

## Walk 7: Earley Station & Woodley Precinct

This circular walk, northwards from Earley station, takes in South Lake, Bulmershe Park and High Wood, finding quiet and attractive oases amidst suburban Woodley.

The South Eastern Railway (SER) opened Earley station in November 1863 on the former Reading, Guildford and Reigate Railway (RG&RR), which originally terminated at its own Reading Southern station. The RG&RR had opened on 4 July 1849 and the SER had taken it over in 1852.

### Length

4 miles (6.4 km). Allow 2 hours plus stops.

### Starting Point

<b>Train</b>	<b>Earley Station</b> (on the Reading to Waterloo line)	
<b>Car</b>	<b>Earley Station Car Park (Pay &amp; Display)</b> Station Road, RG6 7DY OS Grid Ref: SU7528 7187. <a href="http://w3w:///edges.goats.design">w3w:///edges.goats.design</a>	
	<b>or</b>	<b>Headley Road Car Park (Pay &amp; Display)</b> Headley Road, Woodley RG5 4JA OS Grid Ref: SU7621 7328. <a href="http://w3w:///summer.neck.sprint">w3w ///summer.neck.sprint</a> . Start walk at point <b>(10)</b>
<b>Bus</b>	<b>4/X4 Earley Station stop</b>	
	<b>Eastbound</b> (from Reading)	Walk back 50m to Station Road and turn right
	<b>Westbound</b> (to Reading)	Walk back 40m to a traffic island before Kenton Rd. Cross the road at the island and turn right. After 50m turn left into Station Road

### Refreshments

Various cafes in Woodley Precinct Shopping Centre at point **(9)**

### Route Instructions (See map below for numbered points)

1



At the north end of Station Road, stand with your back towards the station and rail tracks, and turn right to reach the steps of a footbridge. This is point **(2)** below.

2



Cross the footbridge to reach the foot of the steps on the other side. This is point **(3)** below.

3



Turn right along road for 80m before turning left into Hazel Drive. Crossing to the right-hand pavement and ignoring Sycamore Close continue for 140m to reach a pathway on your right between houses 24 & 26. This is point **(4)** below.

4



Turn right on to 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 a tall conifer hedge in front of you. This is point **(5)** below.

5



Turn right and after a metal barrier, the path becomes a road, and after a few metres, reaches Nightingale Road. This is point **(6)** below.

6



Carefully cross Nightingale Road and continue straight ahead into School Drive, shortly reaching a crossing tarmac footpath. This is point **(7)** below.

7



Turn left on to the footpath and follow it for 450 m until it reaches Drivers Way just after some metal benches on your right. This is point **(8)** below.

8



Turn left along Drivers Way to reach a T-junction with Crockhamwell Road. Carefully cross Crockhamwell Road and the turn left. Continue along the right-hand pavement for about 550m ignoring roads turning off to the right and left to reach the entrance to the pedestrian precinct. This is point **(9)** below.

9



Walk into the precinct, keeping to the left-hand side. Look out for path heading left between buildings after first block of shops, immediately before Iceland\*. Take this path to reach the road straight ahead. This is point **(10)** below.

*\*if using the alternative start point in Headley Road car park, join the walk at the path by Iceland.*

10



Cross the road using the pedestrian crossing, and then turn right. After about 15m reach a path entrance on your left. This is point **(11)** below.

11



Enter the path and at its end, keep straight ahead, crossing a roundabout, then following right hand pavement reach Woodway on your right. Turn right, cross to the left-hand pavement and follow Woodway to its junction with Beechwood Avenue. Turn left and walk along the left-hand side of Beechwood Avenue crossing over Beaufield Road to reach Howth Drive. This is point **(12)** below.

12



Keep ahead to carefully cross Howth Drive and then turn right for about 70m to reach Chequers Way on the left. Turn left into Chequers Way, and, after about 90m turn right into Grays Crescent. After about 90m reach a cul-de-sac on the left (Tower Close – unsigned). This is point **(13)** below.

13



Turn into the cul de sac and follow the left-hand pavement past metal barriers and onto a cycleway/footpath\* for about 100m to reach a woodland path on the left. This is point **(14)** below.

*\*The cycleway/footpath is Town Lane. It is part of an 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.*

14



Follow path through woodland, keeping the fence on your left and, where the woodland opens out into a grassy area, continue in the same direction to meet a path junction in the corner of the field. This is point **(15)** below.

15



Bear left and within a few metres reach another path junction by the corner of a fence. This is point **(16)** below.

16



Turn left and follow the path with the fence on your left. Where the fence ends, bear slightly left towards the copse in front of you then bear right where the copse ends towards the corner of the field. This is point **(17)** below.

17



Turn left, cross Woodlands Avenue with care, turn right then immediately left and follow the left-hand pavement of Church Road for around 500m to reach the (Anderson Avenue) bus shelter. This is point **(18)** below.

18



Immediately after the bus shelter turn left and then immediately bear left on to the narrow path under the trees. (Do not go straight on). Continue forward with the houses of High Tree Drive on your left until you reach a ditch into High Wood Nature Reserve. This is point **(19)** 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.*

19



Cross the ditch and continue along the winding path until you come to a T-junction with a wider path. This is point **(20)** below.

20



At the junction turn right and continue forward keeping to the main wide path, ignoring offshoots to the left. After bearing right, pass over a dry shallow ditch and trees in the centre of the path, you will eventually come to a large tree (80cm in diameter) in the centre of the path and a number of paths branching off. This is point **(21)** below.

21



Take the most right-hand (narrow) path, past a concrete post on the right, and continue forward through woodland which gradually opens out to grass and brambles and then takes you into the trees, where the path bears to the left. This is point **(22)** below.

22



Follow the path to the left and continue, with the woodland on the left and the fence to the A3290 on the right. Keep the fence on your right until the path opens onto a road. The footbridge to Earley Station is on your right. This is point **(23)** below.

23



Turn right over the footbridge to return to the start of the walk.

24



Journey's end.



