

## A Crawl around the Urban Sprawl

This walk is approximately six miles long and apart from a brief foray into Shinfield CP is almost entirely in Earley. The Interpretation Centre on Instow Road is used as a starting point but the walk can be started and finished wherever is convenient to the walker(s).

From the Interpretation Centre head down to the lake and take the path on the right just before the wooden bridge over the weir. Follow the path through Oldpond Copse and Moor Copse and then take the path over the brook (on the left at the end of the open area) and turn right (into Brookside Close). On leaving Brookside Close turn left into Gipsy Lane. At the end of Gipsy Lane cross Mill Lane and continue ahead, along the footpath that crosses Toseland Way. Follow this path to the left of the houses in Formby Close and later bear left over the wooden bridge (towards Loddon Bridge). Just before the steps leading to Loddon Bridge turn sharp right and follow the River Loddon for just over half a mile (towards Sindlesham Mill). Ignore the footpath to the left through the tunnel under Lower Earley Way and keep going to the roundabout at the end of Rushey Way. Turn right onto Rushey Way and cross the road at the pedestrian lights.

Take the footpath to the left of the telephone box and continue ahead with the pumping station on your left. This path crosses Mill Lane and runs roughly parallel to Lower Earley Way through part of the "Lower Earley Woods and Meadows". This area is open grassland with trees and bushes on the left hand side and houses on the right. Towards the end of this path take the left hand branch, cross a little wooden bridge and bear right through more open grass and scrubby woodland on both sides. On reaching the end of the woody area turn left onto a grassy path immediately after the last tree (English Oak), just before the three-storey houses. This bit of the route is not suitable for wheelchair users who should use the alternative path (in italics), below.

This path curves to the right (do not cross the ditch at this point) in a wooded area. A little bit farther on the path crosses the ditch on the left and very soon meets up with the new gravel path between Gabriels Square and Lower Earley Way. Take either path, they both lead out at the same place and the one nearest to Lower Earley Way is prone to flooding after heavy rain. Keep following the gravel path, cross Barn Croft Drive (leading to Gabriels Square on the right) and take the left hand gravel path (with children's play area on the right), through a narrow path leading to another grassy open area. Take the left hand gravel path, still running parallel to Lower Earley Way to Paddick Drive.

*The alternative route is to stay on the path which eventually ends at Gabriels Square. Enter the square, take the first exit from it on the left, then turn right and follow the path, still parallel with Lower Earley Way, until Paddick Drive is reached.*

Just before Paddick Drive follow the gravel path to the right, cross the road and the path turns right again (running parallel to Paddick Drive). Where the path changes to tarmac keep going straight ahead until you reach the junction where Gipsy Lane changes to Cutbush Lane and then turn left. Follow Cutbush Lane, across the roundabout with Carshalton and Meldreth Ways, shortly after which it becomes a pedestrian/cycle path, and then back to a normal road. Keep going along this road, for about half a mile, until two roundabouts fairly close together are reached, bear right at the first roundabout and then turn right into Beeston Way at the next one. Cross the road at the traffic island.

After about 40 metres turn left onto a footpath leading to Pearman's Copse. This path runs parallel to Lower Earley Way (West) and is also part of the "Lower Earley Woods and Meadows". On reaching Pearman's Copse pass a seat and bench (on the left) and take the grassy path to the right (just before the second seat and bench on the left). Keep going straight ahead along the winding woodland path, over a wooden bridge, bear left just past a sign to "clean up after your dog" and eventually exit onto Ryhill Way and turn left. Shortly after Wilsford Close, turn left onto a footpath (to the right of No.26 Ryhill Way) leading up to Shinfield Road. Turn right onto Shinfield Road and after about a quarter of a mile, turn right in to Halls Lane (opposite a sign to the District Centre). Where the road bears left take the foot/cycle path straight ahead. Follow this path under Rushey Way, past Hillside Primary School, playing fields and Suttons Bowling Club on the right hand side. Cross Chalfont Way and continue to the end of the foot/cycle path.

At this point you have two choices the first of which is not suitable for wheelchair users (follow route in italics, below). Turn left (into Elm Lane) cross Durand Road and just past the metal railings turn right onto a tarmac footpath. Continue straight ahead with the hedge on the right hand side and grass and houses on the left. Where the path bears left, turn right over a small concrete bridge and turn immediately left keeping the hedge and ditch on the left. Enter a narrow footpath with wooden fences on the right and the ditch and Sibley Hall on the left. Keep going along this narrow path (ignoring turns off to the right) and later, where it opens out, follow the fence round to the right and after a short distance turn left (onto Radstock Lane).

*Wheelchair users should turn right onto Elm Lane and where the road ends, bear left and keep going, past Kerris Way, until the footpath eventually becomes Radstock Lane.*

Both paths join here. At the bottom of the hill, cross over Redhatch Drive, continue a very short distance up the other side of Radstock Lane, and turn right onto the footpath behind the corner house on the right hand side. Cross Beech Lane at the pedestrian crossing, enter the nature reserve and take the right hand path round the lake or go up through the meadow to return to the Interpretation Centre.