



COUNTRYSIDE WALKS IN BRACKNELL FOREST

Wildmoor Heath, Broadmoor & The Devil's Highway

4.1 miles / 6.6km – 2 hours +

This anti-clockwise walk starts at the Wildmoor Heath nature reserve car park off the Crowthorne Road, just south of Crowthorne village - grid reference SU838629.

Leave the car park by the path near the notice board and follow this along the edge of woodland and out into open scrub and heathland, which is home to many species of insects, lizards and birds. Continue alongside the pylons for approx. 800m, descending to the lower lying Owlsmoor Bog, which is part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designated by English Nature – this area supports many rare plant species. Carry straight on through a gate where the track bends right and then bear left along a wooden boardwalk further along. Pass through the gap in the fence on your left and climb up onto the main bridleway which crosses the site. Turn right along this, pass through a gate and after a further 250m, exit the nature reserve over a concrete footbridge and through another gate. Continue up a slope straight ahead for another 200m before exiting left onto a tarmac path.

Follow this downhill for 300m, passing through a gate and then turning right onto a cinder track (a public footpath). The large buildings of Broadmoor Hospital can be seen on the high ground to your left; founded in 1863, Broadmoor is a special hospital providing treatment for psychiatric patients under secure conditions. The building of the hospital pre-dates the growth of Crowthorne village as a population centre.

After approx. 300m turn left and follow the path alongside a fields and round through a small wood until you reach a tarmac road, with Broadmoor Farm on your right. Continue straight ahead along Eastern Lane.

Continue straight ahead at the next junction, passing a house and a cottage on your left. The tarmac road soon becomes a rough track leading downhill towards a fish pond at Butter Bottom. Bear left at the pond, keeping it on your right (and keeping an eye out for herons on its banks). Continue straight ahead for a further 500m until you reach the Devil's Highway, a wide straight track running east to west. This Roman Road once linked London and the Roman town of Silchester and is said to have got its name when local inhabitants, after the Romans had departed, thought that only the Devil could have constructed such a feat of engineering.

Turn left and follow the Devil's Highway for 800m before turning left onto a public footpath just after the hospital car park. This heads uphill for a short distance before turning into a tarmac path. Follow this path alongside the road (Kentigern Drive), continuing straight on at the junctions with Upper Broadmoor Road and Cricket Field Grove. Continue down School Hill to its junction with Lower Broadmoor Road at a roundabout. Turn right here and almost immediately left through a gap in corner of the hedge onto Gordon Road, an unmade track.

Continue straight along Gordon Road for nearly 600m, past Pinehill Road on your right, and then re-entering Wildmoor Heath through a gate. You will eventually arrive back at the main bridleway which crosses the site – this time, turn right along it for approx. 800m before taking a path on the left through the trees and back to the car park.

Further walks available online at:

<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/leis-walking.htm>

(or from "Walks" under the website A-Z)