and continue straight ahead. You are alongside the M23 which covers the original course of the railway.

Continue ahead ignoring the path to your left, you will see fruit trees on your left, which are the remains of the former garden of the farmhouse demolished to make way for the M23. Ignore the paths into the field and continue ahead. Please take care as the path can be very muddy in wet weather.

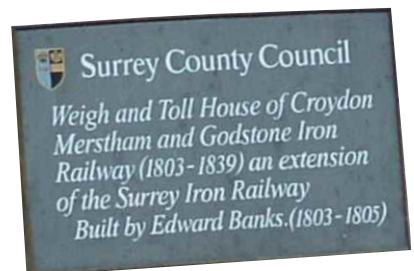
Just before 3 yellow posts in the path on the right you will see the brickwork of a bridge and on your left the land drops away into a cutting. This is the route of the Greystone Limeworks line we noted earlier; it was a later replacement for the CM&GIR. The Limeworks ceased operation in 1956.



The houses on your right were for the men working in the quarry, and this stretch of path that allows vehicular access is named Lime Works Road. At the end of the houses on the left hand side is Jolliffe Road, which, joins the A23 (named after the two investors of the CM&GIR). Continue ahead on the path, past a field of horses, and then on your left you will see the back of the old stable block used for the iron railway. The listed stables were built in 1805/6.

Continue along to the end of the footpath and here you will join Shepherd's Hill. You are now on the former track bed which continued along the left side of London Road. Turn left and left again, so you are on London Road. The large building on this corner was the Jolliffe Arms pub. If you go down the side of the former pub, you come to the front of the listed stables. They are currently being used for car repairs. At the end of the stables there were more quarry workers cottages but these have been demolished.

Return to London Road and turn right, crossing over Shepherds Hill and walk past the houses along the London Road. The house by the large road sign at Number 201 London Road, named Weighbridge Cottage, is believed to be the second oldest surviving railway building in the world. It was built in 1805. The CM&GIR passed through the front garden. The house is now a private residence so please keep on the public pavement.





Continue to the end of the row of houses. Just after the last building there is the remains of a bridge. The top of the brickwork can be seen in the undergrowth. A path used to run at right angles to London Road and the CM&GIR passed under the bridge. Continue along London Road and you will see a deep cutting on the right where the CM&GIR used to run. This section of cutting ends where the A23 has been built over it.

Remains of CM & GIR Railway Bridge



This is the end of the walk. There is a nearby bus stop where the 405 will take you back to Merstham; or you can walk back along the A23.



CM & GIR Railway Cutting

There are some other sites to see. On the other side of the A23 dual carriageway towards Hooley (this is a dangerous road to cross and you do this at your own risk), is the former Fox Shaw Inn.

There are a number of former CM&GIR sleepers built into the garden wall and there is a plaque detailing the property's history including a bet. This is a private residence, please stay on the pavement.



You can also see another CM&GIR bridge on the right hand side of Starbucks Coffee House, 119 London Rd N, Hooley, Merstham, Redhill RH1 3AL. It is more appropriate to drive or take a bus to this location, than walk along the dangerous dual carriageway.