

Walk 16: Lakes, Rivers & Nature Reserves

This flat, pretty walk starts at the Museum of Berkshire Aviation and goes south alongside the river Loddon and then through Dinton Pastures by White Swan and Sandford Lakes. You again walk beside the Loddon, before passing through the magnificent brick arches (built late 1830s) of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's Great Western Railway to enter Loddon Nature Reserve and then reach Twyford. Your return is via Charvil Country Park, by the Old River and through Ashenbury Park. The walk combines elements of walks 1, 3, 5 and 6.

Parts of the walk can be extremely muddy after periods of heavy rainfall.

Length

6.8 miles (11 km). Allow 3 hours 15 mins plus stops.

Starting Point

- Car** **Berkshire Aviation Museum Car Park** (free March 2021), off Mohawk Way. Woodley, RG5 4UE. OS Grid Ref: SU7768 7299. [w3w:///shuts.woven.melon](http://www.shuts.woven.melon)
- Bus 13** **Herald Way** stop – opposite the museum car park entrance road.
- 14** **Herald Way** stop – cross the road and walk back 75m to the roundabout, cross Miles Way
- 19c** to Mohawk Way. The museum entrance road is 50m on your right.

Refreshments

- Heron on the Ford Pub** At point (22).
- Waggon & Horses Pub** Between points (20) and (21).
- Various Cafes & Pubs** In the centre of Twyford. Turn right on the main road just after at point (20) and walk 250m

Route Instructions (See map below for numbered points)

- At the entrance to the car park with the museum and the aircraft on your left, walk to the far end of the car park and turn left. Soon you will find a Dinton Pastures Country Park notice board. This is point (2) below.
- Take the gravel path beside the notice board. It runs parallel to The Bader Way and, ignoring the first turning left, after 200m the path bears left away from the road. Come to a concrete bridge with metal railings over a small stream. This is point (3) below.
- Cross the bridge and continue on the tarmac path which becomes gravel by a wooden gate. Do not turn but continue on the gravel path with the river immediately on your left. Around 700m from the concrete bridge (3) reach a wooden bridge spanning left across the river Loddon. This is point (4) below.

4



Cross the bridge, ignore the paths immediately to the left and right, and walk forward a few paces to reach the junction with the lakeside path. This is point **(5)** below.

5



Turn left and follow the path, with the river on your left and lake on your right, keeping to the main path and ignoring paths on the left and right. After about 500m, at the end of the lake on your right, the path bears right to reach a path junction. This is point **(6)** below.

6



Bear left at the junction and follow the wide path through woodland (ignoring a path on the right) to reach a T-junction of paths. This is point **(7)** below.

7



Turn left at the junction and follow the curving path, with the lake on the right, then keep ahead to reach the junction with the road. This is point **(8)** below.

8



Carefully cross the road to reach footpath sign on the other side. This is point **(9)** below.

9



Go through the gate and keep straight ahead (ignore a path heading rightwards), to reach a path junction after about 50m. This is point **(10)** below.

10



Take the path on the left, then follow the riverside path by the river Loddon for 1.7km to reach a further path junction. This is point **(11)** below.

11



Take the left-hand path and continue to follow it to a junction with a road at Whistley Bridge. This is point **(12)** below.

12



Turn left along the road, taking care of traffic, cross the river and walk past a house on the right, then look out for bridleyway sign on the right. This is point **(13)** below.

13



Follow this bridleyway until it re-joins the road. This is point **(14)** below.

14



Cross the road with care and enter the footpath on the other side. Follow this footpath until it re-joins the road. This is point **(15)** below.

15



Bear left along the road for 50m and ignoring the metal entrance gates on your right continue a few metres to a public footpath on the right. This is point **(16)** below.

16



Turn right onto the footpath and walk past a lake on your right and another on your left. After about 750m come to railway arches. This is point **(17)** below.

17



Go through the arches and immediately turn right to follow a public footpath through Loddon Nature Reserve. After 200m the path turns sharp left to a low-level public footpath marker. Do not follow the wide path but turn right for 10m to reach public footpath signpost next to the river. This is point **(18)** below.

18



Turn left at the signpost and walk with the river Loddon on your right – the path hugs the riverbank and can be very muddy. Ignoring paths to the left, reach a footbridge where the path turns right. This is point **(19)** below.

19



Go over the bridge and follow the path past a 3-storey brick apartment building on your left the reach another footbridge. Cross the bridge, go up concrete steps, cross the road (Weaver Way), go down concrete steps and follow the path to soon meet the main road. This is point **(20)** below. *You are now on the outskirts of Twyford village. As its name suggests, Twyford developed where the two branches of the River Loddon could be safely crossed. These crossing points were instrumental in attracting trade and travellers between the west of England and London, first with packhorses, then wagons and stagecoaches.*

20



Turn left, go over Silk Lane and after 120m, reach the Waggon & Horses pub on your left. Go past the pub. Where the footpath ends, cross the busy road with care to take the pavement on the other side and continue in the same direction. After crossing the second road bridge (with white railings) come to a lane on the other side of the road. This is point **(21)** below.

21



Carefully cross the road and take the lane. Go through a yellow barrier to enter a gravel track. Bear left across an open space and enter Charvil Country Park (by a sign board). Turn right and follow the footpath ignoring a path coming in from the right. At a T-junction turn right. The Old River will be on your left-hand side. *(The Old River is the original course of the river Loddon.)* Continue following the path by the river until the path opens out, then bear left in the direction of the railway. Reach a small footbridge with railway arches beyond. This is point **(22)** below.

Charvil Country Park covers 75 hectares. The area of former gravel pits and remnant pastures is in the flood plain of the lower Loddon Valley between Twyford and Charvil.

22



Go over the footbridge and through the arch. Ignore the path to your right and come to a metal beam barrier and wooden kissing gate. Go through the gate and continue in the same direction. After about 600m pass a ford on your left. Turn left through a kissing gate to exit Charvil Country Park. Turn right at the road in front of the Heron on the Ford pub and soon reach the T-junction with Land Ends Road. This is point **(23)** below.

23



Turn left walk to the end of Lands End Road and the entry to Ashenbury Park. This is point **(24)** below.

24



Cross the road, go through the wooden barrier and continue straight ahead onto a public footpath. Continue on this path for about 200m to reach a telegraph pole with an open area with benches by a lake on your right. This is point **(25)** below.

25



Turn left and walk across the grass towards the high point of the hill. Reach a table and benches with a litter bin to their right. This is point **(26)** below.

26



With the table and benches to your left and the bin to your right, bear slightly right towards the treeline about 150m ahead. Locate the first (left) of two dirt tracks into the thicket. This is about 70m from the corner of the park. This is point **(27)** below.

27



Go through the thicket for about 25m to reach a gate in a chain link fence. Go through the gate onto Beggars Hill Road. Turn right and after 200m the road narrows at a barrier. This is point **(28)** below.

28



Continue past the barrier and after about 600m, the track curves rightwards to reach a junction. This is point **(29)** below.

29



Turn left and continue to follow the tarmac track (Perimeter Road – unsigned) past a children’s play area on your right to reach a road. This is point **(30)** below.

30



On reaching the road, turn right, and, in a few steps, reach a dropped kerb on the approach to a roundabout. This is point **(31)** below.

31



Turn left to cross the road via the dropped kerb and traffic island. On the other side of the road, turn right and walk along the pavement as it curves leftwards. Continue along the pavement to a road junction with Sandford Lane. This is point **(32)** below.

32



Maintaining the same direction, cross Sandford Lane and continue along the pavement to reach the entrance road to the Aviation Museum. (This is signed.) The No 13 bus stop is opposite. This is point **(33)** below.

33



Turn left and walk the short distance to the end of the walk.



