

COUNTRYSIDE WALKS IN BRACKNELL FOREST

Wildmoor Heath, Broadmoor & The Devil's Highway



4.1 miles / 6.6km – 2 hours +

This anti-clockwise route takes you through a range of scenery to the east of Crowthorne, including woodland, **SSSI heathland*** which is important for wildlife including insects, lizards and birds, and a section of ancient Roman Road. You will also be presented with fine views over Broadmoor Hospital which is a historic institution and in parts has grade II listed Victorian buildings.

The 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 down the hill and through the gate where the track bends right. After approximately 40 metres turn left through the gate and climb up onto the main bridleway which crosses the site. At the bridleway turn right. 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 road (South road).

Turn right and follow the road for 300m. On passing through a barrier turn right over a metal stile 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 the path turns left alongside a field 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. At the road end, pass through a stile onto a rough track which leads downhill towards the old reservoir 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 onto the junction with Upper Broadmoor Road and Cricket Field Grove. Turn left 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.

*** Ground nesting birds are particularly sensitive to disturbance by dogs. In order to allow birds to raise their chicks, please stick to the paths and keep dogs on leads during the nesting season shown on the seasonal notices.**