

Walk 2: Bulmershe, High Wood & South Lake

This walk takes you through green spaces that were once part of Bulmershe Park and Bulmershe Heath. You pass through High Wood Nature Reserve and around Southlake. There are children's play areas on Woodlands Avenue and at Southlake. You return via Town Lane and Bulmershe Park.

Length

3.7 miles (6 km). Allow 1 hours 45 mins plus stops.

Starting Point

- Car** **Layby on Woodlands Avenue**, on the park side (north side) of Woodlands Avenue, Woodley. Approx. 75m from the mini-roundabout junction of Woodland Av and Church Road. OS Grid Ref: SU7475 7297. [w3w ///raves.flute.thing](http://w3w.///raves.flute.thing)
- Bus 13** **Bulmershe Court** stop. On the park side of Woodlands Avenue. Walk back 40m to the
- 19c** pedestrian crossing. Cross the road, turn left and walk to point **(2)**
- 14** **Bulmershe Court** stop. On the housing side of Woodlands Avenue. Walk back the way the
- 19a** bus came to point **(2)**.

Route Instructions (See map below for numbered points)

1



With the park on your left walk along Woodlands Avenue to the pedestrian crossing opposite a children's play area. Cross the road, turn left and walk for 250m along the right-hand pavement past two streets, the Co-op and the entrance to Bulmershe Pavilion Sports Park. At the end of a stone wall reach a path on your right. This is point (2) below.

The housing estate (Parklands) is on the site of what was originally Woodley Lodge (home to Henry Addington before he became prime minister from 1801 to 1804). It was renamed Bulmershe Court by James Wheble after he moved there in 1801 and then demolished to build Bulmershe Teaching Training College in 1964. The old wall near The Orangery is the only part of the original house left.

2



Turn right onto the dirt path: it soon joins a gravel path coming in from your left. Bear right and follow the footpath passing ponds on your left and the pavilion and sports fields on your right. Passing houses on your left you come to Kingfisher Drive. This is point (3) below.

The ponds were originally fishponds on the Bulmershe Park estate

3



Turn right and walk along the right-hand pavement for 100m to reach a sign board for High Wood Nature Reserve. This is point (4) below.

The nature reserve is the last remaining remnant of the once extensive Bullmarsh / Earley Heath which extended over much of what is now north Earley and Woodley. High Wood is mainly high forest with a few areas of coppice and a small area of dry and wet heathland. In places you can see remnants of the arboretum (rhododendrons, giant redwoods) created for Thomas Wheble of Woodley Lodge by the horticulturist J.C Loudon in the early 19th Century.

4



Turn right onto the dirt path behind the stone wall. Do not pass between the wooden posts into the wood. The dirt path runs beside the playing fields on your right. Ignore two turnings left and, after about 100m, reach a wooden gate on your left through the fence. This is point **(5)** below.

5



Go through the gate and walk through the bushes to the clearing. Bear left to come to another wooden gate. Go through the gate and bear right to the left of a tree in the middle of the path. (Do not turn sharp right.) Walk through the woods on a wide dirt path to reach a wide crossing path. This is point **(6)** below.

6



Turn left and immediately come to a substantial green metal barrier. Go past the barrier to soon reach Kingfisher Drive. Turn right and immediately reach a path with a black and white bollard. This is point **(7)** below.

7



Go past the bollard and bear slightly right on the path to the right of a litter bin. You will have the green on your left and woods on your right. At the end of the green keep on the path ahead with a fence on your left (and with lamp posts). Ignoring paths into the estate keep on this path for 400m to reach a yellow box just before the steps up to Earley Station Footbridge. This is point **(8)** below.

8



Turn left at the yellow box and walk along road for 80m before turning left into Hazel Drive. Crossing to the right-hand pavement and ignoring Sycamore Close you continue for 140m to reach a pathway on your right between house 24 & 26. This is point **(9)** below.

9



Turn right onto the path, and at its end, turn right again: this is South Lake lakeside path (eventually the lake will be visible on your left). Ignoring paths to the left and right continue for about 700m around the lake until reaching a green/grey signpost with trees and tall conifer hedge in front of you. This is point **(10)** below.

There was originally a North Lake (in the region of Antrim Road) which was filled in and built on in the 1960s.

10



Just before the signpost follow the footpath left around South Lake to reach an amenities area with park tables and benches. This is point **(11)** below.

11



Take the path to the right of the tables towards the children's play area. There is a water garden on your left. At the litter bin bear left passing the play area on your right. Follow the path as it swings left and then right to come to the black and white bollard you passed at point (7) on your outward journey. This is point **(12)** below.

12



Continue on the grassy public bridleway that runs beside and to the left of Kingfisher Drive. (It is the grassy verge beside the road.). The grassy path becomes tarmac and, passing the High Wood NR sign board, point (4) of your outward journey, after 350m reach a point where the road bears right. This was point (3) of your outward journey and is point **(13)** below.

13



Follow the left-hand pavement as it bends around to the right, passing under power lines, to the end of Kingfisher Drive. Turn left into Fairwater Drive (unsigned) and walk past Highwood School on your left. Cross Woodlands Ave at the pedestrian crossing. Turn right and immediately come to Shelgate Walk. This is point **(14)** below.

This was the site of Bulmershe Farm (which was the home farm of the Bulmershe Park Estate).

14



Turn left onto the footpath and walk along the path with housing on your right. At a black metal fence in front of you turn left and walk beside the green metal fence to the school. At a path junction with a crossing path (and a car park) in front of you keep left next to the school's fence. Soon reach the Delivery Entrance to Bulmershe School. Turn right into Chequers Way and after 50m come to Greys Crescent on your left. This is point **(15)** below.

15



Turn left into Greys Crescent and then, after about 100m, take the first left into a cul de sac (Tower Close – unsigned). After about 50m as the road bears right, reach a tarmac cycleway/footpath going straight ahead with to its left a chain link fence. The cycleway/footpath is Town Lane (unsigned). This is point **(16)** below.

Town Lane is part of a very ancient route from Culver Lane in Reading across the once Bullmarsh estate and Bulmershe Heath to the Chequers Pub and on to Sandford Mill and Hurst.

16



Go past the metal barriers and walk ahead on Town Lane cycleway/footpath and, ignoring the first turning left, after 280m reach a wide opening on your left into Bulmershe Park. This is point **(17)** below.

17



Turn left into the open space, ignore a turning right into the woods, and head towards the green fence ahead. After about 50m at the end of the trees on your right, bear right past a red 'dog poo' bin and a park bench along the edge of the trees on your right. Just before the fence ahead, turn right into the wooded area and then left onto the path that runs on your left behind the school playing fields. At the end of the fence head across the park to the layby. This is point **(18)** below. .

(The distance from point (17) to point (18) is about 700m.)

18



Journey's end.

