

## Walk 9: Woodley & Binfield Heath

This circular walk, starting in Woodford Park, takes you north over the railway to Sonning and then into South Oxfordshire. You pass through Sonning Eye and climb to Dunsden Green, once home of the World War 1 poet Wilfred Owen, before turning East and following the footpaths to Binfield Heath. The route then leads you through woods back down to Playhatch, through Sonning Village and the Old Bath Road to Woodford Park.

Some of the paths can be very muddy after rain and the path adjacent to Spring Lane can flood in very wet weather.

### Length

8.4 miles (13.5 km). Allow 4 hours 30 mins plus stops.

### Starting Point

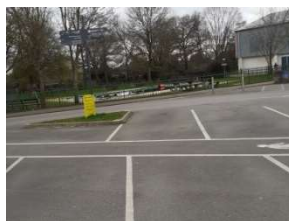
- Car** **Woodford Park Leisure Centre car park**, Leisure Drive (off Haddon Drive), Woodley, RG5 4LY. OS Grid Ref: SU 76237364. w3w: ///owners.grass.hotels  
*(Note: often busy on Saturdays until early afternoon – sports teams)*
- Bus 14/19c** **Chequers** stop. Headley Road. Walk along Headley Road in the direction of bus travel, to the Oakwood Centre to enter Woodford Park by the right-hand side of the Oakwood Centre. Take the footpath that leads past the war memorial to the Coronation Hall. Turn left at the Coronation Hall and continue to the children's play area. The car park and start of the walk are on your right.
- 13/19a** **Chequers** stop, Beechwood Avenue. walk along the right-hand pavement towards a pedestrian crossing, but do not cross it. Go straight ahead to reach a second crossing in front of the Chequers pub. Go over the crossing, turn right to the 14/19c bus stop.

### Refreshments

- The Oakwood Centre** Headley Road, Woodley. Across Woodford Park near the 14/19c bus stop.  
*In Sonning Village*
- Coppa Club** South side of Sonning bridge
- The Mill** North side of Sonning Bridge
- Bull Inn pub** By the churchyard
- The Village Hamper** High Street just before point (26)
- Flowing Spring pub** Spring Lane, Playhatch. Near point (12)

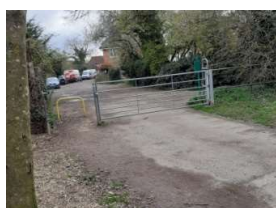
### Route Instructions (See maps below for numbered points)

1



Starting at the Woodford Park Leisure Centre car park, walk towards the children's play area and paddling pool. Turn right and follow the path past the paddling pool. Turn left, then right and walk between the lake and the all-weather pitch. At the end of the lake continue straight ignoring paths to left and right, bear slightly left and left again, past the gates to a grounds maintenance area on the left and school fence on the right, towards a metal gate. This is point (2) below

2



Walk through the pedestrian exit at the left-hand side of the gate along the unmade road to the round-about junction with Reading Road and Western Avenue. This is point (3) below.

3



Turn right into Western Avenue, cross the road and walk along Western Avenue, past the school and church on the right, to reach the junction with Warren Road on your left. This is point **(4)** below.

4



Turn left into Warren Road, keeping to the left-hand pavement, continue ahead to the Sonning sign. Cross the road and, taking care, walk over the narrow railway bridge. Keep to the right when walking round the left-hand bend. Continue past the Old Bath Road turnings and walk to the A4. This is point **(5)** below.

5



Cross the A4 using the traffic island to the left and walk down the pavement on left-hand side of Sonning Lane, which is directly ahead, to the sharp right-hand bend at the bottom. The lich gate leading into St Andrew's churchyard is ahead of you. This is point **(6)** below.

*Sonning was the location of an early Saxon minster. In 909 AD, this became one of two cathedrals in the See of Ramsbury and Sonning. Some Saxon stonework can still be seen in the church. The north aisle dates from the 13th century and the south aisle dates from the early 14th century. However, the church today is largely Victorian, with major restoration work undertaken in 1852–3 and 1876.*

6



Enter the churchyard through the lich gate and follow the path along the wall on the left. At the end of the wall take the middle path which goes diagonally left to exit the church yard by the gate next to the Little Deanery. This is point **(7)** below.

7



Take the left-hand pavement (Coppa Club on the right) to cross the bridges over the river Thames. Pass the Mill Theatre on the left. The French Horn is on the right. Just before the French Horn bear to the left to take the footpath next to the river. Walk to the entrance of an alley way to the right of Furleigh Cottages. This is point **(8)** below.

8



Continue to the end of the alley way. Turn left onto the road and then turn sharp right at Long Gardens and continue along the left-hand side of the road to reach the junction with the road from the Sonning Eye roundabout, on the right. This is point **(9)** below.

9



Continue straight ahead, along the 'no through road', passing the Reading Sailing Club on the left, to the end of the road. Pass through the Wooden gate to the Sonning to Playhatch main road. This is point **(10)** below.

10



Cross the main road and take the footpath immediately to the right of Spring Lane. (Note: this path can become flooded in very wet weather). Walk past the allotments on the right and under the gravel works chute to a wooden footbridge. Cross the footbridge and continue on the footpath which turns left just before a line of trees ahead and exit onto Spring Lane. This is point **(11)** below.

11



Turn right, cross the small bridge and walk along Spring Lane, passing the Flowing Spring Pub on the left, to the junction of the lane with the Reading to Henley Road. This is point **(12)** below.

12



Carefully cross the main road, go through the metal barrier, and climb the steps opposite to join the footpath the other side of the hedge. Turn left and follow the (permissive) path, keeping the hedge on your left, until reaching a footpath on the right which runs uphill between two hedges. This is point **(13)** below.

13



Follow the path uphill between the hedges and continue straight on once the hedge on the left ends until reaching a hedge in front of you at the top of the field. Turn left and follow the path along the hedge to the end of the field. Pass through the gap in the hedge and bear right, keeping the hedge on the right, walk to a metal barrier to the road. This is point **(14)** below.

14



Exit the field through the gap on the left of the barrier and turn right. Keeping to the right-hand side of the road follow the edge of the road and then the pavement to reach the Green at Dunsden Green. This is point **(15)** below.

15



Cross the road to the corner of the green and then bear left and follow the pavement on the edge of the green round, past the telephone box (now a book exchange), to the corner of the green. Turn right into the small road with the green and the Wilfred Owen information board on your right. This is point **(16)** below.

16



Continue along the road, which bears left and passes Orchard Cottage, before it turns to the left to the drives of some house. There is a wide footpath (Tag Lane) immediately in front of you. This is point **(17)** below.

17



Walk along Tag Lane. *Warning*. This footpath can be very muddy in wet weather). After about 700m there is a footpath leading uphill on the right. This is point **(18)** below.

18



Turn right at the footpath signpost and take the path uphill between the hedges. When the hedge on the left ends, continue straight on with the other hedge on the right to the brow of the hill. Just past the top of the hill keep on the footpath which leads to the right through the hedge and then left to continue on the other side of the hedge. Continue with the hedge on left, past a line of trees on the right, to reach the road. This is point **(19)** below.

19



Turn right, walk to the end of the road where it joins the main road, opposite the church. Cross the main road and turn right. Walk past Binfield Heath Church (on your left) to a bridleway on the left. This is point **(20)** below.

20



Turn left to follow this footpath, which narrows after the drive on the left. The path crosses another path (keep straight on here) and eventually leads downhill past woodland on your right, to a right hand-turn just before the road. This is point **(21)** below.

21



Turn right and follow the concrete path, which eventually becomes a dirt path and bears right and then left to take you the other side of the hedge. Keeping the hedge on your left, continue on the path until you reach the steps on your left down to the Reading to Henley Road opposite Spring Lane. This is point **(22)** below.

22



*(Be very careful – it is a busy road.)* Cross the road and enter Spring Lane. Continue over the bridge and immediately turn left onto the footpath which then turns right. Continue under the gravel chute and past the allotments to exit on to the Sonning to Playhatch Road. This is point **(23)** below.

23



Cross the road to the wooden gate opposite and enter the road. Retrace your steps past the sailing club and road to the Sonning Eye roundabout to turn sharp left at Long Gardens and then right into the alley way by the notice board to emerge by the river opposite the French Horn. This is point **(24)** below.

24



Continue on the right-hand side of the road over the Thames bridges to reach the entrance to the Church yard right of the Little Deanery. This is point **(25)** below.

25



Enter the church yard and follow the path on the left next to the wall to reach the main gates. Exit the church yard and walk past the Bull on the right to reach the High Street. This is point **(26)** below.

26



Turn right and walk uphill. (The Village Hamper is on your left). At the end of the High Street turn right and follow Pearson Road to the left-hand bend. Turn left into Sonning Lane and continue uphill to the Berkshire County Sports Club on your left. Cross the road at the pedestrian crossing and go through the gap in the hedge. Do not go straight ahead but immediately turn left and go across the tarmac car park to the minor lane that joins Sonning Lane. This is point **(27)** below.

27



From the car park turn right and walk down the lane. Turn left just before the houses in front of you and take the footpath which leads between the hedge on your left and the tennis courts on the right to King George's Field. This is point **(28)** below.

28



Turn right and walk down the right-hand side of the field, past the cricket nets and fitness equipment and the children's playground to the exit by the school entrance to reach Pound Lane. This is point **(29)** below.

29



Turn right, walk up Pound Lane to the roundabout and follow the pavement round to the right to walk along the footpath along the side of the A4 to the pedestrian crossing. This is point **(30)** below.

30



Cross the A4 and enter Holmemoor Drive. Turn right and walk along Holmemoor Drive and then the Old Bath Road, passing West Drive on your left, to reach the junction with Warren Road on your left. This is point **(31)** below.

31

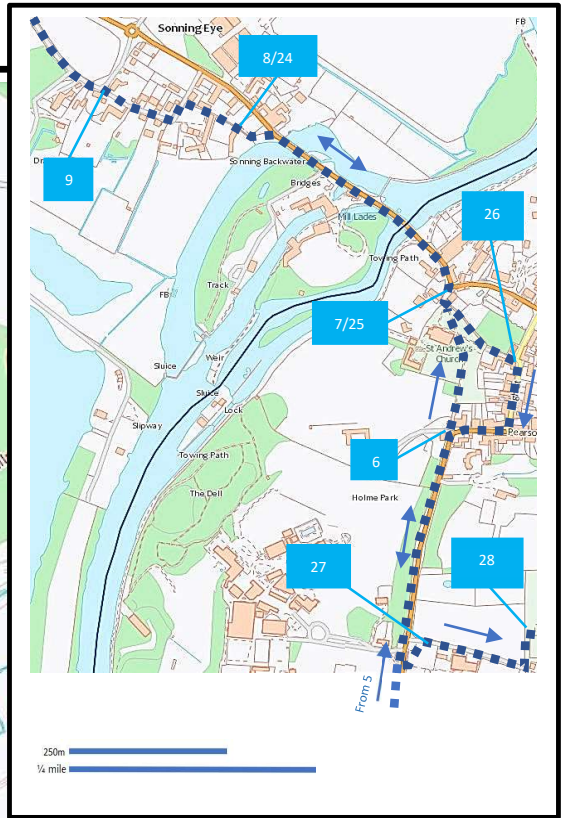
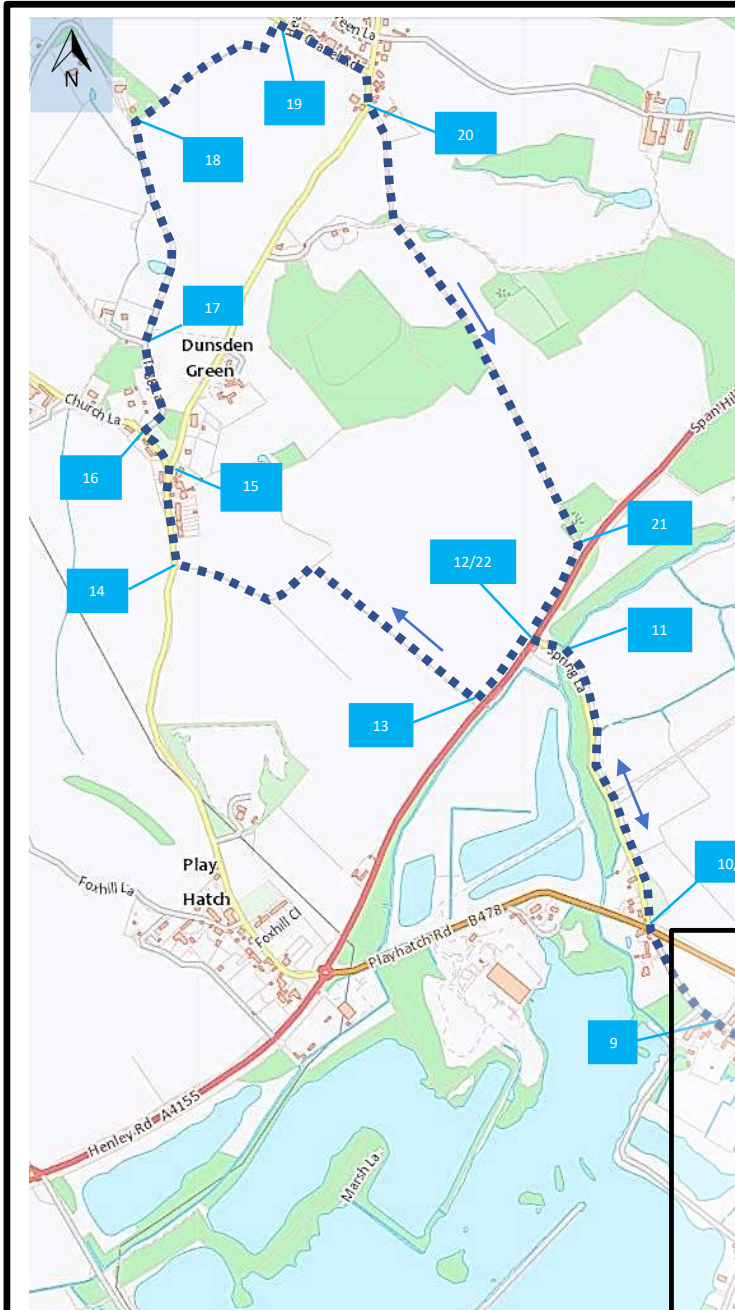


Turn left into Warren Road, cross the railway bridge and continue to the junction with Western Avenue. Cross Western Avenue and turn right. Continue to the entrance to Woodford Park on your left. Take the unmade road, walk through the gate and continue between the lake and the all-weather pitch. Turn left in front of the paddling pool and then right to reach the car-park. This is point **(32)** below

32



Journey's end.



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Northern Area

